

## The Caves of Yala

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### 00. Unknown Amphoe

**Cave YA0018** YA0018  
Ban Bannang Bubo

The cave is signposted as being 5 km west of the H410 from Ban Bannang Bubo.

**Pinyok Mine Cave** YA0021  
Pinyok Mine

This well-known tin mine is 50-60 km south of Yala, a few kilometres east of the Malaysian border and just west of the H410.  
Brown, et al. (1951); Dunkley (1995)

**Tham Gue Long** YA0013

The only information on this cave is that it is 40 km from Yala.  
Anon. (1983); Dunkley (1995)

### 01. Amphoe Muang Yala

**Shop Cave** YA0008  
47N 746306 0721752  
Ban Na Tham  
Length: 10 m

This cave is between Tham Sin and Tham Meud.  
The cave is gated and used as a shop or store.  
Dunkley (1995)

**Tham Chi Wua** YA0015  
47N 746306 0721752  
Ban Na Tham

The cave is close to Tham Sin.  
Dunkley (1995)

**Tham Din** YA0014  
47N 746306 0721752  
Ban Na Tham

The cave is close to Tham Sin.  
Dunkley (1995)

**Tham Khuha Pimock** YA0006  
47N 746390 0721728 Alt.: 100 m

Wat Khuha Pimock, Ban Na Tham  
Length: 40 m                      VR: 2 m

Leave Yala heading west in the direction of Yaha and go as far as the village of Ban Na Tham. At the exit from the village, after a km post (km 7) take on the left a small road which leads south. Less than 500 m from there, enter on the left the gate to a monastery and follow an alley which goes towards the cliffs of a small limestone massif. From here a stairway climbs as far as the cave entrance which opens midway up the cliff and where there is a spectacular sanctuary guardian about 6 m high which was built in 1949 AD and called Chao Khao.

A small entrance gives access to a big chamber (25 m x 35 m x 25 m) which is feebly lit by an opening in the roof. This chamber is called Tham Pha Non and it does not lead to any passages.

This is one of the most significant archaeological and Buddhist sites in southern Thailand and has probably been occupied since about 750 AD. There are rows of seated Buddhas, including one 5 m high. The inner part of the cave is dominated by a 20 m long reclining Buddha (Phra Phutthasaiyat). This highly venerated image probably dates to the Srivichaya (Peninsular) era and was restored during the Uthong period.

The first visit by speleologists was by the APS in 1987.  
Deharveng, et al. (1988); Dunkley (1995); Price (2001)

**Tham Lamphao Thong†**                      YA0035  
47N 744000 0722679  
Tham Lamphao Thong Priest's Camp Site, Ban Thamsin

Tham Lamphao Thong Priest's Camp Site is just north of the junction between the H409 and H4089 at Ban Thamsin.

**Tham Mae Nang Montho**                      YA0039  
ถ้ำแม่นางมณฑล  
Wat Khuha Pimock, Ban Na Tham

The cave is near Tham Khuha Pimock.

Inside the cave are large connecting chambers that are mostly dark. In one chamber there is a large stalagmite in the shape of a meditating woman which gives the cave its name.

**Tham Meud**                                      YA0007  
47N 746575 0721544      Alt.: 100 m  
Ban Na Tham  
Length: 1,000 m  
Other names: Gua G'lap

At the foot of the stairs to Tham Khuha Pimock follow the base of the massif towards the south-east. After 200 m, having passed a small sanctuary cavity, one finds the entrance to Tham Meud just above the water level.

Tham Meud is a show cave formed on two levels approximately 2 and 10m above the level of the surrounding countryside and is partly lit by electricity. Three entrances lead to the lower section which is a level walking passage about 3-4 m high for 275 m and gradually narrowing as you progress inwards. About 150 m from the entrance a higher level begins with a large chamber about 40 m wide and up to 20 m high from which passages with muddy rimstone pools lead back towards the cliff face. The cave has not been fully explored and has good prospects for further discoveries.

The cave is the type locality for the amblypygi *Stygophrynus cerberus* Simon, 1901. The mite *Siamacarus dalgeri* Leclerc, 1989 has also been collected in the cave.

