

1ST MYANMAR CAVE TRAINING

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3.-10.
June 17

Myanmar Cave Documentation Project



Twenty-two trainees from Yangon, Mandalay and Southern Shan with background in mountaineering, tourism, university and fauna conservation participated in the 1st Myanmar Cave Training. They studied and practiced cave survey, mapping, vertical techniques, fauna identification and karst science. The obtained knowledge is important for further systematic documentation of Myanmar's hardly known karst and the base for biodiversity research, conservation and ecotourism projects.

In cooperation with Fauna & Flora International, support of GiZ Germany with contributions of CEPF, Helmsley Charitable and the Forest Department of Myanmar.



CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
PARTNERSHIP FUND

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Our Mission is to document Karst & Caves in Myanmar

Summary & Outlook

The 1st Myanmar Cave Training was given in a seven day course in the karst valley of Parpant Village in Hopon District (Taunggyi, Shan State). The site is very suitable with meandering streams sinking and resurging in the mountainous landscape and thus forming an active underground river system. A geological older higher level of fossil caves exists with well decorated passages and a large variety of speleothemes. Therefore trainees could experience a classical karst landscape and understand the formation of caves by firsthand experience. Previous fauna surveys confirmed fauna (ie bats)

The training consisted the first three days off lectures on Myanmar Karst, karst conservation, fauna identification, cave survey and vertical exploration technique. The trainees learned different survey methods, practised mapping in the surrounding caves and learned to ascend and descend ropes. Afterwards the three trainers offered parallel sessions inside the caves. Trainees could specialize in shaft rigging techniques, cave photography or advanced survey and map creation. Special class room sessions in the morning further increased the background knowledge in karst science and safety.

The training schedule included in particularly:

- Survey techniques, and map creation, (classical and electronic), survey programs
- Geology and speleogenesis of caves and karst
- Cave fauna: bats, reptiles and invertebrates
- Exploration techniques, single rope technique, rope rigging techniques, river caves
- Caving photography and lightning techniques
- Biodiversity and karst conservation
- Safety and hazards

Highlights were swimming along a 1 km long active underground river and the descent of 40 m vertical shaft into Hopon Spring Cave.

Thanks to the two village guides six new cave entrances were found during the training which further concluded the hydro geological picture of Parpant. Close to 1 km of new passage were mapped which are published in the upcoming 3rd book of the project, thus being the first maps from Burmese cavers.

The twenty participants were from Yangon, Mandalay, Taunggyi and the karst areas of Ywangan and Pindaya. The background reached from mountaineering, climbing, bird watching to tourist guides, university lecturers and employees of FFI, GiZ and government departments. The motivation and enthusiasm in the team was high. The special experiences formed a team discovering the world of caves together.

Surprise visitors to the training site were U Htin Aung Ngaing, Director of Hotels & Tourism Shan State and U Khun Maung Baw, Vice Chairman of Parami Development Network.

The farewell evening with 50 people included the villagers and visitors. The beautiful pictures from the photo session were admired revealing a new perspective on the surrounding caves. A Video by Win Pye followed with impressions from the training (link in next section).

Conclusion & Outlook:

The foundations have been laid for a motivated group of young cavers further exploring and discovering the unique karst and caves of Myanmar. This favourably contributes to a systematic documentation for biodiversity research, karst conservation and ecotourism development.

Trainers and Lecturers background

Diego Sanz	Civil Engineer, Member of Swiss Speleological Society and Swiss Rescue Organization, specialist in vertical techniques
Claude Bernhard	Geochemist for groundwater dating, Member of Swiss Speleological Society, expert in cave photography
Dr. Joerg Dreybrodt	Physicist, Member of German- and Swiss Speleological Society, Founder and Coordinator of Myanmar Cave Documentation Project, specialist in survey, mapping and publications.
Dr. Sai Sein Lin Oo	Bat expert at the Zoology Department, University of Mandalay
Dr. Cahyo Rahmadi	Arachnologist and Researcher at Indonesian Institute of Science, President of Indonesian Speleological Society.

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to the many people who helped in facilitating this meeting:

U Pone Nya, Khun Lon	Village- and Vice Village Head Parpant
U Khone, U Saung, U Khat	Village cooks
U Khone 2, U Kee	Catering
Khun Lone, Khun Maung Hlaing	Village Guides
Ven. U Aggadhama	Parpant Monastery
Zaw Min Tun, Zaw Zaw	Police Hopon
Yu Le Win, Khun Aung San	Forest Department Hopon
Soe Thiha	FFI Driver
Myat Myat Moe	Technical Expert Sustainable Tourism, GiZ

The training was made possible in cooperation and with the logistic and financial support of FFI:

Frank Momberg	FFI Program Director
Ngwe Lwin	FFI Project Manager
Aung Lin	FFI Field Coordinator and Training Camp Manager

The contributions of the Karst conservation donors CEPF and Helmsley Charitable are highly appreciated.

