

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 3<sup>rd</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON ADVANCES IN MINING AND TUNNELING  
21-22 OCTOBER 2014, VUNG TAU, VIET NAM

# ADVANCES IN MINING AND TUNNELING

PUBLISHING HOUSE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
HA NOI, VIET NAM - 2014

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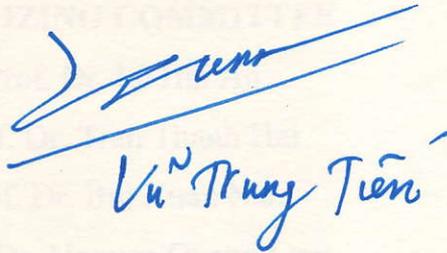
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PROCEEDINGS OF THE 3<sup>rd</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
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## CONTENTS

No		Page
	<b>PREFACE</b>	1
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINE GEOLOGY</b>		
1	NEURAL NETWORK APPROACH FOR MIOCENE CARBONATE PREDICTION IN NAM CON SON BASIN <b>LE Hai An</b>	5
2	APPLICATION OF AHP WITH GIS FOR PREDICTIVE COPPER POTENTIAL MAPPING: A CASE STUDY IN LUNG PO - HOP THANH AREA, LAO CAI PROVINCE, VIET NAM <b>BUI Hoang Bac, NGUYEN Tien Dung, PHAN Viet Son, DO Manh An, KHUONG The Hung</b>	9
3	CHARACTERISTICS AND POTENTIAL OF RARE-EARTH ORE AT NORTH NAM XE DEPOSIT, LAI CHAU PROVINCE, VIET NAM <b>NGUYEN Tien Dung, BUI Hoang Bac</b>	14
4	THE CHALLENGE TO DISCOVER DEEP MINERAL DEPOSITS IN VIETNAM TO INCREASE THE COUNTRY'S MINERAL INVENTORY <b>NGUYEN Thi Thuc Anh, VU Van Luong, Howell WILLIAM JS</b>	20
5	APPLICATION OF REMOTE SENSING TECHNIQUE TO DETECT AND MAP THE IRON OXIDE, CLAY AND FERROUS MINERALS IN THAI NGUYEN PROVINCE, VIET NAM <b>TRINH Le Hung, VUONG Trong Kha, BUI Thi Thanh Lan</b>	25
6	OPTIMIZATION OF LIMESTONE AND CLAY EXTRACTION AND QUALITY CONTROL BY USING BLOCK MODELS-QSO EXPERT AND QUARRY-MASTER FOR MINES OF HON CHONG CEMENT PLANT - HOLCIM (VIETNAM) LTD <b>NGUYEN Van Huong</b>	30
7	QUALITY AND RESERVES OF THE YEN THAI GRAPHITE DEPOSIT, YEN BAI PROVINCE <b>LUONG Quang Khang, BUI Hoang Bac</b>	42
8	DETERMINATION OF OPTIMAL EXPLORATION DRILLHOLE SPACING OF A COAL DEPOSIT BY CONDITIONAL SIMULATION METHOD <b>Pornprom NIMWATTANAKUL, Panlop HUTTAGOSOL</b>	47
9	CHALLENGES TO THE USE OF THERMO-ACTIVE GEOSTRUCTURES IN VIET NAM <b>NGUYEN Van Tri, TANG Anh Minh, PEREIRA Jean Michel and YAVARI Neda</b>	52
10	USING LERCHS & GROSSMANN 2D ALGORITHM TO DESIGN ULTIMATE PIT LIMITS OF SIN QUYEN COPPER DEPOSIT <b>VU Dinh Trong, TRAN Dinh Bao</b>	60
11	THE FEATURE OF SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION OF ANTHRACITE COAL IN VIETNAM COAL MINE <b>LE Trung Tuyen, NHU Viet Tuan, NGUYEN Tuan Anh, Kotaro OHGA, Takehiro ISEI</b>	65
12	GLOBAL RARE EARTH ELEMENTS DEMAND AND POTENTIAL RARE EARTH MINING IN VIETNAM <b>PHAN Quang Van, NGUYEN Phuong, DO Van Nhuan, NGUYEN Truong Giang, TRINH Dinh Huan</b>	69

