

2# 11.10V

REPORT FROM THAILAND TENTACLE

--- Capt. W.E. Zarwell

.... Just returned (April 12, 1972) from a fantastic week of spelunking with Chuck Pease and a friend in Thailand. Saw 4 out of the 6 of the Thai Chuck knew of, all very large and beautiful. We got into a bad air chamber (CO2) and couldn't breathe - neato. We all took turns seeing how much of it we could see before returning for more O2 while one of us waited by the entrance (to notify the coroner? -ed.) We also crawled through a crawlway that was filled with poisonous snakes - we didn't realize it until I had gotten all the way in and the others half through - we all had to back out the same way. Even saw snakes hanging from the ceiling eating bats and the floors crawled with insects in some of these hot caves. Found old disintegrating Buddhas and had a great time... Will probably go to Hawaii next.

(Dave Albert writes that Chuck Pease has been reassigned - to Montana -ed.)

FEATURE ---

CAVING IN THAILAND

-- Michael and Helen Kaczmarek

(editor's note: the Winter, 1971 SPELEOTHEM ran an article from the Nov. 1971 CAVER and we're pleased to return the compliment here; the following is from the same issue of the SPELEOTHEM, slightly condensed)

A unique and exotic brand of caving is offered to the roaming caver in the ancient Indochinese kingdom of Siam, known in modern times as Thailand. A number of reasonably accessible caving areas offer a variety of caving experiences as well as thoroughly fascinating travel experiences.

To the authors' knowledge, no organized speleological group exists in Thailand nor do spelunking or rockclimbing exist as sports or hobbies among the Thai people. Caves must be located by questioning local people and tracking down rumors. Since many caves in Thailand are used in part as Buddhist shrines, they are well known and may even be mentioned in travel brochures. These caves may serve as an index to areas where other caves may be located. If it becomes necessary, adequate caving equipment can be purchased locally. Most hardware stores in villages outside of Bangkok, especially fishing villages, maintain a stock of carbide lamps ranging from very primitive to serviceable models similar to Justrite lamps. These same hardware stores carry a stock of ropes ranging from manila to goldline or its equivalent in white nylon. The most useful map found by the authors was an ESSO road map available in the ESSO Building on the corner of Suriwongsi Road and Dejo Road in Bangkok. The Thai-English legend and names are invaluable in interpreting road signs which are in Thai lettering and the road data is up to date. Taxis are recommended for travel in Bangkok, especially for the newcomer. Most drivers speak a few words of English and prices average around 10 to 15 baht (50 to 75¢) for the careful bargainer. Transportation to destinations outside of Bangkok consists of rented cars, buses, trains and commercial airplanes. A car and driver is the most convenient and desirable method of travel for the caver in quest of new caves. Daily rates for a large Mercedes Benz will range from 200 to 300 baht per day depending on your bargaining ability; a guaranteed income for several days will often induce a driver to work for a lower daily rate. Take care to talk

with the driver long enough to insure that he can speak enough english to understand your directions and, ideally, act as an interpreter.

For the typical caver who is on a limited budget, the least expensive and more adventurous or hair-raising method of travel is by bus. Large orange and white buses run regularly on all roads, and one need only to flag them down to board. An average price is 15 baht per 100 km without bargaining. Once the town nearest the cave area has been reached, travel is by "baht bus". These are small Japanese pickup trucks with benches and a roof placed in the rear for passengers. The price should be about 1 baht for up to 5 or 6 km if the bus has 4 or 5 passengers at the beginning. Otherwise you must pay more or wait for a profitable number of passengers to arrive. Baht bus drivers are masters of raising prices for foreigners and you may have to bargain with several to avoid being overcharged. Make sure that the price and destination are agreed upon before boarding or hard feelings may result. The only items in Thailand not bargained for are tickets and food. Bargaining is conducted in a friendly manner and the loss of one's temper is an insult. If you cannot agree on a price, smile and leave. You may come back later or several times to agree on a mutually acceptable price. Being able to speak a few words of Thai is very well received by the Thai people and often disposes the Thai more generously toward the foreigner in bargaining.

