

**A Photographic Diary of our 2018 April Special Cultural Expedition:
"From China's Shangri-La along the LanCang/Mekong River into Laos"**

by Yau-Sun Tong



《2018年四月從雲南香格里拉沿瀾滄江/湄公河進入老撾 - 民俗風光文化攝影行》

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Preface

All following images within this “**Photo-diary**” were taken mostly with a *cellphone*, the rest few taken with a little *pocket-sized Leica D-Lux 5 point/shoot camera*.

These **snapshots** are only intended **to capture** and **to document** the **events, our travel routes, the joy and fun of our tour members** during this lifetime experience of a fantastic visit to another one of the western China regions; and for our memories.

A cellphone & the little “point & shoot” D-Lux 5 has many limitations in picture taking, little performance in terms of optical quality compared to the famed Leica R and M camera systems with slide-films I am so often used to and fond of using; but at the same time it poses a challenge to myself for still trying to create meaningful images with that...

High quality slide-film images taken from this tour are **not** shown in this **photo-diary**.

Some of the goals I am trying to achieve in my photography include:

- *True to the moments in nature and culture;*
- *Natural and candid;*
- *Compositionally challenging and unique;*
- *Meaningful in subjects and topics;*
- *Story telling with good impacts;*
- *Not to disturb or intrude into local human subjects' life.*

Brief intro

Gathered in *Beijing*, our tour group started the great experience of our
《*2018 April Special Cultural/Photographic Expedition*》
which was especially
designed for those who were interested in a real cultural experience
in some of the fascinating places for unusual and
rich topics of photography and travel.

The following images in chronological order are intend to share the enjoyments
from some of the events and highlights of our journey of this 19-day
journey – another successful one of our ongoing specially arranged
Western China Cultural/Photographic Series Expeditions.

My sincere appreciation & many thanks to all participants of this very special tour!

《2018年四月從雲南香格里拉沿瀾滄江/湄公河進入老撾 - 民俗風光文化攝影行》

2018 "From China's Shangri-La to Laos" ...

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Enjoy...

Featuring: Beijing entry; starting from northwestern Yunnan... along the LanCang/Mekong-river, through Laos, with visits to many worthy local cultures and nature scenic views... another great experience of a lifetime!

The total length of Mekong-river is 4,900km, originates in China's Qinghai province 源出青海省, the river's 2,198km length is inside China, 雲南省內 1,274km of it's length is within Yunnan province.

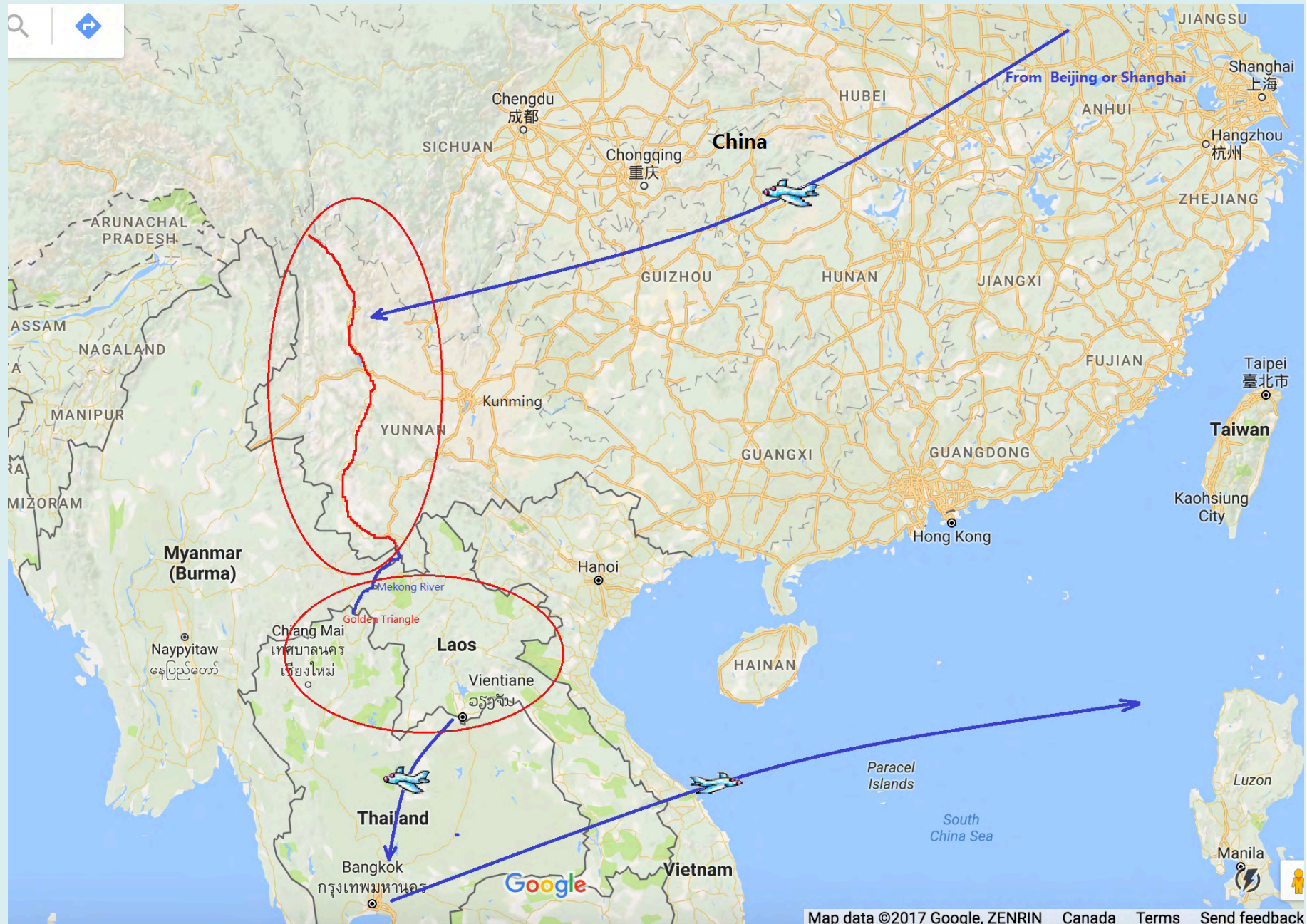
Within China, it is called “LanCang-river” 瀾滄江, outside China, it is known as the “Mekong-river” 湄公河.



