

Botanical Study Tour to Guangxi & Fujian in South China

Orchids and Culture

We will visit the orchid national park Yachang, Northwest Guangxi, with some of the largest known *Paphiopedilum* populations worldwide. In Southwest Guangxi, close to the border with North Vietnam, we go into the Longrui nature reserve for a tropical river boat tour to see the over 2400 years old Huashan Frescos on the limestone cliffs above the Ming river and try to get a glimpse of *Paphiopedilum concolor* on the same cliffs. In Guilin, Northeast Guangxi, we will see the most impressive examples of the world-famous Karst landscape of South China, visit ethnic minority villages and the huge rice terraces of Longji. In Southwest Fujian we will visit the unique Tulous, huge round castle-like round houses of the Haka, and experience local cuisine and customs. Additionally we will see some interesting orchid nurseries, of which some specialize in Oriental cymbidiums and others in the production of *Anoectochilus formosanus* for medicinal purposes. We offer a 2 weeks trip with the opportunity to experience the nature and culture of southern China.

14 days, from May 7 to 20, 2014





Itinerary:

1. We. 05. 7. International flight to China (not included in this offer, but see below).
2. Th. 05. 8. Arrival in Nanning, capital of Guangxi province. The airport is about 32 km from the hotel. A taxi ride costs RMB 90-120 (\$ 15-20) and takes about 40 minutes. At 3:00pm, visiting the private collection of a local orchid grower.
3. Fr. 05. 09. Ride from Nanning to Leye, county capital at the Yachang national park. Departure in the morning, planned arrival at Leye in the afternoon. Check-in at the best local hotel (newly opened, good rooms partly with internet access).
4. Sa. 05. 10. Excursions in the Yachang orchid national park near Leye, the orchid highlight of the tour. We will see some large orchid populations like of *Paphiopedilum hirsutissimum*, which should be in full flower in May and forms extensive populations of several hundred to tens of thousands of plants. Huge karst caves (will not be entered on this tour) and enormous sinkholes with orchid-rich steep faces (will be visited), complete the experiences in Yachang.
5. Su. 05. 11. In the morning visiting a small karst cave in Leye and then return to Nanning. Overnight stay in Nanning.
6. Mo. 05. 12. Visiting Zuo Jiang Huashan Frescos in Longrui nature reserve, Ninming county, southwest of Nanning near the Vietnamese border. The red colored Frescos on the rock at the Ming river (Mingjiang) were made about 2400 years ago. We enjoy these great art works on a boat cruise and get the feeling for tropical orchid habitats. *Cymbidium aloifolium* can be seen on the cliffs close to the ancient drawings, further along on the cliffs *Paphiopedilum concolor* was spotted in flower on our visit 2010. In 1985 Jack Fowlie saw this slipper orchid in the limestone mountains nearby the visitor center (Orchid Digest 53 (1) p. 20-25, 1989), he missed *Paph. helenae*, which grows here close to *Paph. concolor*, but higher, close to the cliff tops. Populations *Paph. hangianum* and *Paph. delenatii* are known from regions further northwest, which we will not. Returning to the hotel in Nanning in late afternoon.
7. Tu. 05. 13. In the morning, we leave for Guilin (former capital of Guangxi). At the outskirts of Guilin we visit the Guangxi Institute of Botany (GXIB) with its important herbarium (IBK), founded 1935 with attached garden, and meet Prof. Dr. Yan Liu, leading orchid expert for Guangxi. Arrival at the hotel in Guilin in the late afternoon or early evening.
8. We. 05. 14. Leaving the hotel (main luggage can be stored at the hotel) and exploring the Hudi valley near Guilin for wild orchids, including a visit to a village of the Yao ethnic minority. In the evening we drive to Longsheng and stay in the best accommodation available.
9. Th. 05. 15. Visiting the famous rice terraces of Longji Rice Village. In the afternoon we go back to the hotel in Guilin.
10. Fr. 05. 16. Boat tour on the Li river down to Yangshuo for enjoying the world-famous karst landscape of Guilin, which was used as backdrops for several movies and TV-dramas. Overnight in Yangshuo.
11. Sa. 05. 17. Flight to Xiamen, Fujian province (directly facing Taiwan island).
12. So 05. 18. Bus tour to Nanjing (southwest Fujian) including visits of small orchid nurseries, some with Oriental cymbidiums, others with *Anoectochilus formosanus* production for traditional Chinese medicine. Main goal it to visit the Tulou Tianluokeng, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Tulous are round houses of the Haka, an ancient Han Chinese group that has migrated down from the North centuries ago and still settles in these huge castle like buildings, which apart from the main entrance have only windows and doors facing the center court. We stay overnight in a relatively simple hotel in Yongding, close to the border with Guangdong province.
13. Mo. 05. 19. Visiting the Tulou Chuxi (UNESCO World Heritage site) in Yongding county. Return trip to Xiamen in the afternoon.
14. Tu. 05. 20. Return trip home

