

Karst and World Heritage

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IUCN / WCPA Task Force on
Caves and Karst



What is Karst?

- It is a complex and dynamic land system that has been shaped by naturally acidic water dissolving away the rock
- It is most commonly found in limestone areas



It consists of . . .

- Underlying bedrock
- The eroded rock with its various landforms
- Life – Vegetation, Animals, Bacteria
- Energy – water, wind, temperature
- Gases – air, carbon dioxide, others
- Soils – with bacteria and other microbiota



It generally has . . .

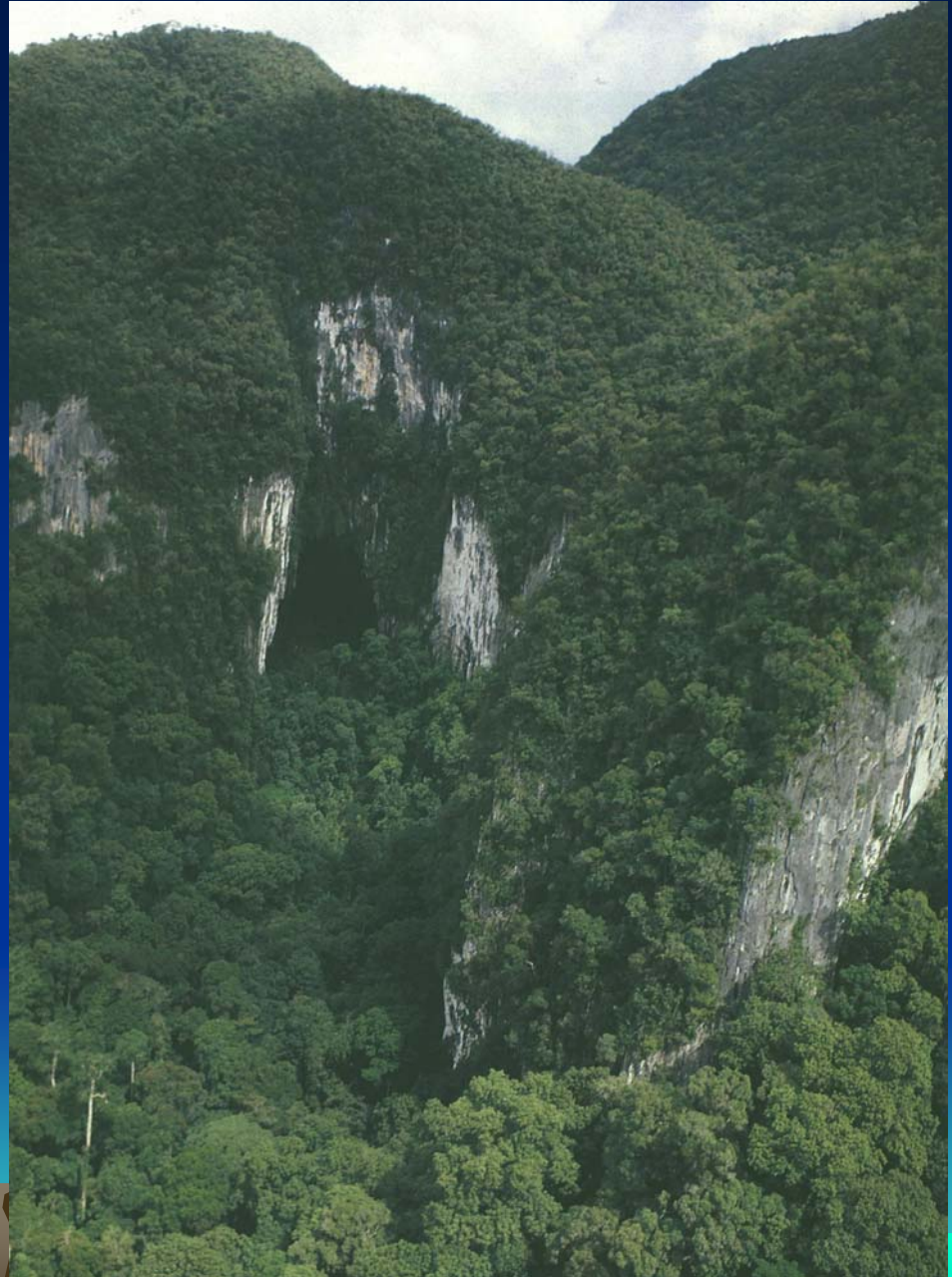
- High biodiversity
- With many species found only on the karst and specially adapted to live on karst
- And many of them with a very limited range