The first recorded scientific visit to the cave was by the Skeet Expedition in 1899-1900. The next known visit was by members of the 1987 APS expedition.

Deharveng, et al. (1988); Dunkley (1995); Harvey (2003); Leclerc (1989)

**Tham Mun To** YA0005  
47N 746753 0723020 Alt.: 180 m  
Ban Na Tham  
Length: 300 m VR: 50 m  
Other names: Tham Khun To

Take the road from Yala to Yaha as you would for Tham Khuha Pimock. After passing the turning for Tham Sam Pao To there is a brick and concrete embankment on the right of the road at the foot of the massif. Behind this part of the road there is the start of a track which ascends steeply with hairpins up the side of the cliff. It leads to a quarry at the top of the limestone massif. Just before arriving within sight of the quarry one finds on the right of the road a large doline with dense vegetation. By descending the shattered boulders into the doline one finds at the bottom the start of a small path which after a few detours in the vegetation leads to the main entrance.

A 20 m wide by 30 m high entrance leads to a large passage containing a chamber 50 m in diameter and 50 m high. Further in is a still larger shaft from which several side passages lead off, one to a third large shaft. The cave appears to have been extensively looted for pottery, etc.

The cave was explored by the APS expedition in 1987.

Deharveng, et al. (1988); Dunkley (1995)

**Tham Phab Khien Fa Panang** YA0009  
47N 756541 0720598

The cave is between Sateng Nok and Budi, to the east of Sateng.

There are 500 year old cave paintings in the cave.

Dunkley (1995)

**Tham Sam Pao Thong** YA0004  
47N 747120 0723390 Alt.: 120 m

Tha Sap

Length: 300 m

Other names: Tham Sam Pao To

The cave is in moo 1 Tha Sap. Take the road to Yaha as if going to Tham Khuha Pimack, but before Ban Na Tham, at about 5 km from Yala, take a track which starts on the right just before a limestone massif. From here it is 200 m to the entrance to the cave which one reaches via a few steps to the foot of the cliffs.

The two large main passages are partly electrically lit, while the side passages were not explored. There is also a higher level just inside the entrance containing a model boat.

The cave has an extensive fauna and is the type locality for the mite *Siamacarus dalgeri* Leclerc, 1989.

Tham Sam Pao Thong was explored and a basic survey carried out by the APS in 1987.

Condé (1992b); Deharveng, et al. (1988); Dunkley (1995); Leclerc (1989)

**Tham Sin** YA0001

ถ้ำศิลป์

47N 747313 0721363 Alt.: 125 m

Wat Khuha Pimock, Ban Na Tham

Length: 30 m

Other names: Tham Silpa, Gua Gambar

From the monastery at Tham Khuha Pimock take towards the south-east the sinuous track which follows the foot of the massif and the marshes. After about 500 m the track joins a small road which leads on the left to a school. It is here that the keys to the cave are kept. As the French group were accompanied by the head monk and two representatives of the governor they had no problem in getting the keys. To get to the cave follow the road past the school for 250 m, as far as a turning on the left. From here a stairway climbs in the rocks as far as the entrance.

The narrow entrance, on the side of the wall, opens into an entrance passage which descends into a high circular chamber which is partially lit by an opening in the roof. At the bottom of this chamber an earth slope goes to a pitch which isn't deep below which the cave is seen to continue. However, at the time of the French visit in 1987 the bamboo ladder was in a very poor state so the way on was not followed.

The first chamber contains important 8th Century Peninsula era Buddhist relief carvings on the walls. The cave is locked for conservation purposes.

The cave was explored by the APS in 1987.

Deharveng, et al. (1988); Dunkley (1995); Stephens (2000)

**Tham Suea** YA0002

47N 747128 0721547 Alt.: 100 m

Ban Na Tham

Length: 180 m

From Tham Sin go towards Tham Khuha Pimock not by the road, but by a track along the base of the cliffs where there can be seen numerous openings. It is about 200 m from Tham Sin that one finds the entrance to Tham Suea. Although quite wide the entrance is partly hidden by vegetation.

The cave starts with a wide passage where the entrance porch occasionally serves as a hermitage. At the back of the entrance chamber a low passage turns right and ascends. After an oxbow on the left the cave opens into a wide and high chamber that is well decorated. On the right there is a rift passage. This ends after 50 m at a big calcite flow which could be climbed to find any possible way on.