**MINING TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNIQUE**

13	ANALAYZING AND EVALUATING THE RESEARCH RESULT OF EXPERIMENTAL BLASTS AT NUI BEO SURFACE COAL MINE TO REDUCE GROUND VIBRATION AND AIR BLAST NEAR RESIDENTIAL AREA NGUYEN Dinh An, TRAN Quang Hieu, DO Ngoc Hoan, TRAN Dinh Bao, BELIN Vladimir Arnoldovich	79
14	PROCESSING OF COAL IN TECHNOLOGICAL SYSTEMS OF MINING ENTERPRISES Atrushkevich V.A. , Atrushkevich A.V.	83
15	ANALYSIS OF VEIN-TYPE GRAPHITE MINING METHODS IN SRILANKA PGR Dharmaratne, PVA Hemalal1, MC Hettiwatte	86
16	CORNER GAS ACCUMULATION CONTROL TECHNOLOGY OF FULLY MECHANIZED COAL FACE DAO Viet Doan, ZHANG Xiao-lei, ZHAO Hong-chao, LI Gen-sheng, GUI Ding- Yang, TRAN Xuan Huy	89
17	APPLICATION OF GOLDSIM SIMULATION FOR MINE WATER BALANCE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT MODELING LE Thi Minh Hanh, NGUYEN Tam Tinh, BUI Xuan Nam, PHAM Van Hoa, NGUYEN Hoang	92
18	PREDICTION AND MINIMISATION OF VIBRATIONS ON STRUCTURES DURING PRODUCTION BLASTS IN A SURFACE COAL MINE – A CASE STUDY PHAM Van Hoa, NGUYEN Sy Hiep, LE Van Quyen, TRAN Dinh Bao, LE Qui Thao	98
19	DETERMINATION OF SHOVEL - TRUCK PRODUCTIVITIES IN OPEN - PIT MINES NGUYEN Hoang, DOAN Trong Luat, LE Qui Thao, DO Ngoc Hoan, PHAM Van Viet	103
20	METHODS USED FOR IMPROVING STABILIZATION AND PREDICTING ARD AREA FOR COAL MINE WASTE DUMPS IN VIET NAM LE Thi Minh Hanh, NGUYEN Tam Tinh, BUI Xuan Nam, LE Thi Thu Hoa, VU Dinh Hieu	109
21	EFFECTS OF CLIMATIC CONDITIONS ON AIR BLAST OVERPRESSURE WHEN BLASTING NEAR RESIDENTS AREA AT SURFACE COAL MINES IN QUANG NINH TRAN Quang Hieu, NGUYEN Dinh An, PHAM Van Viet, TA Minh Duc, BELIN Vladimir Arnoldovich	116
22	STUDY ON THE PROPER BACKFILL MATERIALS IN COAL MINING USING BACKFILL TECHNOLOGY AT CANH NAM AREA OF MAO KHE COAL MINE VU Thanh Lam, NGUYEN Anh Tuan, DAO Hong Quang, DUONG Duc Hai	120
23	RESEARCH FOR PREDICTING LOST ZONES AND FIGHTING LOST CIRCULATION IN THE FRACTURED BASEMENT OF WHITE TIGER FIELD HOANG Hong Linh	127
24	RESEARCH ON SELECTIVE MINING TECHNOLOGY BY HYDRAULIC BACKHOE EXCAVATORS FOR SURFACE COAL MINES IN QUANG NINH, VIET NAM BUI Xuan Nam	135
25	METHODS FOR DETERMINING OF SAFETY FINAL LIMITS OF SAND MINING ON TIEN RIVER NGUYEN Xuan Quang, LUU Van Tam	144

79	26	RESEARCH ON SELECTION OF THE EXCAVATOR-AUTOMOBILE COMBINATION FOR OPEN PIT IRON ORE MINES IN WEAK GROUND CONDITION IN VIETNAM LUU Van Thuc, NGUYEN Van Duc	147
83	27	STUDY ON THE THICK AND HARD ROOF CONTROL METHOD IN THE LONGWALL OF QUANG HANH COAL MINE IN QUANG NINH PROVINCE VU Trung Tien, DO Anh Son, NGUYEN Van Quang	153
86	28	USING DREDGER FOR MINING TITANIUM PLACER IN RED SAND STRATA IN NINH THUAN AND BINH THUAN PROVINCES OF VIET NAM LE Qui Thao, VU Dinh Hieu, NGUYEN Hoang, NGUYEN Xuan Quang	158
89	29	DOMESTIC PRODUCTION OF UNDERGROUND GAS MONITORING SYSTEM TO REPLACE WITH IMPORTED SYSTEM FOR VIET NAM COAL MINES LUU Van Thuc, LE Van Hai, PHAM Van Hieu, NGUYEN Manh Cuong	165
92	30	STUDY ON THE STRESS DISTRIBUTION AHEAD OF FACE WHEN THE RATIO OF CUTTING HEIGHT TO CAVING HEIGHT VARIES IN THE EXTRACTION OF EXTRA-THICK SEAM BY FULLY MECHANIZED TOP COAL CAVING TECHNOLOGY BUI Manh Tung, LIU Chang-you, LE Tien Dung, GUO Wei-bin	169
	<b>MINERAL PROCESSING</b>		
98	31	STUDY ON CONCENTRATING BEACH SAND FROM SOUTHERN HAM THUAN, BINH THUAN PROVINCE, VIET NAM PHAM Huu Giang, NHU Thi Kim Dung	179
103	32	REAGENTS IN SODIUM FELDSPAR FLOTATION Wilasluk JUMPA, Chairaj RATTANAKAWIN	185
109	33	MODELING OF FLOW RATE OF MINERALS WITH VARYING SILO HALF ANGLES AND ORIFICE DIAMETERS Kankanamge LUM, Rohitha LPS, Dharmaratne PGR	190
116	34	TRIAL RESULTS OF LOCAL MADE FLOTATION REAGENTS FOR FLOTATION OF FINE COAL SLURRY AT HON GAI COAL WASHING PLANT PHAM Van Luan, NGUYEN Ngoc Phu	194
120	35	EFFECT OF PINE OIL AND KEROSENE ON SEPARATION EFFICIENCY OF FINE COAL SIZE RANGE 0.1 - 3MM IN FLUIDIZED BED SEPARATOR TYPE RC PHAM Van Luan, NGUYEN Hoang Son, NGUYEN Ngoc Phu	197
127	36	EFFECTS OF WATER AND AIR PULSATION ON THE SEPARATION PERFORMANCE OF FINE COAL OF SIZE FRACTION 0.1 - 3 MM IN FLUIDIZED BED SEPARATOR NGUYEN Ngoc Phu, PHAM Van Luan, NGUYEN Hoang Son	200
135	37	A LEACHING OF GOLD FLOTATION CONCENTRATE FROM MINH LUONG MINE, LAO CAI PROVINCE IN ALKALINE THIOUREA SOLUTION NGUYEN Hoang Son	204
144	38	RESEARCH INTO TECHNOLOGICAL REGIME OF COAL SIZE FRACTION OF 0.1 - 3MM WASHING BY FLUIDIZED BED SEPARATOR NGUYEN Hoang Son, PHAM Van Luan, NGUYEN Ngoc Phu	208
	39	REAGENTS IN PYRITE DEPRESSION FOR COPPER PORPHYRY ORES FLOTATION Attapol SAYKAMTA, Chairaj RATTANAKAWIN	213
	40	BISMUTH EXTRACTION FROM NUI PHAO BISMUTH FLOTATION CONCENTRATE	218

