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The outdoor type

Manager soaks up Malaysian culture and lifestyle

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 Photo by **RICKY LAI**

PEOPLE living in Kuala Lumpur often take for granted the hills and nature sites on the outskirts of the city, but for Korean expatriate SeiWan Kim, he describes his visits to such places as something that gives an "adrenaline rush".

"Walking up a hill like Gasing Hill from Section 5 in Petaling Jaya with lots of trees, or spending hours in a green environment like the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) in Kepong just gives me an adrenaline rush. Comforts in the concrete jungle don't interest me," said SeiWan, who is Korean Air country manager for Malaysia and Brunei.

He added that most Koreans are adventurous and that a number of his fellow expats long for certain aspects of Korean life that others take for granted.

"Korea is dotted with hills. As a Korean, I love the hills and nature walks as they refresh the energy in me.

In Korea, as SeiWan mentions, it is a norm for his wife Miro Ryoo, sons Dong Jae Kim, 22, and Dong Joo Kim, 19, to take a stroll up a hill after dinner.

"Malaysia is blessed with an abundance of green areas and places like FRIM are beautiful.

"As far as I'm concerned, there's no better fun than spending a couple of hours walking among trees, listening to the rustling of the leaves.

"The physical exertion, coolness of a forested environment combined with the spectacular landscape helps rid the work stress. It is a great feeling," said SeiWan, 50.

Being a nature lover, he uses public transport whenever possible and enjoys the commuter rides that have taken him to Port Klang.

His adventures have led him to take a boat to Pulau Ketam, where he was thrilled to see the mud skippers on the mud flats and to enjoy the seafood on the island.

"On weekdays, I work hard and on weekends I travel. I love observing the various cultures in Malaysia as it has Malay, Chinese and Indian people.

"When I attend weddings here, I just soak up the diverse culture. It is just so beautiful," he said.



Road trip discovery: SeiWan Kim showing photos of his trip to Teluk Intan where he saw the leaning tower that he found interesting.

EXPAT @ HOME

SeiWan added: "Count yourself fortunate if you've had the opportunity to attend an Indian or Malay wedding.

"The fascinating wedding ceremonies and the dances also give an expatriate a unique opportunity to gain insight into Malaysian culture."

"Malaysians are friendly people. Once at a Malay wedding, I noticed the older generation doing the *joget* dance with the teenagers and children. It was so much fun.

"In Korea, such a gathering of ages would be unusual as there is some kind of barrier between the old and young," he said.

Of his road trips, SeiWan has many memorable stories to tell.

"I have even driven to Teluk Intan (Perak) where I came across the leaning clock tower there.

"For me, it is a national treasure and the Tourism Ministry must promote this as foreigners would love to see such wonders," he said.

SeiWan added that he loves Malay food like *ayam rempah* and *nasi lemak* served with anchovies. His all-time favourite is *satay*.

"I also came across bananas growing in a village in Teluk Intan called *pisang tanduk*. This was a nice experience as it was the first time I have seen such long bananas. I hope to try one soon, be it fresh or fried," he concluded with a smile.