

CHINA

GUILIN & THE LI RIVER

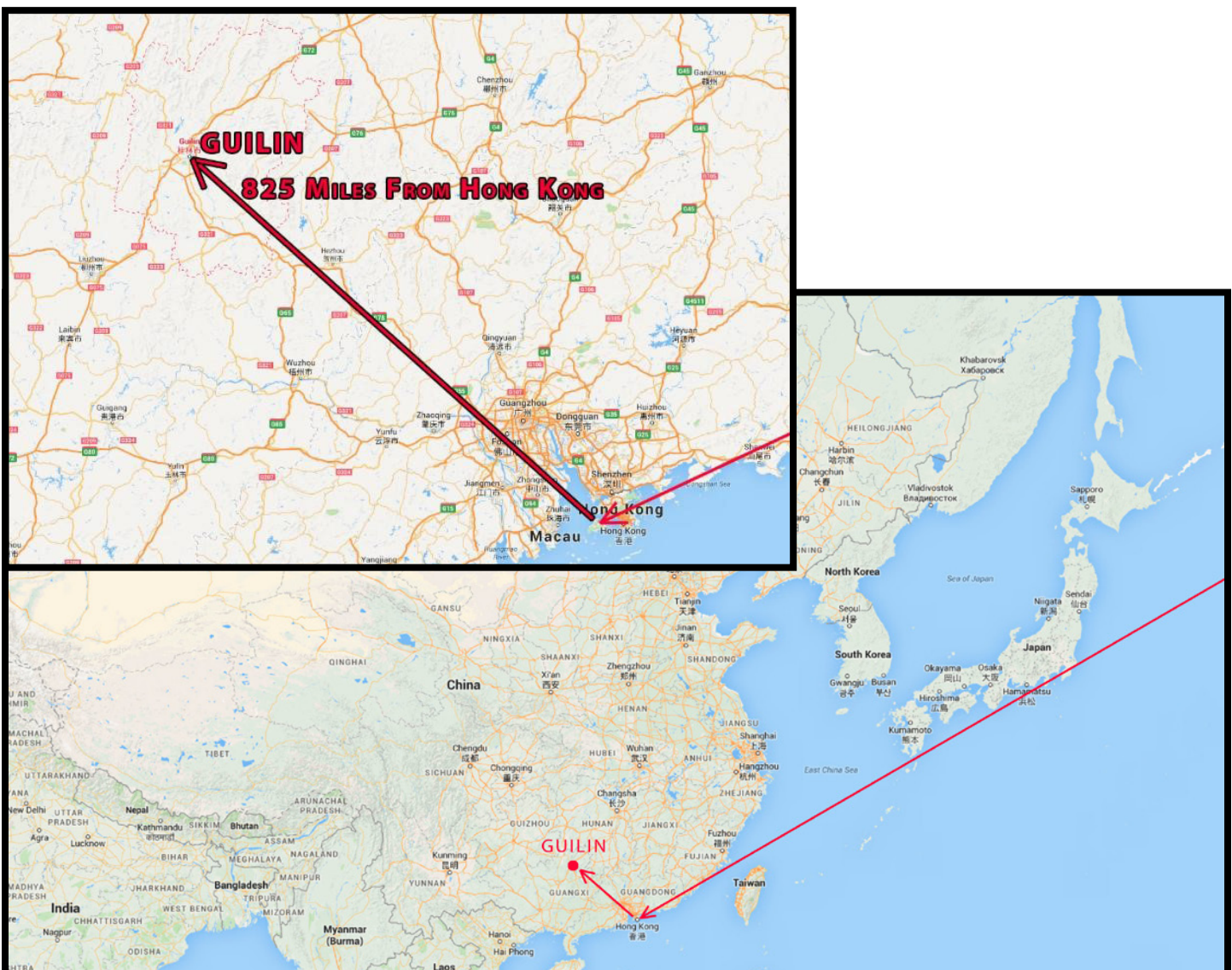
Our trip to China started with a long plane ride to Hong Kong.

We stayed in Hong Kong for a few days upon our return to the USA too, so there will be a forthcoming Hong Kong Flying Pig Adventures travelogue later.

After a couple days of recovery and adventures in Hong Kong we got back on a plane (Dragonair) and headed an hour or so west into the mainland China and the other side of The Great Firewall of China.

