

The hardship, the self-discipline and the Triumph

Annual Gin's 26-mile hike
2007 trip report

by

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We did it and we did it twice!

New Member

The late afternoon sun was still beating down on us mercilessly. Jim sat across from me, looking tired but still with a high spirit. After all, we had been hiking for nearly nine hours. He stared at the ground and seemed lost in his thought. Slowly, he looked up, held his fist and told me that he finally realized what he wanted in his life. He is determined to go back to Nepal and try Mera Peak again, a 22,500 feet mountain that once defeated him. I saw the look in his eyes, this young man whom I only know for a short period is transforming.



This is Jim's first attempt for the 26-mile hike. Unlike most of the new comers, Jim showed up again after his first hike with us on the training trail, but he was not so committed, skipping most of the trainings. Until a month before the 26-mile hike, he trained with us every week. Observing his performance on the 'Valley of Boulders' trail; Mr. Chen and I knew Jim was ready to do the 26-mile hike with us, and we are right. Jim did it and he did it splendidly.

New Training Ground

"Valley of Boulders" is another gem beauty of Harriman State Park. Unfortunately, it is less known to most CMCNY leaders. It is a place that definitely worth visiting particularly after a rain. I was thrilled when the first time George took me there back in March.

Three of us were passing the Elk Pen and ready to climb up to the steep cliff on Green Pond Mountain. George turned to Mr. Chen and suggested we continued on to the dirt road until we hit the Nurian trail. They turned to me and asked my opinion. Thinking any thing would be better than climbing up to that notorious hill on Green Pond Mountain, I gladly accepted the new adventure.

"Valley of Boulders"

At the end of the unmarked trail, we first crossed a footbridge. The path zigzagged along the Stahahe brook. Rain from few days ago brought this river to life. The rushing white water created a few cascades along the brook. It is the sound of the splashing water that I enjoy the most. As Mr. Chen commented on the sound, "it is the music of nature".



Following the river, the trail began to rise up to a waterfall. Once we were on the top, a small emerald pool caught my eyes. Its restful green water was sparkling under the sky. The boys are not as romantic as I am. They kept climbing up and ignoring my suggestion to stop. Not wanting to leave, my eyes were allured into the pool. Loudly, I protested to the boys that someday, we had to come back here. This area would make a nice camp, I convinced myself. Reluctantly, I left and chased after them.

Stahahe brook gradually disappeared behind us, three of us found ourselves nearly out of breath struggling on a trail that was surrounded by giant boulders. “Uh, here we are Valley of Boulders!” I cried out, admiring the wonder of nature.

26-mile, we did it twice!

It has become a tradition that two weeks before the 26-mile hike, we must hike at least 24 miles. This is the most strenuous training for the year. That day, after the extra four miles loop on AT, Mr. Chen insisted on hiking down to Elk Pen and continued on to the Valley of Boulders. Don't get me wrong, I love the area, but after the extra four miles hike on AT, everyone was dead tired. George took every possible opportunity to nap under a shade, Jim gulped down his protein water to keep moving, Mr. Chen stuffed his mouth with candy, fish cakes and rice balls and I kept mumbling how Mr. Chen was killing us. By the time we crawled out of the Valley, dragged our bodies up to the two long hills on the white bar trail, I was sure, that day we did 26 miles. I went home and checked out the map, I was right; we indeed hiked 26 miles that day. It was also that day Mr. Chen and I saw the potential of Jim



Our Supporting Team – Wade's family

One of the highlight of this year 26-mile hike was seeing Wade again. Last year, Wade took over Alex and Tim's water boy responsibility and provided us with the valuable support. He and his new family waited for us at the foot of Jackie Jones Mountain. May and Wade were there cheering us up, providing us with foods, water and fruits. We were looking forward to seeing them again this year.

By the parking at the gate, Wade and May with their two adorable children; Hana and Jonah were waiting patiently for our arrival. Hana is growing a bit taller and she is as



cute as I remember. Jonah just learns to walk. He was running around and ignoring his father's order. The family's dog was there too. Wade did not change a bit, still the proud person I know. May prepared a big tray of pasta for us and busily waited on us. It was a perfect outing. I just wish we could stay a little longer. When time to go, I took another look at Wade and his family. Wade seems very happy, with a lovely wife, two beautiful

children. He has achieved a perfect American dream. I envy him, but deep down inside, I know it is not the kind of life for me.

A Journey to Triumph

The shadows were growing longer on the surrounding hills, and Jim and I were ready to go again. After his revelation, Jim began to tell me how much Mr. Chen and I had influenced him this past year. I learned longtime ago that we must believe in ourselves. Only if we believe we can do it, we will succeed. Jim is transforming to a much confident person for he begins to believe in himself. If Mr. Chen and I had anything to do with this young man's life, we have done our duties for CMCNY.

26-mile hike, perhaps for some people is a crazy idea, but for those who had done it, and continue to believe in doing it, it is a journey to one's dream. A passage eventually leads to a Triumph.

I am glad to have Jim hiking with me this year. We were pretty much hiking the same pace. "It is TMI all the way now, Jim, this path will take us home." I pointed out the red marker to Jim acting like an older sister.

THE END