The mite *Siamacarus dalgeri* Leclerc, 1989 was collected in the cave.

The cave was explored and a basic survey conducted by the APS in 1987.

Deharveng & Leclerc (1989); Deharveng, et al. (1988); Dunkley (1995); Leclerc (1989)

**Tham Wai Wua** YA0016

47N 746306 0721752

Ban Na Tham

The cave is close to Tham Sin.

Dunkley (1995)

## **02. Amphoe Betong [Betung]**

**Cave YA0030** YA0030

Wat Tham Hin, Ban Gunung Chanong

The cave is located close to the Malaysian border. From Betong town take the road to the old Malay border post immigration office, turning right at the blue sign to Ban Bukit Takro and

proceeding for 1.6 km to Ban Gunung Chanong. The cave is in the grounds of the temple on an isolated hill, Gunung Putib, at the foot of the steps up to Tham Hin.

There are three entrances into a large chamber.

Dunkley (1997)

**Gunung Chanong River Cave** YA0027

Ban Gunung Chanong

Length: 25 m

The cave is located close to the Malaysian border. From Betong town take the road to the old Malay border post immigration office, turning right at the blue sign to Ban Bukit Takro and proceeding for 1.6 km to Ban Gunung Chanong. Walk over the bridge past a football field to the limestone hill on the right.

About 25 m long and containing bats the cave is used by a Malay hermit. An upper passage can be reached by going through the cave and turning to the east.

Dunkley (1997)

**Tham Gunung Chanong** YA0028

Wat Tham Gunung Chanong, Ban Gunung Chanong

The cave is located close to the Malaysian border. From Betong town take the road to the old Malay border post immigration office, turning right at the blue sign to Ban Bukit Takro and proceeding for 1.6 km to Ban Gunung Chanong.

This is a small shrine cave.

Dunkley (1997)

**Tham Hin** YA0028

Wat Tham Hin, Ban Gunung Chanong

The cave is located close to the Malaysian border. From Betong town take the road to the old Malay border post immigration office, turning right at the blue sign to Ban Bukit Takro and proceeding for 1.6 km to Ban Gunung Chanong. The entrance to the cave is in the grounds of the temple in an isolated hill, Gunung Putib. Many steps lead up to the cave.

Dunkley (1997)

**Tham Rom Yen†** YA0036

47N 729815 0645242

Tham Rom Yen Priest's Camp Site, Ban Bo Nam Ron

The Tham Rom Yen Priest's Camp Site is in Ban Bo Nam Ron, 3.5 km north of the H410.

**03. Amphoe Ban Nang Sata [Benang Setar]**

**Krachaeng Arch** YA0010

47N 744189 0687052

Ban Ka Sod

Length: 100 m

The arch is 3 km south of the H410 at Ban Ka Sod, about 200 m downstream from the Tham Krachaeng resurgence.

It is traversed by the Tham Krachaeng stream and is 20 m high and wide.

Dunkley (1995); Fontaine, et al. (2005); Price (2001)

**Meditation Cave** YA0020  
47N 747441 0692900  
Ban Nang Sata  
Length: 150 m

The entrance at the foot of the tower a short distance south of Tham Ratt.  
There is a small network of passages which are used for meditation and are partly electrically lit.  
Dunkley (1995)

**Resurgence YA0019** YA0019  
47N 747441 0692900  
Ban Nang Sata

The resurgence is between Tham Ratt and Meditation Cave.  
The rising is impenetrable.

**Tham Hma** YA0033  
Length: 120 m

The cave is beside the road.  
Price (2001)

**Tham Khao Thai†** YA0034  
47N 740009 0686317  
Tham Khao Thai Priest's Camp Site, Ban Tang Ka Deng

The Tham Khao Thai Priest's Camp Site is 2.5 km south of Ban Tang Ka Dang on the H410, near the Nam Tok Tham To Forest Park.

