



# 前往香格里拉之路

## On the road to Shangri-La

一個帶你前往迷人西藏寺院的奇妙旅程，蔚藍天空，茂密樹林，自然美景——感受一下靈山的氣息

A magical journey into an enchanting land of Tibetan temples, dark blue skies, limitless vistas, yaks, prayer rooms – and a breath-taking Holy Mountain

TEXT PETER SCHINDLER PHOTOGRAPHY RON YUE

**正**如許多喜歡在廣闊公路上馳騁的駕駛人一樣，我嚮往在中國邊境萬里無的環境下享受駕駛樂趣那種喜悅。多年來，香港一直是我的家，雖然這個城市不再是「東方之珠」，但它仍然是一個充滿動感的都市，沒有甚麼可以難到香港人，他們更將這個都市四分之三的山區地域保存為翠綠的郊野公園。不過，我和香港有一點是不能相容的：香港沒有廣闊開揚的道路，正因如此，我一直嚮往跨越邊境尋求樂趣。

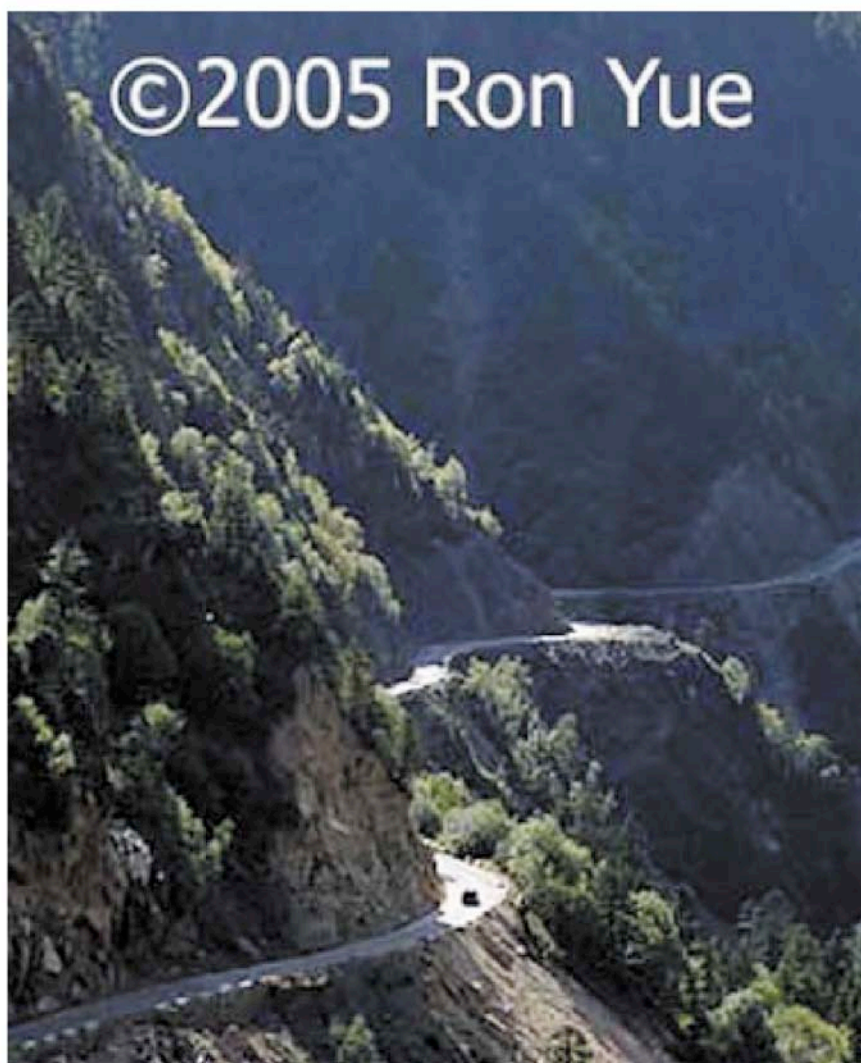
至今年較早前，我終於獲得國內駕駛執照，沒有此執照，就不能在國內駕駛。更加幸運的是，我遇到一些上海朋友，並發現原本他們也熱愛駕駛，於是，我們決定開展一個長達二千英里的旅程，從四川出發至雲南，這兩個省都與西藏邊境接壤，而且環抱香格里拉的群山。

