

monument you'll travel for 21km until reaching the turnoff for the climbing site. If you travel on the eastern side of the hills of Kep, you'll travel for 18km before needing to turn.

From Sihanokville (Kompong Som):

Taxis or rented motorcycle are just about the only ways to get from Sihanokville to Kompong Trach. The travel time is approximately 2 hours to Kampot and will cost about \$20-30US to get there.



Brent belaying on *Natural*, BENJAMIN TIPTON

Head east out of Sihanokville on route 4 for 44.5km then turn right (east) onto route 3 in the town of Prey Nob a kilometer or so after you cross the railroad tracks. Head east on route 3 for 53.5km until you reach the city of Kampot. (refer to directions "From Kampot" to continue on to K. Trach page 27)

From Thailand: If you are coming from the beaches of Thailand, the most scenic way into Cambodia is through the Koh Kong/Had Lek crossing. It also makes a stopover on Koh Chang island in Thailand a feasible addition to the journey from Bangkok. Cambodian visas are available at the border (although its always best to



buy a visa either at an embassy or online before traveling to any of Cambodia's land crossings, scams abound!).

Two options exist at present for travel to Sihanokville, but only one all the way to the Kampot/Kep area. A **ferry** departs Koh Kong at 8:00am every morning to Sihanokville (3 1/2—4 hrs. and \$12-15). If you are traveling all the way from Bangkok the trip will have to be broken up into two days so a stopover on Koh Chang or Koh Kong is suggested. Some guest houses on Khao San road do offer nighttime mini buses to the border before it opens a 7am to make it to the ferry but it's a grueling trip and not recommended. The ferry travels along the coast past islands and fisherman alike which can be a relaxing entry to Cambodia.

The other option that exists is **van/car taxi**. This option will provide you with a trip to Sihanokville or all the way to Kampot/Kep if you can find other riders that would like to head to the same location. Once you get through customs, or actually while your waiting for your paperwork to be completed, you'll be heckled to join a taxi that is "ready to leave," be wary that the taxi is indeed ready to leave, as in the taxi is almost full and ready to depart, taxis only leave when they are full. Rates for either of these journeys are always in flux. Expect to pay anywhere between \$5-25 per seat depending on your bargaining skills, ways of persuasion. The travel time is about 3-5 hours depending on the wait at the four ferry crossings along the way.

Note: The government is improving Route 48 between Koh Kong and Route 4 and when bridges and better roads are completed bus service will commence immediately.

Lodging: Many options exist for all ranges of budget and location but lodging options with anything that resemble amenities exist only in Kep or Kampot. As far as amenities and ease of travel Kampot is the ideal location in the area, but if you are looking for a relaxing time without city noise head to Kep.



Cloister Wall



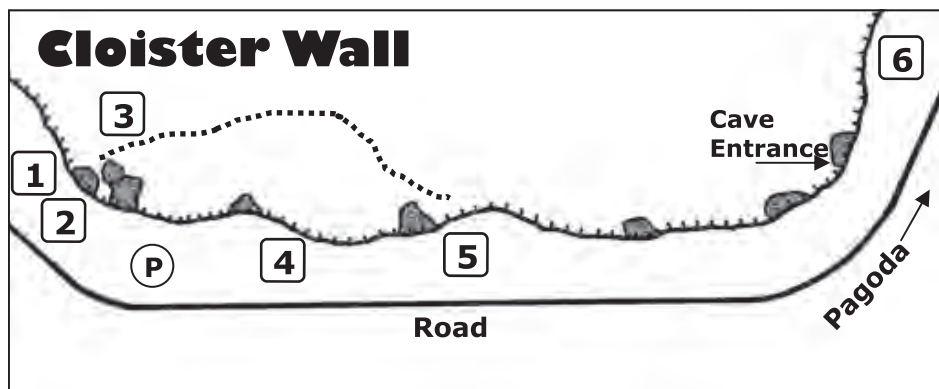
Both Kampot and Kep have quality guesthouses available. In Kep you'll need to choose between near the water or on the hill. The hill has great views. Options abound in both locations for a general map of the area look to the map with directions to the climbing sites (pages 27 & 28).

CLOISTER WALL

This wall was named *Cloister* because of its close proximity to a Buddhist temple and sacred reclining Buddha. Just around the corner from Cloister wall is the pagoda which is quite popular with the locals and foreigners alike. The temple area affords cooler temperatures in the hot season, so it's quite popular with the local children. It's also popular as place to practice English with the occasional foreign visitor.

Cloister has a lot of potential to be developed in the years to come,





but as it is now it doesn't have many routes. A large cave is also accessible near the Pagoda entrance (see map above for details). If you plan on exploring the caves in the area you'll need to bring along a torch.

Finding the Wall: Once you have arrived in Kompong Trach town, approaching from Kampot (west), you'll be looking for a small market on your left and a Pagoda to your right (south). Pass both of these land marks and start looking for a road that heads north (left hand side of the road) that looks as though it leads to a small hill on the horizon. Turn onto this road and travel until you meet the hill in the distance. (If you are traveling on route 33 and meet a bridge you've gone too far, turn around.)

Once at the base of the hill, the road splits. Take a right under the arch. Continue around the corner and begin looking for the *Entrance Exam* on your left—a hundred meters or so before the entrance to the Pagoda. (Or if you have GPS: 10°34'20.49"N 104°28'18.42"E)

1. **Entrance Exam** (5.7) Begin just left of the cave and traverse over it. Continue up the crack on the right to the bolts at the top. This short climb is fastest way to the top of the wall for



access to *Natural's* anchors.

