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(Photo: Kunio Iwasaki)
Blues Poppies in the Rain Kingdom

Flowers of East Nepal

Last year I visited Tibet and central Nepal to watch blue poppies, and this year I went trekking to the rain kingdom, East Nepal to look for another poppy. East Nepal is only about 200 km across Sikkim from the world's heaviest rainfall area - Meghalaya Province of India, and it rains 12,000 mm (12 meters) annually. There is a burst of rainfalls when the moisture of the monsoon, which is coming up from the Bengal Bay along the Prasmapura River, hits the mountain clump of Kanchanjunga (8,586 m), the third highest peak in the world. And it causes cliff collapses, floods and destructions everywhere.

Meanwhile, I have taken two trekkings of Topke Gola - Jargare Himal and Kanchanjunga Circuit based on Taplejung in Northeast Nepal from the latter half of June to the end of July. The latter route is the path that a Japanese botanist Nakao Sasuke walked about 60 years ago.

Here I introduce the flowers that are blooming in the smoking rain and sometimes shining in the morning sun in a dark rhododendron forest.
**Meconopsis grandis**

As named "big" (grand) this flower is one of representative among nearly 80 species of blue poppy (Meconopsis). As its name suggests, the flower has a diameter of 25 cm and a length of 160 cm, which is one of the largest in the Meconopsis genus. The characteristic of this flower is that leaves separated into three from the place where flower buds emerge, the leaves under it are mutually replicating. Also, the flower color changes from sky blue to red purple. (Some says that like hydrangea, it becomes blue when the soil is acidic, and red if it is alkaline, but it’s not established as solid theory.)

M. grandis has some varieties, such as M. Gakydiana (formerly M. Grandis orientalis) in the eastern part of Bhutan and in the west of Arunachal Pradesh of India. The species collected in Sikkim was first introduced to Europe, which was rather small with a diameter of 10 cm and a length of 60 cm.

This flower was blooming in the open of dark rhododendron forest where the sunlight was entering. But we also saw this type beside the meadow and the side of the mountain stream etc.

(North of Topke Gola alt. 3850 m)
Three days after I left, my father who had been bedridden passed away as if he was going to see his son who took the flowers in the sky. He lived the era of Taisho, Showa, Heisei which were turbulent time, and quietly closed his 95 years old life. Since I was out of wired/wireless area it was after the funeral that I got in touch with the news. While I met him before departure and said good-bye, it became a regretful parting. So I send his this flower as my sincere condolence.

ITINERARY

(1) Topke Gola - Jaljale Himal Trek

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>6/26~30</td>
<td>Taplejung</td>
<td>Topke Gola (Explore)</td>
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<td>7/1~2</td>
<td>Topke Gola</td>
<td>Thudam South (Rest)</td>
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<td>7/3</td>
<td>Thudam South</td>
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<td>7/4</td>
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<td>7/6</td>
<td>Doupi Kharka</td>
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<td>7/7~8</td>
<td>Jamle Pokhari</td>
<td>Tin Pokhari (Rest)</td>
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<td>7/9</td>
<td>Tin Pokhari</td>
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<td>Giddhe Danda</td>
<td>Gufu Pokhari (Rest)</td>
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<td>7/12</td>
<td>Gufu Pokhari</td>
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(2) Kangchenjunga Circuit (Tseram – Ghunsa) Trek

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<td>Oktang (Explore)</td>
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<td>7/21~22</td>
<td>Oktang</td>
<td>Tseram (Rest)</td>
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<td>Selele La</td>
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<td>7/24~25</td>
<td>Selele La</td>
<td>Ghunsa (Rest)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/26~27</td>
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<td>Kharka (Explore)</td>
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<td>7/28</td>
<td>Kharka</td>
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<td>7/29</td>
<td>Gyabla</td>
<td>Lalep</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/30</td>
<td>Lalep (Japan Tar)</td>
<td>Taplejung</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Flowers in Topke Gola = Jaljale Himal Trek
We planned to go to Papung with 4 WD, but we did not find a rent-a-jeep due to monsoon season, so we had to walk along the river (Mewa Khola). The altitude there is 650 m and subtropical sun shines are glittering. From the Papung leaches are emerging from the dark and wet forest. We spent 4 days to reach Topke Gola instead of planned 2 days.

