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杨继国 ○ 著

# 三江源

神秘

YANG JIGUO

MYSTERIOUS SOURCES OF THREE GREAT RIVERS



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杨继国 著

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——三江源地区，其范围大致指我国青海省南部玉树、果洛两个藏族自治州及其邻近的地方，因举世闻名的长江、黄河、澜沧江发源地而得名。这里是我国乃至亚洲重要的水源地带，素有“中华水塔”的美誉。三江源地区平均海拔 3500 米，有的地方为 4000 米，是世界屋脊青藏高原的重要组成部分。在三江源自然保护区内，东昆仑山系及其支脉巴颜喀拉山、可可西里山、阿尼玛卿山和唐古拉山脉横贯其间。特殊的地理条件及生态环境构成了雄伟粗犷、多彩多姿的自然景观。

在这块神秘、神圣的地带，生活着藏民族的康巴、安多两大方言区的众多居民。他们保留着古老传统的宗教文化和神奇迷离的民族风俗，甚至在诸多方面，有着比西藏更原始、淳朴的藏族风情。因而它是国内外探险家和旅游者梦寐以求的净土，更是激发文学艺术家艺术灵感和创作激情的乐园。

一个偶然的机，我踏进了这块神奇的土地。从此，这儿就像磁石一样，紧紧地抓住了我的心，以至于一发而不可收，一连去了五次。

短短的几年时间，特别是 2009 年以来，几次深入到三江源及其邻近地区，艰苦自然是不消说了，有时甚至与危险擦肩而过。但也正因为如此，给我留下的印象，不仅是十分深刻的，而且是终身难忘的。看到那迥然不同的绝域风光，那大美、奇美、绝美的高原，怎能不使人心旷神怡，如醉如痴，饥饿疲惫一扫而光呢？望着那些质朴、善良、沉默的藏族群众，怎能不使人感到亲切，心身理解和尊重呢？这里的人们，虽然与我们服饰不同、语言不同、信仰不同，但却是我们同源共祖的骨肉兄弟，祖国大家庭的重要一员。他们甘于寂寞，不惧艰苦，在这生存条件极其恶劣的环境中，顽强坚韧地守护着自己的家园，守护着自己的精神净土，守护着中华民族的雪山水源，默默无闻地



为中华民族，甚至是为人类做出了巨大的牺牲与奉献。他们那独特、神秘的风俗和文化，不但构成了高原一道绚丽的风景，极大地丰富了中华民族精神文化的宝库，而且也是人类文化的瑰宝，是人类文化多样性的生动有力的证明。走进这块神圣、神奇的土地，你怎能不油然而生出宗教般朝圣的感情，心灵怎能不得到净化，灵魂得到升华呢？

在这几次难忘的三江源之行中，我强忍着高原反应，强忍着心脏不适，拍摄了1万余幅相片。这些相片，有的是自然风光，有的是人民民俗生活。虽然，比起三江源的广阔深邃来，我所走的只能算是冰山一角。尽管，有许多我所渴望去的标志性的地方，限于客观条件和身体条件，望洋兴叹，没能去成。同时，还应该承认，比起藏族文化的博大精深，比起藏族民俗的丰富多彩，我的观察是那么的皮毛，是那么的的系统、不完整，但我还是不敢浅陋，将它们整理出来并出版。这样做，为的不仅仅是对得起自己的一番辛苦，对得起朋友和同伴的热情鼓励和大力支持，也为的是留住那珍贵的记忆，不要遗忘自己几次三江源之行的心路历程。更重要的是，也想把自己看到的、记录到的告诉大家，让大家一同分享我的收获与快乐。

上世纪的四十年代，还是青年人的庄学本，拿起相机，走进藏区，拍摄了一大批记录藏族人民生活状况的相片，但在随后的岁月中，限于当时的政治环境，这些相片都被尘封起来了。直到近几年，人们才发现了它们的价值，庄学本被冠为“中国摄影史上伟大的纪实主义先驱，人文摄影大师”，认定他的图片极为独特，“具有重要的艺术和人类学的双重价值”，“为中国少数民族史留下了一份可信度高的视觉档案与调查报告”。