Drink only bottled water (polaris or soda water) or thin hot Chinese tea otherwise you run a high risk of contracting infectious hepatitis which often kills westerners in Thailand. Outside of an "approved" restaurant in Bangkok, eat only thoroughly cooked items and probably only a mild case of dysentery and indigestion will result. For extended journeys out of Bangkok take enough food with you. Fresh fruit of all types is available everywhere and most of the unusual tropical types are delicious.

The caves we visited were all located in the hilly and mountainous areas of Thailand which form a border on the west, east and north of the southern Chao Phaya River delta and the Korat (Nakhon Rat-chasima) Plateau of central Thailand. Time did not permit investigation of cave rumors along the Burmese and Malaysian border south of Hua Hin on the Malaysian Peninsula. Travel by car south of Hua Hin is not recommended (bandits) nor the areas along the Burmese and Malaysian borders (guerilla activities). The present duration of a tourist visa is 15 days.

The more interesting and accessible caves which can be visited easily are in two areas, one NW and SW of Bangkok, and NW of Chiang Mai in the far NW corner of Thailand. Tahn Chiang Dao is semi-commercial; access to the others is gained through permission from the Buddhist monks or nuns of the local wat (temple) and a contribution of 10 or 20 baht per group for the upkeep of the shrine is customary.

Tahn Chiang Dao is a limestone cavern in the base of Doi Chiang Dao (Mountain of the abode of stars), the highest mountain in Thailand. It is located about 75 km north of Chiang Mai, the second largest and most pleasant city in Thailand, best reached by plane or train from Bangkok (\$45 or \$30 round trip, respectively). The area is worth a stay of several days.

The main passage of Tahm Chiang Dao is about 500 feet long with the upper 250 feet occupied with images of Buddha and contains electric lights which an enterprising Thai will turn on for 20 baht. However this money doesn't go into the upkeep of the cave or temple and you may supply your own light if you prefer. The upper passage is decorated with several large white flowstone shields and numerous draperies, now all dead. Among the images is a white marble image of Buddha said to have been brought from Mandalay by a religious hermit named U Kauta. One of the images is coal black, the result of efforts of Burmese invaders to melt the bronze image which they mistook for gold. The main group of images is in the light from a natural entrance in the center of the room and is quite photogenic. Near the end of the electrically lit passage is an unusual bit of graffiti - the royal mark of the king of Thailand. The lower 250 feet of passage terminates in a long pool 2 to 3 feet deep. A number of large bats were noted in the area of the pool. Several crawlway leads exist in the upper portion of the cave but were not entered.

Tahm Khao Tuang (Cave in the limestone hill) is located on the River Kwai Noi, north of the town of Kauchanaburi near the famous bridge. This is approximately 130 km from Bangkok, three hours' driving time. From the bridge, it is a short boat trip down the Kwai Yai and up the Kwai Noi to Wat Mongkol. Small river taxis are for hire at the bridge and the round trip should not cost more than 60 baht. Wat Mongkol is reached by walking from the boat landing. From here one may ascend through some caves which extend through the rocks to the top of the hill; these caves were not visited by the authors and bear investigation. The two entrances to Tahm Khao Fuang are along the crest of the ridge above Wat Mongkol. This cave is in use as a Buddhist temple and monastery. Permission to enter is obtained from the monks who will supply a guide (who speaks no English). A donation for the upkeep of the temple is customary. The main points of interest are a large gilded reclining statue of Buddha and a sitting image. They are separated by 200 feet of passage containing electric lights. Some has been enlarged and improved to allow people to walk through the tight spots. Many side passages exist, but most terminate in less than 100 feet. One promising passage leads off to the rear of the large sitting image of Buddha and appears to have a small dome room about 20 feet high, about 30 feet behind the image. However the monk leading the tour would not allow entrance of this passage and was hesitant about the others. He was impressed by some chimneying which brought a caver near the top of a 20-foot high passage in the tour and was nearly induced to doff his saffron robes and join in the climb. With more time spent in demonstration of the carbide lamps and other caving equipment and techniques plus a proper donation to the wat, the monks could be persuaded to allow exploration. The language barrier prevented the authors from learning if exploration of the side passages was forbidden by religious taboo. About 50 bats were observed on one section of ceiling off of the lighted path. All of the massive recrystallized limestone on the surface exhibited extreme solution including lapies, small dolines and frequent solution tubes. This area offers numerous opportunities to locate caves previously unvisited by western cavers.