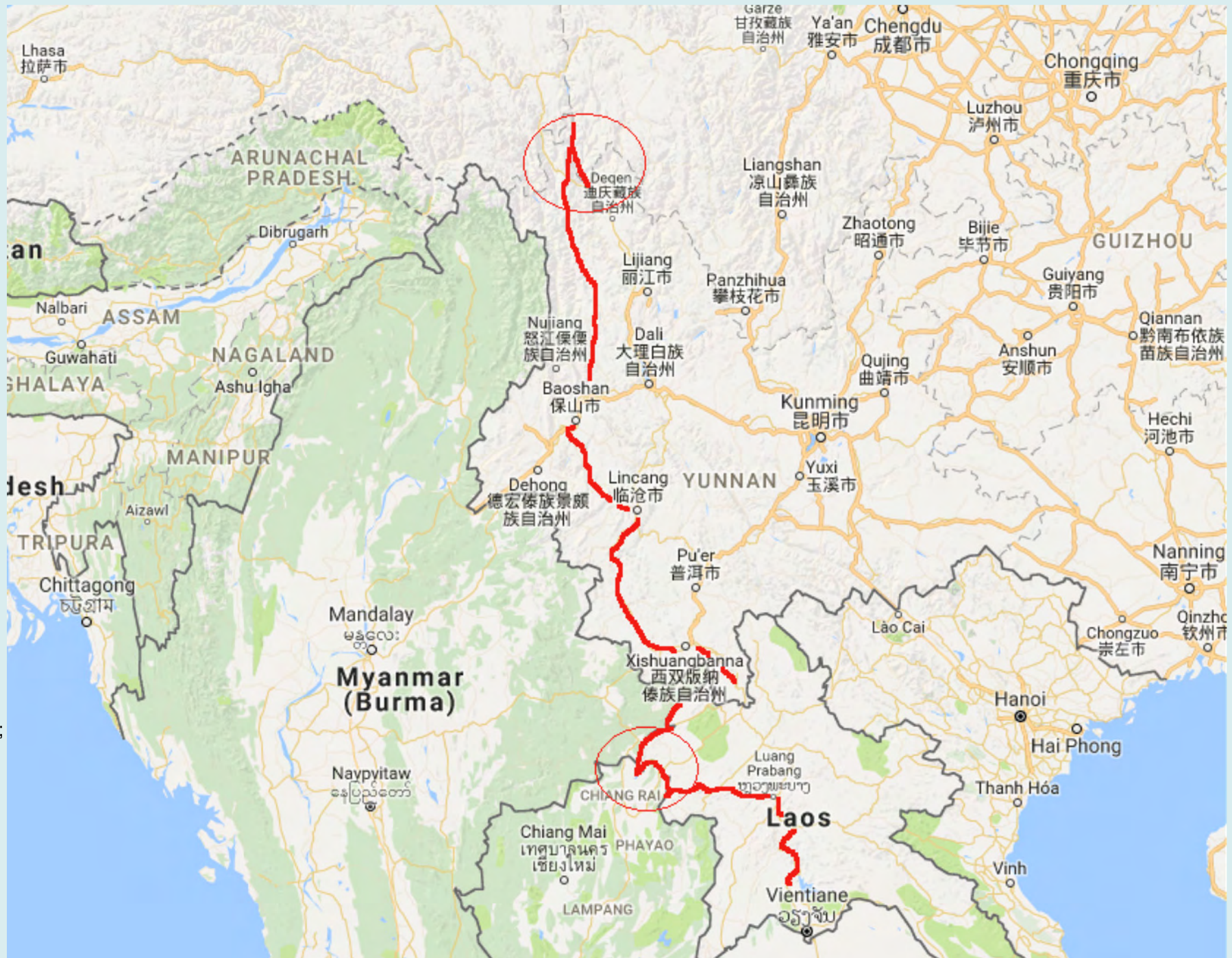
Beijing Arrival

入境北京，前往香格里拉地區，從德欽一路沿
瀾滄江南下，入寮國順湄公河而行...

Early in April, we arrived at Shangri-La by flight via Chongqing
from Beijing, then by land starting our great journey...



Itinerary map: **Red line** showing this one-of-a-kind special journey routing starts from the very eastern tip of **Tibet**, along the **LanCang-Mekong River** all the way to **Laos' capital Vientiane...**



From Shangri-La along the famed Mekong-river, into Laos...

the upper red circle is the **Shangri-La** area; the lower red circle is the Golden-triangle area... Our expedition ends at the Laos capital - **Vientiane**...



Beijing Arrival

入境北京

Early in April,
we arrived Beijing, as always, the
welcoming dinner was excellent
(and the daily meals following
were tastily nourishing...)

After her previous few participations
in our special China expeditions of:
*“Explore the Origin of Tea, Longevity
& Hakka Cuisines”*;
“Best of the Inner Mongolia”; and
“Train to the Wonderland - Tibet”,
Heather had this to say about
our just completed 2018
April expedition:

*“...our **“From Shangri-La along the
Lancang/Mekong-river to Laos”**
did not disappoint. Travelling from
snow-capped mountains to tropical
jungle and meeting people from
so many ethnic and cultural
environments was an
amazing experience.”*

/ Heather, Nova Scotia



(a view from the junction of Tibet/Yunnan/Sichuan, our starting point...) 從雲南的最西北角開始我們的特別行程...

