



World's Largest Cavern Discovered
In Viet Nam in 1991

Hang Son Doong

meaning Mountain River Cave









British scientists from the British Cave Research Association, led by Howard and Deb Limbert, conducted a survey in Phong Nha-Ke Bang from April 10-14, 2009

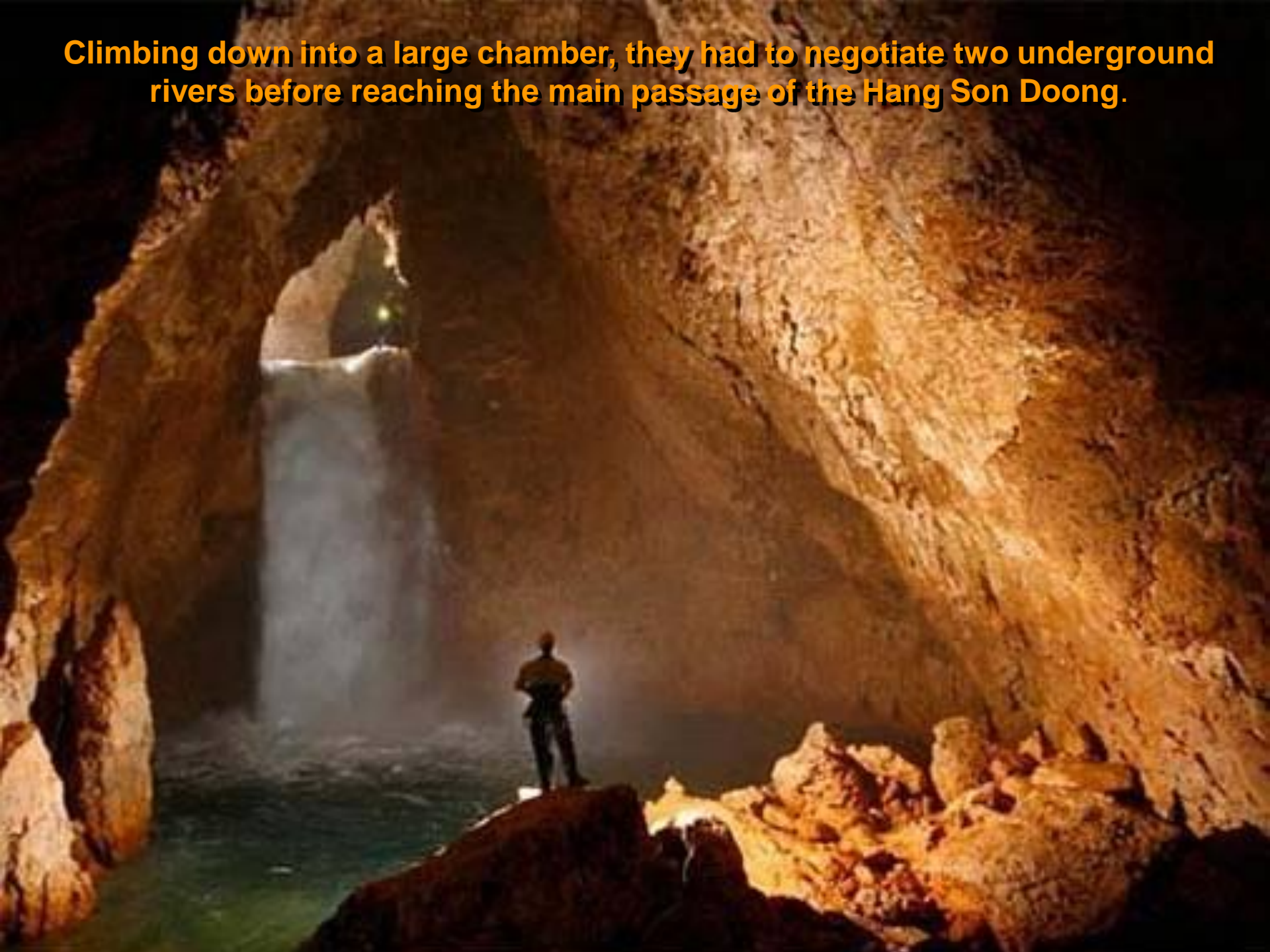


Hidden in rugged Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park near the border with Laos, the cave is part of a network of 150 or so caves, many still not surveyed, in the Annamite Mountains



It took six hours trekking through the jungle to reach the cave.

Climbing down into a large chamber, they had to negotiate two underground rivers before reaching the main passage of the Hang Son Doong.







