Mother River

Yan Wang Preston

For my father Wang Xingyi and mother Gao Suying
You come from the snow mountains, the spring tides are your colours;  
You ran towards the East Sea, the mighty waves are your sizes;  
With your sweet milk, you bring up sons and daughters from all ethnic groups;  
We praise the Long River, you are the ever-flowing spring;  
We are attached to the Long River, you have the heart of a Mother.

You come from the antiquity, washing dust with your great waves;  
You go towards the future, wakening the universe with your roaring water;  
With your pure flows, you fertilise our country of flowers;  
With your vigorous strength, you push our time forward;  
We praise the Long River, you are the ever-flowing spring;  
We are attached to the Long River, you have the heart of a Mother.

‘Song for the Long River’ Theme song for the documentary series ‘The Long River’ by CCTV, 1983

Yangtze, the Long River, is China’s Mother River.  
It is my Mother River.  
I wish to photograph her,  
from the source to the sea, at a precise interval of every 100 kilometres.  
6,211 kilometres.  
63 shooting locations.

Yangtze, the Long River, is China’s Mother River.  
It is my Mother River.  
I wish to photograph her,  
from the source to the sea, at a precise interval of every 100 kilometres.  
6,211 kilometres.  
63 shooting locations.
The Plan:

1. Divide the entire 6,211km Yangtze River into 62 equal sections on Google Earth. Each section is 100 kilometres long.

2. Mark the 63 dividing points, including the start and end points: Y1-Y63.

3. Start from Y1, at the river source, locate each dividing point as precisely as possible, regardless the cost. Photograph ONLY these dividing points with a large format film camera, whatever they are.

The Y Points

Y = Yangtze/Yan
N = North Latitude
E = East Latitude
m.a.s.l. = Metres Above Sea Level

Y1: 33°25'48.49"N 91°2'3.69"E 5,400 m.a.s.l.
Y2: 34°14'12.95"N 91°41'21.21"E 4,800 m.a.s.l.
Y3: 34°11'27.22"N 91°54'2.62"E 4,645 m.a.s.l.
Y4: 34°42'12.72"N 92°47'10.07"E 4,498 m.a.s.l.
Y5: 34°42'5.77"N 93°42'9.98"E 4,422 m.a.s.l.
Y6: 34°39'32.96"N 94°27'10.61"E 4,310 m.a.s.l.
Y7: 34°32'41.36"N 95°11'26.41"E 4,185 m.a.s.l.
Y8: 34°16'16.67"N 95°46'10.92"E 4,088 m.a.s.l.
Y9: 34°17'0.03"N 96°11'31.81"E 4,047 m.a.s.l.
Y10: 33°59'31.87"N 96°41'24.45"E 3,773 m.a.s.l.
Y11: 33°55'31.31"N 97°41'4.07"E 3,598 m.a.s.l.
Y12: 33°40'20.87"N 97°37'19.44"E 3,523 m.a.s.l.
Y13: 32°14'13.95"N 98°10'46.40"E 3,232 m.a.s.l.
Y14: 32°14'5.92"N 98°58'2.77"E 3,104 m.a.s.l.
Y15: 32°10'26.99"N 99°55'20.94"E 2,774 m.a.s.l.
Y16: 31°30'20.78"N 100°46'34.26"E 2,495 m.a.s.l.
Y17: 29°49'13.15"N 101°52'32.26"E 2,265 m.a.s.l.
Y18: 28°18'10.57"N 102°26'41.45"E 2,049 m.a.s.l.
Y19: 27°35'46.87"N 102°09'51.15"E 1,827 m.a.s.l.
Y20: 26°57'56.99"N 102°45'36.68"E 1,624 m.a.s.l.
Y21: 26°24'39.39"N 103°11'15.86"E 1,463 m.a.s.l.
Y22: 25°26'12.32"N 103°22'12.81"E 1,388 m.a.s.l.
Y23: 24°47'46.08"N 103°53'52.12"E 1,303 m.a.s.l.
Y24: 23°58'46.79"N 104°25'58.87"E 1,175 m.a.s.l.
Y25: 23°27'17.57"N 104°25'55.46"E 1,055 m.a.s.l.
Y26: 22°35'30.38"N 104°14'14.89"E 987 m.a.s.l.
Y27: 21°41'32.77"N 104°08'0.07"E 902 m.a.s.l.
Y28: 20°23'44.97"N 103°58'09.76"E 796 m.a.s.l.
Y29: 19°13'47.87"N 103°46'07.62"E 767 m.a.s.l.
Y30: 17°27'41.69"N 103°30'06.07"E 545 m.a.s.l.
Y31: 16°9'50.63"N 103°10'26.44"E 455 m.a.s.l.
Y32: 15°28'39.18"N 102°50'53.81"E 340 m.a.s.l.