Please note that the itinerary as presented above is basically fixed, but due to unforeseen circumstances during the tour, i.e. bad weather or traffic problems, we might have to do minor adjustments, like e.g. depart or arrive earlier respectively later as planned. All the hotels are 4 star level, except in Leye (days 3 & 4), which is 3 star and the accommodations on days 8 and 12, which are simple but clean country hotels. In China the tour will be covered by an insurance according to Chinese travel regulations. But we additionally recommend a travel health insurance which you need to buy in your home country.

Health issues: No specific health hazards at our destinations in Guangxi and Fujian came to our knowledge, but please consult your physician, i.e. regarding recommendations for vaccination. The weather is expected to be summery, likely without explicit extremes at most times (day 6 can be hot) and without long-lasting heavy precipitation, monsoon will usually not start before June. We recommend light clothing, but with additional protection against rain and sun. Shoes should be fit for city and forest, difficult hiking or mountain tours are not planned. We will mainly stay at altitudes between 400-1000 m.

International flights: Because the tour participants are expected to come from various regions, we do not offer prearranged international flights with this itinerary. Booking inexpensive international flights through your computer at home is easy and reliable these days. You will want to coordinate the flight schedule with us. If you have to arrive a day earlier in China we will arrange additional hotel accommodation for you. For the taxi ride from the airport to the hotel we will provide the hotel name and address in Chinese for print out at home and presenting to the driver, you will also have our cell phone number for instant help. In case you feel inconvenient with arranging the flights yourself, we can book the international flight for you as well.

Visa: For every nation different visa regulations for entering China as a tourist apply. Please inform yourself about the necessary procedures for your country. Basically getting tourist visa for China is a relatively easy and uncomplicated procedure, but in most countries requires personal attendance for submission of the application. We will provide formal invitations if necessary for your visa application, but we cannot arrange the visa for you. You need to apply for the visa yourself and pay the necessary fees, which are different for each country.

The tour will take place when at least 10 persons have signed for it, the maximum number of participants is limited to 15.

Per person the tour costs US \$ 3250.- (Euro 2390.-) (not including international air tickets!). Single room surcharge is US \$ 420.- (Euro 310.-).

The costs include all domestic travel (except airport taxi), accommodations, meals including soft drinks, fruits and soft drinks on the bus, tips and entrance fees. No further payments are to be made during the tour, but you have some pocket money available (best changed right after arrival at the airport), e.g. for airport taxi if necessary, also for buying snacks, drinks or souvenirs and gifts.

