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YANGTZE THE MOTHER RIVER -
Photography, Myth and Deep Mapping

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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 run towards the East Sea, the mighty waves are your sizes;
With your sweet milk, you bring up sons and daughters from all ethnic groups;
With your strong shoulders, you support the mountains and oceans;
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, waking 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.
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

Y1: 33°25'48.49"N 91°2'3.69"E 5,400 m.a.s.l.
Y2: 34°14'12.95"N 91°4'38.23"E 4,806 m.a.s.l.
Y3: 34°9'11.73"N 91°54'2.62"E 4,645 m.a.s.l.
Y4: 34°4'43.21"N 92°47'12.07"E 4,495 m.a.s.l.
Y5: 34°7'7.77"N 92°47'12.07"E 4,422 m.a.s.l.
Y6: 34°10'32.96"N 92°47'12.07"E 4,310 m.a.s.l.
Y7: 34°12'41.20"N 92°11'26.47"E 4,188 m.a.s.l.
Y8: 34°14'16.67"N 94°12'09.48"E 4,088 m.a.s.l.
Y9: 34°17'51.07"N 96°11'18.11"E 4,047 m.a.s.l.
Y10: 34°20'13.88"N 96°41'12.45"E 3,773 m.a.s.l.
Y11: 34°22'53.11"N 97°1'4.07"E 3,599 m.a.s.l.
Y12: 34°24'40.87"N 97°17'39.44"E 3,551 m.a.s.l.
Y13: 34°26'14.95"N 98°12'46.40"E 3,232 m.a.s.l.
Y14: 34°27'53.20"N 98°58'12.37"E 3,104 m.a.s.l.
Y15: 34°29'26.99"N 98°55'19.40"E 2,774 m.a.s.l.
Y16: 34°30'20.78"N 99°54'20.57"E 2,495 m.a.s.l.
Y17: 34°31'33.13"N 99°52'26.20"E 2,263 m.a.s.l.
Y18: 34°32'10.57"N 99°54'15.41"E 2,049 m.a.s.l.
Y19: 34°33'22.90"N 99°50'39.11"E 1,922 m.a.s.l.
Y20: 34°34'26.96"N 99°47'56.68"E 1,824 m.a.s.l.
Y21: 34°35'39.39"N 99°45'29.84"E 1,635 m.a.s.l.
Y22: 34°36'52.74"N 99°43'12.81"E 1,488 m.a.s.l.
Y23: 34°38'30.12"N 99°41'28.81"E 1,304 m.a.s.l.
Y24: 34°40'10.80"N 99°39'19.84"E 1,176 m.a.s.l.
Y25: 34°41'47.57"N 99°37'55.45"E 1,051 m.a.s.l.
Y26: 34°43'24.50"N 99°36'40.78"E 976 m.a.s.l.
Y27: 34°45'47.72"N 99°35'28.92"E 892 m.a.s.l.
Y28: 34°47'21.90"N 99°34'18.00"E 812 m.a.s.l.
Y29: 34°48'59.50"N 99°33'10.40"E 722 m.a.s.l.
Y30: 34°50'26.40"N 99°32'59.82"E 651 m.s.l.
Y31: 34°52'41.69"N 99°32'00.62"E 545 m.s.l.
Y32: 34°54'29.39"N 99°31'51.84"E 455 m.s.l.
Y33: 34°56'25.17"N 99°31'43.84"E 340 m.s.l.

