

Meteor lights up Thai skies and social media

7 September 2015



A meteor showered Thailand's ancient capital Ayutthaya in 1998

Thais were left stunned Monday after a suspected meteor streaked through the daytime skies in a phenomena that also quickly lit up social media.

Footage from one Bangkok dashboard car camera captured a fireball followed by a brilliant white flash, that was also seen across the country.

"It was the middle of a blue sky day and there was a quick, [bright light](#) coming down," said Porjai Jaturongkhakun whose dashcam recorded the scene as he drove to work.

"I usually see shooting stars at night but I have never seen one in the day before," the 30-year-old satellite engineer told AFP.

Porjai was one of a number of Thais who managed to capture the dramatic incident on their car dashboard cameras—with such footage and witness accounts quickly going viral on [social media](#).

"It was a meteor for sure, I am confident, because it was fast and very bright", Voravit Tanvuttibundit, adviser to the National Astronomical Research

Institute of Thailand told AFP on Monday.

"It is a normal occurrence but the meteor this morning was especially big and very bright", Voravit explained, adding that he also witnessed the meteor around 8.40 am (0140 GMT).

In a country imbued with superstition, many took the [meteor strike](#) as an ill omen.

"It was a bad sign showing the country and the government is in chaos," Facebook user Dilok Jantaradilok wrote.

What we often call "falling stars" are actually tiny bits of space rock that smash into the atmosphere at about 60 kilometres (37 miles) per second, burning up in flashes of light.

Occasionally, much bigger strikes are seen involving larger chunks of debris.

In October 2013, many Russian dashcams captured the astonishing moment a meteor weighing 10,000 tonnes exploded above the Urals, scattering over a wide area and injuring more than 1,000 people.

The force of that meteor explosion was the equivalent to 30 of the nuclear bombs dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima during World War II.

Affordable and easy to use dashcams are becoming ubiquitous in many corners of the world, particularly to help settle insurance disputes.

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