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Yulong Xueshan __ The Jade Dragon Snow Mountain

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The 13 peaks of 18,360-foot Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, a treasure of wild plants and rare animals, are like a silver dragon lying in the clouds.

Awesome and unconquered, they dominate the Lijiang Plain. Some have described Jade Dragon Snow Mountain as a radiant cornet crowning Lijiang's head .

Scientists say she arose from an ancient geosyncline 230 million years ago in an age when dinosaurs began to increase and formed her present shape sometime during the last 600,000 years, even as late as 12,000 years ago.

Storms frequently rage around the glaciers and silver-gray rocks and eternal snowfields of her five primary peaks.

She is a sanctuary to animals that know not the scent of man and a flower kingdom that was old when the Gardens of Babylon were new.

In the alpine meadows of her lower slopes, lonely herders sing to their goats and set the wild echoes flying with the music of their reed pipes.

She is a botanist's paradise, a " kingdom of medicinal materials." Of the 1 3,000 kinds of plants in Yunnan, more than half of them can be found on Jade Dragon Snow Mountain as well as 400 types of trees in 20 primeval forest communities.

On her slopes grow such trees as fir, dragon spruce, Chinese hemlock, Chinese larch, and fragrant camphor.

She has more than 50 species of azalea, 60 kinds of primroses, eight species of poppies and 20 lilies, four species of peonies, five camellia, 50 species of rough gentian, and six kinds of flowering crabapple. From April to June the azaleas turn the mountain into a riot of brilliant color. And in autumn blue rough gentian flowers cover her marshlands. She is decorated with blooming flowers 10 months of the year.

She is home to a rare tea - Wild Snow Tea -which the Naxi insist is good for high blood pressure. It ripens in the winter time and Naxi men, women and children flock to the mountain in November, December and January to pick it. When dried, it resembles tiny strips of dried apples whitened by the

sun.

The mountain is also a sanctuary for animals, many of them rare animals that live at different temperature levels. She is home to 30 kinds of animals protected by the state, such as the wild ass, the Yunnan snub-nosed monkey, the lesser panda, the forest musk deer, the clouded leopard, the blood pheasant, the silver pheasant, and the spotted, yellowish civet cat.

She is one of Yunnan's protected nature reserves, and a certain fee is charged to those for making scientific investigations, collecting animal and plant specimens, taking photos and shooting films.

Jade Dragon Snow Mountain is yet to be conquered by a human, albeit mountaineering teams from the United States, Japan, China, and other countries have tried.

She is an awesome mountain, a whimsical mountain.

She even has green glittering snow. You can see it from Yunshanping (Dragon Spruce Meadow) if you look westward. The only explanation that has emerged is that it may be caused by crystals or algae. And she has a glacier at the lowest altitude in China that is 7.5 miles wide and 21.7 miles long.

She has attracted the attention of many scholars and travelers. Early in 1837, the French writer Bacier introduced Jade Dragon Snow Mountain in his acclaimed book entitled " Universe " .

And seven years ago the chairman of the international Mountainous Region led a team to the mountain for field work.

In Lijiang City you can have a magnificent view of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, with the main peak thrust into the clouds, the Old Man Peak standing out on the right and Black Snow Peak on its left.



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The Spring Snow

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Azaleas in the Snow Mountain



Mountaineering

Yunshanping (Dragon Spruce Meadow)

Walled in by dragon spruces, the alpine meadow is truly a God - made " snow mountain garden " carpeted with thousands of colourful flowers and green grasses.



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