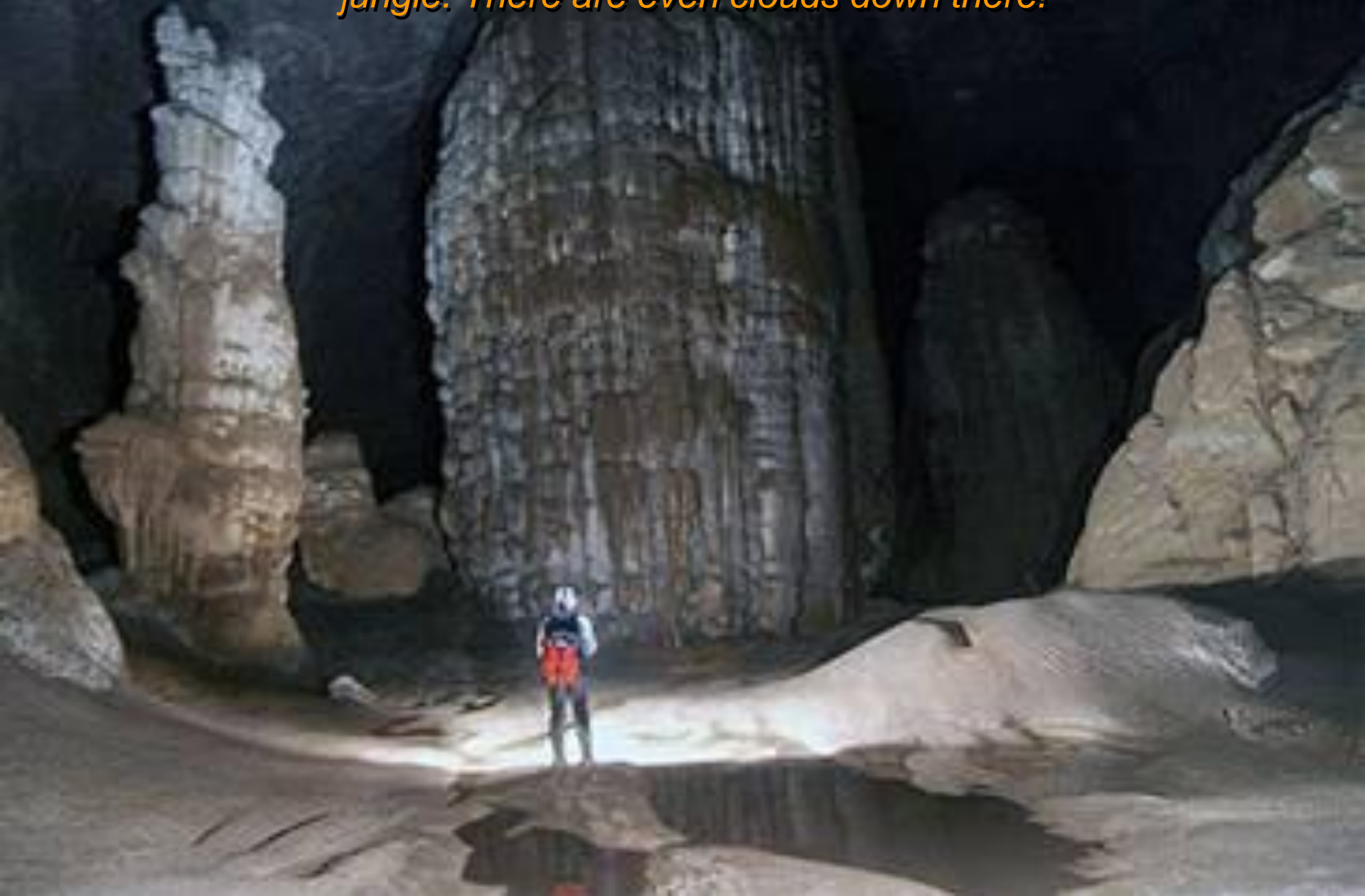
The cave is located near the
Laos-Vietnam border.

Hang Son Doong, in the Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park in Vietnam, was discovered by Ho-Khanh in 1991. However it wasn't until 2009, when Howard and Deb Limbert surveyed the cave, that the full extent of the cave was made know.





The cave is considered to be the world's largest. One of its caverns could fit an entire New York City block of skyscrapers! The cave holds a river and a jungle. There are even clouds down there!