Asclepias curassavica
This flower native to South America blooms from late autumn to early winter in Japan, but in Nepal it blooms in summer. If the flowering factor is not sunshine or temperature, what is the cause of flowering? Did it lose the sense of season due to coming to the northern hemisphere?
The back is a local house in tin roofing. (alt. 700 m)
In Nepal, rice planting season starts from the end of June. When the seedlings grow, and the rice fields are filled with water, rice planting starts in a week. All family members are coming to the field and planting. In Japan we were doing the same way 60 years ago. The rice field borders are made by heaping up a lot of stones, which has been built for hundreds of years.

I camped the day before in front of the blue roof house visible in the upper central of the picture. (alt. 800 m)

Cardamom (Elettaria cardamomum)
A ginger company, take spices from the seeds for curry materials. It is indispensable for seasoning Nepal ’s national meal dālbhāt. Villagers are cultivating cardamom along the a stream, and making it a source of cash income.

White flower foresight would be Amaryllis family.
To keep quality better it is harvested in a bunch and shipped raw.

After going past Papung, we finally entered the forest zone. Under dim forest, flowers which like moisture shined mysteriously.
According to the itinerary prepared by the travel agency, the travel between Tuplejung
and Papung was supposed to arrive in one day by taking a jeep, and that between
Papung and Topke Gola was a day's walk. However, when we arrived, there was no jeep
due to monsoon, so we had to walk for 2 days on the river bank under the scorching sun.
Also distance between Papung to Topkógola is 16 km and altitude difference is 1900 m,
which a porter who is supposed to have fast legs cannot walk in a day. We were forced
to camp in roadside where leeches were attacking us badly.
This sloppy plan caused serious problems even later, but that story came later.
And it took 4 days to arrive at Topke Gola (altitude 3,700 m). But, there was a reward.
**Meconopsis walliichii**

There is a small khalka (pasture land) about 3 km to Topokegola. There were flowers with wine color, or reddish-purple and little blue color. It was *Meconopsis* (blue poppy companion). To see this flower was one of my purposes of this trekking this time. The length is about 160 cm and the diameter of flower is about 15 cm to 20 cm. This flower was named after Nathaniel Wallich (1786 – 1854) who was the second director of the Kolkata Botanic Garden. He collected blue poppies in Nepal and sent the specimen to Europe, introducing the blue poppy for the first time to the academic world. You can see pale yellow flowers in the picture on the above. It looks like *Meconopsis paniculata*, but it is also *M. walliichii*. The way to distinguish is whether the leaf slices reach to the main vein of the leaf. The picture below is *M. paniculata* that grew nearby. Try to compare the shapes of the leaves.
Topke Gola, A Village of Flowers

There are 13 households at the same height as Mt. Fuji, where they are living by yak grazing. Also they are engaged in transportation business with yak as a main vehicle.

We proceeded to the north passing under the left side of the escarpment to Thudam. This route is only used only by local residents. On the map the route is drawn in ultra fine broken lines.

(At the entrance of village in full bloom of yellow flowers such as buttercup and violet)
The area around Topke Gola is the capital of M. Grandis which blooms with various colors.

(Around Sado Pokhari – alt. 3800 m)
(At the kharka on the way to Pansang Pass – alt. 4200 m)
(In the rhododendron forest – alt. 3850 m)
Comparing M. Grandis in grassland and that of forest, the latter has a large flower (diameter 25 cm) and a length of about 2 m, and the leaves have less bristles and are smooth. I do not know if the reason is coming from simply nutrition or variation. If it is classified as a variant species in the future, I prepare a variation name for that time as Meconopsis grandis var. topkegorensis since it grows in Topke Gola.
Two boys who lived next to our camping site lead me to this place. They were returning home from their elementary school (boarding system) in Papung during summer holidays. The elder brother was able to answer in English properly though not fluently.

(Left – Sundai age 11, right – Kaji age 7)

Since our schedule was tight, we shortened our two days plan for searching flowers and resting in Topke Gola in one day and crossed 5012 m high pass to head for Thudam with dragged heavy legs.

Rheum nobile
Annual grasses of Rhubarb genus of Polygonace family. It is also called Tall Heavy Rhubarb. I likes humidity, and grows on the south side of the pass where the fog of monsoon hits directly here, so you cannot see them on the northern side as the wind gets moist off past the pass.

There are some ruins that have been eaten and scattered here and there, local people are eating flower buds which are packed by the bract. It tastes sour, just like sorrel.