Now, let us look at some examples
of World Heritage Areas on Karst



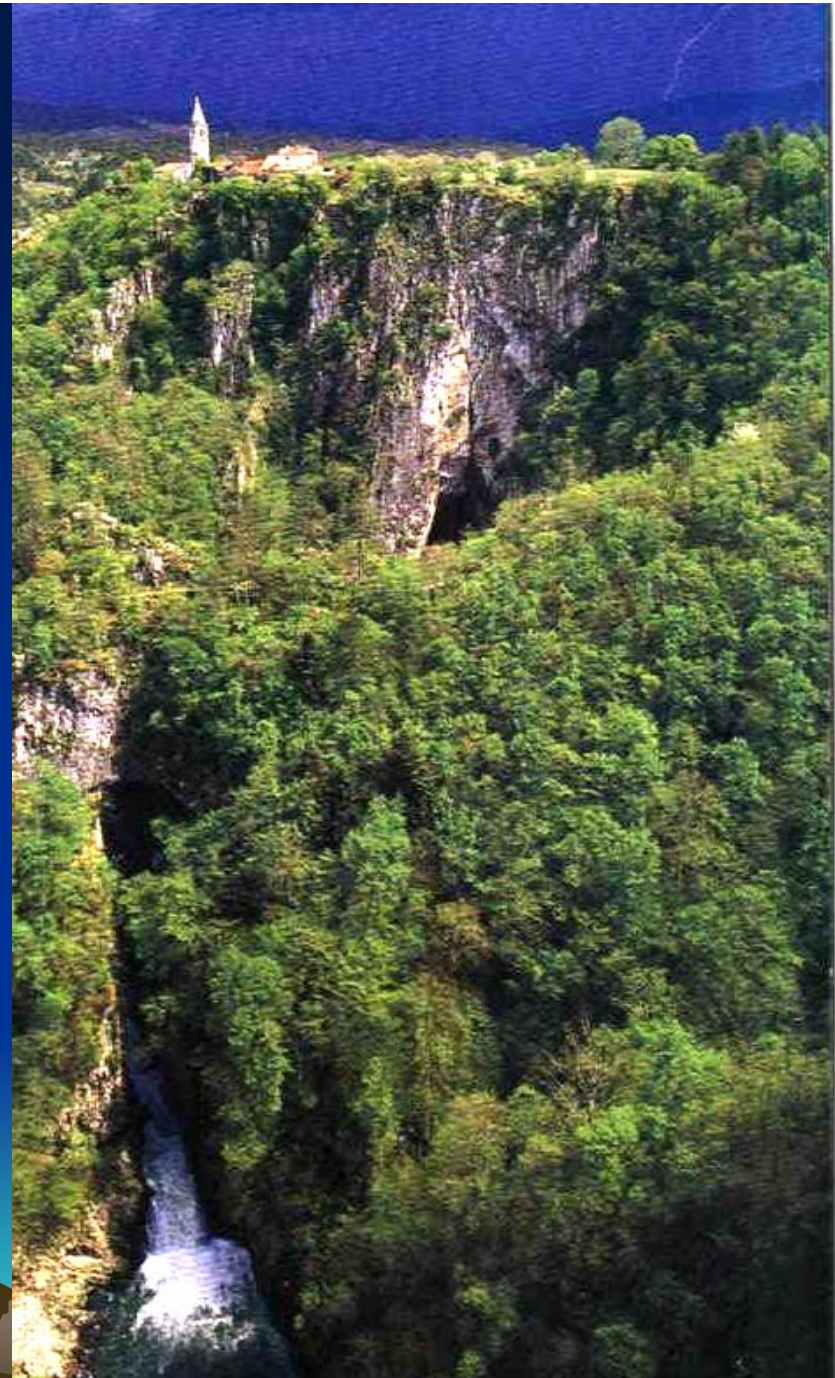
- Gunung Mulu in Malaysia
- A Cave Entrance in deep forest