# STUDY ON THE STRESS DISTRIBUTION AHEAD OF FACE WHEN THE RATIO OF CUTTING HEIGHT TO CAVING HEIGHT VARIES IN THE EXTRACTION OF EXTRA-THICK SEAM BY FULLY MECHANIZED TOP COAL CAVING TECHNOLOGY

BUI Manh Tung<sup>1,2\*</sup>, LIU Chang-you<sup>2</sup>, LE Tien Dung<sup>1</sup>, GUO Wei-bin<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hanoi University of Mining and Geology, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

<sup>2</sup>School of Mines, Key Laboratory of Deep Coal Resource Mining, Jiangsu 221116, China

\*Corresponding author's email: manhtungvnn@gmail.com

**Abstract:** The extraction with higher cutting height for extra-thick seam is being the new research orientation in longwall caving technology. Due to increase the top of coal thickness and cutting height which leads to the change of cutting/caving height ratio, the rule of roof failure (including top coal caving) and the distribution of stress around the face alter correspondingly. This paper is based on the geological conditions of face 8102 of Tashan-DaTong mine, employing the numerical model by UDEC<sup>2D</sup> code, analysing the effect of cutting/caving height ratio on the law of stress distribution ahead of the face. When the ratio of cutting/caving height decreases and the cutting height increases, the results of research have shown that: (i) - peak stress redistributes further ahead of the face and its value manifestly drops; (ii) - the plastic deformation ahead of face significant increases and the zone of plastic strain also expands. Therefore concluded that the variation of cutting/caving height ratio results in the redistribution of roof pressure which contributes to the control of roof failure and face stability.

**Key words:** Extra-thick seam, Extra-cutting height, Cutting/caving height ratio, Stress distribution.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The extraction of longwall top coal caving from the initially geological condition to the caving stage can be divided into two stages of fracturing process and flowing/caving process. The effective fracturing of top coal is crucially beneficial to the caving, which is mainly dominated by the stress distribution in surrounding rock mass. Hence, the study on capability of top coal should be based on the rule of stress distribution around the longwall.

## 2. GEOLOGICAL CONDITIONS OF MINE

Seam 3-5<sup>#</sup> varies in thickness from 12.63 to 29.20m, on average of 20m. The seam has comparative complex structure with high cleavage and a single rock band of 0.6m thickness. The rock mass is mainly composed of kaolin stone, kaolin-claystone, claystone-sandstone.

Systems of joint relatively develop in the seam. Seam has moderate strength from 27MPa to 37MPa, on average of 32MPa. The spacing between the joints is from 15cm to 25cm. The distance between the main joints is from 1.0m to 1.2m. Joint angle is 55°. Coal is brittle and easy be crushed.

The immediate roof rock mass is the metamorphic kaolin, schist and penetrated-igneous rock. The thickness of immediate roof is uniform from 2m to 8m. The strength of igneous rock is of grade IV in Protodiakonov classification. Stratigraphic column is shown in Fig. 1.

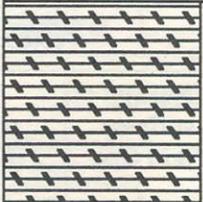
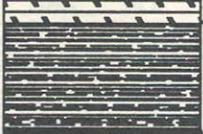
Stratigraphic column	Thickness /m	Properties
	15.45	Sandstone
	7.2	Claystone-sandstone
	16.8	Coalseam 3-5#
	14.7	Silt stone

Fig. 1. Stratigraphic column

### 3. LAW OF STRESS DISTRIBUTION AHEAD OF FACE WHEN THE CUTTING TO CAVING HEIGHT RATIO CHANGES

To study the effect of cutting/caving height ratio on the stress distribution law ahead of face, the numerical modelling UDEC<sup>2D</sup> code is employed for the simulation and analysis.

#### 3.1 Model generation

The model is based on the geological data of face 8102, TaShan Datong mine. The depth is from 300m to 500m. The average thickness is 20m. The seam dip angle is stable from 2 to 10 degree, on average of 6 degree. The rock mass is highly jointed. The geomechanical properties of rock mass and joints are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

In model, the X axis represents the strike while the Y axis is the vertical one. The length of model is 400m;

the height is 160m; the depth of mining is 450m; thickness of seam is 20m. The framework of model is outlined in Fig. 2. The models are built up with the ratio of cutting/caving height being 1:4.55 (cutting height 3.6m), 1:3 (cutting height 5.0m) and 1:2.08 (cutting height 6.5m) respectively.

