

REWARD

to all explorers who provide samples of ores, soils, minerals or other natural formations previously unknown to a man.

by Katarina Bozanic

Introduction

The recent unexpected seismic activity of the extinct volcano on Mt. Hidrasu, has become the main focus of the study of our Institute. After careful investigation of the information and samples collected during the prospecting expedition to Mt. Hidrasu, we can now confirm that the cause of the disturbance is not the volcano itself, but the mysterious organism which inhabits the volcanic cone. Although the most impressive characteristic of this creature is its colossal size, it remained unknown until now due to the fact that it is a sessile organism, buried deep in the volcanic crater, with only minute portion of its anterior part protruding above the ground. In this report we intend to present the key aspects of this organism's morphology and physiology as a means to better understand its function and place in the nature.

16 Expulsion tube

When the post-larva settles in the cocoon, the muscles in the expulsion tube contract, launching the cocoons high out in the air, with the purpose of landing on the habitable ground. The offspring than must escape from the cocoon, by cutting its way out.

15 Cocoons

At the far end of the carpel, four cocoons are located. Their function is to protect the offspring in the final stage of transformation and transport out of the parent's body.

14 Carpel

In this enclosed chamber embryos develop into the larvae. All larvae are photosensitive and aggressive. The large number of offspring in three distinct larval stages can be found in this chamber:

- a) the nauplius stage is characterized by the use of the pair of the head appendages for crawling and attack;
- b) the zoea stage is characterized by the use of thoracic appendages for leaping, and the head appendages for attack;
- c) the megalopa stage is represented by a single, large post-larva, which uses the three pairs of thoracic appendages for catching the pray and two pairs of head tentacles for poisoning the opponent.

13 Zygote

The fertilization resembles the more complex form of pollination in the plants: the pollinator first places an egg cell in the cup above the bridge; after that, the pollinator must find a male gamete of an adequate shape, and place it in the receptive cavity in the egg. After a zygote is formed, the canal leading to the carpel opens.

12 Male gametes

Up to eight male reproductive cells hang from the elastic fillaments. Each spermatium has unique four pointed star shape. When approached, the fillaments move as tentacles, attacking the intruder.

11 Female gametes

Large egg cells are not capable of free movement. Each ovum has the unique four pointed star receptive cavity in the middle. Only one egg will have a receptive cavity complementary to the only one spermatium.