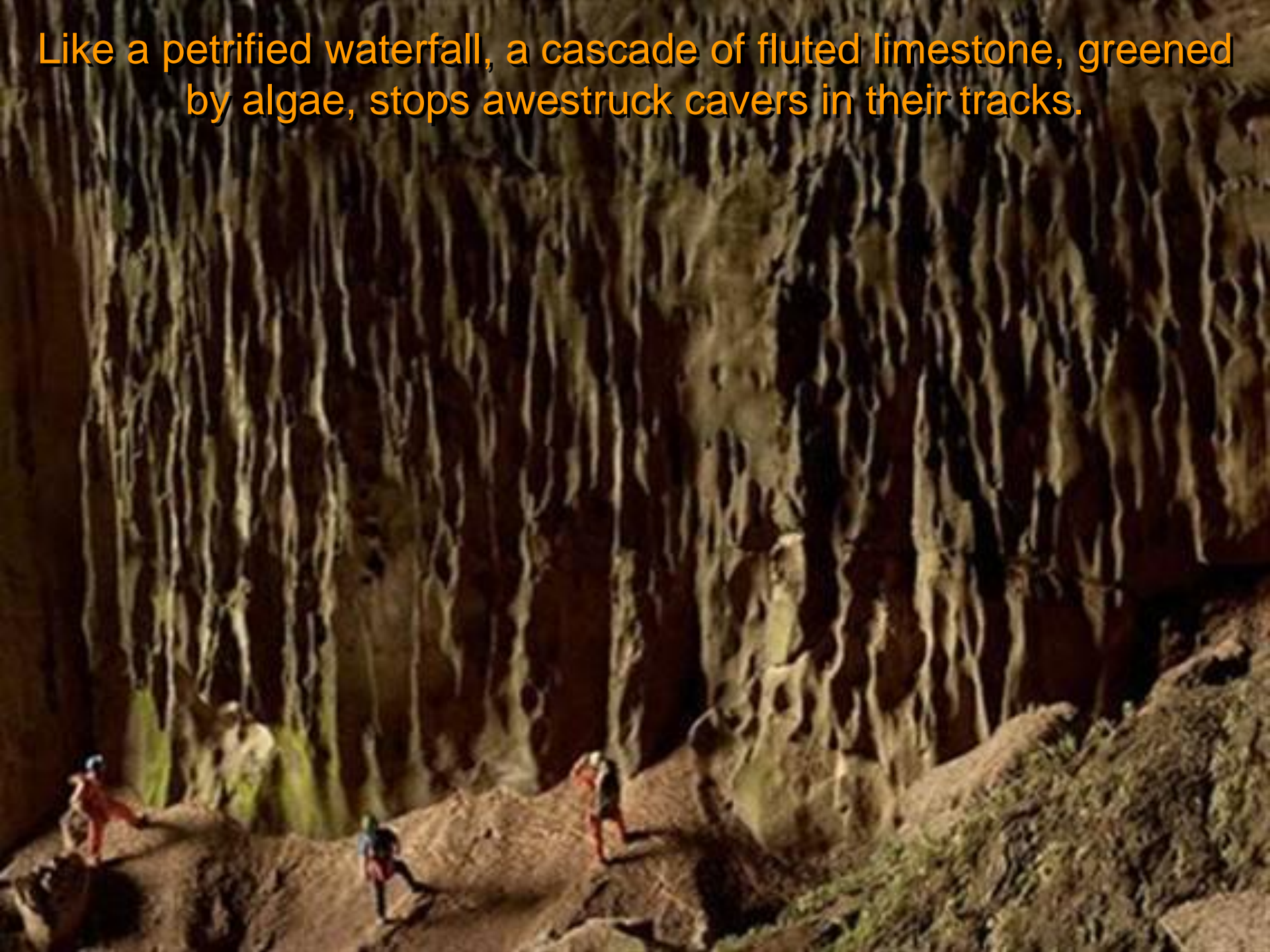
National Geographic sent a team to document the cave in 2010. Carsten Peter's stunning photo's were featured in the January 2011 issue and should not be missed.







Like a petrified waterfall, a cascade of fluted limestone, greenened by algae, stops awestruck cavers in their tracks.







Rare cave pearls fill dried-out terrace pools near the Garden of Edam in Hang Son Doong. This unusually large collection of stone spheres formed drip by drip over the centuries as calcite crystals left behind by water layered themselves around grains of sand, enlarging over time.





The biggest chamber of Son Doong is over five kilometers in length, 200 meters high and 150 meters wide.



The cave which had never been entered before by anyone including local jungle people because the entrance which is small by Vietnamese cave standards (10m high and 30m wide) emitted a frightful wind noise which was due to the large underground river."



An enormous shaft of sunlight plunges into the cave like a waterfall. Between us and the sunlit passage ahead stands a stalagmite that in profile resembles the paw of a dog.



“The Hand of God would be just too corny,” he says, pointing at the formation. “But the Hand of Dog does nicely, don’t you think?”



Collapsed Doline

-a mini jungle one quarter of a mile below the surface

Dolines are created when a cave system ceiling collapses inwards allowing daylight to stream in and create new and unique ecosystems.

A new species of wood louse (non-pigmented and blind) was discovered in a dry side passage.

The plants in this area exhibited an adaptation called “phenotropic plasticity” meaning changes in response to the environment.



