

Humanity and Cultural Treks:

A trek along the Shakadang Trail (time requirement: 7-8 h)

Taroko Visitor Center --- Shakadang Bridge --- Shakadang Trail

(Hwy. No. 8, 189 km)

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(4.5 km)

(Trail end at 3D-cabin –phonetic sound Sangianwu)

Brief introduction to the trek: If we take the Taroko Visitor Center as the center, then the most accessible trail is the Shakadang Trail. The Shakadang Bridge abuts the Sila-an Tunnel; there is a parking lots to the left side (with spaces to accommodate 7 large vehicles and 20 small vehicles). The parking lots are often full during the weekends and holidays. You can opt to park the car at the Taroko Visitor Center and walk over to the trail.

Brief introduction to the trail: From the bridgehead of the Shakadang Bridge follow the steps down, you can connect to the semi-tunnel-like trail carved out of the marble cliff walls. The trail was first built as a roadway for transporting materials to develop the region's hydropower in 15th year of Emperor Showa's reign (1940) during the Japanese occupation period. Therefore, you can still see the relics of a large water pipes crossing the river (at 1K + 933 m), a check dam (3K + 28 m), and a check station for mountain access control set up after the retrocession of Taiwan (1K + 548 m). The trail was originally named "Mysterious Valley Trail," and it is now serving as a cultural trail for the aborigine people. "Shakadang" is a Taroko tribe aboriginal word meaning "molar," because when a clan of the tribe set up here they dug up a molar to gave the name. The tribe along the Shakadang drainage area is constituted of the "Batto" clan. The trail winds along the creek, and the creek has blue-green clear flows all year long, showing the beauty of water and rock that represents a feast of nature just at the same time when the rich cultural ideology of the trek dawned on you.

*Shakadang Bridge: From November of 2000, visitors to the Taroko Visitor Center could proceed from the Shakadang Tunnel that was constructed on the west side of the Taroko Terrace (having a length of 870 m) directly connecting the Central Cross-Island Highway. There is no need to circumvent back to the ornate (entrance arched) gate at the starting point of the highway. The tunnel has a length of about 800 m, with foot trail and vehicle lanes separated. The Shakadang Bridge (94 m in length) abuts the exit of the tunnel and spans Shakadang Creek. The 2 sides of the bridge have a total of 100 stone lions. The other end of the bridge connects to Sila-an Tunnel (271 m in length), which reconnect to the original Central Cross-Island Highway near the Changchun Shrine section.

Introduction to a special resource: The Shakadang Trail belongs to a subtropical monsoon rain forest of the nanmu and figs forest type climate. En route you can see many species of fig trees, such as white barked fig tree, hard land fig tree, Knish fig (*Ficus variegata* var. *garciae*), Hayata fig (*Ficus irisana*), angular-fruit fig (*Ficus septica*), and red fruit fig (*Ficus superba*) etc. A unique feature of the fig trees is their well-developed aerial roots. When you see entwining roots cling to the cliff walls and branches full of fig-like fruits, as well as stipules marks next to leaves, you can be quite sure that what you see is a tree of the fig family.