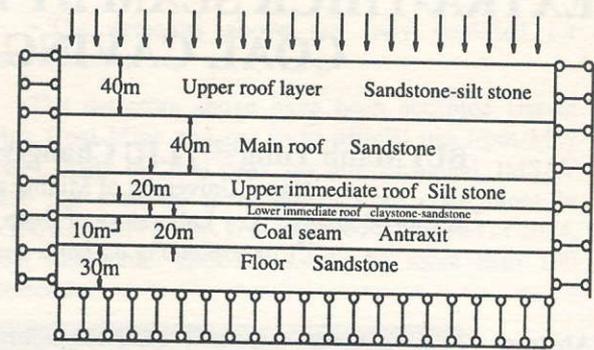


Fig. 2. Frame of model

Table 1: Material properties of model

Layers	Density d/N·m <sup>-3</sup>	Shear modulus (K) Gpa	Bulk modulus (G) Gpa	Cohesion (C) Mpa	Internal friction f/°	Tensile strength t/Mpa
Main roof	2500	25	18	4	45	2
Upper immediate roof	2500	17.5	10	2	38	1.3
Lower immediate roof	2500	12	3	1.4	35	0.93
Coal seam	1400	3.2	1.2	1	33	0.3
Immediate floor	2679	12	3	1.4	35.8	0.93

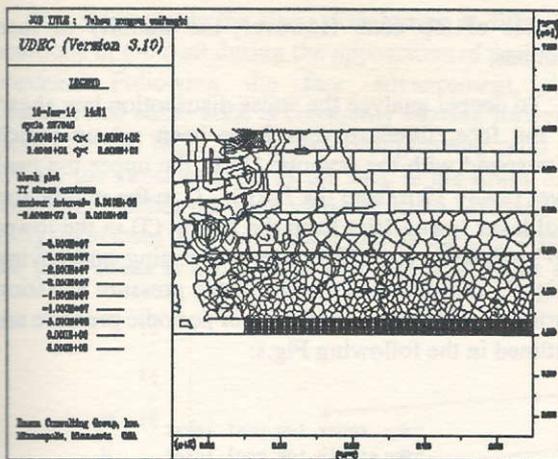
Table 2: Joints properties of model

Layers	Normal stiffness (jkn) Gpa	Shear stiffness (jks) Gpa	Cohesion (jcoh) Mpa	Internal friction Jfric /°	Tensile strength (jten) Mpa
Main roof	11	7	0.08	35	0.05
Upper immediate roof	9	6	0.06	32	0.04
Lower immediate roof	7	4.5	0	0	0
Coal seam	5	3	0.04	15	0.02
Immediate floor	7	4.5	0.04	15	0.04

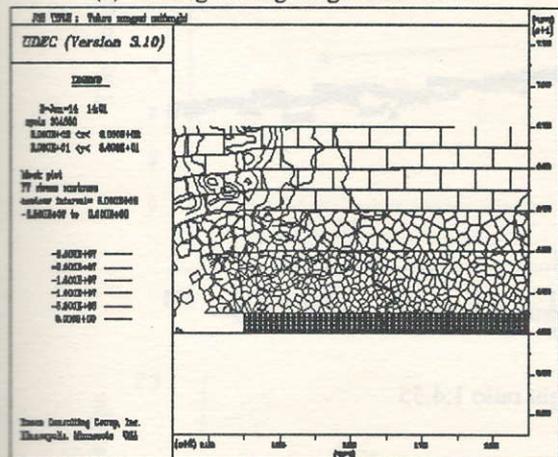
#### 3.2 Analysis of Result

The rotation of main roof and the compression of the entire main roof are the major factors affecting the breakage of roof rock and top coal. The zone adjacent to face is called the balanced-abutment stress zone. The bordering point between this zone and the elastic

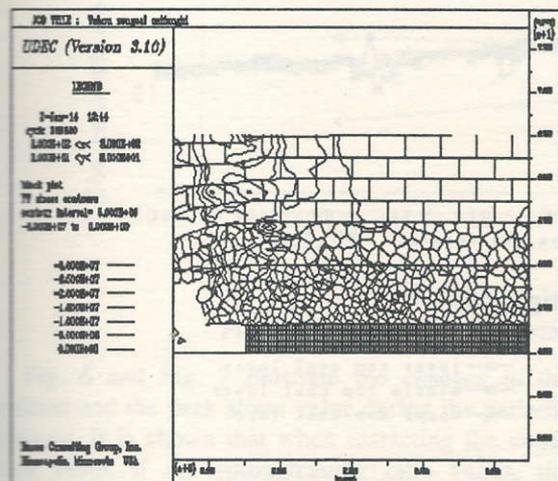
deformation zone is called the peak abutment stress. The stress distributing ahead of the face is divided into decreasing stress zone, increasing stress zone and the primary stress zone. Fig. 3 and Fig. 4 show the stress distribution in front the face during and after the appearance of periodic stress when the cutting/caving height ratios are 1:4.55, 1:3, and 1:2.08.



(a) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:4.5



(b) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:3

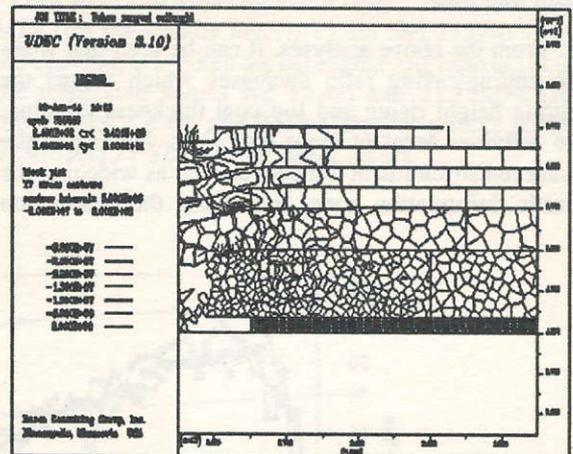


(c) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:2.08

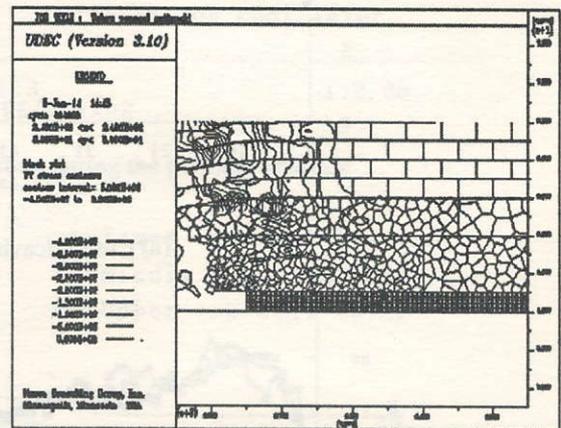
Fig. 3. Stress distribution in front of the face during the appearance of periodic pressure