我真的希望我有空間將整個奇妙旅程完完整整地為你描述，但也許讓我把九天旅程的其中一天展現在你的眼前吧。

這一天，我們打算以行山代替駕駛，由康定(一個位於四川首都成都市以西約三百公里的城市)出發，往上走至一片草原，飽覽四川最高的山峰貢嘎山之景，山頂是木雅貢嘎山脊，是西藏舊區康巴的一部分，而康巴現在則屬四川省。在起程那天的前一夜，我已經幻想著自己第一眼看到西藏高原那壯觀美景的感覺。

然而，在我起床時卻有一點失望，因為那是一個陰天。我們還應繼續行山嗎？那位在前一晚為我們準備拔蘭地美酒的旅管負責人十分友善，他提議：「如果你們想看看貢嘎山，那就駕駛至八公里以外看看吧，我可以帶路。」

當我們一行六人騎上租來的車輛之際，正是清晨七時，天氣冷得要命，那車子卻是一部不大理想的三菱SUV。最



**A**s someone who loves driving on the open road, I had often looked longingly across the border into China and wondered what delights might be there. Hong Kong has been my home for many years, and although it is no longer the “Pearl of the Orient,” it is still a vibrant city full of can-do people who have preserved 40 percent of their

mountainous territory as lush, green country parks. But Hong Kong and I are completely incompatible on one point: it has no open roads. So I kept looking across the border, full of yearning.

Then, earlier this year, I finally acquired a Mainland driving licence, without which driving in the PRC is not permitted. By a further stroke of good

fortune, I met up with some Shanghainese friends and discovered that they, too, loved driving. We agreed to set off on a journey of over 3,000 km through Sichuan and Yunnan, two provinces that share a border with Tibet and embrace the mountains that are the home of the fabled Shangri-La.

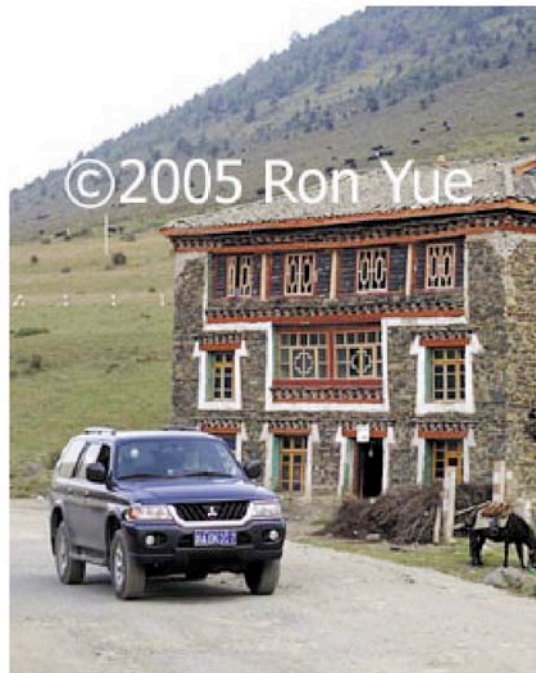
I wish I had the space to tell you about the entire magical journey, but let me re-live just one of those nine days.

This was a day on which we planned to spend the morning not driving, but hiking: from Kangding, a city about 300 kilometres west of Chengdu (the capital of Sichuan), up to a pasture from which we could enjoy a clear view of Sichuan's highest mountain, Gongga Shan. The peak is in the Minya Konka Range, part of the old Tibetan region of Kham, and now part of Sichuan province. As I went to sleep the night before I envisioned my first view of the magnificent, mystical Tibetan highlands.

But I woke to the disappointment of a dreary, grey sky. Should we still go hiking? The innkeeper, a friendly chap who the night before had served us a brandy that tasted remarkably like schnapps, suggested "If you want to see Gongga Shan, drive to a look-out only eight kilometres away. I show you the way."