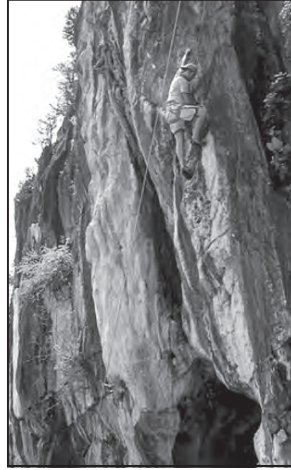
2. **Passed** (5.8) An alternative route directly below the anchor for *Entrance Exam* is worth a go before pulling the rope if not in a rush or you have beginners in your group.

3. **Old Woman's Teeth** (5.3, scramble)

This scramble is difficult enough that a short description is needed. Once up *Entrance Exam* traverse up and to the right over a large hole. (It is suggested that you are roped in for this traverse.) Once across the hole proceed straight to a corridor that runs parallel with the road below. Continue for 15 meters until you see a red piece of webbing (or come to a dead-end) and then proceed over the small edge (to your right) of the corridor down and gradually traversing left and towards the Pagoda. At this point you'll see a small concave on the edge of the rock face. Just over the edge from this position the anchor may be seen and set for rappel. It's helpful if someone stays on the ground and directs your movements because this route can be very confusing.

4. **Chute** (5.9) This chimney doesn't have many options for pro or an anchor at the top, the route is pretty self explanatory. Start to the right of the large cave with water in it. It's a bit sharp but worth a go.

5. **Natural** (5.10a) Much enjoyed by those that are fond of varied routes. Start directly below the anchor and choose a route to your liking. Many prefer the

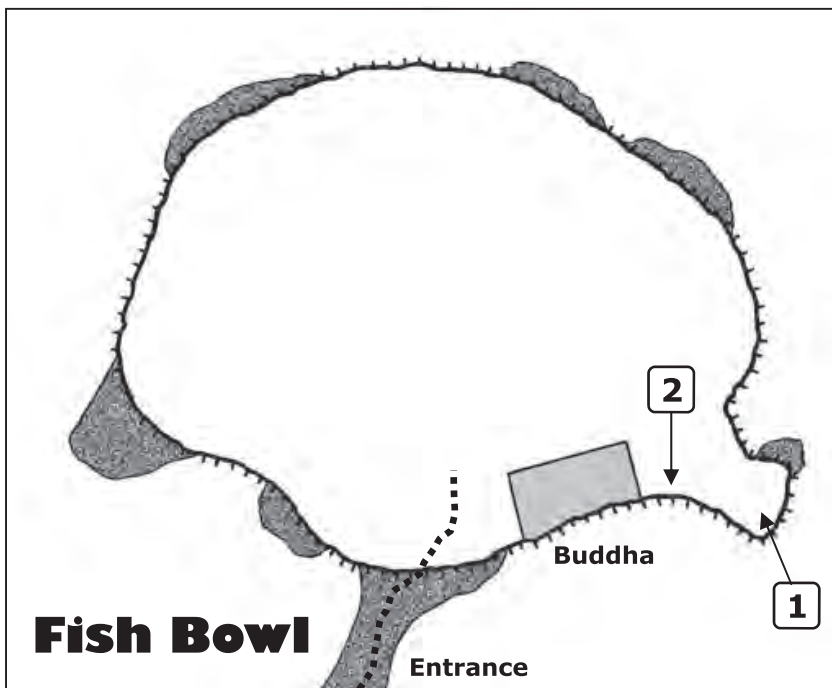


Barak Bruerd on *Natural*



Kim on *Cactus Climb* RYAN SINCLAIR





outer exposed line, but you can also stay the course up the chimney to the finish.

6. **Cactus Climb** (5.9) The route is located near the entrance to the Pagoda. No anchors or bolts, and little in the way of available placement.

FISH BOWL

It's an area that gives you the feeling that you're in a fish bowl, literally and figuratively. This site is located within the mountain itself. It's in a sink hole carved out by ocean and waves years and years ago when sea water covered the entire area. Now-a-days it's home to a reclining Buddha, caves, much needed shade on hot days and refreshing cool breezes. The figurative part of the fish bowl comes from the area's other residents -the local children that





Inside the center of *Fish Bowl*

offer to be your personal tour guide and light your way through the caves with their makeshift torches for a small fee. When not leading visitors, they'll surely be interested in what you are doing in their sink hole. Needless to say you'll have a lot of onlookers if you climb at *Fish Bowl*. An abundance of interesting caves are available for exploring so bring a torch if you'd also like to look around a bit.

Finding the Cliffs:

From *Cloister* you'll head into the gate and Pagoda grounds to your right (north-east) when facing the cliff. Once on the Pagoda grounds, you'll need to pass through a small cave section to enter *Fish Bowl*, so park your car in the available shade and head for the cave entrance to the east. Pass through the cave and you are there.



The Reclined Buddha in *Fish Bowl*

1. **Don't Tap on the Glass** (unrated) Found just around the corner from the reclining Buddha this route has large vines at the start of the climb. No anchor at the top.
2. **Buddha** (unrated) The start is located just next to Buddha's head. No anchor at the top. Routes vary.