From the 3,300m elevation of **Deqin** in northwestern top of **Yunnan**, to around 170m in the capital city **Vientiane** of Laos, Along this stretch of 1,800 kilometers winding **LanCang/Mekong-river** region that we've traveled through... the sights, sounds, tastes, people, culture, scenes were amazing... and no way could be recorded justifiably by a camera or by just one person... *Here in this photo-diary, I'm trying to give a brief feeling of what we've been enjoying...*
While a picture is worth thousand words... here see my photo-diaries





我們的行程一路風土人情美不勝收...

Along our journey of a special kind, non-commercial in nature,
So much to see, to taste, to smell, to experience & to photograph...



滿懷信心過大橋...

A truly confident matriarch crossing the “Gold-sand River... (upper region of the famed Yangzi-river)









In this UNESCO Heritage of Nature Site “Three-parallel-rivers Region”, so much to explore...

And along our route of the LanCang-river, upmost interesting culture & nature... 沿瀾滄江有太多可看可感受的啦...



(next page photo: *“a cottage for you”* ...)





Yes, it is the upper
“Mekong-river”...

這也是瀾滄江一面呢...

兩岸民風民俗頗有意思,在這裡的江邊
我們遇到了這個熱情好客的藏族家庭,
阿扎與母親把好吃的都拿出來了...
青稞酒酥油茶等自然不在話下...
還有屋後收穫的殼薄如紙的核桃...
(見下幾頁)

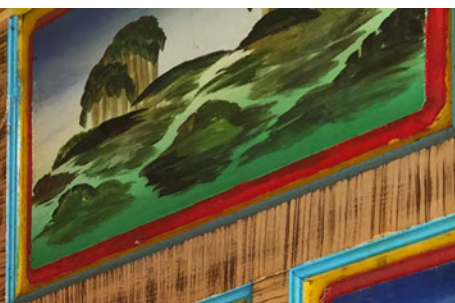
(Next few pages):

We run into this Tibetan family live
right by the Lancang River side.
At his back garden, I met A-za on the
field, after few conversation, A-za insist
to invite us all into his house, brought
out all the good treats... the hospitality
was wonderfully warm,









A-za's mother
presenting us their
Tibetan special drinks...