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About us: We are both fluent in English. In addition Wenqing is a linguist born in China, having lived in Japan for many years and being a German citizen since 2000. She speaks and writes fluently German, Chinese and Japanese. Holger, a native German speaker, only masters English as second language. We met each other on a botanical study tour in Sichuan in 1997 and married in 1998. Until summer 2001 we lived in Germany. After that we moved to Sichuan, where we work for the administration of Huanglong national park and also run our own company, Hengduan Mountains Biotechnology, Ltd., which is specialized in laboratory propagation and nursery raising of orchids. We also produce fruit crops like blueberry shrubs and other plants. Since 1999 we annually organize and conduct 1 to 3 botanical study tours in China, mainly in temperate mountain regions of Southwest China, but since 2010 also in the subtropical to tropical mountains of South China. Our guests come from all over the world and many have participated in 2 or 3 tours with us, some in 5 or more!



Wenqing and Holger Perner
in June 1997 at Mt. Emei, Si-
chuan province.

All following photos were made on our botanical study tours in Guangxi and Fujian.

Day 2: Visiting a private or-
chid collection in Nanning.
(May 15, 2010)



Day 3: On the way to Leye. A
stop at the roadside photo-
graphing the landscape.
(May 10, 2013)

Day 4: *Paphiopedilum hir-*
sutissimum along the visitor
trail at Yachang.
(May 17, 2010)



Day 4: Walking through a col-
ony of flowering *Paphiopedi-*
lum hirsutissimum at a cliff in
Yachang.
(May 11, 2013)

Day 4: *Paphiopedilum hirsutissimum* along the visitor trail at Yachang.
(May 11, 2013)



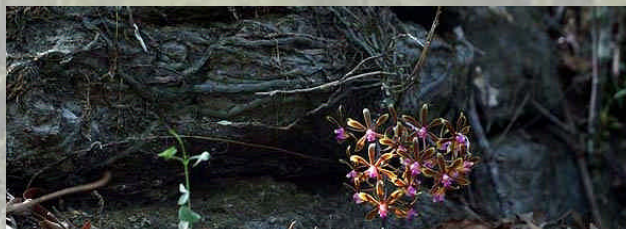
Day 4: Huangjing sinkhole (320 m long, 170 m wide and 140 m deep) in dense forest. Rich orchid populations inhabit the margins of the sinkhole.
(May 17, 2010)

Day 4: *Rhododendron simsii* at the sinkhole in Yachang.
(May 17, 2010)



Day 4: *Luisia teres* at the sinkhole. Same plant on both photos. (May 13, 2012)

Day 4: *Phalaenopsis honghenensis* lithophytic at the visitor trail in Yachang.
(May 17, 2010)





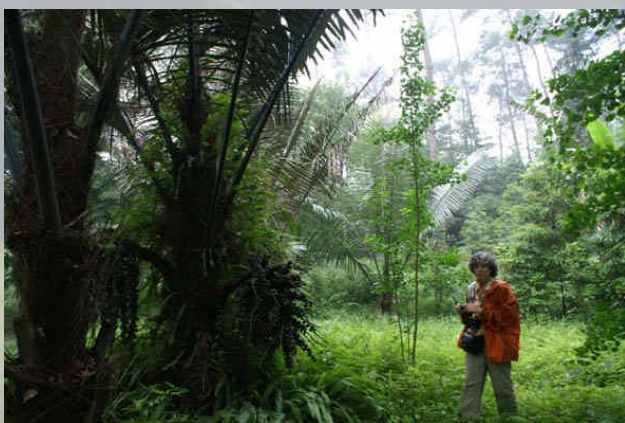
Day 6: Boat tour on the Ming river. On the right *Paphiopedilum concolor* high on a cliff above the river, photographed from the boat.
(May 19, 2010)



Day 6: Detail of the Huashan frescos (left) , photographed from the boat (May 15, 2012), and photographing *Dendrobium loddigesii* in its habitat above the landing point (May 13, 2013).



