

Mt. Banahaw: The Mystic Mountain and Pilgrim Site Every Holy Week

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Profile of Mount Banahaw

Elevation: Approximately 2,158 m (7,080 ft)

Location: Mount Banahaw is located in Lucban, Quezon and Majayjay, Laguna, Luzon, Philippines

Mt. Banahaw is an active complex volcano and a part of the Cristobal National Park. The three-peak is believed to be a depot of psychic energy and considered by the locals as a sacred and mystic mountain. It pours legendary folklores and superstitions that house countless members of cults, faith healers and soul seekers who climb its slopes to meditate and link to the mountain spirits. Its geographical location sits to a center point where the key lines of the earth meet. Wherever such latitudes intersect, they create paranormal energy field that manifest higher frequencies of perception, physiological or metaphysical.

History of Mt. Banahaw

The origin of the word “banahaw” is attributed to a description of a holy being – the mountain has a rock which contains a footprint of an unknown being. Banahaw word originated from the combination of “banal,” meaning holy or divine, while “daw,” means a word used to quote another speaker or meaning a slight doubt.

It is considered also holy by the locals because of its “holy water” which allegedly beneficial both on the physical and spiritual aspects. They are coming forth from local springs and its holy places or caves. There are compositions of unique natural features such as rocks, “holy caves” and springs with shrines build around, inside or on them as commanded from a “holy voice” as revealed to a man during the Spanish time.

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It is also a famous hiking activity peaks during the Holy Week of each year with different trails around the complex mountain. The summit which is actually a rim encircling the crater is numbered by three and these viewpoints are the usual destination for hikers and pilgrims. One can find here the Cave of the God the Father and the “holy spring” at Barangay Kinabuhayan that claims to have curing powers.

Status of the Mountain Range

Because of the uninterrupted activity of climbers and pilgrims, the trails have become cluttered with trash alerting the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Cristobal National Park. On March 2004, a 5-year suspension of hiking activity to visitors – whether pilgrims, hikers or tourists during Holy Week which covers two trails – the Sariaya and Dolores trails and was scheduled to reopening in 2012.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the park superintendent seek to extend the Banahaw closure for another 8 years to complete its healing process. The project of the local government “Plant and Grow One Million Trees to Secure Quezon’s Future” was launched to rehabilitate Banahaw and its landscape.

The department and local official are formulating strict guidelines and structures on how the mountain climbing activities at Banahaw could be regulated and controlled once it reopens.

Before its closure, about more than half a million people – pilgrims, hikers and tourists visited the mountain during the Holy Week.

Reference: Philippine daily Inquirer, Across the Nation January 24, 2012 ppA11

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