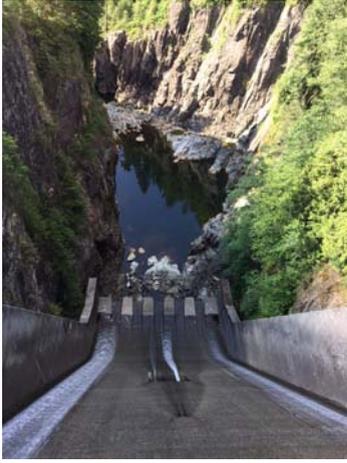


## Hiking at the Cleveland Dam Trail

Y.S. Sz



It was a beautiful morning when 26 HKU alumni and friends gathered at the Cleveland Dam public parking lot on June 20. Perhaps the sun might be a tad too strong? No problem, the hike path was well shaded. In fact, as we would later see, some of the trees here were REALLY tall.

We admired the expanse of water in the reservoir behind the dam first, and started downward from there, going toward the Salmon Hatchery. Shortly we came to a junction, and while waiting for the guide to come to decide whether to take the higher or the lower route, a song was sung (“...you’ll take the high

road and I’ll take the low road...”) and a story was told about how in the song the two brave Scots decided their fate after losing the battle to the English. Well, that’s the sort of unfettered chatting you would expect from our hiking.



After some meandering, we came to THE TREE, a huge Douglas Fir of 2.5 m girth, which was said to be 800 years old. How tall? We had no way to gauge. We marvelled for a while, and then proceeded to a scenic point that took in the whole view of the dam from below. The narrowness of the gorge accentuated the sheerness of the dam, and gave one the feeling of being inside the movie “The Lord of the Rings” (for those who have watched it, anyway). Cameras clicked.

Then another leisurely walk alongside the river brought us to the Salmon Hatchery. On the way, we also witnessed how nature worked its wonders: some hemlocks had elevated roots because they grew on top of cedar stumps and later the stumps fell apart, leaving the hemlocks standing like an octopus.

From the Hatchery, we looped back to the starting point at the parking lot. Although the trip entailed a drop and rise of more than 100 m, what with all the viewing, chatting and mirth, our gait had never been taxing. The substantial elevation merely added to our feeling of accomplishment.

