The Adventures of Tuan

A COMIC BOOK ON RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN ASEAN HERITAGE PARKS
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Being a nature-lover and a travel enthusiast, Tuan’s ultimate dream is to visit all ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs). AHPs are protected areas of high conservation importance, preserving in total a complete spectrum of representative ecosystems of the ASEAN region. The ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHP) Programme is one of the flagship biodiversity conservation programmes of ASEAN. The establishment of AHPs stresses that the ASEAN Member States (AMS) share a common natural heritage and should collaborate in their efforts to protect the rich biodiversity that supports the lives of millions of people in the region. The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) serves as the Secretariat of the AHP Programme.

This comic book will take us to Tuan’s adventures in each AHP that he visited and will teach us important lessons on how to become responsible tourists in protected areas. The AHPs featured in this publication are Tasek Merimbun Heritage Park of Brunei Darussalam; Virachey National Park of Cambodia; Kepulauan Seribu Marine National Park of Indonesia; Nam Ha National Protected Area of Lao PDR; Gunung Mulu National Park of Malaysia; Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary of Myanmar; Mount Makiling Forest Reserve of the Philippines; Bukit Timah Nature Reserve of Singapore; Ao Phang Nga-Mu Ko Surin-Mu Ko Similan National Park of Thailand; and Hoang Lien National Park of Viet Nam.

The next adventures of Tuan will take us to other AHPs and will give us a glimpse of the beauty and bounty of biological resources in the ASEAN region.
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Tuan, together with his friends planned an adventure trip to Tasek Merimbun - a beautiful place in Brunei just an hour travel from the city.

The group explored the jungle and now preparing for a boat ride.

Welcome to Merimbun lake, friends! Today I'm going to show you how stunning the scenery of this place is!

Hi there! I'm Andy and I'm your tour guide!

Hi Andy! We're glad to meet you!

Yay! You know we got really tired from our trekking activity but I'm so excited because I heard that this lake is the gateway to Brunei's past and culture!
...I’m Tuan by the way.

Oops! Sorry Tuan but we are not supposed to throw plastic bottles in the lake!

Improper waste disposal poses a great risk to birds and fish which might mistake our garbage for food.

Ohhh! I’m so sorry. I never knew that throwing a plastic bottle in the lake can be that harmful.

Now we know, Tuan. What should we do?
Recycling bottles is a better option than throwing them in the lake or in the garbage bin. Not only does it help beautify our environment, but it also conserves energy and natural resources by reducing petroleum and natural gas consumption and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions. I get it. Thank you for the information, Andy. From now on I will be more careful with my actions. I will dispose my garbage properly and I will also practice recycling. Thank you, Andy!
BE PHYSICALLY FIT

TUAN’S ADVENTURE IN
VIRACHEY NATIONAL PARK, CAMBODIA

TUAN AND RAYA ARE TRAVEL BUDDIES FOR YEARS. THEY ARE FASCINATED BY NATURE AND ALWAYS WANTED TO HIKE FOR WATERFALLS, WILDLIFE AND NATURE. PLANNED MONTHS BEFORE, THEY ARE ON THEIR WAY HERE IN CAMBODIA TO EXPERIENCE PHNOM VEAL THOM WILDERNESS TREK IN VIRACHEY NATIONAL PARK.

TUAN IS VERY MUCH EXHAUSTED WHEN HE BOARDED THE PLANE. THE DAY BEFORE THE TRIP, HE STAYED OVERNIGHT WITH FRIENDS CELEBRATING HIS TRAVEL TO CAMBODIA.

ARRIVING AT THE AIRPORT, HE MET RAYA.

HEY TUAN! YOU LOOK UNWELL.

YES, I STAYED UP ‘TIL MIDNIGHT WITH FRIENDS.

ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN MAKE IT TO VIRACHEY?

OF COURSE! I AM EXCITED TO CAMP OUTDOORS.
The next day, they took a ride to Banlung - the town of take-off for the hike. It is located almost 650 kms from Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia.

We are here, Tuan.

At last we are here! I hope the eight-hour trip gave me some rest.

It should since the trek, they say, is very challenging.

The friends went to the Virachey National Park Eco-Tourism Information Centre and asked for the three day package - complete with tour guide, homestay and camping in the grassland up in the trek.
I am so excited! What is the chance of us seeing gibbons and hornbills up there?

I am not so sure, but I think we can hear their calls. That for me is already fun!

Trekking started, and...

Are you okay? Can you make it?

My legs and feet are already aching. I don’t think I have the energy to move.

I knew it! You are not prepared for this trip. You knew that our trail to Virachey is steep and requires one to be physically fit.

I thought I am used to this trekking activity.

Yes we are used to it but this trek is not an ordinary walk in the park. Our trail is more challenging than the rest of the parks we already visited.

What did you do before this trip?
I did some walking after office, and spent some time in the stairs and treadmill in the gym. This way I had my muscles and bones inclined to the uphill trek.

Trekking is more fun if you are fit to enjoy the long walks, and the uphill trek.

I will keep that in mind, Raya.