Ratchaburi and Phetchaburi, 110 and 170 km south of Bangkok are major areas of interest to the caver. A number of limestone caves are scattered throughout both areas in which Buddhist shrines were established by a people called the Non from the 6th to the 11th Centuries A.D. Khao Nuq (Snake Cave), northwest of Ratchaburi, is said to contain an ancient bas-relief of Buddha. Marked by a sign on the highway 28 miles south of Ratchaburi is the road to Tahm Khao Yoi, a cave with a large gilded image of the Buddha in the reclining position. It is about 4 km off the main highway. The hill containing Tahm Khao Yoi is apparently a large limestone fault block and evidence points to extensive solution features. If the cave is closed, permission to enter may be obtained from the wat about 1/3 km away.

About 4 km north of Phatchaburi is Tham Khao Luang (same name, different location), one of the most beautiful and easily photographed caves in Thailand. It is a shrine consisting of two large collapsed domes containing many images of Buddha illuminated through the openings in the roof. The two domes are connected by passage. Only one lead, a large standing passage, was noted. If the cave is closed, go to the wat near the end of the entrance road and one of the white robed nuns (and probably 20 or so children) will accompany you to the cave which she will unlock and allow you to explore at your leisure. Be prepared to take time exposures. No lights are needed to explore the shrine part of the cave.

BRITISH COLUMBIA SPELEO RESEARCH

Volume 1, no. 2 of BRITISH COLUMBIA MAINLAND CAVERS NEWS brings the announcement that this is the new name of our small but determined group of caving friends just north of the boundary. "Membership is now open to those speleologists genuinely interested in the scientific part of caving apart from recreational caving. For more information contact the Editor" (Gerrit H. Van Der Laan, Suite 58 - 2002 St. John Street, Port Moody, B.C.)

The same publication records a March 31 Chilliwack Valley trip. Temperatures were recorded: Slesse Creek Cave, 44°F, Chipmunk Cave #1, 43°F, #2, 44°F, #3, 48°F. The average surface temperature then was 56°F; the Chilliwack River was 41°F. "Minor excavation was carried out at Wells Sink".

Also noted was an article by Clarence Hronek in the March/April B.C. Motorist Magazine, on Euclataw Cave.

CASCADE GROTTO TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

Bob Brown has completed map storage racks, but cannot find out who has the grotto topographic maps (if any) obtained from the U.S.G.S. years ago. Anyone having information thereon, please call Bob. RO 3-9094.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

On March 25-26, Bob Brown, Fith Gardner, Greg Thomson, Judy Anderson and Jay Schneider joined VICEG for a Cascade Cave trip. Driving up Friday night, they showed the current NSS slide show and went on to the cave area Saturday despite 4" of snow. The main target was Double Trouble. Along the way they found a new passage 3-400 feet long, much like the rest of the cave - cracks and walking, and an old stream passage. It is an upper level just before the Bastard Crawl. Most notable feature was a bacon drapery 7 feet long and about 14" wide. The area is still going. They are planning a trip soon to resurgences at the base of Marble Mountain near Campbell River, a 3000' exposure of limestone with known sinks on top.

Jack Charleston reported that he and the Coughlins finally located the pit on Whitehorse Mountain last November; entrance about 4' across, 25-30' deep and 30' across at the bottom. Apparently all in till or alluvium. It was higher on the mountain than where we had previously looked for it and much higher than the short solution tube we have partially excavated. This leaves a known but uninvestigated fissure in the area.

Letter to the editor

Gerrit and I are very interested in the formation of the International Glaciospeleological Survey. We are still pushing the formation of a caving group in our area for all types of caving... The 1972 Expedition to Ghar Parau, Iran, writeup I found very interesting. I enjoy hearing and reading of caving around the world, as one can learn and apply new-found knowledge to his own caving techniques.

-- Clarence L. Hronek.