沿着这位大师的足迹，追寻着他的理想，我也走进了这处神秘的地方。没有过分的奢望，我只想时隔七八十年以后，使我的摄影作品，能够对当年庄学本的摄影作一些补充和对照。我所提供的尽管不是很全面、但至少是真实可信的，是用我的眼睛直接观察，用我的镜头直观记录的藏族人民今天的真实生活情境，他们的形象风貌、生存状况、文化生活、民族风情，他们所处的土地和环境，以及与他们有关的一切。衷心期望通过我的摄影，能够继续增进人们对这片神秘土地和人民的了解，并进一步激发人们对这方净土的兴趣和热情。

2010年9月12日■



The area of headwaters of the Three Great Rivers covers Yushu and Golog Tibetan autonomous prefectures in Qinghai Province and its neighbouring areas. The “Three Great Rivers” refer to the Yellow River, Yangtze and Lancang River. The area is an important water source of China and of Asia. At an average altitude of 3500 metres, and in some places at the elevation of 40000 metres, it is part of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, known as the Roof of the World. Bayan Har, the eastern branch of Kunlun Mountains, Kukushiri Mountains, Anemaqen Mountains and Tangula Mountains extend across the natural reserve at headwaters of the three rivers. The special geographic conditions have begotten rugged and imposing landscapes.

This mysterious and sacred area is inhabited by Tibetan people who speak Khampa and Amdo dialects. They keep their ancient religious tradition and splendid customs. In some aspects, they possess even more primitive Tibetan culture than the Tibetan in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. Because of this, the region has become a pure land aspired for by Chinese and foreign adventurers. It is also a source of inspiration for artists and writers.

Since I set foot on that region by chance, it has been like a powerful magnet for my heart. Unable to resist its attraction, I have visited it five times.

In a few years, especially after 2009, I visited the headwaters of the three rivers and its neighbouring areas several times. Needless to say, there I experienced hardships. On a few occasions I had a narrow brush with danger. It is just the difficulty and sufferings I had that have left on me ineffaceable memories. In face of the great beauty of the landscape, I was intoxicated, totally forgetting hunger and tiredness. The simple and kind-hearted local Tibetan people of a few words won my respect and understanding. People there wear costumes different from ours and speak their own



languages and have different beliefs, but they are our brothers, members of the great family of the Chinese nation. Living in a harsh environment, the fearless people guard their home and the pure land of their spirit, and a water source of the Chinese nation. They are silently making contribution to China, and even to the human culture. Their unique and mysterious custom and culture are not only a brilliant pearl in Chinese culture, but a gem in the human civilisation. Their culture is a witness to cultural diversity. Once you set foot on this area, you feel you are making pilgrimage to a holy site and your mind is purged of earthly thoughts.

During my visit to the headwaters of the three rivers, I sustained altitude disease and heart trouble and shot ten thousand pictures. Some of the pictures show landscapes in that region and others show the local Tibetan people's lives. What I have seen there is just a tip of an iceberg, and due to lack of necessary apparatus and my physical condition, I failed to visit some landmarks. At the same time, I must admit that my observation of the area is superficial and incomplete, in comparison to the rich and profound Tibetan culture and local customs. Despite this, I put my pictures into an album and decided to have it published. By such an album I mean to express my heartfelt thanks to my friends and companions who have given me encouragement and support. The book is also a memento of my travels. Above all, I like to share my joy and what I learned during my travels with everyone.

In 1940s, Zhuang Xueben, a young man then, entered the Tibetan people's region carrying a camera with himself. He took a great number of pictures of the Tibetan people's lives. But in the ensuing decades, due to political reasons, those photos were neglected. Their value has not been discovered until recently. Zhuang Xueben is honoured as a "Pioneer of Documentary Photographing in China". His photographs are regarded as works with unique artistic and anthropological values and as reliable visual investigation reports on Chinese ethnic groups.

Following the master's footprints, I broke into that mysterious region. I didn't aim high. I just wanted to add some new pictures to Zhuang Xueben's magnum opus produced 70 years ago. My pictures may carry incomplete information, but at least they are believable. They show present Tibetan people's lives and their culture and customs and everything about them, seen with my eyes and caught with the lens of my camera. I hope my photographs will help readers know more about the land and people living on it, and inspire their interests in the pure land.