1. Divide the entire 6,211km Yangtze River into 62 equal sections on Google Earth. Each section is 100 kilometres long. Mark the dividing points, including the start and end points: Y1-Y63.

2. Start from Y1, at the river source, locate each dividing point as precisely as possible, regardless the cost. Photograph ONLY these dividing points with a large format film camera, whatever they are.

3. Repeat this process 63 times, until Y63, the river mouth, is reached and photographed.
Distance between two consecutive Y Points = 100 km
Y2. The River Source
Y2: 100km from the river source
Y3: 200km from the river source
Y4: 300km from the river source
Y5: 400km from the river source
Y6: 500km from the river source
600km from the river source
700km from the river source
Y9: 800km from the river source
Y10: 900km from the river course
1,000km from the river source
Y12: 1,100km from the river source
Y28: 1,200km from the river source
Y14: 1,300km from the river source
Y15: 1,400 km from the river source. Unable to reach after 7 hours trekking.
Y16: 1,500km from the river source.
Unable to reach after searching for two days.
1,600km from the river source
1,700km from the river source
Y2W: 1,800km from the river source
Y20: 1,900km from the river source
Y21: 2,000km from the river source
Y22: 2,100km from the river source
Y23: 2,200km from the river source
Y24: 2,300km from the river source
Y25: 2,400km from the river source
2,600km from the river source
Y26: 2,700 km from the river source
2,500km from the river source
2,900km from the river source
3,000 km from the river source
Y22: 3,100 km from the river source
Y33: 3,200 km from the river source
Y34: 3,300km from the river source
Yao 3,400km from the river source
Y36: 3,500km from the river source
Y37: 3,600km from the river source
Y2: 3,700km from the river source
3,800 km from the river source
Y40: 3,900km from the river source
4,000 km from the river source
Film loaded back-to-front by accident
Y42: 4,100km from the river source
Flim loaded back-to-front by accident
4,200km from the river source
Y44: 4,300km from the river source
Y45: 4,400km from the river source
Y46: 4,500km from the river source
YKP: 4,600km from the river source
Y48: 4,700km from the river source
Y49: 4,800km from the river source
Y50: 4,900 km from the river source
Y52: 5,000km from the river source
Y53: 5,200km from the river source
5,300km from the river source
Y55. 5,400km from the river source
5,500km from the river source
5,600 km from the river source
5,700km from the river source
5,800km from the river source
5,900km from the river source
6,000 km from the river source
Y62: 6,100km from the river source
6,200km from the river source.
The River Mouth.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Dates Reached</th>
<th>Place Information</th>
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<th>Dates Reached</th>
<th>Place Information</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y2</td>
<td>16 Nov 2011</td>
<td>Tuotuo River (right bank) Golmud Area, Qinghai Province. An almost uninhabited area on the Tibetan Plateau.</td>
<td>Y12</td>
<td>12 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jiaha River (right bank) Borha Township, Yushu County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y5</td>
<td>6 Nov 2013</td>
<td>Zhihui County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. Entrance to the Yanzhanggua Valley (the first valley on the Yangtze) Uninhabited area on the Tibetan Plateau</td>
<td>Y15</td>
<td>Attempted on 15 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jiaha River (right bank) Near Jintang Township, Bayu County, Shaxian Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y6</td>
<td>8 Nov 2013</td>
<td>Qamariib County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. An uninhabited area on the Tibetan Plateau</td>
<td>Y16</td>
<td>An unnamed on 16 &amp; 17 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jiaha River (left bank) Near Ranweng Village, Shanyin Township, Bayu County, Shaxian Province. Three rafters died here in the 1986 Yangtze River rafting. Tibetan Hydroelectric Dam (under construction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y7</td>
<td>10 Nov 2013</td>
<td>Yege Xiang, Qamariib County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. About 40km downstream from the confluence with Chumaer River.</td>
<td>Y17</td>
<td>19 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jiaha River (right bank) Near Batan County, Shaxian Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y8</td>
<td>11 Nov 2013</td>
<td>Zhihui County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.</td>
<td>Y18</td>
<td>19 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Diwu Village, Kei Township, Batan County, Shaxian Province.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y9</td>
<td>11 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Qamariib County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.</td>
<td>Y19</td>
<td>20 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jiaha River (left bank) Near Dêring County, Shaxian Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y10</td>
<td>10 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Chengduo County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.</td>
<td>Y20</td>
<td>21 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jiaha River (left bank) Cangjue Village, Shangri-la County, Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y21</td>
<td>22 &amp; 25 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (left bank) Xingpen Village, Lijiang Township, Shangri-la County, Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. 10 km upstream from the Great Bend on the Jinsha River.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y22</td>
<td>21 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) Caudiudu Village (Nahsi language, meaning 'the gold hole'), Lijiang City, Yunnan Province. 40 km downstream from the Tiger Leaping Gorge. Liyuan Hydroelectric Dam area (under construction)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y23</td>
<td>24 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) Nukesi Village, Cunyu Township, Lijiang City, Yunnan Province. Ahai Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y24</td>