The equipment support by the Swiss Speleological Society Bern and from Peter Schoch (Eastern-Swiss Caving Society) was extremely helpful. The T-Shirts were sponsored by u-blox AG, Switzerland.

Warm thanks to Fateme Waqef from the Iranian Cavers. Her invitation to a talk in Tehran triggered the contact to Nyi Nyi Aung and the Yangon Mountaineers.

Training Video

by Win Pye

<https://vimeo.com/221874233>



Our Mission

We bring value to Myanmar and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by a systematic documentation of caves and karst for biodiversity research, conservation and ecotourism. 31 cavers of 12 nations contributed in 14 expeditions since the foundation in 2009.

Contact

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Speleogenesis and Fauna Lectures

Lectures in the main buildings ground floor (Photo J. Dreybrodt and C. Bernhard)



Dr. Sai explaining how to recognize a bat species caught the evening (Photos J. Dreybrodt)



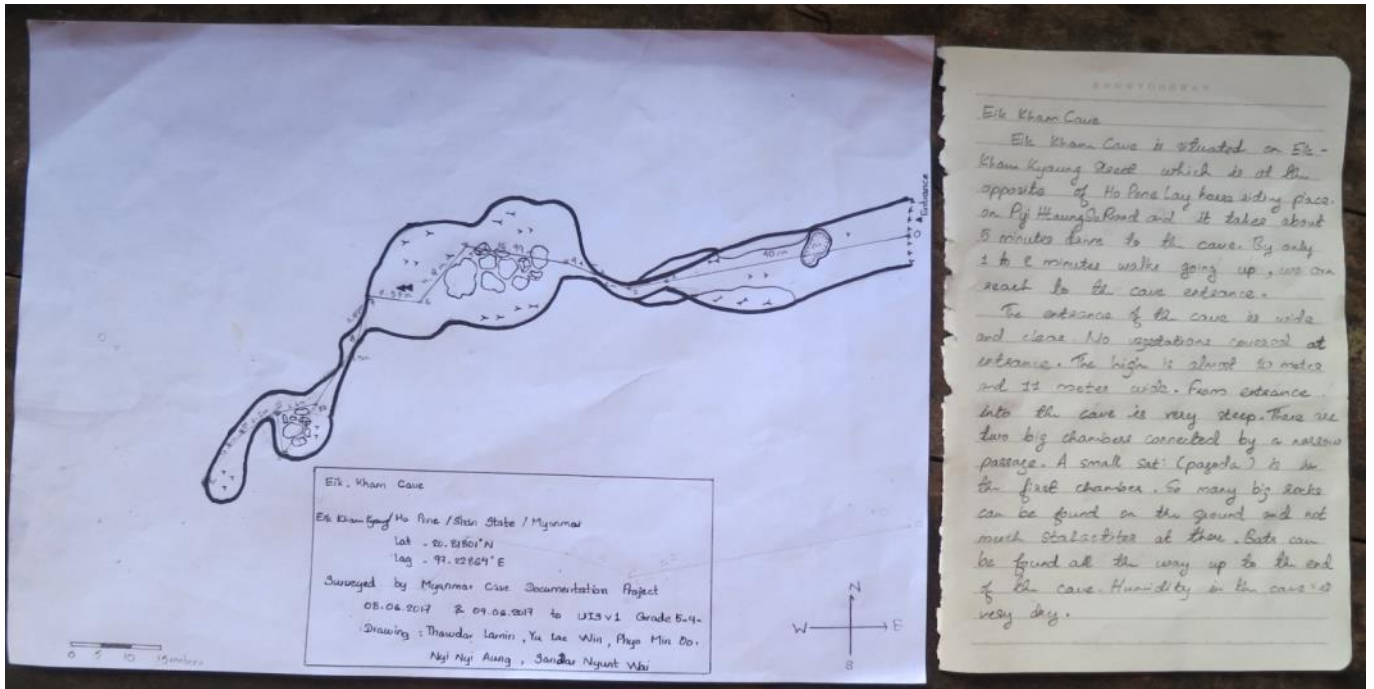
Survey Training

Survey of the cave with compass and clinometers with one person sketching a map (Photos J. Dreybrodt)



Cave Map Creation

Typing in survey data and drawing from the plot line the cave map (Photo J. Dreybrodt)



Vertical Exploration Technique

Ascend and descend exercises in the tree before applying inside a cave (Photo J. Dreybrodt and C. Bernhard)



Horizontal Exploration and In-Cave Lectures

Swimming in a 1 km long river cave and admiring a beautiful decorated passage (Photo J. Dreybrodt)



Cave Photo Training

Highlight pictures showing the beauty of Parpant Caves (Photos C. Bernhard)



Team Photos

Trainees with village people (Photos C. Bernhard)



Photo at the last day - Trainees with trainers (Photos C. Bernhard)

