

Sungai Batu as a geosite in Jerai Geopark and its contribution to the geoarchaeo-tourism industry in Malaysia

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Abstract: Archaeological excavation at the Sungai Batu Site by the Centre for Global Archaeological Research (CGAR), USM, since 2009, revealed evidence of the oldest civilization site in Southeast Asia, began at 6th Century BC. The evidences are classified into three type of monuments and iron smelting workshop. The monuments are ritual site, river jetty and port administrative building. All the monuments are made from bricks. All these shows that since 6th Century BC, there are “geologists” among the Sungai Batu population who knows where is the source for quality clays to make bricks and to mine the iron raw material. Besides that, the population also shows their right choice of the area

for civilization. Sungai Batu is located 30 km southeast of Gunung Jerai. The geological evolution of Gunung Jerai allowed the suitable landscape for the civilization. The formations, rocks, minerals, and also the mangrove trees are great resources for the people to have clays and iron oxide for their building and industry. Therefore, Sungai Batu civilization evidence was chosen as one of geosite in Jerai Geopark. It presents the geoarchaeological concept where culture evidence was interpreted as part of a geological process.

Keywords: Sungai Batu, Jerai Geopark, geoarchaeo-tourism