Prior to landing we had to turn in all our newspapers to the Dragonair cabin crew. We were then allowed to land, exit the plane in Guilin, pass through customs / security, and finally enter into the other side of The Great Firewall of China.

It was evening before we were all collected by our guide, escorted, bused and deposited in our Guilin Hotel for a one night's stay, to prepare for an early exit from Guilin and onto a boat trip on the Li River to the tourist town of Yangshuo.



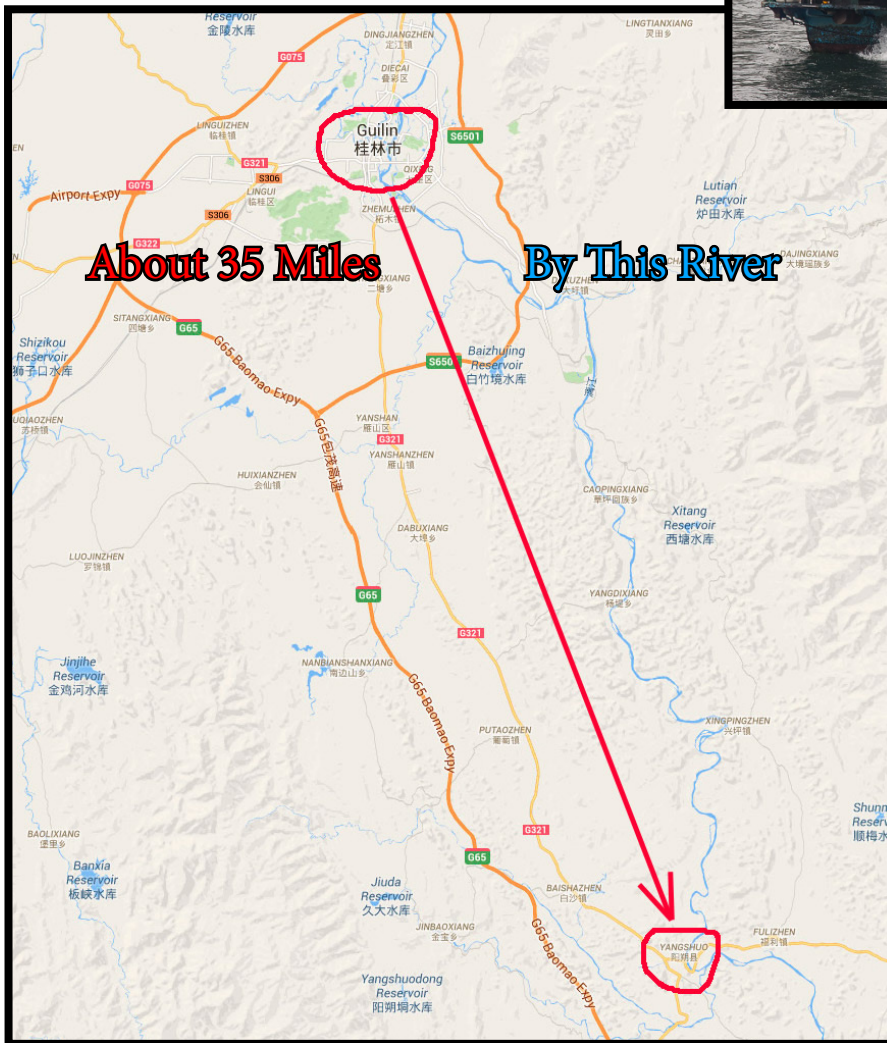
That evening we were lead on a short walk in Guilin to see all the tall people in Guilin. They had all gathered and were playing basketball at some outdoor courts.



It is fashionable in Guilin, China to wear one's jacket backwards while riding your scooter. The oven mittens are an optional fashion item, the masks a sign of things to come.