12 Sept.2010 ■





2005/07/25

青海省玉树县

*Mani Stone Mounds*

Yushu County, Qinghai Province, 25 July 2005

玉树新寨的嘛尼堆

堪称世界之最

不知历经多少年代

由多少虔诚之心累积而成



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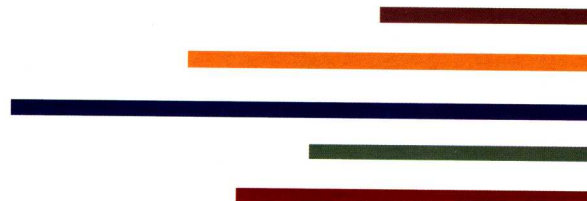
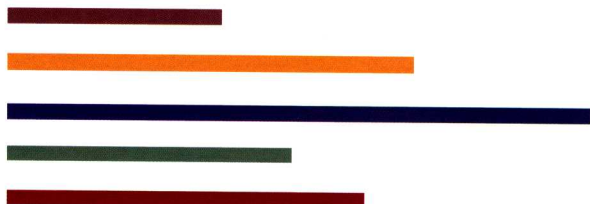
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第一编 *Chapter 1*

从玛多到玉树

*From Madoi to Yushu*



## 从玛多到玉树

——江源在我心中，曾经是一个遥不可及的梦。一提到那里，我眼前出现的就是那如闪电般飞掠而过的草原精灵藏羚羊，那圣洁端庄、晶莹剔透的皑皑雪峰，那无边无际缀满鲜花的茫茫草原，那神秘莫测、原始自然的蓝天白云。

2005年夏天，我终于实现了这个愿望。我走进了三江源地区，开始了令我回味无穷、终身难忘的三江源之行。

7月24日，我们乘坐汽车驶出西宁，穿过由金黄色的油菜花镶嵌的绿色大地和草原，越过几座白云缠绕的高山，中午就到了海拔4000多米的玛多县了。刚过了县城，就见在道路前方有一座桥，旁边矗立的牌子上写着“黄河第一桥”。尽管到了玛多，就可以说是到了黄河源头了，但看到了黄河源头的第一桥，我们还是惊喜地叫了起来。于是赶紧停车，向黄河桥下冲去。到了桥下，只见一条一丈来宽的小河静静地躺在那儿。这就是哺育了我们民族的伟大的母亲河吗？这就是在中原地区汪洋恣肆、横行无羁的那条大河吗？在这里，它静静地躺在蓝天白云之下，无声无息地流淌着，是那么的安详，那么的温柔。一些当地的小孩在河边快乐地玩耍着。有的小孩还手上扯着一根线，线上挂个鱼钩，再随意地拴一

块石头，连渔竿都没有，就在河边钓起鱼来。我走近一看，他们还真是钓了不少，有的鱼个头还挺大。我们的母亲河，就像一个慈祥的母亲，敞开胸怀，奉献着自己的所有。

从黄河第一桥上驶过，车行不远，忽然看见前方无垠的草原上，竟然有无数的湖泊，像一只只清澈的眼睛，在炯炯地注视天空；更像一颗颗明亮的星星，在顽皮地闪烁。我脑海蓦地一亮，星宿海！原来这就是古代典籍中常提到的星宿海，是古人探寻黄河源头最远的地方。在古人的记载中，这儿是黄河的源头，也是古人传说中天上的星星睡觉的地方。传说星星晚上到天空为人间照明，白天就落到星宿海休息睡觉。过去，在古诗中我曾多次读到过它，今天，真的来到了这地方，真的看到了星宿海，亦真亦假、亦梦亦幻，我被深深地陶醉了。不知是这仙境来到了我的梦中，还是我走进了这梦的仙境之中。

由于临近玉树的路段正在修整，我们很晚的时候才到达玉树藏族自治州的所在地结古镇。州里的朋友已经苦苦地等了半夜，见我们好不容易来了，自然要拉着客人先到餐厅里去，尽一尽地主之谊。他们都是藏族康巴汉子，不仅豪爽，而且幽默，劝我们喝了不少酒，也介绍了许多情



