

"Kaharian sa Ilalim"

The documentary "Kaharian sa Ilalim" by Kara David delves into the Capisaan Cave, one of the longest caves in the Philippines, located in Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya, stretching 4.2 kilometers. The cave was discovered by locals in the 1960s after noticing the large number of bats inhabiting it. The film highlights the cave's mystery and hidden beauty, which had been inaccessible for years due to human-related issues but is now open for exploration. The title likely reflects the cave's concealed splendor. Beyond showcasing the cave's natural wonders, the documentary also captures the challenges of reaching it and emphasizes the resilience of nature despite human exploitation.

At the start of the documentary, it already highlights how humans can be considered an invasive species on the planet. It illustrates how, when the cave was first discovered, people exploited its inhabitants, particularly the bats, by invading their habitat and using them as a food source. This led to a significant decline in the bat population. In 1997, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) stepped in to close the cave, restricting access to locals to safeguard not only the bats but also the remaining resources within. Inside the cave, the remnants of human cruelty are still apparent. Signs of desperation and the destructive actions of people, aided by their weapons, remain visible, almost as if they are part of the cave's natural features, leaving a lasting impression.

The documentary also sheds light on how people in remote areas sustain their lives, relying heavily on nature's resources for survival and continuity. This statement offers the audience a glimpse into the harsh realities of living in remote areas or perhaps anywhere—where survival often depends on hunting and utilizing natural resources. It underscores the role of nature as a primary provider and a crucial link in the food chain.

Furthermore, the closure of the cave led to a newfound appreciation for its true value, highlighting how Filipinos often take things for granted until it's almost too late. At the same time, it also showcased the resourcefulness of the Filipino people, as they found ways to utilize and benefit from the cave while ensuring its preservation.

Inside the cave, a glimpse of history is revealed through its unique and solid formations, created over years by the flow of water. These natural masterpieces, shaped by time and patience, stand as works of art beyond human capability. They hold untold stories that will likely remain a mystery. However, they also bear the scars of human cruelty, reflecting the damage inflicted over time.

The documentary also provides valuable insights about caves that, while seemingly unnecessary, are important to know. For example, it highlights the dangers of exploring caves and introduces viewers to various rock formations. Stalagmites are formations that grow upward from the ground, created by water droplets, while stalactites hang from the ceiling of the cave. Helictites, on the other hand, are characterized by their curly shapes. The stunning flowstone, attached to the cave walls, forms from the strong flow of water over time. Remarkably, these formations take at least a thousand years to fully develop. This knowledge not only fosters appreciation but also opens doors for further research into caves and the potential discoveries they hold.

The documentary also highlights the interconnectedness of nature. It reveals why some formations within the cave are remarkably clean and crystalized, thanks to the pristine condition of the forest above it. Clean water and an untouched forest, free from logging, contribute to the purity of the formations below. This indicates that the people of Kasibu are, at least, taking good care of their forest. Moreover, the film demonstrates nature's remarkable ability to heal and protect itself after destruction. The cave's spiky rock formations and its increasingly treacherous paths serve as natural defenses, showcasing how nature can adapt and safeguard its own beauty.

Nature has so much more to offer, and if we explore it responsibly, we can uncover incredible hidden treasures we never imagined existed. These discoveries might even hold solutions to pressing issues we face today, including environmental challenges. People must move beyond myths and misconceptions about the world around them. As mere tenants of this planet, we should learn to appreciate its gifts and avoid destroying the resources it has generously provided. This privilege demands preservation and proper utilization. The more we protect and care for nature, the more it will reveal its wonders and serve humanity.

Screenshot from the Documentary



Screenshot from the Documentary