<td>26 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) The Yellow Eyebrow Village, Golden River Township, Lijiang City, Yunnan Province. Dragon Mouth Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y25</td>
<td>26 Mar &amp; 1-6 June 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) The Yellow Eyebrow Village, Golden River Township, Lijiang City, Yunnan Province. Dragon Mouth Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y26</td>
<td>7 Jun 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) The Ants' Tomb, Yungkin County, Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. Confluence of Meina River and Jinsha River Said to be one of the best places for Fengshui in China Guanyinyan Hydroelectric Dam area (under construction)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y27</td>
<td>9 Jun 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) Jingmenkou, Yuri Village, Dalongtan Township, Panzhihua City, Sichuan Province. Jinsha Hydroelectric Dam area (under construction)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Y28</td>
<td>11 Jun 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) Near Baimakou Village, Wuding County, Chongxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. Natural landslide site awaiting to be treated and flooded. Wudongde Hydroelectric Dam area (under construction)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y29</td>
<td>12 &amp; 14 Jun 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) Nei Huaqungping Village, Luhe Township, Haoling County, Sichuan Province. The biggest dam in China</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Y30</td>
<td>15 Jun 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) The Rusty Millstone Port, Jinqiao Township, Qiaojia County, Yunnan Province. Baihetan Hydroelectric Dam area (under construction)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y31</td>
<td>16 Jun 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) The Rusty Millstone Port, Jinqiao Township, Qiaojia County, Yunnan Province. Baihetan Hydroelectric Dam area (under construction)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Y32</td>
<td>17 Jun 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) The 'Fishing Harbour' Villege, Taifu Town, Luzhou City, Sichuan Province. The viewing pavillion for the Xiangjiaba Hydroelectric Dam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y33</td>
<td>18 Jun 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) The 'Fishing Harbour' Villege, Taifu Town, Luzhou City, Sichuan Province. The viewing pavillion for the Xiangjiaba Hydroelectric Dam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y34</td>
<td>19 Jun 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) Changzi Village, Jiang'an County, Yibin City, Sichuan Province. The fishing harbour for the Xiangjiaba Hydroelectric Dam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y35</td>
<td>20 Jun 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) The 'Fishing Harbour' Villege, Taifu Town, Luzhou City, Sichuan Province. The fishing harbour for the Xiangjiaba Hydroelectric Dam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y37</td>
<td>22 Jun 2013</td>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank) Banha (White Sand) Village, Jangtigh Town, Chongqing Municipal City.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Locations Dates Reached Place Information
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 Sep 2013</td>
<td>The White Tower Village, Chazhou District, Chongqing Municipal City. Three Gorges Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Fengdu County, Chongqing Municipal City. Three Gorges Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Xihu Town, Shihu Tupe Autonomous County, Chongqing Municipal City. Three Gorges Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Aqain Village, Shuangqiang Town, Yangtze County, Chongqing Municipal City. Three Gorges Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Liyutun Village, Quch Township, Wuchan County, Chongqing Municipal City. Three Gorges Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Kianxiang, Ziqia County, Yichang City, Hubei Province. Three Gorges Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 Sep 2013</td>
<td>No.13 Pier, Yichang City, Hubei Province. Approximately 10 kilometres downstream from Gezhou Hydroelectric Dam. Border between the upper and the middle streams of the Yangtze River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Qingshui Town, Zhijiang City as part of Yichang City, Hubei Province.</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Y56       | 21 Oct & 21 Nov 2013 | Long River (right bank)  
Yingpan Village, Changfeng Xiang, Anqing City, Anhui Province. |
| Y57       | 22 Oct & 22 Nov 2013 | Long River (branching channel, right bank)  
Yube Xiang, Tongling City, Anhui Province. |
| Y58       | 23 Oct & 21 Nov 2013 | Long River (right bank)  
Fuhua Port and Jiazhu Tower, Ma'anshan City, Anhui Province.  
Confluence of Gushu River and the Yangtze River.  
Near Li Bai’s Tomb.  
The battlefield between Taiping Rebellions and Qing government army in 1853. |
| Y59       | 24 Oct & 21 Nov 2013 | Long River (right bank)  
Sheshan Port, Qixiashan District, Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province.  
Very close to Mt. Qixia. |
| Y60       | 25 Oct & 20 Nov 2013 | Long River (right bank)  
Yuhua Village, Yangzhong City, Jiangsu Province. |
| Y61       | 27 Oct & 19 Nov 2013 | Long River (right bank)  
Duanshan Port, Zhangjiagang City, Jiangsu Province. |
| Y62       | 5 Oct & 16 Nov 2013 | Long River (branching channel, left bank)  
Yingzhou Park, Chongming Island, Shanghai Municipal City. |
| Y63       | 16 Nov 2013 | The mouth of the Long River  
Dongtan Wetland, Yingqinling Village, Chongming Island, Shanghai Municipal City. |
1. The river’s names:
The Yangtze River has different names in different regions, some of these names are adopted in my record. For example:
‘Tuotuo’ is the river’s Tibetan name for the tributary leading from the Jianggudiru Glacier.
‘Tongtian River’ means ‘a river leading to the Sky/Heaven.’
‘Jinsha River’ means ‘a river with gold sand.’ The river sand in this stretch is rich in gold. The stretch after the Jinsha River is called the ‘Long River’. Although the Long River still has many different names in different areas, I have opted not to use them in the record.