阿扎的母親款待我們
藏族飲品...



A-za insists to give us some good home-made liquor to bring along on road...
一定要我們帶上自家釀製的上好補酒...

專程跨過瀾滄江到江西岸去探訪有名的茨中教堂，
由法國傳教士主持始建於1867年...

We made a detour across to the west side of
the River, visiting a locally famous church
(CiZhong) that was originally build at 1867,
led by French missionaries...



(next page: Alan walks into the CiZhong church...)





下一頁：

教堂旁一家的廚房牆上一邊是著名的特蕾莎修女掛曆，另一邊是中國近代五位國家領導人的掛畫…

(next page):

Walked into a family house kitchen, there is a wall-calendar with Mother Teresa's photos... and a wall-poster with the recent five generation of leaders in China from Chairman Mao to Chairman Xi of current...



【圣德助撒姆妈】为贫穷的人服务

圣德助撒姆妈 (St. Theresa of Calcutta) 1910年出生于印度加尔各答。1947年皈依天主教，并创立了圣德助撒姆妈修会。她一生致力于为最贫穷的人服务，特别是在加尔各答的贫民窟。她创立了“圣德助撒姆妈修会”，为穷人提供食物、住所和医疗照顾。她的事迹感动了全世界，她于1982年被封为圣人。她的名言是：“我们不是为穷人做善事，而是为穷人做善人。”

2018-3 (若瑟月)							2018-4						
星期日	星期一	星期二	星期三	星期四	星期五	星期六	星期日	星期一	星期二	星期三	星期四	星期五	星期六
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31											

日期与地方不同，不要同时有两个日期打星，如果日期有冲突，不要打星的日期。*注：明天是“复活节”，(3月31日)





維西縣瀾滄江東岸高山上一處傈僳族村寨…

A minority Lisu people's village located by the east side of the river, up on the high mountain...







We made a detour from the River to visit a beautiful little ancient township - Shaxi,

我們專程轉去探訪劍川縣古鎮沙溪…





茶馬古道上僅存的一個古集市…

A true to its name ancient “Tea-horse-trail” township still remains its unique charm...











The meals we had while in this ancient township were excellent as well. While our expeditions always follow the principle of healthy, tasty, local and variety dish selections...













一漢名勝

興教寺

神明統踏適意今身願

道德元魁能善隱



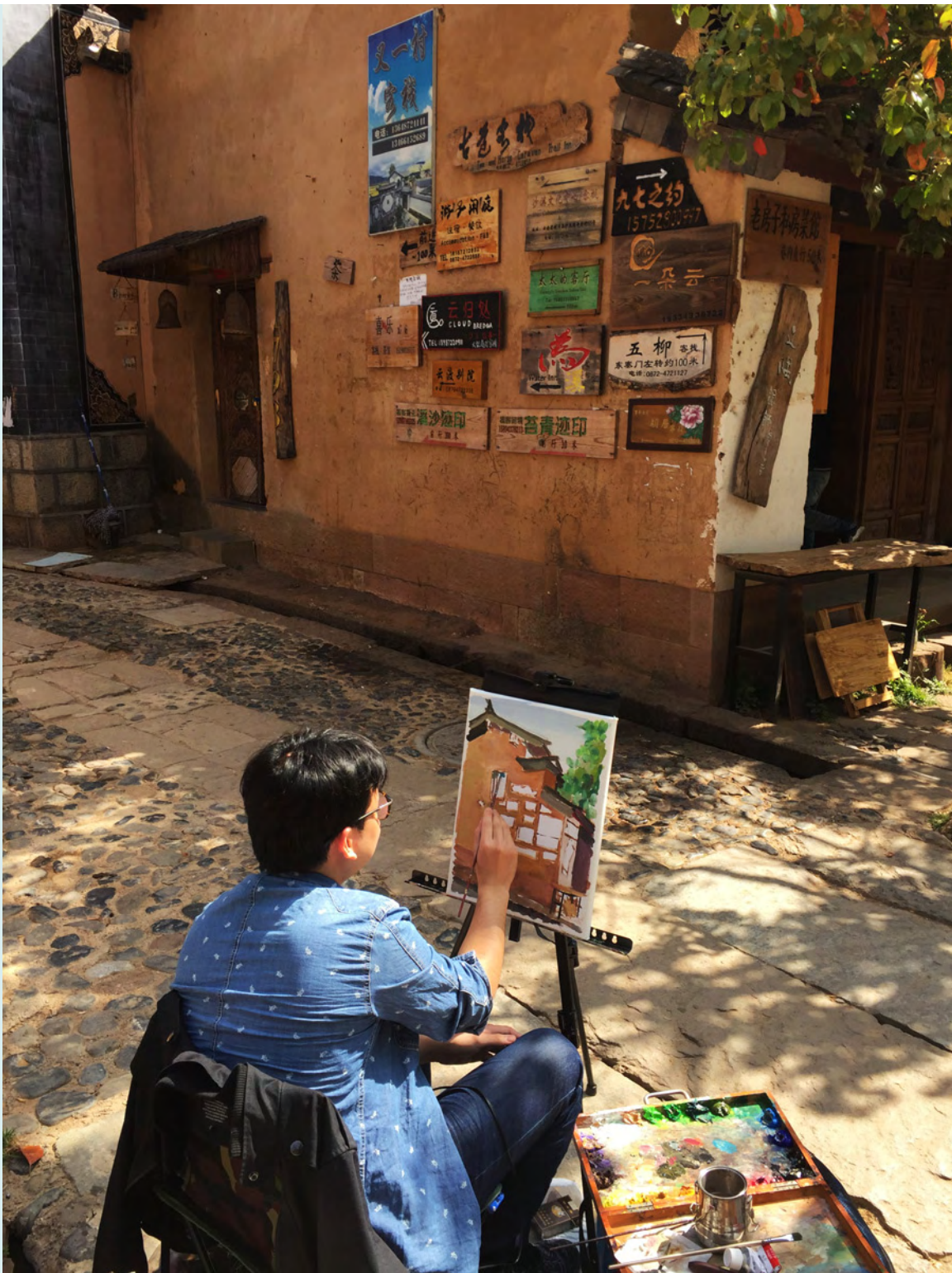
Our inn keeper Yin-er was wonderful, her inn is well-kept, With typical minority Bai people's building style. Her Breakfast was great – simple but healthily tasty... haha

