

22nd June 2010

pudu jail (1895-2010)



[[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/\\_i0\\_0lrrssMw/TDSKafFe5RI/AAAAAAAAAD2Y/C\\_vRQut9aSw/s1600/pudu+jail.jpg](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_i0_0lrrssMw/TDSKafFe5RI/AAAAAAAAAD2Y/C_vRQut9aSw/s1600/pudu+jail.jpg)]

A lot of hullabaloo and brouhaha was generated when the foundation of the Portuguese bastion in Malacca was discovered a few years ago. Everybody was jumping up and down like toddlers with a new toy.

The accidental find by JKR workers digging to lay water pipes was highlighted in the papers all over the land and was overly sensationalised! It was a talking point in mamak shops for a while. What was so great about them concrete relic anyway?

My point is..if we were so excited about preserving a seemingly useless foundation stone from the distant past, I am amazed that Pudu Jail could not create that same 'sense of history and legacy.' Rather it seems to be in the 'way of progress' and people are in such a hurry to have it obliterated fro the face of the earth.Hmm...

Alcatraz, Fremantle Prison, Australia, Tower of London just to name a few, have all 'done time' have contributed so much in the history of the country. They have been preserved with such tender care for the tourism industry and of course for posterity.

Take a virtual tour of these sites. Allow yourselves to be awed and fascinated by the superb preservation efforts in the countries concerned.

For crying out loud, when Pudu Jail 'Old man of KL' was 'given the coup de grace, nobody so much as raise a hand in protest.

Yes, we have some agitation, but only a token of soft whimpers by an ineffective group of yuppies and NGOs who made campfire and sang songs around its premises.

It was more of a teary goodbye of sorts to the old giant, and to administer last rites for its impending demolition rather than anything else.

When the death knell sounded (10pm on 21.6.2010)with a thunderous roar of falling rubble effected by bulldozers, souvenir hunters risked life and limb, rushing to get fragments of it as momentous.(brick or stone or dust) Presumably to remind the next generation that a great prison once existed in our midst. It

was the folly and shortsightedness of the people today that leveled it to the ground under the pretext and guise of progress and development.

The building is no ordinary concrete structure being a penitentiary where convicts were incarcerated and executed. It has become an integral part of our 'turbulent history.'

Therefore its a shame to see it go. A lot of exciting events took place over the 108 years of its existence. I need not elaborate. The newspaper will have plenty of it over the next few days.

Of course there are 1001 reasons and justifications for tearing it down. But hey, listen.. they are also just as well 1002 more reasons for wanting to leave it alone. The list and argument goes on. But at the end of the day ,really, it is the piper that calls the tune. Know what I am saying?

The die is cast. No turning back. The demolition squad is raring to go. But one thing needs to be done...as is the custom of all right minded men.

I have this to say. The place where it now stands has to be 'exorcised' hopefully to rid it of a beehive of paranormal activity that may ensue and prevail as a result of the demolition.


As one elderly vendor, selling paraphernalia as offerings to the 'netherworld' has this eerie remark for those who want to lend a ear.

"Keeping Pudu jail may be a waste of space. Yes. But whatever is built in its place *will be haunted. Believe me.*"

We have been warned. I rest my case. Over to you.

Posted 22nd June 2010 by [ky cheah](#)

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