Day 6: Tropical insects around the landing point in Longrui nature reserve at the Ming river. The insects were photographed on the way to the boat for the river tour.
(May 15, 2012)



Day 7: In the botanic garden of the Guangxi Institute of Botany, Guilin.
(May 20, 2010)



Day 7: Arriving in downtown Guilin, former capital of Guangxi. (May 16, 2012)



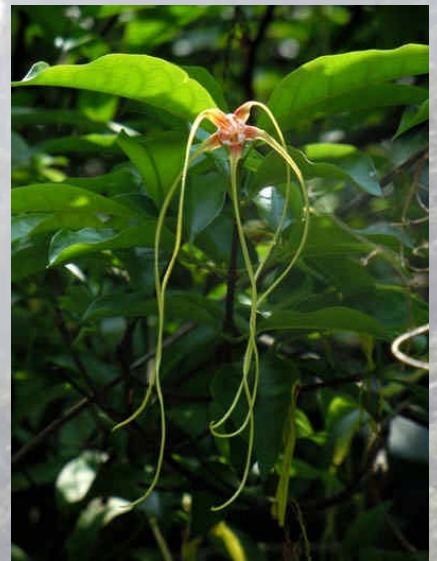
Day 8: Botanizing in the Hudi valley.
(May 21, 2010)



Day 8: *Pholidota chinensis* in Hudi valley.
(May 21, 2010)



Day 8: In English Hudi valley is called Butterfly valley. Indeed, butterflies and their exotic caterpillars abound here!
(May 17, 2012)



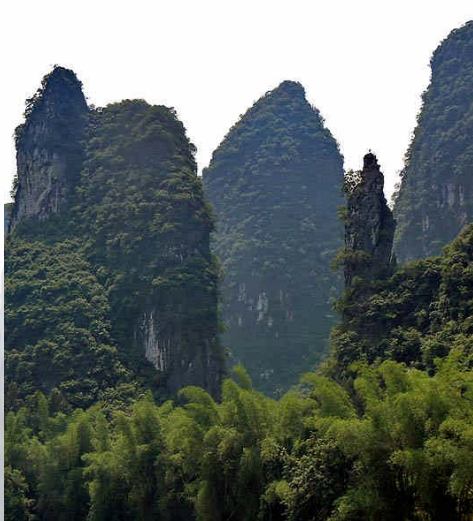
Day 8: *Strophanthus caudatus* in Hudi valley.
(May 17, 2012)

Day 8: The Yao village at the end of the road in Hudi valley. On the top left side you see the drum tower overlooking most of the village. Approaching enemies, festivities, and other such reasons would let the villagers hit the drum to alarm everybody. (May 17, 2012)



Day 9: On the way to the Longji rice terraces we stop at a Yao village. The locals offer souvenirs for sale. As everywhere in China, a fair amount of bargaining is required (and expected by the vendors) to close a satisfying deal!
(May 23, 2010)

Day 9: The Longji rice terraces are a stunning view in Longsheng county.
(May 23, 2010)



Day 10: The Li river cruise from Guilin to Yangshuo is a highlight of any China trip! For about 4 hours (warm lunch is served aboard) the boat is passing endless chains of karst mountains.
(May 18, 2012)



Day 12: Medicinal herb tea made of *Anoectochilus formosanus* produced from the laboratory-grown jewel orchid. Seen here in a nursery in SW Fujian.
(May 20, 2012)



Day 12: The Tulou Tianluokeng in SW Fujian.
(May 20, 2012)



Day 12 & 13: Life goes on in the old traditions passed down for centuries in the Tulous of the Haka people. (May 20, 2010)

Through Google or Yahoo a lot of additional information about our destinations can be found, here are some links:

