

Trek to Thalamalai

Date: 25 Oct 2009

It was a very exciting day for all of us. It was the first trekking experience for many of us. There were some who have already been for trekking. We were all completely ready for the trek. We reached the foot of Thalamalai early in the morning around 7 a.m. We had our breakfast at the foot hill itself. Then the trek organiser asked



us all to assemble in a circle. We had a head count and a small prayer, and we started off in a single file, uphill. The pathway was covered with stones and covered with wild bushes and trees on both sides. The trees found around the area were generally short in size. Different varieties of cacti were seen. Unfamiliar type of flowers was also seen. The entire Thalamalai mountain and its surrounding hills was a semi arid area.



On the way we had time to take many photos. A black bug with white spots on it popped up sometimes on the path. May be it

was disturbed by our walk. Centipedes were also an attraction on the way.



After hours of journey we reached a place where there was a long stretch of a single rock, which was a part of the path. Everybody gathered together there and we had a small photo session.

From this particular place Thalamalai really looked like a 'Thalai', i.e. like a head of a human looking up. We all then realized how the mountain got its name. Before the main temple, which is on the summit of Thalamalai, there was another temple below it with a hall of pillars in front of it. There was also small pond near this temple with lots of fish in it. Some of the guys and girls had fun climbing a banyan tree which was near the temple. When they saw that Sangeetha madam was approaching them, they were all trying to get down, but to their surprise she also joined them.



There was a 15 minute journey from there to get to the summit. The sight of the temple made on the cliff was magnificent. We had to stop and admire how the temple was constructed during its age with only man power. There was a small shrine below the main temple on the summit. Everybody had a time out after getting to the top. We were not able to immediately appreciate the view of the temple after a tiring climb. Everybody

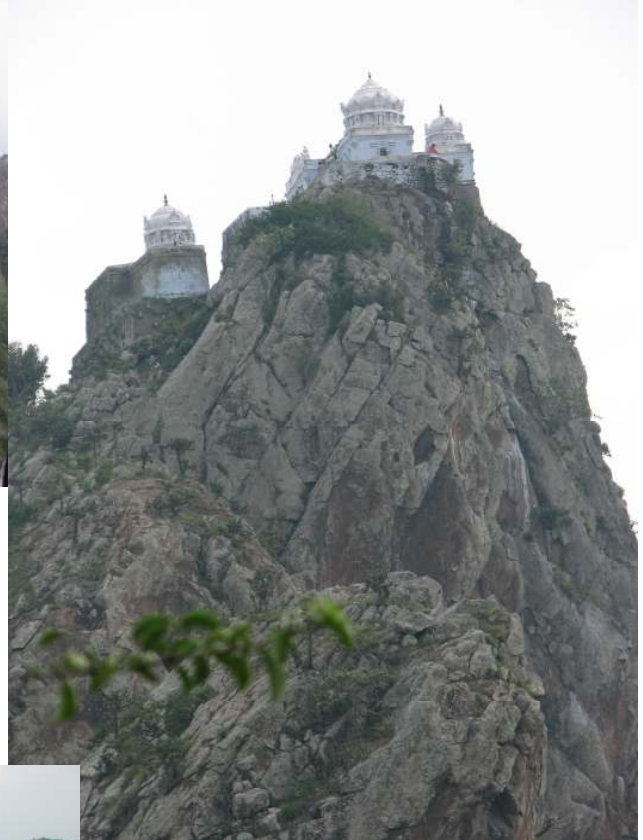


just lay down on the veranda for some time and some even had a small nap. Those who were hungry did not even wait for the others to get there, but started opening their food packs. The smell of the food gave as much satisfaction to the local monkeys there, as to us. The monkeys were surprised and perplexed to see such a huge crowd

at the temple. But, they were not so afraid to try catching a food pack from someone's bag. We had fun seeing the monkeys. There were also some monkeys in the crowd including me who climbed onto the terrace of the temple through a ladder.



All the mountains and hills adjacent to Thalamalai were visible from there. It was a spectacular view from the terrace of the temple. After a long time of rest we started our downward journey.



We carried plastic bags to collect plastic waste littered over the way.

All of us again gathered at the long stretch of rock. Some people who were coming in the end got cut off from the rest and had taken a different path, but reached there safely. We had a group photo session, and then proceeded in our

journey. It was getting difficult for few of them to make the downhill journey as their legs started to shiver. But with the help of others we all made it to the foothill. We had a head count again standing in a circle to check whether anyone was missing. The trek organizer appreciated everyone especially Mr. Manikavasagam though old, could make it to the summit and back. Everyone clapped and thanked the organizer who guided us on this trek. Then we heaped the plastic waste that we collected and burnt it. Snacks and sweets were distributed to everyone for their refreshment. Also everyone refreshed themselves with water from a hand-pump. Then we all boarded the bus and headed back to our college.

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