A gorge cutting through an
ancient coral reef



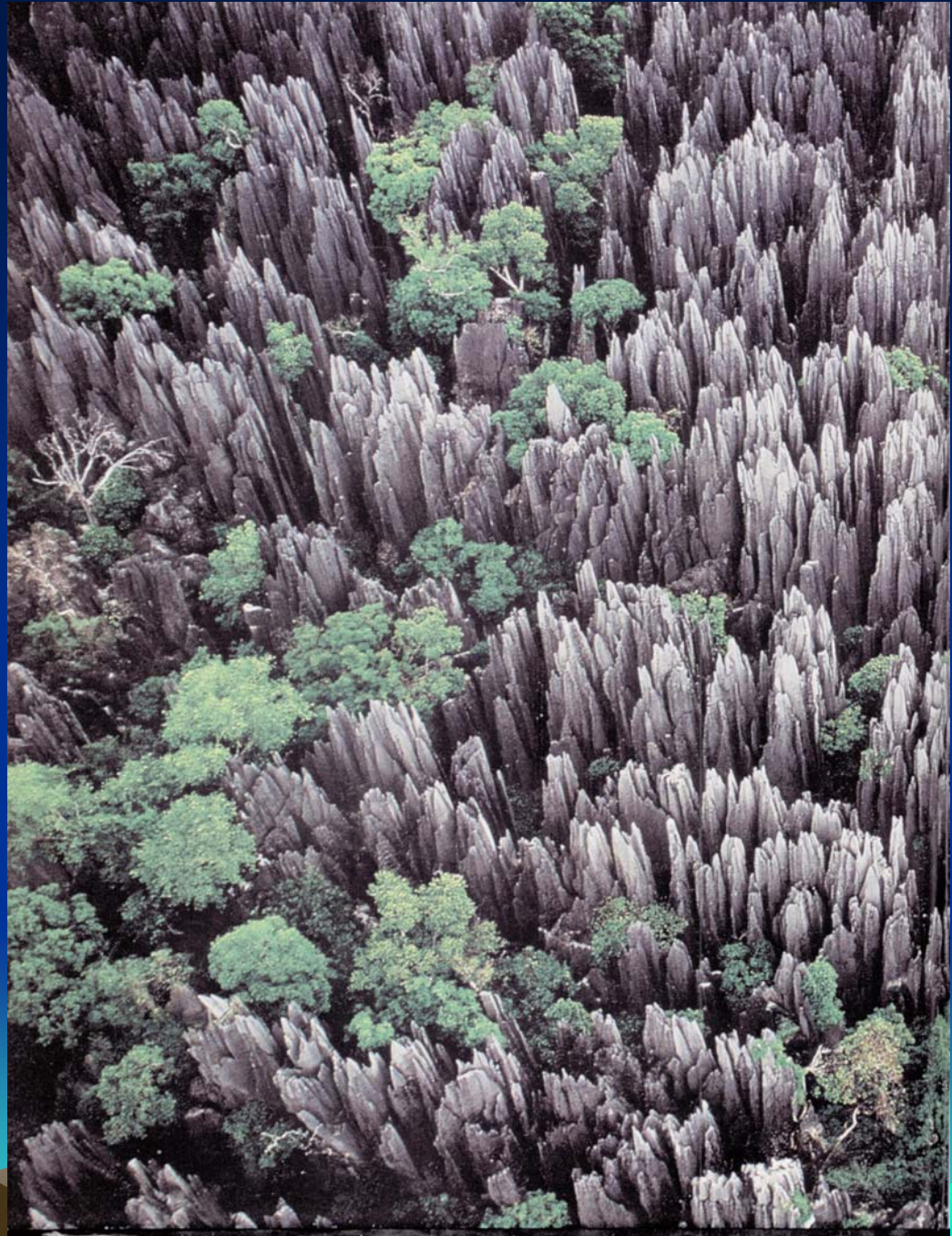
- The big doline at Skocjanske Jama in Slovenia