(On the south slope of Pansang Banyang, atl 5012m)

**Pansang Banyang Pass** (alt. 5012 m)

A simple pass with merely one cairn (Cholten) where only local people are crossing over. The white road with granite stone that a glacier has grinded down for a long time conjures bone road.

Banyang means “under the top”, so implies pass. Local people call it as Deurali simply.

Beyond the pass we went down to the bottom of the glacial valley and on the steep slope. There were pale yellow flowers on a wall of the end moraine (a trace of glacier).
Meconopsis discigera
This flower belongs to Discogine subgenusis which is special even in Meconopsis genus. The height is about 40 cm in length and the head of the fruit is disc shape (see below). There are M. bhutanica in Bhutan, M. tibetica and M. torquata in the same group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit shape</th>
<th>Habitat (end-moraine North slope of Pang Sang Pass)</th>
</tr>
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</table>

I had intended to go to Umbak La to see these flowers in more three days march over the 5000 m high pass.

When going down to the glacier valley deeper, there were also blue poppies here – *M. grandis*.

You can see Umba · Rumba Mountain Glaciers on the upper right beyond the U-shaped valley. The white flower in the lower center is *Primula Obliqua*. (alt. 4600 m)

When we arrived at the riverside camp and reconsidered the process from now on, we realized that it was impossible to go on schedule because the plan was too loose I decided not to go further because I missed the return flight and the flowers in bloom in
other places if went on. I took a rest for a day there, crossed the pass again, and arrived at to Topke Gora then took the way to Jaljale Himal. We marched from Topke Gora to the west along the river and stayed at Doupi Khalka for 2 nights, where I explored flowers along the Saju Khola. M. paniculata and M. grandis welcomed me.

**Meconopsis paniculata**

Variation species with vermilion color. We came up along the river on the right.
(alt. 4250 m)
**Meconopsis grandis**

Three slender sisters. Every Grandis of this valley is pink color. (alt. 4000 m)

Unfortunately I could not find Blue's Meconopsis walliichii which I looked for but instead...
Meconopsis sinuate

The stem was eaten. The criminal was a sheep.
**Meconopsis simplicifolia**

The length of the stem with flower is about 20 cm, but when the flower becomes to fruit it extends more than double.

Other than Meconopsis.....
Arenaria sp.

Fritillaria cirrhosa
Trekking course of Jaljale Himal goes around rocky mountains and ponds (pokhari) with repeating ascent and descent between 4000 m to 4500 m. In the morning (until around 10 o'clock) weather is nice and pleasant, but it is always rainy in the afternoon. Porters hate rain so that they hurry to the next camp site, which makes me left alone behind of them.

Camp site at Jamle pokhari (alt. 4200 m)

Going on the ridge route. Raining under the clouds.

There are less flowers other than primula, rhododendron, lagotis and saxflaga on the trekking course.
**Rhododendron nivale** at Doupi Khalka (alt. 4500 m)

**Primula stormosa** at Doupi Khalka (alt. 4000 m)
The day before the final day of the trekking we headed to the village Sang at the foot from Giddhe Danda. As usual the slowest porter departed first, followed by me, a guide, a porter carrying my loads, then followed by young healthy porters who put away our tent. When arriving at the destination this order was reversed, and young porters were setting tents there. However, on this day, as the guide hurried the way back, he had not lose his way. We noticed his mistake and returned to the original road after 1 hour. For this reason, the caravan was divided. The sun had already sunk and the forest was wrapped with dense darkness. My GPS was the sole reliance and it worked, so we could reach the lodge at around 10 pm. Three porters were left behind in the forest and they spent the night in the dark forest. Disaster in Mt. Tomuraushi crossed my head. Fortunately, on the next day three of them arrived safely, but if it happened the worst my trekking might have ended there.

**Flowers around Kangchenjunga Trek**
The eastern end of Nepal, where borders to Sikkim, is the frontier of Nepal and is quite related to Japan. In 1912, Buddhist Bunkyo Aoki had entered this area from Sikkim to who smuggle himself in Tibet. And the Kyoto University mountaineering club (AACK) was founded in 1931 with the aim of climbing Mt. Kabru (7338m), south of Kanchenjunga. (Although the plan was not realized due to the WWII, the team had first climbed Mt. Yalun Kang (8, 505 m) in May 1973) Then, in 1962 Sasuke Nakao who headed the Osaka Prefecture Univ. mountaineering club for climbing Mt Nuptu (6044 m), stood on Nango La (4776 m) in the south, and marked that blue poppies (Meconopsis Grandis) were in full bloom and left pictures. ("Himalaya's Flower" (Mainichi Shimbun))
It is almost sixty years since my predecessors and seniors walked. I tried walking along the path of their dreams.