Finally, they reached the grassland.

Raya, this sight is worth all the hardwork.

Yes, Tuan. Just be more prepared next time.
Tuan’s Adventure in Kepulauan Seribu Marine National Park, Indonesia

This place is beautiful, Sita! Thank you for taking me with you.

You’re welcome, Tuan. You’re free to join my diving trips anytime.

The water is so clear. We can see the fish and corals from here.

Kepulauan Seribu is actually a famous dive spot in Indonesia.

There are different species of fish, giant clams, and sea turtles here.
Oh, I see one! Look, Sita, it's a hawksbill turtle!

Their amber and yellow shell makes them easy to spot! It's great to see them swim in the water.

Wait! I think I saw something that isn't fish.

I need to get this before this turtle eats it.

Got it! It's a plastic bag.

The turtle could've eaten that.

Plastic products, bottles, aluminum cans, food containers, and even household items can harm our oceans and the creatures living in them.

Turtles, fish, dolphins, and even birds can mistake them for food.

These debris can trap the species and damage the corals below.
I know! We can do our part in saving the ocean!

When we visit places like marine parks, we should throw our trash in the proper containers. We should never toss them out to the sea.

Same goes for the beach! We should also try to pick up trash when we see them, and tell other tourists not to litter.

DO NOT LITTER

This way, we can protect marine life and preserve the beauty of the places we visit.
The view of the mountain is breathtaking, Malo! Thanks for bringing me here!

Welcome, Tuan. This is the province of Luang Namtha.

Oh, there you are Ming Ming! Tuan, this is Ming Ming, our beautiful guide.

Hi Ming Ming! It's nice to meet you, Tuan! Our first stop will be the village of the Khmu Tribe.
The protected area is home to a variety of ethnic groups including Tai Lue, Tai Dam, Khamu, Akha, Lantaen, Lahu, Yao, and Hmong. If you want to stay here for a few days, please avail of the homestay service of the locals. Ecotourism is one of their main sources of livelihood.

Buying wildlife products for medicine and for food is strictly prohibited in this park, Tuan.

My friend told me that it has amazing medicinal values but it is very expensive!

Sounds interesting! But wait... is that a pangolin?

Please do not patronize wildlife products anywhere in the world. It threatens the abundance of our biological resources.
Oh, thank you for informing me, Ming Ming. I will also tell my friend about that.

GROWL
GROWL

What's that sound?

That's my growling stomach! I'm too excited for our picnic lunch in the forest!

Hahahaha! Hahahaha! Hahahaha!

Let's go!

END.
Tuan’s Adventure in Gunung Mulu National Park, Malaysia

Tuan is with his friend Toto for adventure caving. It’s Toto’s first time to enter a cave and his excitement made him so nosy and noisy he was breaking the rules.

Tuan and Toto entered the cave. Toto was shocked it was so dark he couldn’t see anything. He started making fun of the echo.

This place is dark. I wonder where the bats are. Awooh! Anybody home?

Stop making noise. There are other tourists here. You’ll see the bats in a bit.

Tuan and Toto continued walking.

Ohh, there! I see one. Oh no! There’s a lot!
While Tuan and Toto were walking, they saw a picturesque view. Nice view! Oh look at this! That is a stalactite!
Tuan reminded Toto to be mindful of the rules. Out of anger, Tuan shouted.

There are things you must be mindful of when entering an AHP. It includes following their rules!

Shhhh... Tone down your voice.
Tuan visits the country of Myanmar where he visits the beautiful Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary.

Finally after a long and tiring travel I have reached this beautiful place! Wow! The Shwe Myitzu Pagoda looks spectacular!

Hmm... what do I explore here? Let me take a closer look at the pagoda and take nice pictures for my friends and family to see back home.

I think it would be a lot better if I enter the pagodas; they said it is really beautiful inside with plenty of things I can take pictures of.
SIR!!! WAIT! KINDLY TAKE YOUR SHOES OFF. YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO WEAR SHOES OR SLIPPERS INSIDE THE PAGODA.

I AM SO SORRY, SIR.

THANK YOU!

WOW! THIS IS MY FIRST TIME SEEING HUGE STATUES AND STRUCTURES, AND THEY ARE ALL MADE OUT OF GOLD!
Sir, could you please take a picture of me? Thanks!

Mister, you are not allowed to do that...

Sir, please be responsible with your actions. I don’t know if you noticed before entering the Pagoda entrance, but there is a huge sign board with the list of the dos and don’ts when entering this sacred place.

I am so sorry about that please forgive my wrong actions. I will make sure to read the rules and inform my friends to also respect this place once they visit.
Hello everyone! Welcome to the Mount Makiling Forest Reserve.

Declared as an ASEAN Heritage Park in 2013, this park that we are about to enter is home to numerous species of plants and animals that are hardly found anywhere else in the world. An example is this Kamagong tree.
This tree is also called mabolo, and it is native to the Philippines.

Wow, this is a unique-looking flower!

It is unique actually. This is called the “kapa-kapa”

Kapa-kapa is rarely found in its natural habitat, and the MMFR is one of the few places where you can find this flower.