穎兒的沙溪古鎮穎居客棧非常溫馨舒適...









The township is a place for those who love the art of painting, or photography...

這裡也該是喜好藝術者的好去處...



Next we came to the ancient city of Dali for a rest...

Still our principle, fresh, local, healthy then tasty...

還是我們的原則，新鮮、本地、健康、好味道...



Few of our member followed me to a local family visit in town, seeing how some locals living... Gretchen is admiring Mr. Mei's flowery courtyard...

家訪我的朋友梅先生家，也好讓西方人了解一下當地人的生活。





人樹合一 ...

She and the dancing tree...



一位着傳統白族服飾的當地婦女…
A woman with traditional minority
Bai people's costume ...





Back on our route along the Lancang-river, we visited a local mosque with long history. It started 600-yr ago here during Ming dynasty, with unique building style.

有其獨特歷史及建築風格的南涧县公郎回营清真寺，始於明朝洪武年間了…



世守清真

銀鬚長子孫當家請想人生能幾何

金鐘轉時光消逝誠問善功有多少

福如海

拜



村民們很熱情，邀請我們參觀他們的清真寺，也不介意我們觀摩他們在做祈禱…
Villagers were very friendly, inviting us to visit the mosque, and did not mind
our presence during their prayer . After that we randomly had a local family visit...





مسجد جامع
بازار

مسجد جامع
بازار

مسجد جامع
بازار





Arrived in LinCang region, we settled in this very comfortable hotel... dinner was equally satisfying... 抵達臨滄雲縣下榻... 附近三大碗的菜色做的很不錯...

(next page): The next day we explored a unique Temple in the mountain... (下頁): 次日我們造訪了山裡的鳳慶石洞寺...





Built at 1794 during Qing Dynasty, FengQing Stone-cave Temple has a glorious surrounding, and some rare species of flower trees, interesting histories...

While our visiting, the Taoist priests were conducting a special ceremony on some donors' behalf... see my video here:
<https://vimeo.com/267130641>

鳳慶石洞寺，一處優雅之仙地...

“石階有塵清風掃
洞府無鎖白雲封”

剛好遇到當日道士們在為施主做法事...







洞府無鎖白雲封

石階有塵清風掃

人多拥挤小心慢行

積德行



Lunch we were back to last night's restaurant, because it was so good. The owner (woman in purple) was extremely happy with us and requesting to have photo together...

我們又回到昨晚的飯店，“三大碗”的老闆娘非常高興，一定要與大家合影；她家的飯菜確實做的好...





路旁一處火腿烘房... A ham smoking house by the roadside...



Into the region of LanCang, we are enjoying the goodness of top quality Pu'er tea tasting... a truly engaging and enjoying experience! This tea-lady really knows what she's doing, And was wonderfully hospitable...



進入瀾滄地區，我們有幸一路品味上等的普洱生茶及熟茶。這個茶莊女老闆非常熱情，雖然知道我們並不是買茶的，但還是招呼我們品嚐了不少好品種，及傳授了不少茶知識...