It was 7am and close to freezing when all six of us piled into our hire car, a hapless Mitsubishi SUV rental. For a while it refused to come to life, but eventually it stirred, then began to shake and rattle as it ticked over. A few kilometres down the road the innkeeper indicated a turn that took us off the paved road and onto a winding, gradually-rising dirt track with deep potholes. For the first time I started wishing that our SUV not only looked like an off-road vehicle, but actually behaved like one: it lacked four-wheel drive, had no crawler gear, and seemed to pant at the mere sight of the mountains.

I proceeded at no more than a few kilometres per hour, but my passengers were bobbing up and down as the car bumped over this rugged path – which I noticed was becoming ominously narrower and wetter. Then, just when I felt I had everything under control, I made the mistake of thinking the track ahead was merely wet when in fact it was a swamp. Within seconds the rear wheels were



spinning and digging two snug holes. I tried to rock my way out, but we only sank deeper. Then the engine stalled with a "Phew!" that seemed to say, "Not in my wildest dreams am I going any further."

With our car – thereafter known as 'Not in Your Dreams' – sitting there sulking, I gave in to a desperate need to announce the incredibly obvious: "We're

*"I gave in to a desperate need to announce the incredibly obvious: 'We're stuck!' I took some small comfort from the fact that all my passengers agreed"*

stuck!" I took some small comfort from the fact that all my passengers agreed. But then it became obvious we would need some ingenuity because all we had to get ourselves out was a shovel. I was the one responsible for this mess, so I decided to work while my companions lit cigarettes and discussed the situation. After exactly 30 seconds' shovelling I ran out of breath and my muscles started to tire. I had forgotten we were at 3,500 metres.

In this part of the world, a suburban SUV stuck in the mud with one feisty woman and five urban alpha males holding a meeting, cigarettes glowing and mobile phones ringing, tends to draw attention. Sure enough, before we knew it, a Tibetan farmer appeared, shaking his head.

He introduced himself as Wang Dui. His face was dark brown and youthful, but rough; his long, thick hair had probably never seen a comb; and his eyes were unfathomable. Were we trespassing? But after an exchange of a few words it seemed we were okay, and he took complete command of the situation. A shouted summons brought a neighbour, who was immediately sent to organise a tractor. Then Wang Dui took our shovel and within 30 minutes had built what looked like a perfect piece of highway, immaculately laid down using local tiles. And he hadn't even worked up a sweat, let alone run out of breath! The tractor

arrived, a steel cable was attached to the tow-hook of our bogged brute, and in just a few seconds 'Not in Your Dreams' had popped out of the marsh – and we all shared a feeling of relief and gratitude to Wang Dui.

We completed the journey to the lookout on foot only to find the view was obscured by heavy cloud, so Wang Dui

invited us to his house for tea. I'd never seen a Tibetan house up close. From the distance it looked like a crude bunker: four walls made of large, rectangular bricks offset against one another, and tilted slightly inward for added strength. The roof was made of weathered slate, and set into the walls were massive but delicately-designed wooden window frames. The yaks grazing nearby – black, sturdy, and furry – and the weather-beaten faces of

對真：轉了又轉，兜了又兜，我們慢慢向上攀；上：車子停在王先生在西藏的屋前  
Opposite page: "Turn after turn, hairpin after hairpin, we steadily gained height ..." Above: "Not in Your Dreams" outside Wang Dui's Tibetan house