Y=Yangtze/Yan
N=North Latitude
E=East Latitude
m.a.s.l.=Metres Above Sea Level
Distance between two consecutive Y Points = 100 km
Y3. The River Source
Y2: 100km from the river source
Y3: 200km from the river source
Y4: 300km from the river source
400km from the river source
500km from the river source
Y7: 600km from the river source
700 km from the river source
800km from the river source
1,000km from the river source
Y22: 1,100km from the river source
Y2: 1,200km from the river source
Y54: 1,300km from the river source
Y15: 1,400km 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
1,700 km from the river source
Y2R: 1,800km from the river source
Y20: 1,900km from the river source
Y2: 2,000km from the river source
Y22: 2,106km from the river source
Y23: 2,200km from the river source
2,300km from the river source
25% 2,400km from the river source
2,500km from the river source
Y27. 2,600km from the river source
Y2: 2,700km from the river source
Y29: 2,800km from the river source
Y20: 2,900km from the river source
Y2: 3,000km from the river source
Y22: 3,100km from the river source
Y33: 3,200km from the river source
Y34: 3,300km from the river source
Y503: 3,400km from the river source
Y36: 3,500km from the river source
3,600km from the river source
3,700km from the river source
Y39: 3,800km from the river source
Yao: 3,900 km from the river source
Y41: 4,000km from the river source
Film loaded back-to-front by accident
Y42: 4,100km from the river source
Film loaded back-to-front by accident
4,300 km from the river source
Y45: 4,400km from the river source
Y46: 4,500 km from the river source
YK7: 4,600km from the river source
4,700 km from the river source
Y49: 4,800km from the river source
Y50: 4,900km from the river source
Y51: 5,000km from the river source
5,100km from the river source
5,200km from the river source
5,300km from the river source
YOS: 5,400km from the river source
5,600km from the river source
Y58: 5,700km from the river source
5,800km from the river source
6,000km from the river source
Y62: 6,100km from the river source
6,200km from the river source.
The River Mouth.
A Record of the Journeys:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Dates Reached</th>
<th>Place Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y1</td>
<td>15-16 Nov 2011, -30℃</td>
<td>Tuotuo River leading from the Janggudiru Glacier. (left bank) Golmud Area, Qinghai Province. An uninhabited area on the Tibetan Plateau.</td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y3</td>
<td>21 Nov 2011</td>
<td>Tuotuo River (right bank) Golmud Area, Qinghai Province. An almost uninhabited area on the Tibetan Plateau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y4</td>
<td>5 Nov 2013</td>
<td>Tuotuo River (right bank) Golmud Area, Qinghai Province. An almost uninhabited area on the Tibetan Plateau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y5</td>
<td>6 Nov 2013</td>
<td>Zhiduo 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y6</td>
<td>8 Nov 2013</td>
<td>Tongtian River (left bank) Qumarlêb County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. An uninhabited area on the Tibetan Plateau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y7</td>
<td>10 Nov 2013</td>
<td>Yege Xiang, Qumarlêb County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. About 40km downstream from the confluence with Chumaer River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y8</td>
<td>11 Nov 2013</td>
<td>Tongtian River (right bank) Zhiduo County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y9</td>
<td>11 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Tongtian River (left bank) Qumarlêb County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y10</td>
<td>10 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Tongtian River (left bank) Chengduo County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y11</td>
<td>9 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Tongtian River (left bank) Chengduo County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. Near the White Pagoda Memorial for the river-crossing of Princess Wencheng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y12</td>
<td>12 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jingha River (right bank) Borda Township, Yushu County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y13</td>
<td>13 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jingha River (left bank) Luoo County, Sichuan Province. A secret logging site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y14</td>
<td>14 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jingha River (left bank) Dié County, Sichuan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y16</td>
<td>Annapurna on 16 &amp; 17 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jingha River (left bank) Near Ranweng Village, Shanye Township, Basu County, Sichuan Province. Three rafters died here in the 1986 Yangtze River rafting. Tibet Hydroelectric Dam (under construction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y17</td>
<td>19 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jingha River (right bank) Near Basu County, Sichuan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y18</td>
<td>19 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jingha River (right bank) Diesu Village, Kexi Township, Basu County, Sichuan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y19</td>
<td>20 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jingha River (left bank) Near Dêring County, Sichuan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y20</td>
<td>21 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Jingha River (left bank) Kanggai Village, Shangri-la County, Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations Dates Reached</td>
<td>Place Information</td>
<td>Locations Dates Reached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinsha River (left bank)</td>
<td>21 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Caokedu 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank)</td>
<td>24 Mar 2013</td>
<td>Xianxu Village, Cuiyu Township, Lijiang City, Yunnan Province. Ahai Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank)</td>
<td>26 Mar 2013</td>
<td>The Yellow Eyebrow Village, Golden River Township, Lijiang City, Yunnan Province. Dragon Mouth Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank)</td>
<td>26 Mar &amp; 5-6 June 2011</td>
<td>The Yellow Eyebrow Village, Golden River Township, Lijiang City, Yunnan Province. Dragon Mouth Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank)</td>
<td>7 Jun 2011</td>
<td>The Ants' Tomb, Yongren County, Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. Confluence of Wanma River and Jinsha River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank)</td>
<td>9 Jun 2011</td>
<td>Jingmenkou, Yiu Village, Dalingan Township, Panzhihua City, Sichuan Province. Jinsha Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinsha River (right bank)</td>
<td>28 Jun 2011</td>
<td>Near Baishaxi Village, Wuding County, Chongqing Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. Natural landslide site awaiting to be treated and flooded Wu dependable Hydroelectric Dam area (constructed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations</td>
<td>Dates Reached</td>
<td>Place Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y38</td>
<td>15 Mar 2011</td>
<td>Long River (right bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; 22 May 2014</td>
<td>Long River (left bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y39</td>
<td>14 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Long River (right bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y40</td>
<td>16 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Long River (right bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; 24-25 May 2014</td>
<td>Long River (right bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y41</td>
<td>17 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Long River (left bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; 25 May 2014</td>
<td>Long River (left bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y42</td>
<td>18 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Long River (left bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; 26 May 2014</td>
<td>Long River (left bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y43</td>
<td>19 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Long River (left bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; 27 May 2014</td>
<td>Long River (left bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y44</td>
<td>20-21 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Long River (left bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; 28-29 May 2014</td>
<td>Long River (left bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y45</td>
<td>22 Sep 2013</td>
<td>Long River (right bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; 29 May 2014</td>
<td>Long River (right bank)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Locations Dates Reached Place Information
Y47 | 25 Sep 2011 | Long River (right bank) | Lingguanshan Hazard Zone, Jingezhou Embankment, Jiangling County, Hubei Province. |
Y49 | 25 Sep 2011 | Long River (right bank) | Chengling Rock Cliffs, Yichang City, Hubei Province. The confluence location of Dongting Lake and the Yangtze River. One of the three most famous rock cliffs on the Yangtze River. |
Y50 | 26 Sep 2011 | Long River (right bank) | Yuyue Township, Jiaxiu County, Xiangning City, Hubei Province. |
Y53 | 16 Oct & 24 Nov 2013 | Long River (right bank) | Qianan Island Port, Haangshu City, Hubei Province. |
Y54 | 17 Oct & 24 Nov 2013 | Long River (right bank) | Linjiang Road, Xunyang District, Jujjou City, Jiangxi Province. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
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<th>Place Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</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)  
Yubei Xiang, Tongling City, Anhui Province. |
| Y58       | 23 Oct & 21 Nov 2013 | Long River (right bank)  
Fuhua Port and Jinhua 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)  
Yinghehu Park, Chongming Island, Shanghai Municipal City. |
| Y63       | 16 Nov 2013 | The mouth of the Long River  
Dongtan Wetland, Yingdong 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.

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Shanqiu Township Government, Baiyu County, Sichuan Province, China
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Land & Water Visual Arts Research Centre, Plymouth University, UK

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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)

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