**Tham Krachaeng** YA0017  
ถ้ำกระแชง  
Resurgence: 47N 742708 0685510 Alt.: 120 m  
Main sink: 47N 743028 0683513  
Khao Tham Krachaeng, Ban Than To  
Length: 5,633 m

Tham Krachaeng is found to the south of the H410 road about 50 km south-west of Yala, near the village of Ban Than To which is halfway between Yala and Betong. The cave is in Khao Tham Krachaeng and the river sink entrance, Tham Lod, is near the Ban Lang National Park. From the entrance to the park headquarters a track on the opposite side of the road, just south of the bridge, leads for 2 km to some houses. From this small village the limestone hill can be seen and is reached by a 10 minute walk downstream or through the cultivated land.

The resurgence entrance, Tham Krachaeng, is reached by driving north from Ban Than To for 14 km, through Ban Ka Sod to the 8.47 kilometre marker. Turn right here and follow the track for about 2 km. Where the track swings left after some houses the hill can be seen on the right. The 100 m long Krachaeng Arch Cave is seen immediately and the resurgence is found by walking upstream for a few minutes.

From the stream sink at the Tham Lod entrance a very flood prone passage leads after 620 m to the main junction where a tributary stream comes in from the south. The water in this tributary is noticeably warmer. The main streamway is a mainly large, south to north trending passage. The floor is covered in sand and gravel and in some places the water is deep enough to swim.

The Tham Krachaeng entrance is blocked by gours. A swim is necessary to get to the gours which can be climbed up and over to regain the stream inside the cave. From here it is easy going in a generally straight passage to the first skylight. There is one side passage with a floor of mud filled gours to the west which becomes too small after 70 m. At the first skylight there are many guano covered boulders where it is easier to stay at water level to find the way through. The streamway then continues south and then loops north. At the point where the loop turns north there is an inlet coming in from the south. This has been followed to where the passage splits into a low crawl and a climb up that is draughting.

As the streamway heads north it reduces in size and the noise of the water increases as it approaches a major boulder choke. An awkward climb up of 2 m leads to a squeeze and then the main choke. The choke of large white marble boulders is fairly solid and it is necessary to climb up through the choke. At the top of the choke there is a chamber filled with flood debris.

On other side of the boulder choke the passage heads north for a short distance before looping back round to the south. After a few minutes the junction with Tham Lod is reached. The distance from the resurgence entrance to this junction is 2.8 km.

From the main junction the warm tributary stream which can be followed upstream and southwards for nearly 2 km passing a skylight after about 500 m to a boulder choke that has not yet been negotiated. Just before this terminal boulder choke there is a cold water inlet from the east which has been surveyed for just over 100 m, but not completely explored. The source of the warm water inlet is not known on the surface.

The cave was first explored and surveyed by Liz Price and Malaysian cavers in August 1993 to 5,516 m. A second expedition by Price and the Axbridge Caving Group in December 2000 was thwarted by flooding after survey only another 117 m of an upstream inlet.

Dunkley (1995); Ellis (2009); Price (1994), (1995), (2001)

**Tham Krachaeng 3** YA0026  
Ban Than To  
Length: 20 m

This short cave is to the west of the Tham Krachaeng resurgence.  
Dunkley (1997)

**Tham Morakot** YA0023  
Ban Than To  
Length: 40 m  
Other names: Emerald Cave

The cave is between and to the west of Kracheng Arch and Tham Krachaeng.  
There are steps up to the entrance chamber which is used as a temple. A climb up to the back wall leads to a 20 m long passage.  
Dunkley (1997)

**Tham Muang Tang Kradung†** YA0011  
47N 740084 0687338  
Ban Tham Muang Tang Kradung, Ban Tham Thalu

The village is near the H4106 to the south of Ban Tham Thalu.  
Dunkley (1995)

**Tham Nan Kiaw** YA0025  
Ban Than To

Tham Nan Kiaw is to the south of Tham Morakot.  
This cave is said to connect to Tham Krachaeng via a pitch.  
Dunkley (1997)