2. For a long distance, the river is the border between various Chinese provinces, such as between Tibet and Sichuan Province, or between Yunnan Province and Sichuan Province. Even within the same provinces, different sides of the river are usually different places with different names. During the journeys, we interpreted the GPS numbers into real places on the maps, then chose to go either bank based on the access possibilities. Therefore, the record shows the places that I managed to reach, but these are not the only possible destinations.

3. The latitude: each shooting location was determined by the combination of GPS readings, Chinese road maps, local land shapes and particularly, the river shapes. In most occasions, the locating was reasonably accurate. Once a pre-determined point was reached, I would simply stay there in order to communicate with the site and to photograph. Normally, my coverage area would be within a few minutes’ walk. When it was impossible to reach the pre-determined points, negotiations with myself had to be carried out. Such points were either abandoned, or substituted.

4. At lunch time on the 29th October 2013, having reached Y62, 6,100 kilometres away from the river source, I discovered that all the films from Y39 to Y62, 24 points in total, were ruined due to my operational mistake. For this reason, the photographs from Y39 to Y62 are re-shoots made in November 2013 and May - June 2014.

Notes:

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Swatch Art Peace Hotel, Shanghai, China
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Shanxi Townshp Government, Baiyu County, Sichuan Province, China
The Photographers’ Association, Yichang, China
BA (Hons) Photography, Blackpool & Fylde College, Blackpool, UK
Land & Water Visual Arts Research Centre, Plymouth University, UK

Team:
Zhao Ping (High-altitude expedition driver, China)
Wang Rui (High-altitude expedition driver, China)
Yang Muqiu (Assistant, China)
Alex Gabbay (Filmmaker, UK)
Ma Zhandong (Filmmaker, China)
Sun Jianjun (Filmmaker, China)

Map Drawing:
Eleanor Mulhearn (UK)