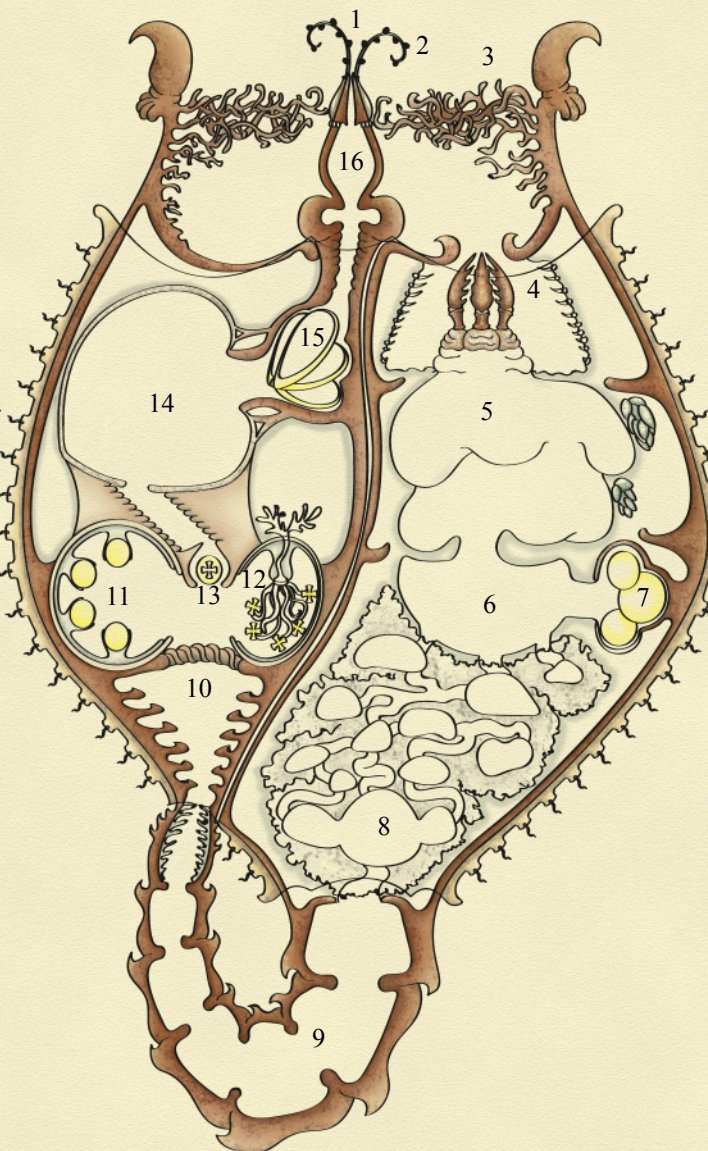
10 Reproductive glands

In this hermaphrodite creature, female and male reproductive organs are connected via an elastic bridge.

Conclusion

Due to the strange bodily symmetry of this organism, it is clear that the creature can be oriented either vertically or horizontally in the ground. Because of its predatory feeding behavior and its size, we suggest issuing a warning note to the miners and general population to avoid visiting Mt. Hidrasu until further notice.

Ignatius Levine,
Head of Geobotanical department of Imperial Prospecting Institute



1 Antennae

The most obvious superterranean organs are two antennae. They are sensory organs, receptive to touch, air motion, vibration, and olfaction.

2 Pseudo geodes

Attached to the antennae are numerous formations that resemble mineral geodes in appearance. The exact nature of those formations is not clear, but it is presumed that they are organs of aggressive mimicry, used to attract living prey with strong psychoactive aerosol.

3 Tentacles

After the pray is lured, the net of flexible, muscular tentacles is used for grasping the living food and introducing it to the mouth.

4 Mandibles

The large, serrated mandibles are developed for holding, cutting, and chewing food, but also for fighting. Because of those functions, they are covered in the same hard carapace as the exterior of the body. However, in the joints the mandibles are much softer since the elastic tissue is exposed.

5 Stomach

This large, hollow organ is covered in a deep layer of protective mucus which also hinders the movement of any still living pray. Not all species comprising the gut flora have been identified, but some of them include:

- a) several types of massive amoeboid formations capable of digesting different organic and inorganic materials;
- b) species of a poisonous fish-like creatures;
- c) electric eels.

6 Coelenteron

This is sac like cavity where nutritient absorption takes place. It is important to note that coelenteron has only one entrance point; the digestive tract of an organism ends here, and only narrow canals conduct water and nutritions to the spongy tissue.

7 Excretory vesicles

In the appendix leading from the coelenteron are located large vesicles, used to contain waste materials from the digestion. Since no expulsion opening of the digestive tract exists, it seems that the liquid contents of the vesicles are excreted from the organism through the flagella on the carapace. However, the large indigestible particles, such as gems, metal objects of quality or bones, can be found in the large quantity inside the vesicles.

8 Spongy tissue

The function of the spongy tissue is to allow the exchange of gases. Because of that, this tissue is soft and porous and can be cut through with ease. It is still debated about the function of this organism which lives in the spongy tissue, but it is possible that it is a parasite related to the common lungworms, only of the giant size. It reproduces in the spongy tissue, and therefore immobile eggs and aggressive larvae can be encountered in its tunnels.

9 Syphon

The pseudocaudate hollow tube connects the gastrointestinal and the reproductive regions. Since in the walls of the syphon are located the main circulatory vessels, its tube is infested with a large population of flying leeches.