

A new species of *Lethe* HÜBNER, 1819 from N.W. Yunnan, S.W. China

(Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae, Satyrinae)

by

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received 19.X.2025

Abstract: In this paper, a new species, *Lethe siyaoi* spec. nov., is described from the upper Salween (Nujiang) valley in Gongshan, N.W. Yunnan, S.W. China.

Materials in this study are deposited in Chongqing Museum of Natural History, Beibei, China (CMNH), the Research Institute of Evolutionary Biology, Tokyo, Japan (RIEB), and SONG-YUN LANG's private collection, Beibei, Chongqing, China (LSY). Photographs of the holotype of *Lethe huongii* MONASTYRSKII, 2004, which is kept in Natural History Museum, London, UK (NHMUK), were taken and provided by SI-YAO HUANG (Bonn) and were permitted to use by BLANCA HUERTAS (NHMUK).

The new species described here belongs to the *Lanaris*-group sensu DE LESSE (1957) (LANG, 2017, 2020, 2022; HUANG & YU, 2025). My first encounter with this species was at the Research Institute of Evolutionary Biology, Tokyo, Japan in winter 2019. It was a single ♂ specimen collected by Mr. MASATOSHI NISHIMURA from Chudu Razi, Kachin, N. Myanmar, and kindly shown to me by Mr. RAICHIRO KATSUYAMA. At that time, I strongly recommended that KATSUYAMA-san publish it, but he has not done so yet. In summer 2021, Mr. SI-YAO HUANG collected 2 ♂♂ of this species in the upper Salween (Nujiang) Valley, Gongshan, N.W. Yunnan, which have remained temporarily in my collection ever since. At the time, SI-YAO considered this species most likely to be the ♂ of *Lethe huongii* MONASTYRSKII, 2004 from N. Vietnam (Lang Son, Huu Lien Nature Reserve), described from 1 ♀ (fig. 2), with the ♂ still unknown. More recently, local collectors caught another batch of ♂ specimens in N.W. Yunnan, identical to those previously collected by SI-YAO, and sold them online. I urged SI-YAO to publish it, but he preferred caution. Neither ♀ specimens from N.W. Yunnan nor ♂ Vietnamese *L. huongii* MONASTYRSKII were available, so he chose not to describe it as a new species, and instead published it only as a new record of the ♂ of *L. huongii* MONASTYRSKII (HUANG & YU, 2025). Based on my experience, the Yunnanese ♂ specimens and the single Vietnamese ♀ specimen (namely *L. huongii* MONASTYRSKII) are clearly different species. With SI-YAO's permission, I here describe and publish the former as a new species. Waiting for a ♀ specimen from Yunnan or a ♂ specimen from Vietnam seems unwise. In butterfly taxonomy, sometimes taking a calculated risk like this is worthwhile.

Lethe siyaoi LANG spec. nov. (figs. 1a-c)

Holotype ♂, CHINA, Yunnan, Gongshan, on the road from Gazu to Qiqi, 5.VIII.2021, leg. SI-YAO HUANG, NJ1, CMNH.

Paratype: 1 ♂, same locality as holotype, 6.VIII.2021, leg. SI-YAO HUANG, NJ2, LSY.

Diagnosis: In the *Lanaris*-group, three species are already known: *Lethe lanaris* BUTLER, 1877, *L. naga* DOHERTY, 1889 and *L. huongii* MONASTYRSKII, 2004 (LANG, 2018, 2020).

A) Based solely on ♂ specimens, the new species can be distinguished from *L. lanaris* BTL and *L. naga* DOH. by the following key characters: 1) the forewing termen is slightly curved, whereas it is nearly straight in *L. lanaris* BTL. and *L. naga* DOH.; 2) on both sides of the forewing, a white oblique discal band is well present, whereas it is entirely absent in *L. lanaris* BTL. and *L. naga* DOH.; 3) on both sides of the hindwing, the apical half of the submarginal area is covered by white scales, which are absent in *L. lanaris* BTL. and *L. naga* DOH.; 4) the ♂ gnathos (fig. 1c) is narrow and tapers, whereas it is slightly broad with a rounded apex in *L. naga* DOH. and is very broad in *L. lanaris* BTL.