- The Sacred Well (Cenote) at Chichen Itza, Mexico



The Tsinghy (Pinnacle Karst) of Madagascar

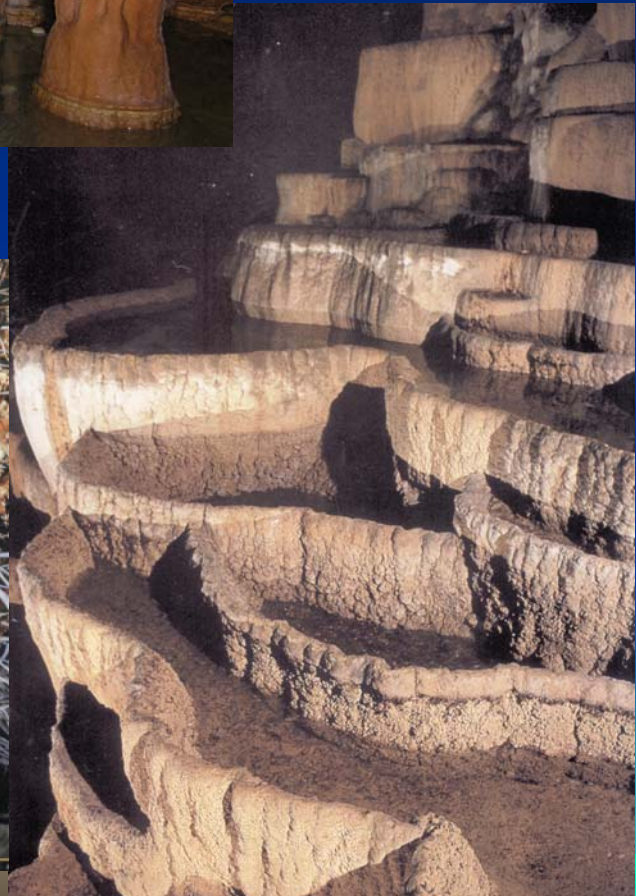


The Towerkarst of China



Caves are often places of great beauty

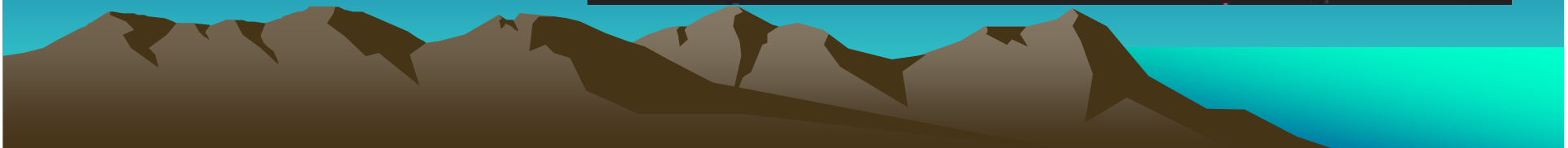
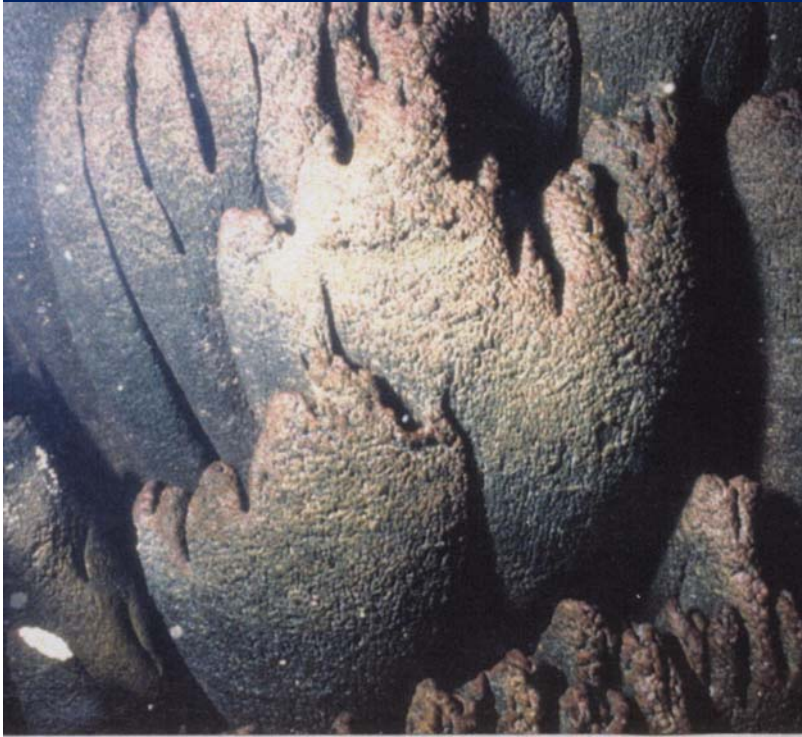