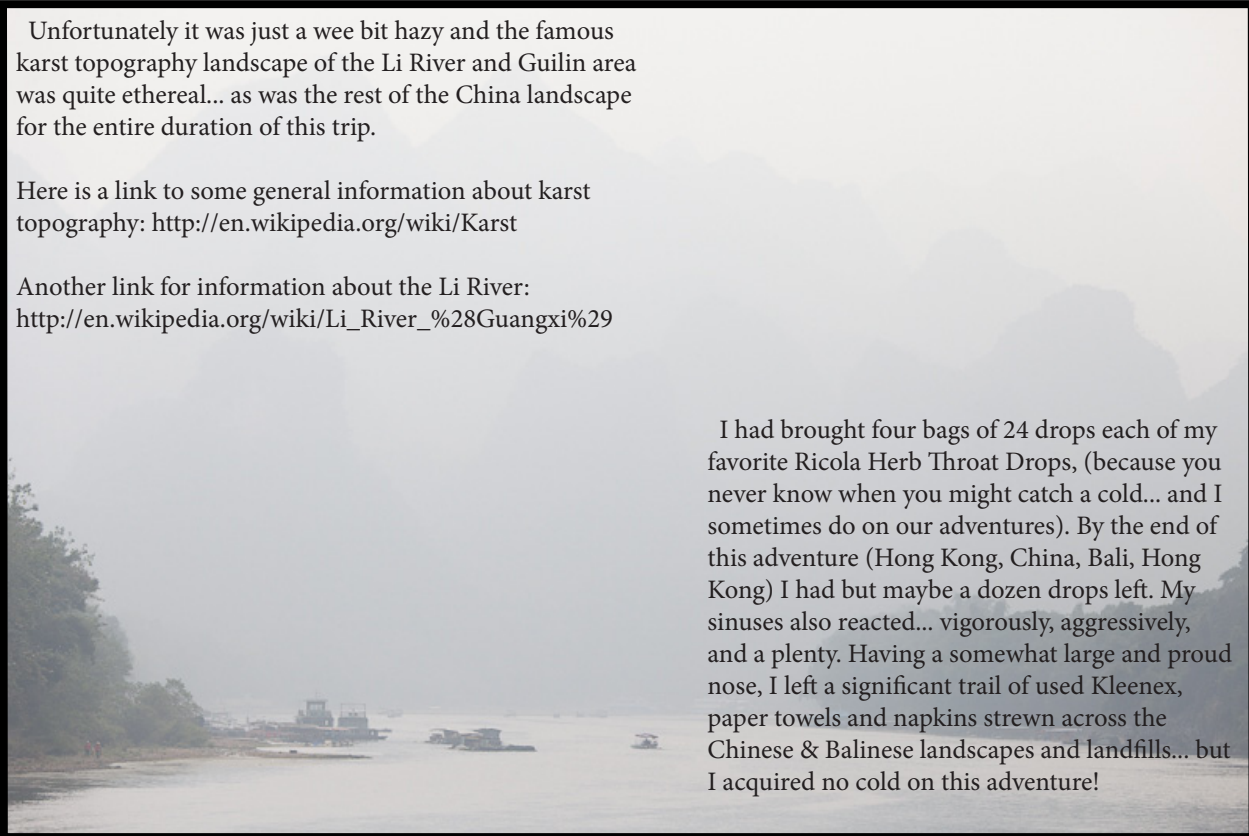
The next morning we were bused to a spot on the Li River where there were many tour boats. We boarded a boat like this one and headed out onto river and to make our way to Yangshuo.



Unfortunately it was just a wee bit hazy and the famous karst topography landscape of the Li River and Guilin area was quite ethereal... as was the rest of the China landscape for the entire duration of this trip.