B) Although the new species is known only from ♂ specimens and thus cannot be directly compared with *L. huongii* MONASTYRSKII, which is known only from 1 ♀, it appears to represent a species clearly distinct from the latter based on the following two important reasons: 1) on both sides, the ♂ forewing discal band is nearly straight, whereas it is strongly curved in ♀ *L. huongii* MONASTYRSKII (within the genus, if ♂ individuals possess a forewing discal band, regardless of its width, its curvature is generally consistent with that of ♀ individuals); 2) on both sides, the ♂ hindwing submarginal area is densely covered with white scales, especially near the apex, whereas this white is completely absent in ♀ *L. huongii* MONASTYRSKII (within the genus, typically, ornamental markings are more developed in ♀ individuals than in ♂ individuals, rather than being reduced or vestigial).

Etymology: The specific name *siyaoi* is dedicated to Mr. SI-YAO HUANG (Bonn), who collected the type specimens and authorized me to publish this taxon.

Distribution: S.W. China (N.W. Yunnan), N. Myanmar (N. Kachin).

Acknowledgements: I am deeply grateful to Mr. HUANG SI-YAO (Bonn), Dr. MASAYA YAGO (The University Museum, the University of Tokyo, UMUT), Mr. RAIICHIRO KATSUYAMA (UMUT, RIEB), Mr. NORIO NAKAMURA (RIEB), Mr. SHUHEI YAMAGUCHI (RIEB), Mr. TOSHIAKI AOKI (RIEB), Mr. TAMAMITU SAITO (RIEB), Mr. MOTOKI SAITO (Musashino), Ms. BLANCA HUERTAS (NHMUK), Mr. HUANG HAO (Qingdao) and Ms. HOU JIANG (CMNH) for their kind assistance in various ways during this study.