*They are the books in the library of
the history of the earth*



Including the history of living creatures and remarkable examples of biodiversity

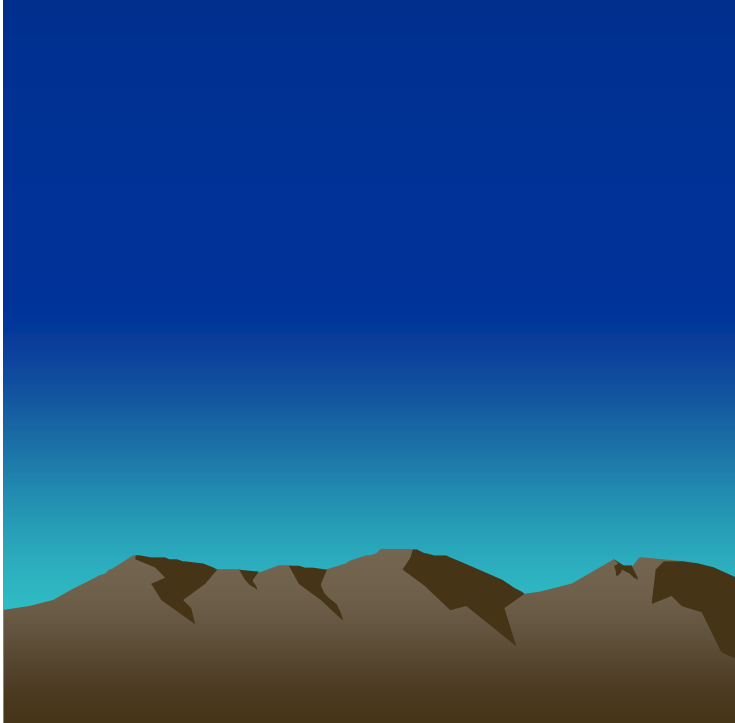


Some other bits of history . . .

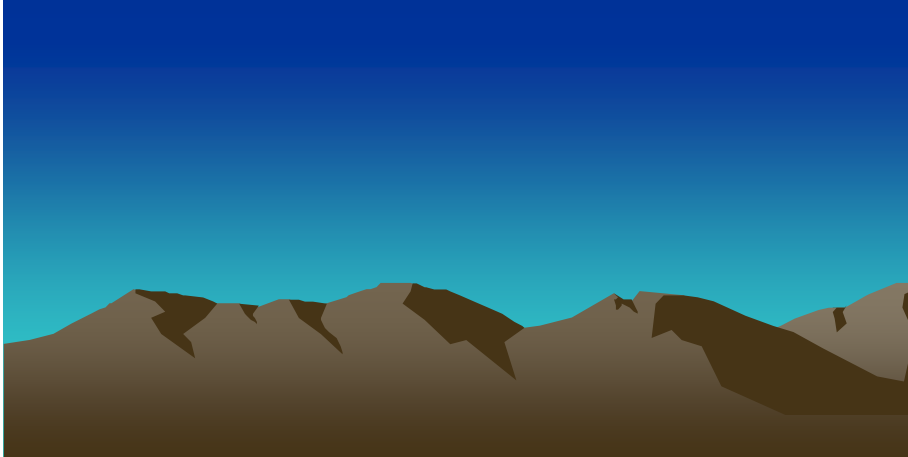


Places of peace and worship





As a Place for Art



- But it is now time to look at the very distinctive character of the Sublime Karst of Papua New Guinea