景邁山上採茶忙 … Tea-picking on JingMai mountain, here is famous for top quality Pu'er teas...





In Lancang region, we have chance randomly visited some minority Lahu people's villages... Seeing their living, tasting their foods etc... (see next few pages)

在瀾滄地區我們隨機訪問了一些少數民族拉祜族的村寨，
與村民們互動，受到他們熱情地款待…（見如下幾頁）









Those Lahu people are very hospitable...

她們非常好客...



We are up on the beautiful JingMai mountain... 初上景邁山...

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Following the cobbled stone mountain road, we came across tea-farmer Mr. Yang's farm, the hospitality we received was extraordinary... Mr. Yang's also a Lahu minority...

景邁山上我們偶遇拉祜族茶農楊先生的莊園，並在他家的“景邁大橋魚莊”受到他們一家人的熱情款待...



Mr. Yang is brewing his top quality spring tea for us to taste... while his uncle was watching, I'd call him "Mr. T", since he looks almost the exact like Mr. T in the American TV series...

楊先生在為我們沖泡他茶山上的
上等老樹普洱生茶...



One of our expedition group members - John is learning about tea from Mr. Yang, and pouring Pu'er tea for Mr. Yang...

我們團隊裡的此君對茶之道很感興趣，
正學習如何倒剛泡好的普洱熟茶...





It's about noon hour, Mr. T and Mr. Yang warmly inviting us to lunch together with them... a real homemade meal indeed...

Vegies just picked from the garden, fish just caught from the pond, bamboo shoots just cut below the hill by the riverside, banana just pick ripen from the tree the while we were there...

楊先生一家盛情邀請我們共進午餐...

<https://vimeo.com/267132463>



Fresh & tasty, dinning naturally with a Lahu minority family up the mountain in their tea farm... another real cultural experience...

又一個非常好的自然真實的文化體驗...

Their surrounding and environment, all
The natural offerings... here's not for
human... it is for deities, immortals...

好山、好水、好茶，好安寧的地方，
這裡只應是神仙住的環境吧...

(next pages): we further south & arrived
in Menghai - a Dai ethnic minority
autonomous county...

(下兩頁)： 我們來到西雙版納的
勐海傣族自治縣...







Here in Menghai, we participated local Dai people's "Water-splashing Festival" held once a year on that date... another superb cultural experience...

這裡我們參與了一年一度的傣族潑水節...



On the wall: "bargain price selling black market cars, call 1366877513"...

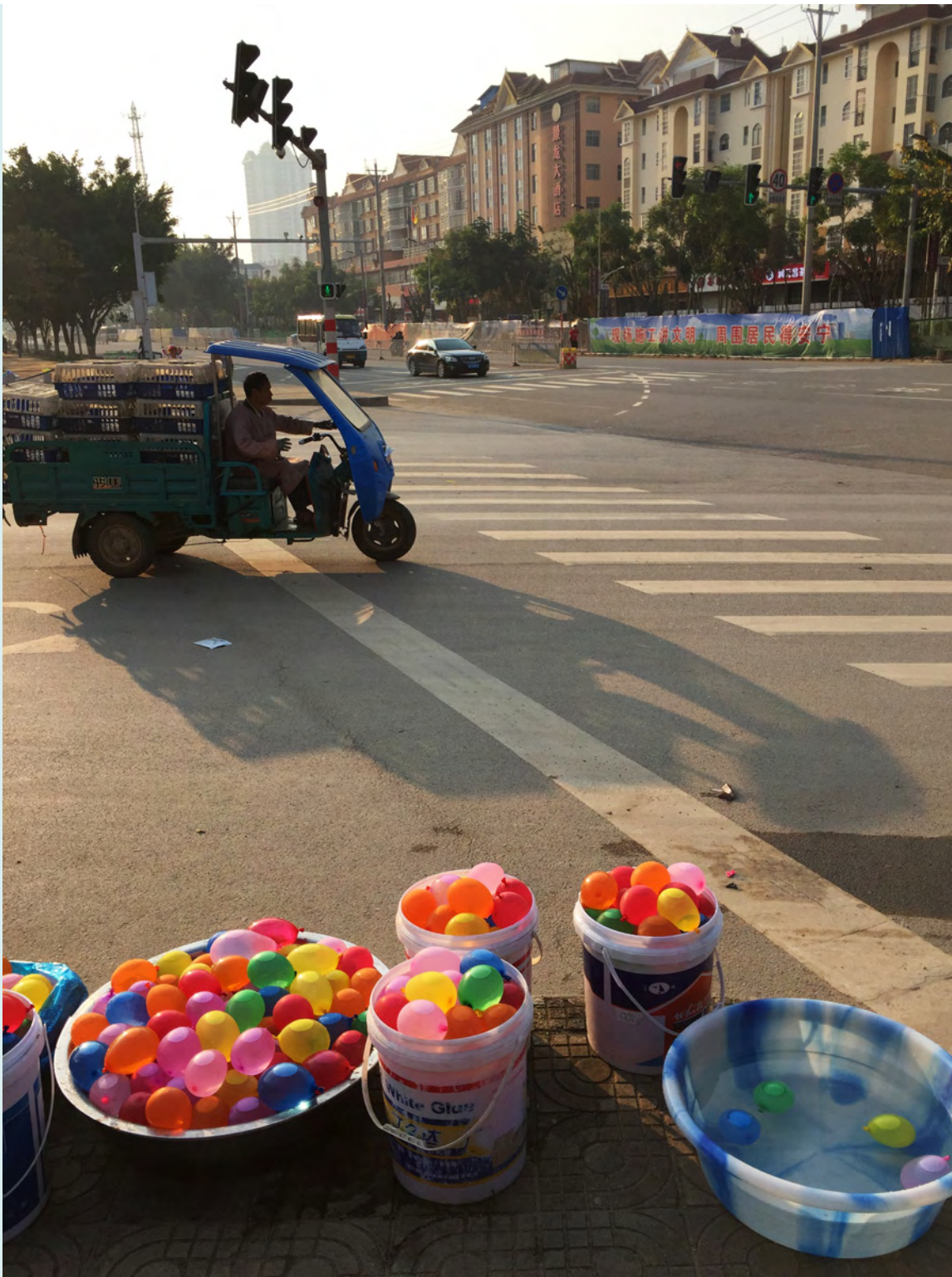
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清晨的集市...