**Tham Ratt** YA0012  
47N 748906 0694453 Alt.: 180 m  
Ban Nang Sata  
Length: 150 m  
Other names: Tham Raet

From Yala take the H4010 southwards as far as Ban Nang Sata (a distance of 41 km). In the village turn to the right onto the H4077 heading towards Yaha. 2 km from the junction the road follows the small massif of Tham Ratt whose entrance can be seen from the road.  
Several Buddhas statues and a community of monks can be found in a labyrinth of electrically lit passages.  
A small impenetrable resurgence was found to the south of the cave.  
The site was recorded by the 1987 APS expedition.  
Deharveng, et al. (1988); Dunkley (1995)

**Tham Taloh** YA0022  
Ban Tham Taloh

The village is near Ban Bang Sata in the shelter of a semi-circle of towers.  
A cave near the village was used as a refuge by the negrito villagers in the 1960s.  
Dunkley (1995); Wavell (1964)

**Tham Thalu†** YA0032  
47N 739602 0692104  
Ban Tham Thalu

**Upper Meditation Cave** YA0024  
Ban Than To  
Length: 200 m VR: 100 m

This is a very large cave above Tham Morakot.  
The huge entrance chamber slopes steeply upwards and two wooden ladders at the rear give access to a monk's quarters and another entrance respectively. There is at least 100 m elevation difference in the cave.  
Dunkley (1997)

#### **04. Amphoe Than To**

**Tham Kasage** YA0031  
47N 745123 0683350  
Than To

The cave is 4 km north-east of Than To.

#### **05. Amphoe Yaha**

**Tham Than Lot** YA0037  
Ban Ta Loo, Patae

The cave is in moo 9 Ban Ta Loo.  
It is an active, decorated cave with a floor of fine sand.

**06. Amphoe Raman [Reman]**

No caves have been recorded in this amphoe.

**07. Amphoe Kabang [Kabae or Kabe]**

No caves have been recorded in this amphoe.

**08. Amphoe Krong Pinang [Kampung Pinang]**

**Tham Ba To Koo**                      YA0038  
Huai Krathing

This decorated limestone cave has a stream with blind fish.

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<b>Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Co-ordinates</b>	<b>Altitude</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>VR</b>
YA0001	Tham Sin	47N 747313 0721363	125	30	
YA0003	Tham Suea	47N 747128 0721547	100	180	
YA0004	Tham Sam Pao Thong	47N 474120 0723390	120	300	
YA0005	Tham Mun To	47N 746753 0723020	180	300	50
YA0006	Tham Khuha Pimak	47N 746390 0721728	100	40	2
YA0007	Tham Meud	47N 746575 0721544	100	1,000	
YA0008	Shop Cave	47N 746306 0721752		10	
YA0009	Tham Phab Khien Fa Panang	47N 756541 0720598			
YA0010	Krachaeng Arch	47N 744189 0687052		100	
YA0011	Tham Muang Tang Kradung	47N 740084 0687338			
YA0012	Tham Ratt	47N 748906 0694453	180	150	
YA0013	Tham Gue Long				
YA0014	Tham Din	47N 746306 0721752			
YA0015	Tham Chi Wua	47N 746306 0721752			
YA0016	Tham Wai Wua	47N 746306 0721752			
YA0017	Tham Krachaeng	47N 742708 0685510	120	5,633	
YA0018	Cave YA0018				
YA0019	Resurgence YA0019	47N 747441 0692900			
YA0020	Meditation Cave	47N 747441 0692900		150	
YA0021	Pinyok Mine Cave				
YA0022	Tham Taloh				
YA0023	Tham Morakot			40	
YA0024	Upper Meditation Cave			200	100
YA0025	Tham Nan Kiaw				
YA0026	Tham Krachaeng 3			20	
YA0027	Gunung Chanong River Cave			25	
YA0028	Tham Gunung Chanong				
YA0029	Tham Hin				
YA0030	Cave YA0030				
YA0031	Tham Kasage	47N 745123 0683350			
YA0032	Tham Thalu	47N 739602 0692104			

<b>Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Co-ordinates</b>	<b>Altitude</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>VR</b>
YA0033	Tham Hma			120	
YA0034	Tham Khao Thai	47N 740009 0686317			
YA0035	Tham Lamphao Thong	47N 744000 0722679			
YA0036	Tham Rom Yen	47N 729815 0645242			
YA0037	Tham Than Lot				
YA0038	Tham Ba To Koo				
YA0039	Tham Mae Nang Montho				