Ms. Maya, can you tell me what this plant is?

Sure, one moment.
My friends will envy me, they have not seen this.

We should not pick flowers just to use them to brag to our friends. Plants and animals should be left untouched, as each one of them plays an important role in the balance of life in the park.

That is correct. We are just observers here, and we should not take anything from nature.

I'm sorry. I'll make sure to keep that in mind.

The more we inform others, the more we are helping in conserving nature.

It's ok. You can also watch out for other people who might do this.
Tuan calls Yi Ling, his Singaporean friend.

Hello! This is Tuan. May I speak with Yi Ling?

Hi Tuan! This is Yi Ling!

Thanks for replying to my Facebook message. So when can we visit Bukit Timah?

I'm excited to see the long-tailed macaques!

Okay! Got it.

I visited the website of NParks and already registered for a guided "Monkey Walk." We will meet tomorrow at the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve Visitor Centre a around 5 p.m...
THE NEXT DAY...

Hi Yi Ling! It’s so nice to see you here!

Welcome to Singapore, and welcome to Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, Tuan!

The staff from the National Parks Board are briefing the visitors on the Dos and Don’ts inside the nature reserve.

While inside the park, three monkeys approached the group.

Oh my! I should take some selfies with the monkeys!

Hi, Sir! I’m sorry but our guides asked us to stay at least 1.5 meters away from the monkeys.
The guided tour continued and everyone enjoyed learning more about the macaques while appreciating the beauty of the nature reserve.

Okay. Thanks for reminding me. I will just throw some bananas and take photos of them from here. My name is Lee, by the way.

Wait! Feeding them is strictly not allowed, Sir. The guide even asked us not to maintain eye contact with the macaques and do not use flash photography.

Hi, Sir! I noticed that you brought a plastic bag. Please do not show that to the monkeys as they know that plastic bags usually contain food.

Oh, I should have listened to the guide earlier. I’m sorry. Thanks for sharing!

Hi, Sir! My name is Lee. I noticed that you brought a plastic bag. Please do not show that to the monkeys as they know that plastic bags usually contain food.

Oh, I should have listened to the guide earlier. I’m sorry. Thanks for sharing!
NEVER HARM SEA LIFE

TUAN’S ADVENTURE IN AO PHANG-NGA-MU KO SURIN-MU KO SIMILAN NATIONAL PARK, THAILAND

This is such a wonderful day to go snorkeling and explore this beautiful beach, I will definitely take memorable photos.

Okay group let's gather up and get ready to board the boat. Please wear your life vests and gear on your snorkels and bring yourselves together. You are all going to have the time of your lives.

I'm excited for this! I will finally swim with the fishes and take amazing photos of corals, and hopefully I get to have a glimpse of a sea turtle.

While Tuan is appreciating the corals, he saw a tourist stepping on one of them.

Wow! These corals are amazing.

OHH..HEY! STOP!
So how’s the experience? I learned that we should not step on the corals while snorkeling. Thanks to Tuan!

Stop! Don’t grab the fishes.

Alright everyone! Go back to the boat, please!

And another tourist, trying to grab a fish for photo.

I learned that we should not step on the corals while snorkeling. Thanks to Tuan!
Tuan also told me not to grab any marine life to take photos of them.

That is very responsible of you, Tuan. Aside from those tips, you should also refrain from feeding the fish for they might rely on these instead of eating their own food.

Now, let us move to our next adventure! Are you ready?

Yes we are!
Hey Tuan! Aren’t you glad that we came here! I told you this would be a great trip!

Yes, you’re right! The view is amazing!

Our friends back home would surely love these photos.

Chan and Tuan continue their trek, and chanced upon a group of women from the local village.
Wow, this has got to be a lucky day!

Hey Tuan! Look! C’mon, let us have our picture taken with them!

Me first! Hey, let’s have a picture together!

Hey Chan, you must at least ask them if it is okay to take pictures of them.

Most of the locals are not comfortable having their pictures taken with tourists.
We understand. Would you like to buy?

Wow, those are beautiful!

Apart from preserving the plants and animals in the area, we also have to respect the rights of the locals.

I didn't think of that. Guess you're right...

I am sorry.
These are handmade, and it takes years for someone to master this art.

When buying souvenirs, we should opt to buy from the locals. This way, we are helping them in their livelihood.
ASEAN Heritage Parks are defined as “protected areas of high conservation importance, preserving in total a complete spectrum of representative ecosystems of the ASEAN region”. These areas are established to generate greater awareness, pride, appreciation, enjoyment and conservation of ASEAN’s rich natural heritage, through a regional network of representative protected areas, and to generate greater collaboration among AMS in preserving their shared natural heritage.
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The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) is ASEAN’s response to the challenge of biodiversity loss. It is an intergovernmental regional centre of excellence that facilitates cooperation and coordination among the ten ASEAN Member States and with relevant national governments and regional and international organizations on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of such national treasures.

For more information, log on to www.aseanbiodiversity.org or chm.aseanbiodiversity.org

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