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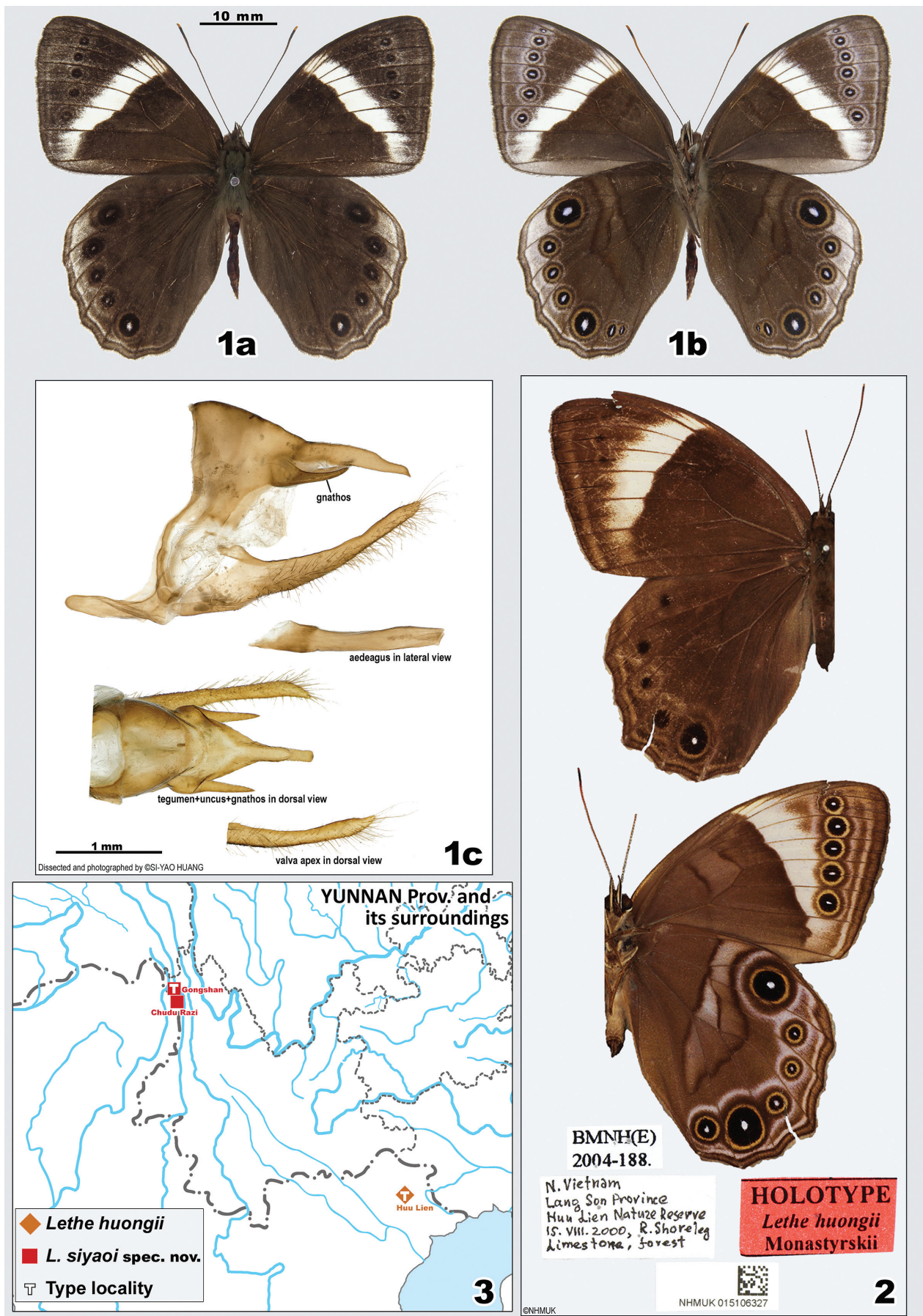


Fig. 1: *Lethe siyaoi* spec. nov.: (a-c) ♂, holotype, CHINA, Yunnan, Gongshan, NJ1, CMNH, (a) dorsal, and (b) ventral sides, (c) genitalia in lateral view.

Fig. 2: *Lethe huongii* MONASTYRSKII, 2004, ♀, holotype, N. VIETNAM, Lang Son, Huu Lien, ©The Trustees of NHMUK.

Fig. 3: Distribution map of *Lethe huongii* MONASTYRSKII, 2004 and *L. siyaoi* spec. nov. [Sources of data: CMNH; RIEB; MONASTYRSKII, 2004].

The Research Institute of Evolutionary Biology (RIEB)

Lab of Entomology



From left to right: T. AOKI, T. SAITO, M. YAGO, S. LANG, N. NAKAMURA, and S. YAMAGUCHI
(photographed by R. KATSUYAMA, 16 Dec 2019)



R. KATSUYAMA and LANG at Todai, 14 Dec 2019

令和元年12月14日13時57分
東京大学理学部2号館4階大講堂
2019年度 日本蝶類学会大会
林賞受賞記念特別講演 郎嵩云博士
An introduction of the genus *Lethe* Hübn.
from China (Nymphalidae: Satyrinae)



S-Y. HUANG at LANG's home, Beibei, 7 Nov 2021

the Science Institute of West China
Chongqing Museum of Natural History
Beibei



LANG and S-Y. HUANG, 7 Nov 2021



Lethe siyaoi spec. nov.
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Zeitschrift/Journal: [Atalanta](#)

Jahr/Year: 2025

Band/Volume: [56_3-4](#)

Autor(en)/Author(s): Lang Song-Yun

Artikel/Article: [A new species of *Lethe* Hübner, 1819 from N.W. Yunnan, S.W. China \(Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae, Satyrinae\) 495-498](#)