The billboard has: “Forever following the lead of the party”...



Early morning is always the best time for photography - particularly “street photography” ...

6 am in an intersection, someone is ready selling the water-bombs for use in the “water-splashing festival” activity later that day...

(see next page, and my short video: <https://vimeo.com/267131951>)

一大清晨，賣“水彈”的已在勐海街頭擺好攤子了，今日中午的潑水節活動定是好熱鬧…
(如下頁所示)











While passing through Jinghong city in XiShuangBanNa, We once again crossed the Lancang-river, tomorrow we will be in Laos and call it the “Mekong-river” ...

通過景洪市時，我們又一次跨過了瀾滄江，明日將會在老撾并稱之為“湄公河”了…

Driving towards Mengla - the last stop over in China before we cross into the country of Laos tomorrow from Yunnan’s XiShuangBanNan...

前往勐臘途中，這將是這次行程我們在雲南的最後一晚，明日將從版納過境入老撾了…

(next page): three Dai girls put on make-up for the festival day in Mengla...

(下一頁): 三位勐臘傣族姑娘正為當天的節慶做準備…





From this southernmost point of Yunnan we crossed into the country of Laos... continuing our journey of exploring along the river of Mekong...

In the next group of images, will be all about the culture and nature along our way in Laos...

從雲南的最南端，我們進入老撾繼續探索湄公河沿線的風土人情...



(For the next four pages):

1. the first Lao village we visit;
2. the little big fellow;
3. the green dress girl;
4. the king rooster.

(下四頁): 1. “過境後第一個停留的村寨”; 2. “小小大人物”; 3. “綠衣淑女”; 4. “雄雞之王”









Here we had our first Lao lunch after the border,
good view over looking the pasture... good food too!

坐在這田園風光的飯莊裡，我們吃了進入寮國
後的第一頓午飯… 味道不錯的!

For the next five pages:

1. “two families”;
2. “village red-flowers”;
3. “motorbikes in four colors”;
4. “roast pigs”;
5. “cows by Mekong river bank”

接下面五頁： 1. “兩個家庭”； 2. “村寨的紅花”；
3. “四色摩托車”； 4. “清晨的烤豬”； 5. “湄公河邊黃牛群”















From HuayXai we started our Mekong-river two-day boat ride... along the river much viewing while relaxing on the boat...

從老撾會晒我們開始了兩天的湄公河上船行，向琅勃拉邦進發...
兩岸風光接踵...











In Pakbeng, we stopped for an overnight stay. The hotel breakfast next morning was wholesome, giving good energy to continue for another day of sailing on the river before reaching Luang Prabang...