And another

I think your idea of trying to get some international cooperation on glaciospeleology is a good idea. I just had an inquiry from Canada about glacier caves--so the interest continues to grow. We might find that there is much interest abroad (maybe even much work in progress or completed). The organization would be in the no-man's-land between glaciology and speleology, however from past experience I think we might get more assistance and interest from the cave people! Anything I can do let me know. We are all short of time and resources these days, but let's push on.

--Garry D. McKenzie

EDITORIAL

WE'RE LOSING THE GUADALUPES

The NSS has chosen the most difficult of all methods of saving New Mexico's Guadalupe Mountain region and its extraordinary caves: persuading Congress to pass and the President to OK a bill which would both:

(1) keep most of Carlsbad Caverns National Park as wilderness, and specifically prevent the National Park Service from constructing the proposed Guadalupe Parkway which would bring hordes of tourists close to many fragile caves.

(2) prevent the US Forest Service from applying its normal methods of economic development and its cooperative permissiveness to local interests such as jeep and motorbike clubs and mineral collectors, in the part of the New Mexico Guadalupe outside Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

In NSS Conservation Chairman Rob Stitt's words: "The overall approach we have used so far has been to work quietly with the NPS and the FS, while pushing the other conservation organizations to carry the ball publically. We have led the battle until now - but as we get into the lobbying stage it will be the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society who will have to carry the ball." Maybe so. Already there is disagreement about the effectiveness of the effort. Rob considers it "relatively high for a project of this type. I think the NSS, with its proposal and followup efforts, was directly responsible for the large response at the hearings (I understand there were 200 persons appearing and over 2000 written comments received)".

This sounds impressive. Unfortunately, it is not.

Consider the situation at the time of Washington state's own Glacier Peak Wilderness Area hearing of 1959 when only recently had conservationists achieved their first triumph - the saving of Echo Park in Dinosaur National Monument, and that at the cost of Glen Canyon, now a symbol as "THE PLACE NO ONE KNEW".

At that time, the USFS was proposing a Glacier Peak Wilderness Area of sorts, well aware that conservationists considered its proposal grossly inadequate and further aware of growing conservation sentiment for a North Cascades National Park instead. Yet it was confident that it had the traditional support of commercial and other local interests, and that public opinion was apathetic.

112 persons spoke at those hearings and 858 letters and telegrams were received (the majority favoring creation of a greatly different wilderness area), a number proportionately much more impressive than that indicated above for the Guadalupe considering the primitive state of conservation action at the time.

Yet the reaction of the USFS was token only - addition of only three localized areas which did not significantly change the outline of its original inadequate proposal. This gave great impetus to the alternative proposal to create a North Cascades National Park instead.

But to persuade Congress to pass a bill creating the North Cascades National Park required about a decade of dedicated effort - with the quiet approval of the National Park Service behind the scenes. To do this required enormous activity to first inform the public of the scenic and other resources which were endangered, and then to mobilize that informed public opinion. Books, movies, slide shows, lectures, conferences on many related topics, workshops, letters to the editor, radio & TV appearances - every known communications medium was employed by the Sierra Club, The Mountaineers and a host of conservation groups and individuals across the nation (including the Cascade Grotto) to create a broad public knowledge and concern. The inevitable cost of increased used was faced and accepted, for without that extremely broad public support, we were faced with the loss of everything. And it worked. After a few years we reached the point that our state's senators and the successful candidate for governor, the vital local congressmen, and influential local and national newspapers and magazines not only favored legislation creating the national park but were working effectively on its behalf.

And that is what it takes to get legislation through Congress and signed by the President. Even with this, our North Cascades National Park is only half what it should be and we are still fighting to save remnants of the rest.

And as for wilderness preservation in units of the National Park System like Carlsbad Caverns National Park, the present position of the National Park Service is demonstrated in the current wilderness proposal for Lava Beds National Monument. Some years ago, it prepared a preliminary proposal for this; conservationists united in agreement that it was inadequate - just like the Forest Service in the Glacier Peak example. Yet when the final proposal was made and the necessary bill went to Congress, that already inadequate wilderness proposal had been cut down still more.

How does this all apply to the Guadalupes?

