



HIKING AT TOKUN & SERAYA HILL IN BUKIT MERTAJAM

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The hike to the deep jungle of Bukit Seraya in Bukit Mertajam on 7th December 2024 was quite an adventure to say the least. It was indeed very exciting and challenging. We started at around 7.30am. Before we hadn't even begun ascending, we already walked 2km. Not long after our hike, we reached the old abandoned dam of Bukit Seraya. This dam was built during the British colonial era. As we made our way up to the pinnacle of Bukit Seraya, we passed by a few attractions, or in Chinese we call them “打卡景点”, such as the Mushroom Rock, the Angkor Wat Tree, the Bonsai Tree, the Seraya Big Tree, and the Octopus Tree.

The hike was not without some difficulties and mishaps. Carrying a backpack of approximately 5kg behind my back, I had a feeling at the beginning of the hike that this day was not a perfect day with me having my best of form. Nevertheless, I embarked on this journey towards the deep jungle of Bukit Seraya with great anticipation and excitement. Some sections of the trails were rather steep and challenging. Due to the rainy season, those trails were quite slippery. I slipped and fell on my bum 3 times, scratched both of my palms with a little bleeding, and occasionally experienced some minor cramps at my butt, groin, thigh, and toes. Thankfully I was able to persevere on and continue.

But the greatest memory of the hike in an unprecedented turn of events (at least for me) was when we got lost in the jungle in uncharted territory while diverting from a blocked route due to a fallen tree 5 hours into the hike. We were heading to Seraya Valley Farm to replenish ourselves with coconut water at that time. Although it seemed like we couldn't find our way out of the jungle, never did I once feel worried because I had my schoolmate with us who is an expert navigator in the heart of Bukit Seraya, in whom I have total faith and confidence. Eventually we found our way to somewhere near the peak, and the SVF farm owner came to our rescue in his pick-up truck, and brought us to his farm to enjoy the refreshing pandan flavour coconut. We had 2 coconuts each. The farm owner also treated us with some of his durians. Let me tell you an embarrassing secret. At the farm house, I hit my forehead hard on the almost invisible staircase ceiling. What a painful mishap!

An hour later, at about 3.00pm, we were back on track on the peak of Bukit Seraya. We were all already very tired as we made the descent towards the base of Cherok Tokun Hill. We dreaded the hike down but we persevered on. We didn't have any choice anyway. No helicopter was coming to bring us down. It took us 2 hours to reach the base of the hill. As one of our hikers said, the seemingly few kilometres of descending walk felt like endlessly 10 times longer.

Finally, the unexpected 9.5 hours hike from 7.30am to 5.00pm had come to an end. My legs were so stiff when we reached the base, and I couldn't even walk properly, but by limping slowly to the car. This hike is my personal record. I am actually not a regular hiker. Hence, this hike remains the most challenging and one of the most memorable and unforgettable hikes I have ever encountered and experienced to date.



Figure 1. The hiking group



Figure 2. The old abandoned dam of Bukit Seraya



Figure 3. The forest reserve of Bukit Seraya