半途我們停下過了一晚，第二天旅店的早餐做的很好…
從那裡船行繼續向琅勃拉邦進發…











Finally we disembarked by the historical city of Luang Prabang – a UNESCO World Heritage Site of Culture... from the riverbank moved to our hotel in the city, with a traditional Lao building style... (next two pages)

終於我們抵達了琅勃拉邦，一個世界文化遺產地... 從河邊碼頭移入我們在市區裡的一間有傳統老撾特色的酒店... (下兩頁)







The city visits... 城中四處參觀...







Overlooking Luang Prabang and the Mekong-river... 鳥瞰琅勃拉邦與湄公河...

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The daily ritual of monks taking offerings from benefactors... 和尚們每日清晨的化緣...







Market in rain... 雨中的集市...









On route to Vang Vieng...



Over looking the town of Vang Vieng...









Breakfast by the river...



A roadside dried-fish market...

路旁的魚干市場...





Very close to the capital city Vientiane now...

很近首都萬象了...



next page:
“chaos & order”

下頁：抵達萬象



Arrived Vientiane, we'd lunch in a nice Lao restaurant...

萬象午餐...



(next few pages):
Scenes in Vientiane

下幾頁：萬象景緻...





5000

15000

ថែទាំបារមីស៊ីម ទំនប់ស្ទឹងស្រែចម្រុះ

LUX











“Only three bottles...?”

“三瓶就倒啦...?”

The next pages: “Vientiane street lives in a morning”...
後面的一組照片：“萬象一個清晨的市井生活…”







A coconut seller facing Thailand cross the Mekong-river in front...







MOT HANG
Coffee
PAKSONG BOLAVEN

WELCOME
VISA
MasterCard

OPEN
to
VISA

WELCOME
MasterCard

Le Sommelier
The Best Coffee



Mother & daughter... 母女倆...



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ອຸປະຖຳໂດຍ: ບໍລິສັດ ເມຍລາວ ຈຳຫັດ

ຖະໜົນ ເຈືອນຸນ
RUE CHAO ANOU

Two Buddhist monks in traditional orange robes walking across a crosswalk.

Various advertisements and signs on buildings in the background, including 'KOVAN', 'KAZUL', and 'MEKONG'. A red circular 'no entry' sign is also visible.

ຮັບແປ ພາສາບາລີ ສົບສອນເມນາ (ລີ)
ໂທ: 020 5653 5654

ຮ້ານຂາຍຢາ ພື້ນເມືອງ
021 252944 ອາຈານບຸນທ່າ ບັນຍາຈິດ 020 56535654



A direct flight from Vientiane to Bangkok for exit ...

Via Hong Kong for home return international flights...
a grand completion of our another worthy expedition...

What a totally enjoyable journey!

从万象飞曼谷经香港回程北美，旅程圆满结束...

Welcome to partake our two upcoming non-commercial, alluring expeditions:

For 2019 April:

“From Southwestern China to the wonderlands of Eastern Tibet through southwestern Tibet region’s Gyirong valley, then cross into Nepal”

For 2019 June:

*“From Northwestern China’s XinJiang to Kyrgyzstan –
experience the amazing lands of Central Asia”*

See itinerary sketch maps in the next pages:

For 2019 early April: “From Southwestern China to the wonderlands of Eastern Tibet through southwestern Tibet region’s Gyirong valley, then cross into Nepal”

This **expedition** takes advantage of the best weather season for the intended spots that we will visit, from outside Chengdu region, to flowering **Eastern Tibet**, then to the **Southwestern Tibet** region of **Gyirong** area... all enchanted with beautiful nature and culture during that time of year. **Gyirong** will be first time open to foreign visitors next year to cross over to **Nepal** by land...

(The ever important & necessary “Tibet Entry Permit” will be specially arranged for our participants)



**For 2019 early June: “From Northwestern China’s XinJiang to Kyrgyzstan
experience the amazing lands of Central Asia in nature & culture”**

This **expedition** takes advantage of the good weather season for the intended spots that we will visit, from the capital city of **Xinjiang** - Urumqi, through some of the most interesting nature & cultures in western & southern parts of Xinjiang – a true **Central Asia region**... then by land cross into one of the unique Central Asian countries - **Kyrgyzstan**... fascinating!



See epilogue next page...

Epilog

The snapshots in this Photo-diary are in no way able to represent the richness of culture and nature scenes we've seen, the fun and joy we've experienced during our group's
2018 Expedition...

for Yau-Sun Tong's special "Western China Cultural/Photographic Series"
non-commercial upcoming expeditions

e.g. *the 2019 Expeditions:*

<http://photoart.chebucto.org/photonews.html>

contact Yau-Sun for details:

tel: (902) 443-5500

e-mail: taiji@chebucto.ca

or my previous inviting photo-diaries:

<http://photoart.chebucto.org/gallery5.htm>

Good-bye for now...