The analysis of modelling shows that during the appearance of periodic pressure and subject to the decrease of cutting/caving ratio: the plastic deformation is greatly damaged; the ability of top coal to resist the failure falls down; the increasing stress area expands and moves further from the coal face, leading failure

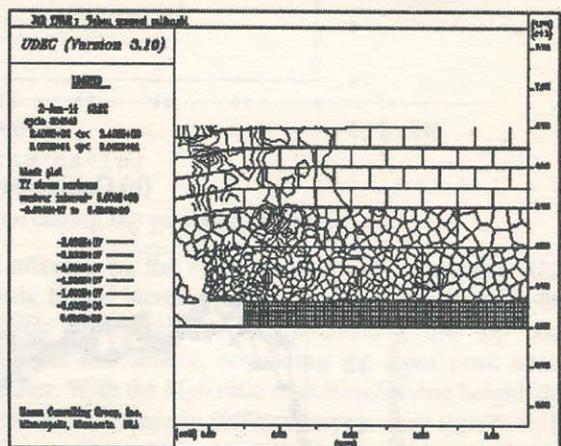
zone of top coal to develop. This is beneficial to the failure of top coal which is broken mainly due to the rotary effect of main roof rock mass.



(a) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:4.55



(b) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:3



(c) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:2.08

Fig. 4. Stress distribution in front of the face after the appearance of periodic pressure

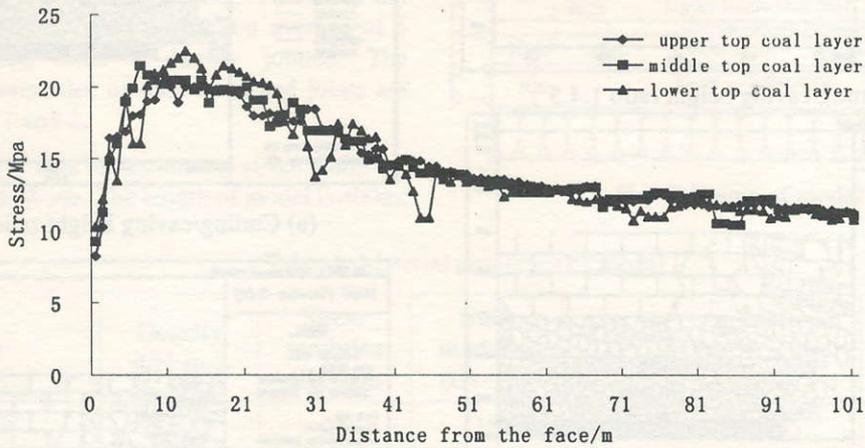
After the appearance of periodic pressure, the model indicates that subject to the decrease of cutting/caving ratio: the increasing stress area moves from the top to the adjacent face zone; the increasing

stress area dwindles and moves to the contiguous zone of shearer zone. At this moment, the failure of top coal is mainly controlled by the compression of the entire main roof rock.

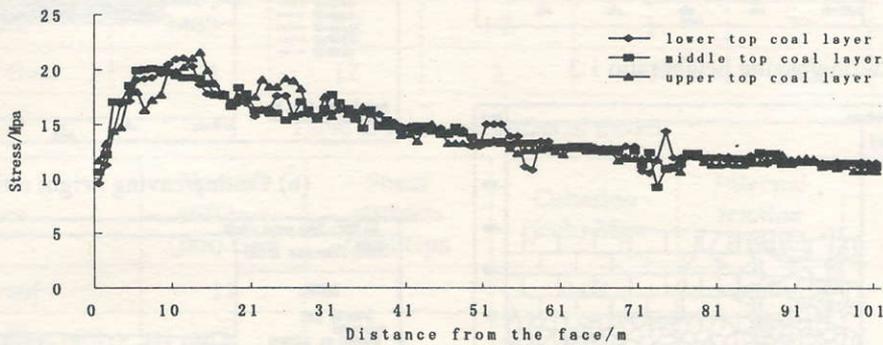
From the above analyses, it can be seen that when the cutting/caving ratio decreases which means the cutting height rising and top coal thickness thinning, the activities level of main roof rises, leading to the stress redistribution at top coal as well as widening the plastic deformation zone, improving the destruction

process of top coal. However, the stability of face declines.