## Drive Touring

初的時候，這部三菱動也不動似的，但最終也能啟動引擎，然後一拐一拐地搖曳前行。

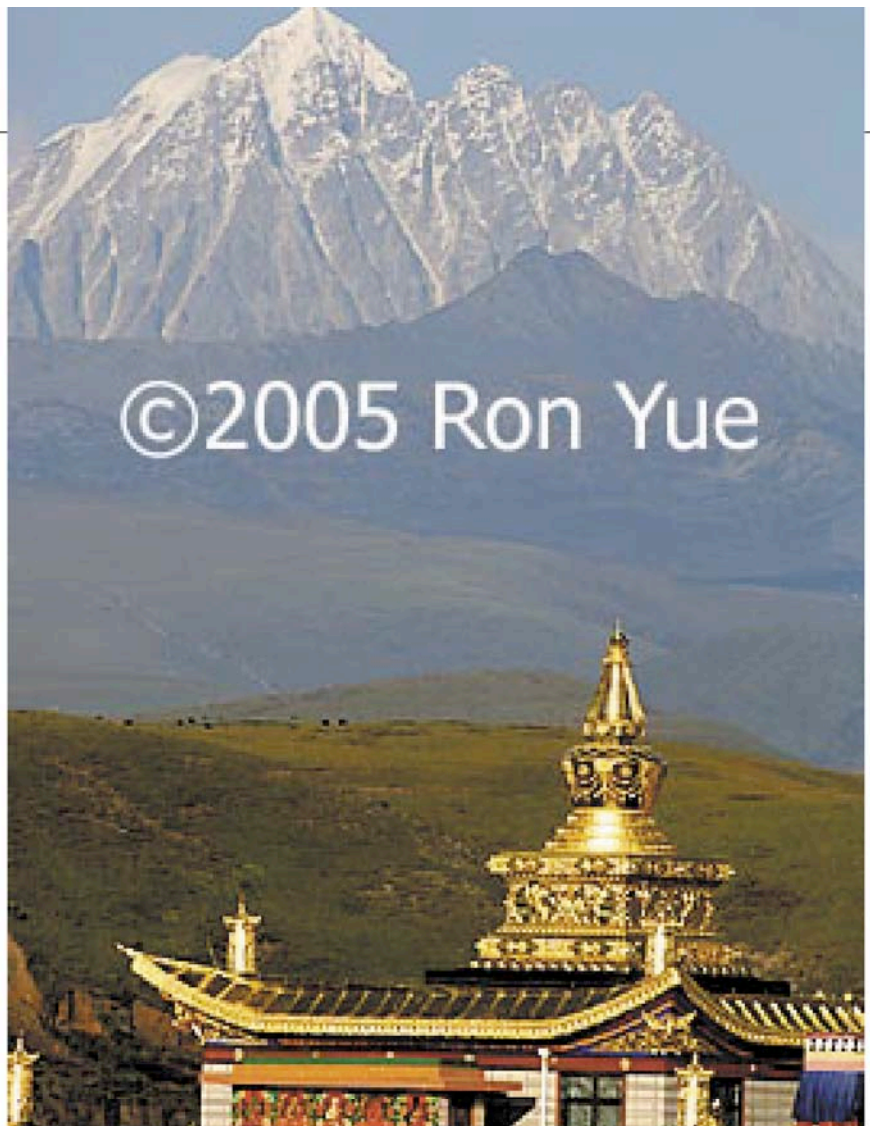
駕駛了數公里之後，旅館負責人指示我們轉彎，引領我們進入一條迂迴曲折的石屎路，那是一條上斜的路，骯髒的路上滿佈地洞。我首次希望我們那輛SUV不僅是看起來可以行走崎嶇之路，而且實際上的確可以這樣做：它沒有四輪驅動，沒有爬山功能，而且似乎一看到山峰便會氣喘。我以每小時數公里的車速行駛，但我的乘客們在崎嶇不平的道路上被搖上搖下，而該道路更愈來愈窄，愈來愈濕。然後，正當我相信一切在自己掌握之內的時候，我錯誤地以為前面只是濕路，但事實上那卻是一個沼澤。後輪在數秒間落入兩個陷入的地洞，我嘗試將車輪弄出，但反而愈踩愈深，之後，引擎「呼」一聲，彷彿告訴我們：「我決定不再前行。」

我們與那部車子一同坐著、待著，我絕望地向大家宣佈：「我們被困了！」乘客們也同意我說的話。然而，我們顯然需要一些妙計，因為唯一能夠把我們救出來的，就只有一個鑿子。由於我對形成這個困局有責任，我決定在我的同伴們抽煙和商量眼前的境況的時候，趁機努力工作，在鑿了僅僅三十秒後，我已氣喘不已，我的肌肉也疲累不堪，我已忘記自己身處三千五百米的高度。

在這個山上的世界，一部困在泥土中的山區SUV，加上一個煩躁的女人和五個來自市區的男士正在開會，香煙點燃著，手提電腦不停地響了又響，藉此吸引路人注意。幸好，一位西藏農民出現了，並與我們握手。