When heading for Kangchenjunga, Nepali people were in the boiling water at the football world cup games. They decorated the national flag of their supporting team and raised a banner to expressing their wishes. Football fever of Nepalese people is considerable.
This route is a part of Great Himalaya trekking course across Nepal from the east to the west, but the start point is at the small stream with altitude of 1,500 m, and goes through the farmhouse's garden, along the paddy field, and inside the corn field. And that is also in the kingdom of LEECHES.

The movement for search of its prey for blood with shaking its head looks somewhat yacky-pretty. But if it comes to its size becoming 5 ~ 10 cm, it is truly amazing! Once sucked on, it won’t leave for a long time. If you try to forcibly get away, the chewing mouth remains on your skin and make it tickled later. When it finishes to suck blood, it falls falling without any itching, but blood will not stop for about 2 hours, and the surroundings will be dyed red. In this trekking I have donated a lot of blood. The measure is an Air Salonpas, pain relief air sole. Blown away. It falls off instantly and there remains no bites.

The roads where leeches appear are wet and the flowers that like humidity are advantageous.
Begonia picta

Chirita spp.

Impatiens family

Impatiens falcifer
Ascending to the Lasiya Pass at 3300 m high, we descended to the bottom of the river flowing out of the Yalun Glacier and went upstream of this river. When exceeded 3300 m red-wine colored Meconopsis began to appear.
**Meconopsis walliiichii var. fusco-purpurea**

This is a variant of *Meconopsis walliiichii* seen in Topke Gola. It is higher in length and more flowers than that of *M. walliiichii* in Topke Gola.

The diameter of the flower is 10 cm, the length is 140 - 160 cm (some close to 2 m)

(Between Tortong and Tseram alt. 4050 m ~ 4100 m)
Tseram is a small village with only 4, 5 farmers grazing yaks. The central square of the village is the place where the yaks rest from the pasture, and also used for camp site. For this reason, there are a lot of dunks around the tents. You should be careful and watch your step when you go to toilet at night.

We went upward along the side moraine of the Yalun Glacier. On the way, I found a colony of M. grandis and M. paniculata, which remained after blooming on the side of a stream along moraine. A couple of weeks earlier you would have watched superb color pattern of yellow and blue.
Since side moraine of Yalun Glacier is about 20 m in height, you cannot see the inside of glaciers without climbing the moraine. At Oxtang, when looked down the inside…

Is a glacier white? Certainly glaciers in Switzerland and Alaska are white, but here it is dark due to scraping down the mountains and rolling up the soil and sand. It is a desolate world like after the flood. The glacier flows from left to right, but it is too slow to see it is flowing. Nevertheless, there are roaring sound of the rock falls sometimes. (The black peak is the front peak of Rotong (6682 m), a part of Kotang (6148 m) can be seen across the suspended glacier on the right)

I did not expect to find a blue poppy here. But I found young leaves with small bristles on side moraine.
It may be Meconopsis, my expectation increases.

The next day, I explored the end moraine of a small glacier on the west side of the Yalun Glacier. I traversed the middle of the end moraine from left to right. On the top of the end moraine there is a small glacial lake in which upper glaciers are flowing down.
**Flowers during the Exploration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gentian family</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look like Gentiana jamesii in Hokkaido. When rain is coming it hides the stamen with cilia. (Stamen appears under the sun)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Codonopsis thalictrifolia  
Pedicularis klarkei  
Leontopodium monocephalum  
Bistorta sherei
**Primula capitata subsp. crispata**

Blue bonbon candies are standing around the side moraine. They are the main characters of this valley along with Bistorta and Anafalis.

Cow and yak (and its mix) come from this hill foot (Ramche) to this pasture on a day-to-day basis. They never eat this flower because it has poison. Therefore, they are prospering.