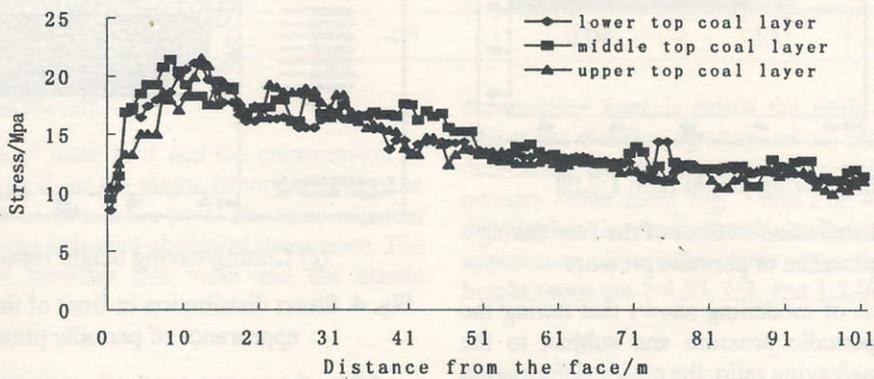
To deeper analyze the stress distribution law ahead of the face, three surveys have been set up which correspond with the layouts: (1) in the upper top coal layer (away 19m from the floor); (2) in the middle top coal layer (away 10m from the floor); (3) in the lower top coal layer (interface between cutting and caving height). The statistical results of the pressure variation during and after the appearance of periodic pressure are outlined in the following Fig.s:



(a) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:4.55



(b) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:3



(c) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:2.08

Fig. 5. Graph of stress distribution in front of the face during the appearance of periodic pressure

Fig. 5 represents the stress distribution at different positions in top coal during the appearance of periodic pressure. Following the face advancement, the concentrated stress zone is constantly moving forward from the coal face. When the cutting/caving ratio is 1:4.55, the stress in front of the face at the lower top coal layer reaches the peak value of 20.76 MPa and is away 9.4m from the face. For the middle top coal layer, the peak stress is away 6.4m with the peak value of

21.45 MPa. The position is away 12.4m and the peak value is 22.46MPa for the upper top coal layer. When the cutting/caving ratio is 1:3, the respective values are 11.4m and 21.01MPa (for lower layer); 7.4m and 21.40 MPa (for the middle layer); 13.4m and 21.6MPa (for the upper layer). When the cutting/caving ratio is 1:2.08, the respective values are 12.4m and 21.13MPa (for lower layer); 8.4m and 21.39MPa (for middle layer); 12.4m and 21.52MPa (for upper layer).

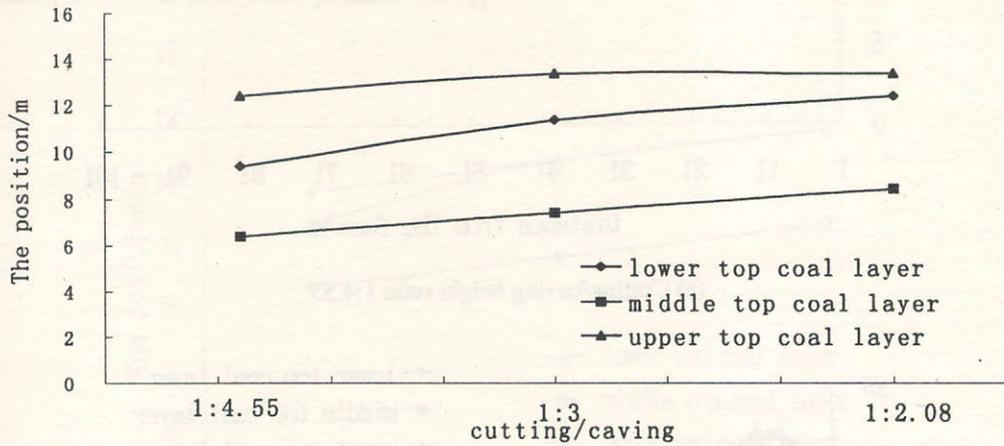


Fig. 6. Change of front peak stress position during the periodic pressure

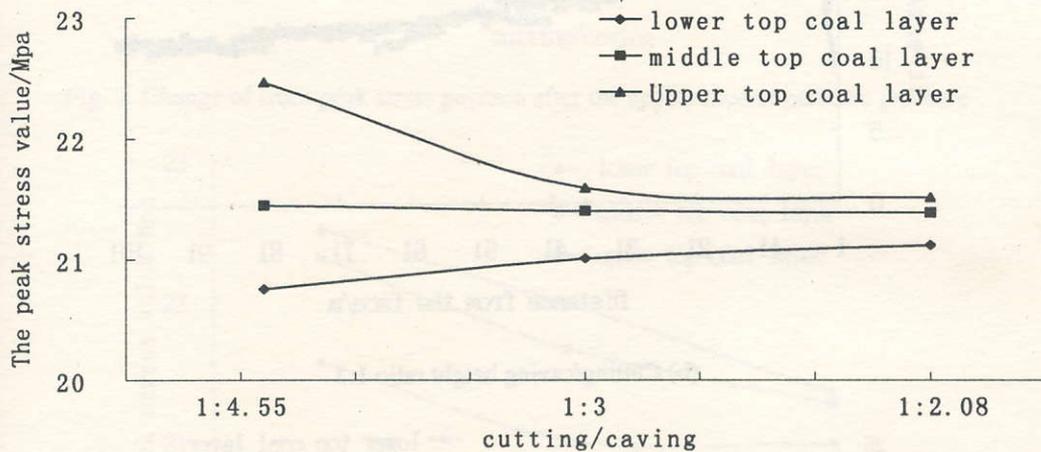
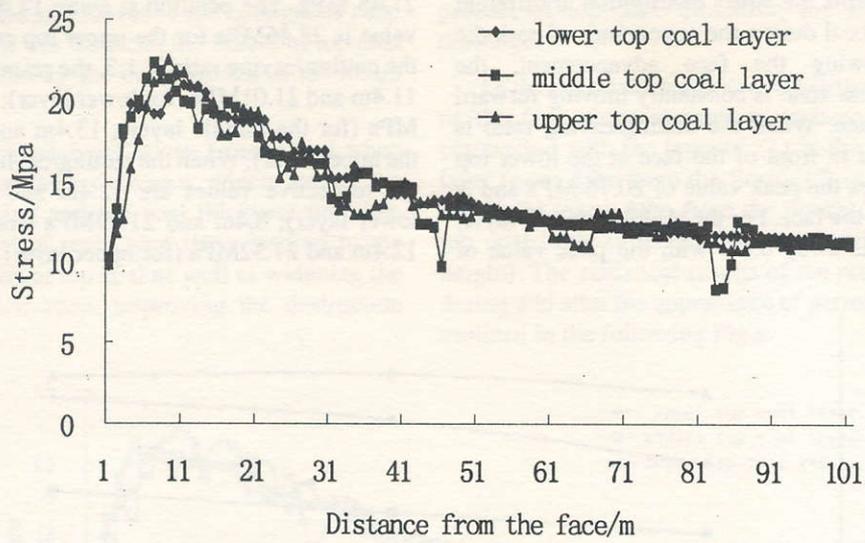


