

The Conquest of Mount Kinabalu by YES

YOUNG ENGINEERS SECTION, IEM



by Engr. Wong Yoke Mei

A trip which was planned one year ago has finally rolled into action. The Young Engineers Section (YES) of Institution of Engineers, Malaysia (IEM) has successfully organised its 555th meeting on top of Mount Kinabalu, the highest mountain in South-East Asia with its Low's Peak reaching 4,095m above sea level.

A group of 18 diversified young and energetic engineers participated in this adventure. YES would also like to express its gratitude to Engr. Shuhairy Norhisham and Engr. Mah Way Sheng for handling all the arrangements, making this trip possible for the participants.



A view taken from the plane before landing at Kota Kinabalu International Airport



A group photo taken at the Sabah International Airport

On the first day of the trip, the flight departed from LCCT at 10.25 a.m. and reached Kota Kinabalu International Airport at 1.00 p.m. After a group photograph at the airport, the participants headed to the designated hotel by taxi. The hotel was located strategically in the town centre, with a wide choice of food outlets and a convenience store.

Just like the 'Jalan-jalan cari makan' TV crew, we spent most of the day exploring Kota Kinabalu, the bustling state capital, and savouring the flavours of the local cuisine. On that particular night, we were invited by IEM, Sabah branch, to a dinner at WISMA IEM, Sabah.

We met up with the YES committee of Sabah branch and got to mingle around. It was then followed by a short presentation of their activities by Shevon Chia, the Sabah YES chairlady. Subsequently, we had a short *Mamak* session at a nearby local restaurant.



Shevon Chia sharing some interesting particulars about YES of Sabah Branch with the participants



A token of appreciation received from the YES advisor, IEM Sabah Branch



A group picture with Sabah YES committee members

We woke up early at 7.00 a.m. the following day and gathered at the hotel lobby to wait for the assigned van to pick us up. It took us about 2 hours to reach the foothills of Mount Kinabalu. After registration, we collected our name tags and headed towards Mesilau gate, the more difficult trail which provided a wonderful view of flora and fauna.

At the starting point of Mesilau gate, we got ourselves some porters to carry our backpacks and their leader gave us a briefing about the trail. We were told that Laban Rata, a place where we would later rest in, was about 8km from Mesilau gate. Before we began our journey, we took part in the warm-up exercise session together and snapped another group photograph. All of us were very excited before the climb as this would be the day that we will be conquering the Mount Kinabalu! At 10.30 a.m., we began our uphill climb.

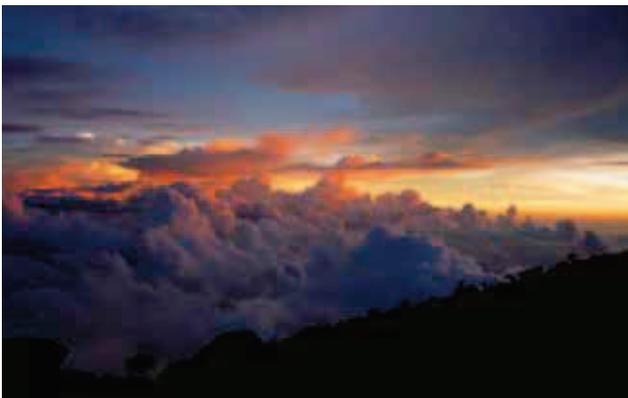


A group photo taken at the Mesilau gate before starting the journey

After 8 hours of continuous hiking, we arrived at Laban Rata. It was a tiring journey made worthwhile when we got to see the magnificent panoramic view – looking at the clouds below us from where we stood. The first thing that came to our minds was to grab some food at the restaurant. However, the restaurant was crowded as everyone seemed to have reached the stop at around the same time.



The view along the trail up to Laban Rata



The setting sun spreading a beautiful shade of amber into the sky (a view captured at the Laban Rata Restaurant)

After the buffet dinner, it was already dark outside, so we had to find our way to the nearby hostel using torchlights. At 9.00 p.m., we had our 555th meeting amongst the committee members. We went to bed as soon as the meeting came to a close.

On Day 3, we woke up very early, at about 1.30 a.m., for a simple breakfast and prepared for our climb to the peak. It was 7 degrees Celsius. Due to the cold weather, we had to wear thick jackets, gloves, scarves and for some of us even caps to keep ourselves warm. It was still very dark at this hour, and thus, everyone had to use a headlamp which each of us had brought along. After a short briefing, we began our journey to the peak. It was indeed a long staircase. Despite our aching limbs, we had to go on. After about an hour's staircase journey, we reached a rope climbing section, followed by slope walking all the way to the peak. Halfway, we arrived at a station to register ourselves.

At approximately 5.30 a.m., we finally reached the peak and just in time to see the sunrise. We could hear the sound of cameras clicking every second or so at Low's Peak. Here, we had a further task to complete, which was to form an LED outline of the 1 Malaysia logo and, with the cooperation from each participant, we were able to carry out this feat successfully.



The spectacular sunrise from Low's Peak



The 1Malaysia logo set up before the sunrise at Mount Kinabalu

Soon after, we began our descend from the peak and then collected our backpacks from the hostel. We arrived at the foot of the mountain at about 4.30 p.m. and each of us was awarded a certificate to record our achievement in completing the climb.



Happy smiles at Low's Peak

On the final day, we boarded the flight back to Kuala Lumpur just before noon. It has been a tough yet enjoyable trip. Also, we were lucky to have had a group of friends who encouraged each other to complete the tough hike without giving up. It was only through this perseverance and determination that enabled us to reach the peak. Hopefully, we could have another hiking activity soon. ■

The chairman admiring the view from the peak