(South of Oxtang alt. 4650 m, Yalun Glacier is visible in the back)

It was hard to find the blue poppy that I expected. It started rain as well. I gave up and tried to get back to the tent. When I went down the end moraine and turn at a rock…..
Meconopsis horridula
The leaves are bigger than M. horridula in Tibet and Qinghai Province, and the bristles are sparse. It may be less necessary protect itself from drying due to growing in the rain kingdom. I could not find anything else other than this one.

The guide tried to cheat me saying "There is no water here, so that camping is impossible". But I refuted him by finding a small stream nearby and forced him to set up my tent. It was worth.
(South of Oxtang alt. 4770 m)
It became fine in the morning when we left Oxtang. I said good-bye to Kabru and Rotang that I saw their whole features for the first time, and returned to Tseram.

After taking a one day rest in Tseram, we crossed Sinion Pass (4645 m), Milgin Pass (4648 m) then headed for Ghunsa.

**From Tseram to Ghunsa**
Meconopsis walliiichii var. fusco-purpurea

M. walliiichii had appeared one after another in the mountain road from Tseram to the pass. The clouds buried Tseram valley but after waiting for a while the clouds flew away and rocky peaks on the other side had appeared. Flowers started shining on the morning sun. It is a good shutter opportunity which never got in the valley bottom. I returned back to the spot where this flower was blooming and pressed the camera shutter.

(North of Tseram, alt. 4000 m)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primula soldanelloides</th>
<th>Primula saphirina</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both are small flowers with the diameter less than 1 cm. It is due to adapting to the low temperature and the strong wind blowing through the pass. (Between Sinion Pass and Milgin Pass, alt. 4600 m)</td>
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**Saussurea topkegolensis**

This plant is like an extraterrestrial creature but a species of Asteraceae, and it also is called fluffy spruce. It wraps its sprout with fluff and protects it from the cold. As the name of topkegolensis shows, it is a plant unique to East Nepal. (West of Selele Pass, alt. 4400 m)
Ghunsa is the political, economic, cultural and religious center of this region. In addition, trekker lodges are standing like forest trees as it is the starting point (end point) of Kanchenjunga sightseeing. This day I was the only guest staying in this village, but the village would be full of guests in the trekking season from autumn to spring.

Local houses. Buddhist flags (tarcho) on the roof are flowing with the wind. When the flag flows to the mountain, it comes fine.

Opium poppy planted at the house garden

Now I am entering into the final chapter of the trekking. I came here is to see what was seen by Sasuke Nakao who visited Nango La nearly 60 years ago. For this purpose I fought leeches and also the guide. Receiving the morning sunshine on my back, I left for Kalka, base of Nango La. We once descended along Ghunsa Khola down to 3200 m, then climbed again along the valley. The first appearing flowers were lily and campanula which are usually growing in low altitude mountains.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notholirion macrophylum</th>
<th>Campanula pallida</th>
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<td>(Altitude 3200 to 3400 m)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Impatient family</th>
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<td>(Altitude 3300 to 3400 m)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Thalictrum virgatum</th>
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Climbing up to the rock slide area (alt. 3800 m ~ 4000 m) you can look a sea of M. wallichii var. fusco-puruprea.

(South of Kharka alt. 4000 m)
When coming up to alt. 4200 m, M. walliiichii was getting fewer and gave way to M. paniculata. The pale-yellow flower is yellow form of M. walliiichii (if names, it would be M. walliiichii var. lutea) and that of behind the stream is M. paniculata. The direct left of M. paniculata is M. grandis (which extends its stem to sky and had one fruit on its tip). Also M. paniculata are standing together on the upper slope.

(South of Nango La alt. 4200 m, Nango La is the right edge of the top left mountain.)
A bit more upward ... M. walliichii is a sole red one, all others are M. paniculata.

In the forest of M. paniculata there were many M. grandis already finished with flowers.

Prof. Nakao visited here on June 22, 1962. I came on July 28th, a month later, so there was no choice even though I did not see M. grandis. But why did Nakao not mention about M. paniculata and/or M. walliichii were blooming here. I guess some reasons. One is that only M. grandis was blooming when he visited here and no other Meconopsis was not. Certainly M. walliiichii blooms late, so it possible that no M. walliichii was here when he came. But what about M. paniculata? When I visited Topke Gola a month ago there blooms both M. grandis and M. paniculata nearby. There was actually no M. paniculata (M. walliichii also) here when he visited 60 years ago and transplanted later? Or did he merely forget to describe about M. paniculata which was
existing everywhere because he was too attracted by the charm of blue to see other flowers. My question is getting deeper. Anyway here is a large community of three poppies. In early July, there would be opportunity to see these three flowers at the same time.