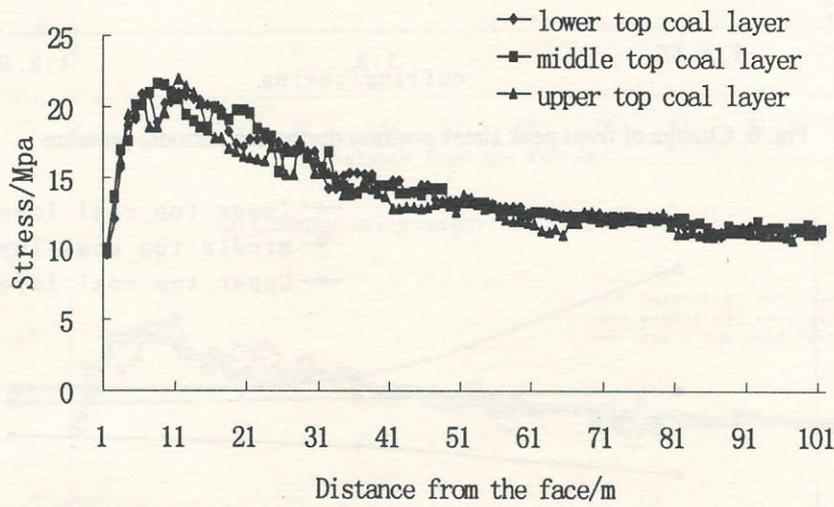
Fig. 7. Change of front peak stress value during the periodic pressure

Fig. 6 and Fig. 7 illustrate the changes in the position and the peak stress value during the periodic pressure. It is shown that when extracting the extra-thick seam, if the cutting/caving ratio varies, the position and value of peak stress will significantly change. For the lower layer and upper layer of top coal, the peak stress positions are relatively far from coal face whereas the peak stress point for middle layer is close to the coal face. The reason is that while the upper layer stands the load of overlying layers, the lower layer

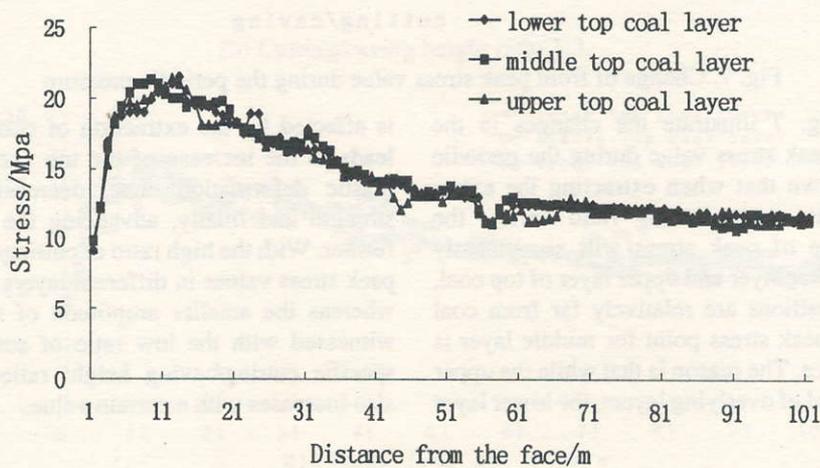
is affected by the extraction of cutting process. This leads to the increase of the top coal breakage in the plastic deformation zone, decreasing the top coal strength and finally, advancing the front peak stress further. With the high ratio of cutting/caving height, the peak stress values in different layers vary significantly whereas the smaller amplitude of value variation is witnessed with the low ratio of cutting/caving. At a specific cutting/caving height ratio, such amplitude also increases with a certain value.



(a) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:4.55



(b) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:3



(c) Cutting/caving height ratio 1:2.08

Fig. 8. Graph of stress distribution in front of the face after the appearance of periodic pressure

Fig. 8 shows the stress distribution at different positions at top coal layers after the appearance of periodic pressure. Depending on the face advance, the concentrated stress zone is constantly moving forward from the coal face. When the cutting/caving ratio is 1:4.55, the stress in front of the face at the lower top coal layer is away 9.6m from the face and reaches the peak value of 21.56 MPa. For the middle top coal layer, the peak stress is away 6.6m from the face with the value of 22.31 MPa. The peak stress position is away

8.6m and the value is 22.51MPa for the upper top coal layer. When the cutting/caving ratio is 1:3, the respective values are 10.6m and 21.00MPa (for lower layer); 7.6m and 21.66 MPa (for the middle layer); 10.6m and 21.98MPa (for the upper layer). When the cutting/caving ratio is 1:2.08, the respective values are 11.6m and 20.98MPa (for lower layer); 8.6m and 21.27MPa (for middle layer); 11.6m and 21.35MPa (for upper layer).

