

Summer trip to explore the less travelled parts of the Nujiang valley

I have visited Nujiang more than 10 times now, exploring the mountain roads and tracks going up the Gaoligong and Biluo/Hengduan mountain ranges. Much has changed since the great plant explorers of the early 20th century visited, but there is still virgin lands left – and some are accessible by road. My own purpose for this trip is to document and photograph the variation within the genera *Arisaema* and *Nomocharis*, as well as the species *Lilium henrici* (and its subspecies). The area is also extremely rich in *Rhododendron*, which should be in full flower when we visit.

I will be joined on this trip by a local friend, August Wu, who speaks fluent French and has joined me to the mountains as translator before. We will use local drivers who know the (often quite bad and dangerous) roads.

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There are a maximum of 3 spots available – the cost per person will be **29500 CNY**, or around \$4500. This includes all travel from Dali (DLU) to Xianggelila (DIG), all hotels (single room), meals, soft drinks, snacks and entrance fees. International flights are not included.

The trip starts in Dali around June 17th – we will discuss which date fits everyone's schedule the best. The itinerary suggestion is as follows:

Day 1 (Sun Jun 17): International flight to Dali (DLU) – not included in this offer.

Day 2 (Mon Jun 18): Arrive in Dali, where we will pick you up at the airport. Overnight in a decent hotel in Dali city (Xiaguan).

Day 3 (Tue Jun 19): After breakfast we will take a public bus to Liuku, the largest town and government seat of Nujiang. The bus takes around 5 hours. Overnight at a very pleasant 4 star (by Chinese standards) hotel.

Day 4 (Wed Jun 20): Drive to Pianma Yakou, the type location for *Nomocharis farreri* and several *Arisaema* species. On the way there we will make multiple stops, searching for *Lilium henrici* and other plants of interest. Lunch in Pianma, then drive back and further up the valley to a (very basic) guesthouse at the foot of Biluo Xueshan.

Day 5 (Thu Jun 21): Wake up at 5 am, go by car and/or motorcycle as far as possible, then trek up to the top of Biluo Xueshan. Time permitting we will head back down the same day, alternatively spend the night in a shepherd's hut halfway down. This trek is quite hard, and optional. The mountain itself has *Lilium henrici*, thousands upon thousands of *Nomocharis*, *Omphalogramma*, some practically unknown *Meconopsis* species – and a ridge at the very top covered in what I think should be *Lilium souliei*. If possible, we will make our way to a hotel in Fugong at night.



Day 6 (Fri Jun 22): Rest at our hotel in the small town of Fugong.

Day 7 (Sat Jun 23): Explore a mountain road near Fugong I have not yet visited. Either try to reach the type location for *Meconopsis castanea* or possibly *Lilium georgei*. Overnight in Fugong.

Day 8 (Sun Jun 24): If permitted by the military we will drive to Yaping Yakou, a mountain pass at the China-Myanmar border. We will see *Lilium georgei*, *L. yapingense*, *L. brevistylum*, *Nomocharis basilissa*, *N. aperta*, countless *Arisaema* and many, many other genera of interest. The *Rhododendron* will also be in full flower at this time. Overnight in Fugong.

Day 9 (Mon Jun 25): Drive to Gongshan (4-5 hours). Overnight in a basic hotel there.

Day 10 (Tue Jun 26): If possible, we will drive up a mountain road on Gaoligongshan I have yet to visit. We should see *L. henrici*, and hopefully *Nomocharis basilissa*. Overnight in Gongshan.

Day 11 (Wed Jun 27): Drive up the road towards Dulongjiang, then drive the old road to the top of Heipushan. We will see lots of *Lilium henrici* in full flower, as well as *Nomocharis pardanthina*, *Nomocharis gongshanensis* and *N. saluenensis*. There will also be plenty of *Rhododendron* and *Arisaema*. Overnight in Gongshan.

Day 12 (Thu Jun 28): Drive from Gongshan, over the Biluo/Meili mountains to Deqin, hopefully seeing several *Nomocharis* along the way. Overnight at a basic hotel in Deqin, where we will switch drivers.

Day 13 (Fri Jun 29): Drive over Baima Xueshan, botanizing along the way. We will see plenty of high alpiners, and lots and lots of *Lilium lophophorum*. Overnight in a pleasant hotel in Xianggelila.

Day 14 (Sat Jun 30): Fly back home, or, if you so choose – spend a couple more days exploring the small Tibetan town of Xianggelila.

We are happy to help make arrangements for my regular driver to take you to Tianchi (*Nomocharis forrestii* and *Lilium souliei*) or Tianbaoshan (*Fritillaria delavayi*), this is however **not included in the price** and we cannot join you as we are headed South-East to look for lilies in the Bakerianum complex.

Please note that this itinerary may be changed! Roads in Nujiang often close on short notice due to landslides and occasionally due to construction. Tibetan areas have also been closed off to foreigners in the past, although this is unlikely to happen in Xianggelila. You are responsible for buying your own health insurance for the duration of your stay, and applying for a visa at the Chinese embassy in your home country.

Weather: Expect heavy rains every day! This is, sadly, the middle of rainy season and Nujiang is infamously wet, so bring raincoats and some warm sweaters in addition to good, water-proof or easily dried footwear.

Health: You are required to buy your own travel health insurance. There are no specific health risks on our trip, although you may choose to take (or update) vaccines for tetanus, Hepatitis A and travellers diarrhea. There is no malaria in N Yunnan, and very few mosquitoes in the mountains. Altitude sickness should not be an issue, although you may experience some light headache and difficulty sleeping in Xianggelila.

Food and hotels: Restaurants on the countryside are generally basic but clean, serving standard Chinese stir-fried dishes with rice. We will try to order a selection that should satisfy everyone. There's no Western food or alcohol (not counting watery beer) to be had outside of Dali. Hotels will mostly have ensuite bathrooms with Western style toilets, the exception being the very basic guesthouse at Biluo Xueshan. All hotels will offer free WiFi; but Facebook, Google, Gmail, Blogger and many other pages will be blocked. (If you need to access these pages, get a paid VPN like VPN.ac)

Electricity is 220V, the standard plug is 2 flat pins, but many sockets will accept European (round pinned) plugs. If you need adaptors let me know, they only cost 20-30 RMB to buy here in China.

Visa: Getting a tourist visa for China is generally easy, but there are different rules and costs for every country. You are responsible for applying for your own visa, but we will help you provide invitation letters and hotel bookings.

Money: Please note that only ATMs in Kunming, Dali and Xianggelila can be expected to accept foreign credit/debit cards, so please withdraw enough cash on the first day to last you through the trip.