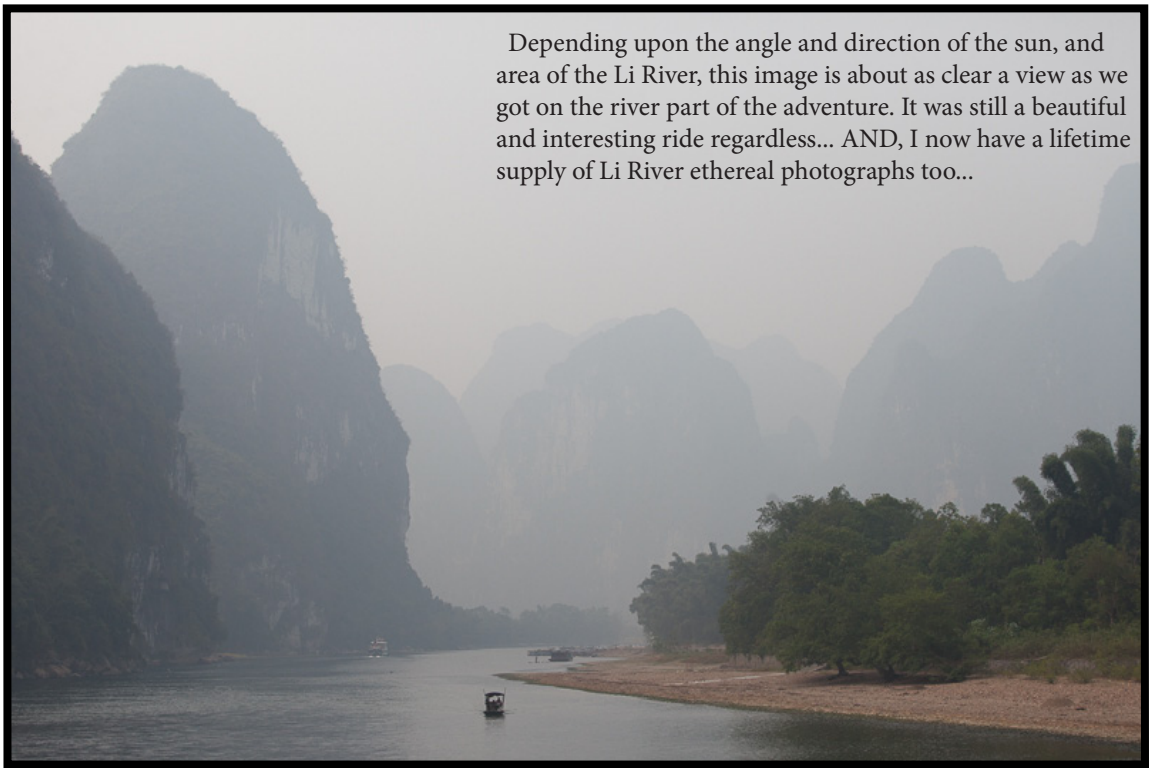
Here is a link to some general information about karst topography: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karst>

Another link for information about the Li River: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Li_River_%28Guangxi%29



I had brought four bags of 24 drops each of my favorite Ricola Herb Throat Drops, (because you never know when you might catch a cold... and I sometimes do on our adventures). By the end of this adventure (Hong Kong, China, Bali, Hong Kong) I had but maybe a dozen drops left. My sinuses also reacted... vigorously, aggressively, and a plenty. Having a somewhat large and proud nose, I left a significant trail of used Kleenex, paper towels and napkins strewn across the Chinese & Balinese landscapes and landfills... but I acquired no cold on this adventure!

It became clear (in a not-so-clear way) that most of the non-ethereal images were going to have to be close up images with not a lot of air space between the subject and camera. So, that is where the focus was most of the time. Landscape photography was not going to be a frequent subject this time.



Depending upon the angle and direction of the sun, and area of the Li River, this image is about as clear a view as we got on the river part of the adventure. It was still a beautiful and interesting ride regardless... AND, I now have a lifetime supply of Li River ethereal photographs too...

These watercraft were by far the most common on the river, used for a variety of purposes. Most were made of genuine plastic bamboo pipes, but there were some that appeared to still be authentic bamboo bamboo.



Engine Powered Tourist Sightseeing



Human Powered Produce Delivery Boat



Engine Powered Fishing Boat



Human Powered Passenger Ferry



Engine Powered Multipurpose Boat
Tourist Sightseeing / Passenger Ferry / Livestock Ferry

These people have stopped in a shallow area of the Li River to harvest snails, (Chinese Escargot). The 'snail' portion is ground and mixed with other materials, then stuffed back into the shell, then served warm, (not really sure if it was actually cooked though). I tried some, but found nothing that I liked about them. The consistency of a dry bland gray paste with flecks of green material in it... no garlic, no butter, no readily identifiable redeeming quality outside of making the other foods served with it taste better than itself by comparison.



An island market in the middle of the Li River



A tourist stop along the river.



The closer we got to Yangshuo, the busier the river got.



We passed several spots like this along the river, where these tourist boats were staged to accept clients.



Finally the Li River became a congested mass of boats navigating as best they could and (as far I could tell) avoiding each other.



Towards the end of the trip on the Li River, we were served a lunch that had been prepared on the stern of the boat and then we were finally jettisoned off at Yangshuo.



The next Flying Pigs Adventures, China: The People Portraits.

Until Pigs Fly Again,

Wally & Wendy Hampton

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