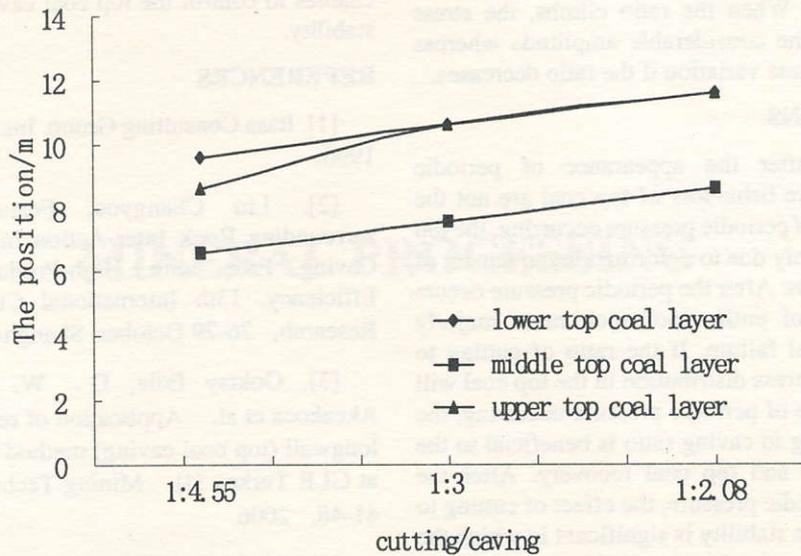


Fig. 9. Change of front peak stress position after the appearance of periodic pressure

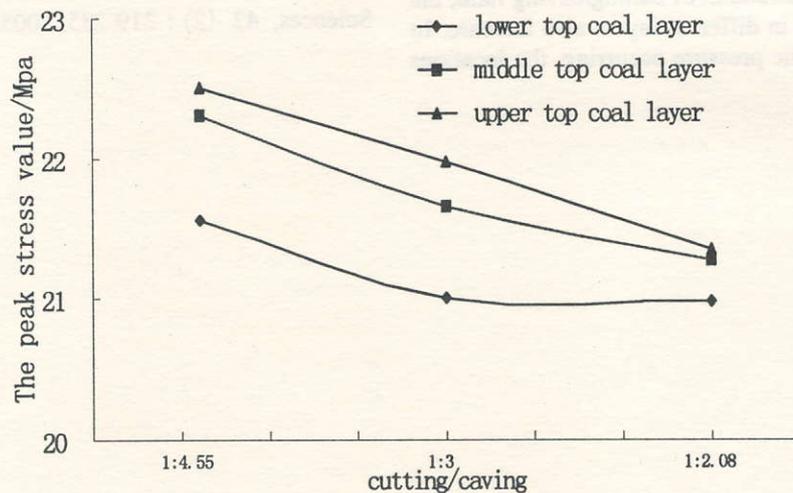


Fig. 10. Change of front peak stress value after the appearance of periodic pressure

Fig. 9 and Fig. 10 illustrate the changes in the position and the peak stress value at the top coal after the appearance of periodic pressure. It can be seen that when extracting the extra-thick seam, the peak stresses during and after the appearance of periodic pressure are relatively the same while their positions show a certain difference. For the lower and upper top coal layer, the peak stress positions are relatively far from coal face whereas the peak stress for middle one is close to the

coal face. Compared to the case of during the periodic pressure, the stress values ahead of the face with and without the effect of main roof rock show little variation. The elements are similar to that during the period of periodic pressure occurring.

By examination of stress distribution at various layers top coal during and after the appearance of periodic pressure, following results are outlined. If the cutting/caving height ratio drops, the peak stress

positions of different layers move further from the coal face. During the periodic pressure, the position of abutment stress changes significantly. Specifically, the abutment stress positions of the upper layer and lower layer in top coal are far away from the coal face whereas such position of the middle layer is quite close to the face. It is explained that the upper and lower layers have partly absorbed the overlying load, which diminishes the destruction in the elastic deformation zone at the middle layer. At the same time, the ratio of cutting/caving has also affected the stress values in front of the face. When the ratio climbs, the stress values will vary the considerable amplitude whereas such amplitude is less variation if the ratio decreases.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

During and after the appearance of periodic pressure, the failure behaviors of top coal are not the same. In the time of periodic pressure occurring, the top coal is broken mainly due to deformation movement of main roof rock mass. After the periodic pressure occurs, the compression of entire roof rock mass majorly causes the top coal failure. If the ratio of cutting to caving drops, the stress distribution in the top coal will change. In the time of periodic pressure occurring, the reduction of cutting to caving ratio is beneficial to the top coal breakage and top coal recovery. After the occurrence of periodic pressure, the effect of cutting to caving ratio on face stability is significant in which the drop of ratio leads to the face instability.

For the extraction of extra-thick coal seam, depending on the reduction of cutting/caving ratio, the front peak stresses in different layers also increase. In the time the periodic pressure occurring, the locations

of peak stress also show the difference, being far away from the coal face in the upper and lower layer while being relatively close to the face in the middle layer.

The ratio of cutting to caving height has certain effect on the peak stress value in front of face at various top coal layers. If such ratio is relatively high, the peak stress values increase from the lower to the upper layers. Conversely, if the ratio decreases, the peak stress values also drop. Therefore, the adjustment of cutting/caving height ratio will adjust the stress distribution, which enables to control the top coal caving ability and face stability.

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