I climbed 500 m up on a steep gravel trail of the slope to attain Nango La pass. Nakao had crossed over the pass and headed for Mt. Nuptu to climb to its summit, but I had turned back here.
There is a stone incense burner on the pass and passers-by gives a pray here. There were flowers under it.

**Rhodiola cretini**
This flower is a dioecious plant. Do you know which is which? (Alt. 4776 m)

As the descending route is more difficult than ascending, I had a lot of troubles on my way to Taplejung such as landslide, road collapse due to flood and even guide’s neglect. But flowers had never betrayed me.
Cyanotis cristata

Didymocarpus oblongus

Delphinium sp. (D. scabridiflorum?)
Decentra macrocapnos

Unknown (Deutzia sp.?)
Flowers in Gosainkunda

Gosainkunda trekking is the best and easiest way for acclimatization. You can go to the pond (kunda means pond) in 3 days from Kathmandu. Trekkers I met there were light-worn, so I worried that "When the weather changes, what will they do?" (In such case there are mountain huts every 1 km, so that they may escape in). I intended to find two kinds of blue poppies in this area, but I had to return in one day-stay at the pond due to my heavy high-altitude disease, which once happened there is not twice. Thanks to that, I had been able to successfully cross over the 5000 m pass afterwards.

Meconopsis napaulensis
This flower was the first blue poppy introduced to Europe in 1820 by Nathaniel Wallich of Kolkata Botanical Garden. He collected this flower in Gosainkunda with his employee, so napaulensis means Nepal. At that time, as the Meconopsis cambrica (Welsh poppy) was known in Europe this flower was also classified as Meconopsis as it was the same yellow flower. If (there were no IF in history) a blue color poppy such as M. simplicifolia were introduced for the first time, it might have not classified as Meconopsis and would have other new genus name. Cambrica is now out of the genus Meconopsis and M. napaulensis became a source of confusion in the nomenclature of Meconopsis. It has a strange fate.  

(West of Gosainkunda, alt. 4350 m)

M. walliichii was previously seen to be belonged in M. napaulensis because the leaves are similarly deep cut. However, the fruit attaching style and the length are completely different. I searched for another kind of Meikonopsis, M. dhwoji, but I could not find it.
### Other Flowers in Gosainkunda Trek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lloydia tibetica</strong></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(East of Cholang Pati alt. 3600 m)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Euphorbia luteoviridis</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(East of Shing Gonpa alt. 3500 m)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Primula rotundifolia</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Both: West of Gosainkunda alt. 4350 m)</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Primula concinna?</strong></th>
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Gosainkunda is the holy place of Hinduism. There is a big festival in July, and a lot of pilgrims are gathering not only from Nepal but also India. Of course, accommodation is not enough, so they sleep with a tent. For this reason, there are many flat places along the trek road so that a tent can be set up. Some of the pilgrims are ascending with the Trident Spear which is the symbol of God Shiva. Pilgrims are piling stones at the side of Gosainkunda on the summit and praying health and happiness for family and own.
I was also praying for my father that "His death is peaceful and calm" when I had not received the notice of his death yet.

There are a lot of various sized ponds among the rocky mountains in Gosainkunda. I have heard the creation myth of this pond from my guide.

A long time ago, Gosainkunda was the huge mountain in Himalaya as high as 10,000 meters. And the Shiva god lived at the summit. One day, Shiva got smoked marijuana and slept comfortably, but when he woke up he felt thirsty. He searched water to drink around, but he could not find it. His throat dried more and more. Shiva got angry and thrusted a Trident spear in his hands on the top of the mountain, then crashed into pieces. There was no trace on the top, it became flat. And there remained dents in the spot where the spear struck. When it began to rain the pits turned out to be ponds. Gosainkunda is one of the ponds and the biggest.

There are mountains exceeding 7000 m such as Langtang Himal and Ganesh Himal around Gosainkunda. As Gosainkunda is a single peak, we have fairly beautiful views of these mountains.

Ganesh Himal. Last year I searched for flowers at the foot of this mountain.
Summit of Langtang Lirun in cloud.
And far beyond the Tibet border

Mt. Shishapangma  (alt. 8027 m) The lowest among the 8000 m class mountains.