Looking up towards one of the collapsed ceilings of the cave



The hole in the ceiling through which the light cascades is unbelievably large, at least 300 feet across. The light, penetrating deep into the cave, reveals for the first time the mind-blowing proportions of Hang Son Doong.

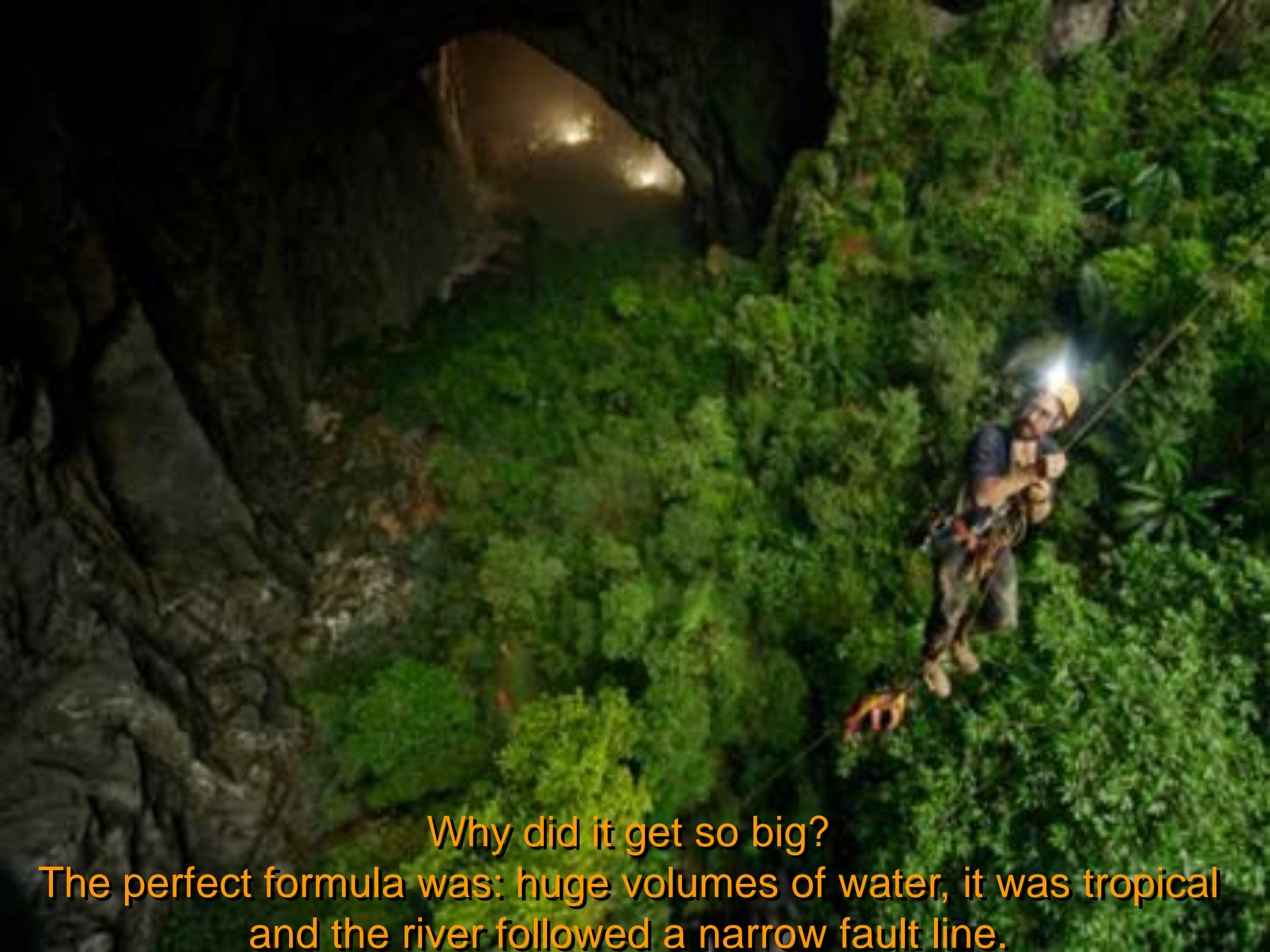


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Measuring 200m high and 150m wide this new cave is believed to be almost twice the size of the current record holder which is the Deer Cave in Malaysia .





Why did it get so big?
The perfect formula was: huge volumes of water, it was tropical
and the river followed a narrow fault line.





Collapsed doline -mini jungle one quarter mile below the surface



It is amazing that we are still discovering places this spectacular!





After exploring the cave passage for six kilometers, their way was barred by a formidable and gigantic calcite rock face they named 'The Great Wall of Vietnam.'





After scaling the “Great Wall of Viet Nam” it was found that the cavern system ended.



Hang Son Doong

The End

Edward Longstreet's Edit