他先自我介紹，他姓王，膚色黧黑，外表年青但粗獷，他那又長又厚的頭髮好像未曾梳理，他的眼神深不可測。我想，他會有甚麼反應？我們是否擅闖私人地方？但在談了一會之後，我認為我們應該不會遇到麻煩，而且已掌握了當時的情況。農民召喚了一名鄰人，而該鄰人亦立即安排一部拖拉機過來，然後，王先生拿了我們的鑿子，在三十秒內，已鋪成一條小路，簡直完美無瑕。他不僅沒有氣喘，更好像連一滴汗也沒有！拖拉機運到後，我們用鋼線鉤著車子，那輛車在數秒間便從泥濘中跳出來——我們的心情頓時輕鬆了不少，而且十分感激王先生。

我們徒步完成其餘的旅程，卻發覺



美景已被密雲掩蓋，王先於是邀請我們到他的家中喝茶。我從來都嘗近距離參觀一所西藏的房子，從遠處看，它像一個粗糙的倉庫：四幅牆以又大又長的磚一塊一塊砌成，每塊稍向內傾以使屋子更穩固，屋頂似傾斜的木板搭建，在牆上是大大的木窗框。黧黑、結實、毛茸茸的犛牛在旁凝視，而王先生鄰人那張陌生的臉孔更令人感到我們已進入了一個很不熟悉的地方，而擅闖私地之感又再回來。不過，王先生以微笑歡迎我們，並打開圍繞著他家的閘門，突然間，兩頭小豬像賽跑一般向我們飛奔過來，牠們不停轉圈，不斷發出叫聲，這些動物已把王先生這屋子的地下視為自己的家園。我們進入陰暗的居住地方，然後經過木梯登堂入室，我們感到一陣溫暖，但同時嗅到一陣發霉的味道，這與我以往曾經參觀過的房屋很不同。但在我爬上木梯的時候，我在木條與木條之間瞥見一絲開心的景象：那是兩位少女開心的陽光面容，紅潤的臉蛋，潔白的牙齒，微亮的丁尼外衣，閃亮的粉紅T恤。我感到畏怯。

王先生邀請我們隨便參觀，屋子十分黑暗，沒有裝飾和粉刷，只有小小窗子透入微弱光線，看來十分貧乏和荒涼。隨後，我推開一道門，進入王先生的祈禱室，我怎可以想像得到這是一名貧民的房子？滿室都是全家的財富——畫作、雕塑、金銀珠寶，綠色、金色、藍色、紫色——如山一般堆積在莊嚴的佛像前，他們告訴我，這佛是至高無上的。

站在那裡沉思了一會後，我再與王先生他的朋友一起，他的朋友已經坐在廚房內一個正在燒木的爐前，他們請我們喝地道的牛油茶，我啜了一口——立即便提醒自己，那是禦寒的好方法。我肯定我的旅遊同伴和我一樣，都是在謹慎的氣氛下喝了那些茶，以免令主人家不悅。

天色漸漸晴朗起來，於是我們與主人

上：寺廟金塔後的靈山壯麗無比。右：牛油茶至少是暖的。Top: The overwhelming magnificence of the Yala Holy Mountain beyond the Monastery's golden tower. Right: At least the yak butter tea was warming.

家便道別，返回SUV，再次起行，重新計劃我們的路程——往318公路走。然後，我們放下旅館負責人，向太貢草原進發。轉了又轉，兜了又兜，我們慢慢向上攀，很快便經過一列又一列的樹木，郊外愈來愈崎嶇，當我們往拉薩的方向駕駛時，兩旁滿是樹木的景色令人嘆為觀止。當我們到達前往大貢及其草原的交叉路口，最後一片雲子已經散去，上面的天空蔚藍一片，太陽高照。

我們應該正接駕駛至最近的市鎮雅江，但在燦爛的太陽底下，我們勇敢地繼續踏上征途。只是轉了幾個彎，我們便看到開揚的山谷，在我們面前的是一大片草地，在暮色之下映得金黃，牛群正慢條斯理地吃草。路上一直是樹木茂密，宛如一條河流，我被那舒服的自然聲音和流動的感覺深深吸引，令我覺得自己好像在水中駕駛一樣。