In the Guadalupes we are presently committed to an equal mobilization of public and political support, but for a course opposed at least privately by both the NPS and the USFS, and without any real mechanism for doing so.

In the Guadalupes, there has been an acknowledged "lack of local leadership for the last six months" (Rob Stitt's own evaluation); in the North Cascades there was a constant progressive mushrooming of leadership until Congress and the Administration responded.

Worst of all, instead of the tremendous informational campaign essential to demonstrate nationwide support to each senator and congressman, in the Guadalupe there has been a policy of hiding the resources of the area from public understanding to the degree that even highly conservation-minded cavers of other areas are so apathetic and uninformed that they are mistakenly concentrating their activities on less vital issues. And so we are losing the Guadalupe.

The situation is not hopeless - yet. Rob Stitt is taking drastic action to "try to develop more effective and communicative local leadership; work with other conservation groups to expand gradually our overall efforts; and putting pressure on the NPS and FS to recognize the national significance of the area and its resources and act accordingly".

Well and good. But from our experience in the North Cascades, it will not be enough. Without the 2000-member North Cascades Conservation Council which coordinated and stimulated other conservation organizations and bore the brunt of the North Cascades campaign, we never would have had a North Cascades National Park. Even with a 2000-member Guadalupe Conservation Council we won't get an adequate Guadalupe Wilderness the way things are going now - but it would be a big stride forward.

The N3C existed and was already creating momentum among conservation leaders before the USFS blew it in 1959 and gave the national park proposal truly great momentum. We should have started building momentum long ago with a national Guadalupe newsletter, slide shows, New York Times articles and the like. With failure of the Guadalupe Wilderness proposal now likely, it is time now to start building momentum toward enlargement of Carlsbad Cavern National Park as a second string to our bow, with adequate wilderness built into the enacting legislation, a proposal I first made in 1963 when the time was not yet ripe, nor the Guadalupe so threatened.

The Guadalupe indeed are a national caving area as Rob has pointed out. While the ideal is strong, effective leadership in the New Mexico-Texas area to promote the maximum response close to home, any effective leadership is better than none. Let us hope that all NSS members will back the efforts of Rob Stitt in Stockholm to develop this leadership, and in the difficult, intensive days of implementation of his recommendations on an overwhelming scale.

* * * *

W.R.H.

(The quotations above are from a letter of Rob's to Rane Curl, dated March 13, 1972, in response to my later-withdrawn motion that the NSS Board look into this matter; it was read in full by Rane at the last NSS Board meeting and is thus a matter of public record.)

VULCANOSPELEOLOGICAL ABSTRACT: Morris, Pat. 1971. Lava caves in Ethiopia. Wm. Pengelly Cave Studies Trust NL 17, Dec., pp. 1-2.

An informal report on biological collecting in ignimbrite "bubble" caves in Awash National Park, one intersected by a railroad cut. No information was given on size, other than mentioning a 20-foot entrance pit. The biota is extensive and the caves hot and unpleasant in some areas.

VULCANOSPELEOLOGICAL ABSTRACT: Brown, A. Sutherland. 1969.
Aiyanih lava flow, British Columbia. Canadian Journal of Earth Sci.
Vol. 6, no. 6, pp. 1460-68.

The Aiyanih basalt flow about 60 miles North of Terrace, B.C. (inland from Prince Rupert) is about 220 years old. It consists of a narrow valley flow 14 miles long with a terminal plain about 2 miles wide and 6 miles long. The writer mentions only "pipes largely filled with entrail-like lava and stalactitic roofs." However B. Neil Church has written (ltr, 2-28-72) "The leading edge of the lava near the Nass River contains countless caves which apparently formed as a result of the local outflow of molten lava beneath crusted-over sections of the lava field. Some miles to the SE, near several cinder cones and the source of the lava, a small, partially collapsed lava tube was discovered - the west opening of this tube was large enough to accomodate me standing upright - the east opening was plugged with ice. In the same area, but one to two miles further west, a sizeable stream flowing along the south margin of the lava flow suddenly disappears underground, possibly into a lava tube, re-emerging several miles down the valley."

--W.R.H.

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