<http://orchidconservationalliance.org/>

<http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/hzqz/t84229.htm>

http://www.lseb.cn/Js/attached/file/20120620/20120620103631_0647.pdf

<http://www.informatik.uni-bremen.de/~net/photos/china/longsheng/>

http://www.visitourchina.com/guide/dragons_backbone_rice Terraces.htm

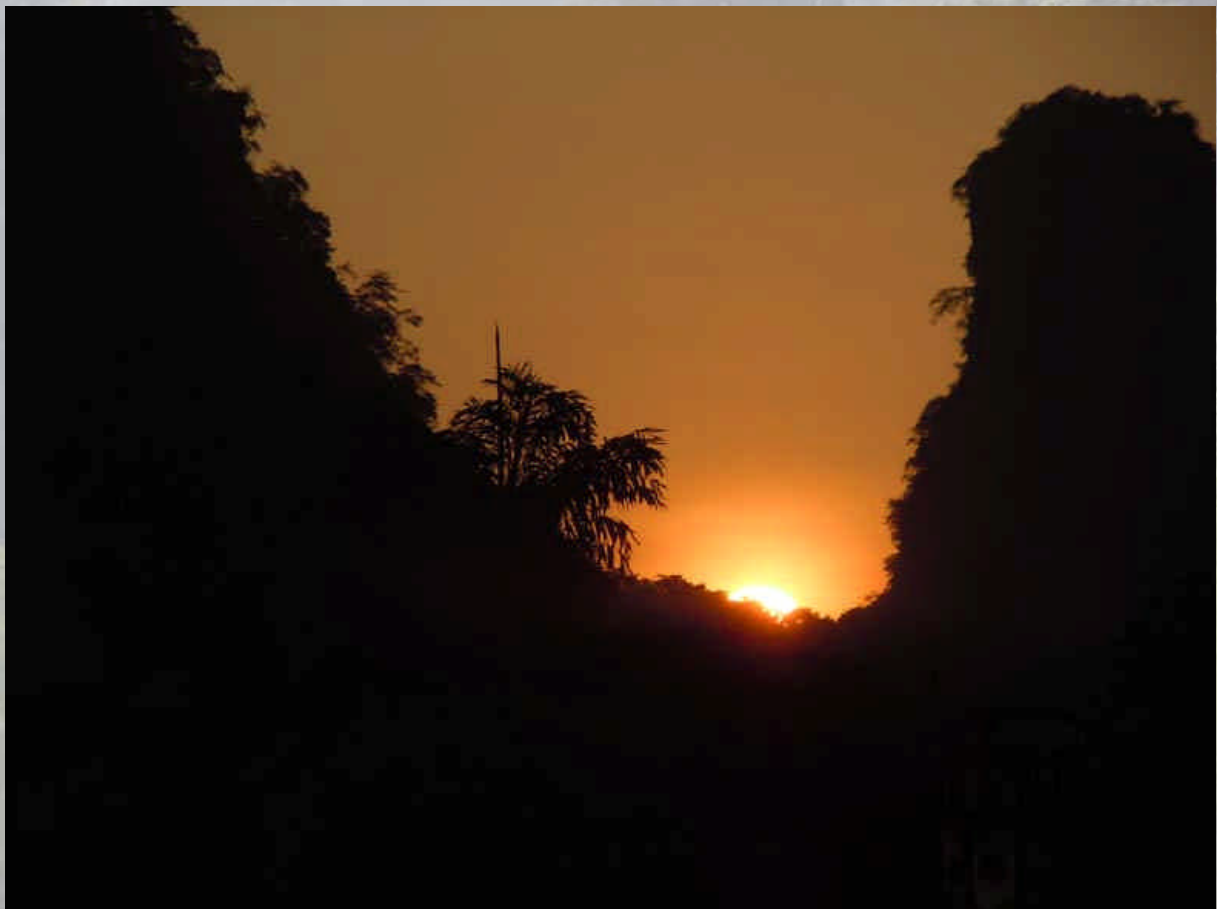
<http://wikitravel.org/en/Longsheng>

http://www.travelchinaguide.com/attraction/guangxi/guilin/li_river.htm

Coordinates of some of our more remote destinations:

Leye: 24°47'15'' N; 106°33'24'' E (Yachang lies west of the town)

Longrui nature reserve landing point at Ming river: 22°14'18'' N; 107°03'17'' E



Day 10: Sunset in Yangshuo. (May 18, 2012)