在這種美妙的狀態中駕駛了一小時左右，我們抵達太貢。此時此刻，太陽已高掛天上，我們很想到處走走。不過，我的攀山友人卻說：「不如駕車穿越這個市鎮到遠一點的那個角落，我在兩年前曾攀登那山頭，最高的山峰高達差不多六千米，我們在這裡應該可以看到。」

我們有少許質疑，但最後也同意駕駛數分鐘看看——然後我們慶幸做了這個決定。只是轉了一個彎，聖山便巍峨地聳立在我們跟前，在落日的襯托下發出亮光，山頂上的積雪猶如皇帝的冠冕。在我們前面還有一所宏偉的西藏大寺，白色的牆，金色的塔，我立即停下車子，我們走山附近的小丘，欣賞更佳的景觀——四周寂靜無聲，我們已沉醉於此時此刻的奇妙美景之中。

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“The valley opened up, and before us lay expansive meadows glowing yellow in the evening light”

Wang Dui's neighbours reinforced the feeling of entering a very unfamiliar place, and a sense of trespassing returned. But Wang Dui simply smiled a big welcome as he pushed open the gate of the compound that surrounded his house. In an instant two piglets came racing, almost flying, towards us. They skidded around in a thousand twirling circles, squealing the whole time. It is here, on the ground floor of the house, that Wang Dui's livestock made their home. We entered the dark twilight inside the dwelling and made our way over to a stocky wooden ladder that led to the living space. From the hole above came a feeling of warmth mixed with a smell of mustiness. This was unlike any home I'd ever entered. But as I climbed the ladder I spotted two bright beacons of happiness: the radiant faces of two young girls, white teeth, gleaming denim jackets and flashing pink t-shirts. My unease turned to awe.

Wang Dui invited me to walk around freely. The house was dark, devoid of decoration and furnishings, illuminated only by faint cones of light filtering through small windows, and seemed poor and barren. Then I pushed open a creaking door and entered Wang Dui's prayer room. How could I have thought this was a poor man's house? In this room the family's wealth – paintings, sculptures, jewellery, all in turquoise, gold, blue and purple – was spread out before a resplendent figure of Buddha, towering above all and everyone else.

After standing there for some time in deep thought, I rejoined Wang Dui and my friends, who were now sitting in front of a wood-burning stove in the kitchen. Yak butter tea was served. I took a sip – and quickly had to remind myself that it was good for fending off the cold. I was reassured to see that my fellow travellers were drinking it with the same circumspect air of guests not wanting to offend their host.

The day was getting brighter and so we said farewell, returned to the SUV, and re-negotiated our path down to the paved

road. Then we dropped off the innkeeper and pressed on toward the Tagong grasslands. Turn after turn, hairpin after hairpin, we steadily gained height, and before long had left the tree line behind us. The countryside became more rugged, and as we drove in the general direction of Lhasa the limitless vistas that came into view were taking my breath away. By the time we reached the intersection with the road to Tagong and its grasslands, the last cloud had disappeared, the sky above was dark blue and the sun was etching razor-sharp shadows into the land.

We should really have headed directly to Yajiang, the nearest town, but enticed by the sun's golden rays we drove boldly on. After only a few turns, the valley opened up, and before us lay expansive meadows glowing yellow in the evening light, with heavy yaks moving slowly as they grazed. The road was tree-lined for long sections and meandered like a gentle stream. Lulled by its flowing motion, I felt almost like I was driving on water.

When we reached Tagong, the sun was flirting with the horizon so we were anxious to turn around. But Ron, my climbing friend, said: “Let's just drive through town and around the next corner. I climbed the Yala Holy Mountain two years ago. The tallest peak is over 6,000 metres. We should be able to see it from here.”

We grudgingly agreed to another few minutes' drive – and were glad we did. As we soon rounded a corner, before us stood the Yala Holy Mountain in all its glory, glowing in the pure light of the setting sun, its snow-capped peaks looking like the golden crown of a king. Ahead of us was a big Tibetan monastery with white walls and a golden tower. We walked up a nearby hill to get a better view, then fell into silence as we all took in the overwhelming magnificence of that moment.

*Peter Schindler is the author of On the Road, a lavish book about the joys of driving. He is also developing driving tours into China. For more information, go to his website [www.ontheroadeditions.com](http://www.ontheroadeditions.com)*