况。从他们的谈话中，我更清楚了，玉树平均海拔4000多米，海拔在4000米以上的山峰有两千座，是著名的万山之宗、江河之源和歌舞之乡。玉树还是著名的康巴文化之乡，康巴文化是藏族文化中充满神秘色彩的一种文化。康巴人是生活在西藏昌都、青海玉树及其他使用康区方言的藏族人。康巴人体格高大、威武勇猛、习俗独特、生性浪漫、喜欢游走，被称为“高原吉普赛人”。康巴男人喜欢将红色或黑色丝线和发辫编在一起，盘于头顶上，称之为英雄结，显得潇洒剽悍，因此，“康巴汉子”在藏区很有名，很得女人喜欢。

朋友们在酒桌上谈得很高兴，一位朋友还即兴演唱了自己创作的歌曲：“草原里响起的，是五彩的歌；乳汁里飘起的，是甜美的歌；彩袖里甩出的，是激情的歌；心窝里唱出的，是欢乐的歌。”

第二天，我一大早就醒来了，匆匆洗漱后，便随上州委的车队，去看一年一度的赛马盛会。

汽车傍着一条水流湍急的小河走了二三十公里，就见前面彩旗飘扬，歌声如潮。到了跟前，盛装的藏族群众排成两行，手捧哈达，跳着欢乐的舞蹈，唱着动听的歌儿，欢迎着远方的宾客。纵目望去，只见四周都是欢乐的海洋。在绣毯般的草原上，到处是穿着节日服装，洋溢着欢乐笑容的藏族同胞。远处，像蘑菇般绽放的，是各种颜色的帐篷。再远处的山头上，冒着一股股的白烟，这是藏族人民在盛大节日或重大活动时用芬芳的松树枝燃起的“煨桑”。湛蓝的天空，是大朵大朵花瓣似的云团，还有一群雄鹰也赶来助兴，在天空中划出一道道优美的弧线，久久地盘旋着。主席台以大红的色彩装饰得格外漂亮。到了这会场，你不能不为藏族人民对传统文化的热爱所感动，你不能不为这欢乐的气氛所感染。

望着还在不断涌来的人群，我想周边地区的人们大概都来了。有的是扶老携幼，有的在周边搭起了帐篷，妇女们更是穿起了节日的盛装。在这之前，藏族朋友就告诉我说，藏族人的财富，都穿在妇女的身上，现在看起来果然是这样。只见每一位妇女，都穿着鲜艳的锦缎藏袍，领口、袖口和下摆上缀着华贵的皮毛，身上挂满了各种珍贵的宝石，就连佩戴的藏式腰刀，也都用黄

金、白银和宝石装饰着。据介绍，有的藏族妇女的服饰，价值高达上百万元。想来也是，藏族同胞长期过着逐水草而居的生活，积累起来的财富，没有固定的场所保藏，便要换成各种各样的首饰，让自己心爱的女人戴在身上最保险，而且作为男人，这样做也很有面子，值得骄傲和自豪，再加上藏族有尊重妇女、爱惜女儿的古老、美好的传统。女儿出嫁，父母亲要陪嫁许多珍贵的首饰，一代代传下来，妇女身上佩戴的财富，也就可想而知了。

赛马会正式开始了。当身着民族服装的县长用藏语宣布开幕后，最震撼人心灵的就是入场式时那越跳越热烈的玉树歌舞了。这实际上也是一种竞赛，各个代表队在入场时，就展开了激烈的角逐，他们仿佛把攒了一年的劲儿都使了出来。无论男女，一到表演区域内，就伴随着震天动地的歌声，在草地上纵情欢舞，跳得激情洋溢。特别是那些康巴汉子，头打英武的英雄结，脚穿锃亮的牛皮靴，腾空旋舞，舞姿刚健有力、大方舒展，激越的脚步声和着铿锵的鼓声，震荡得草原发出咚咚的回响，使每个人的心不能不激荡起来，不能不兴奋起来，也不能不为藏族人民的豪情所感染。

开幕式后，是精彩的各种马术表演与比赛。只见一个个矫健的康巴汉子，骑着一匹匹威猛的骏马，疾如闪电般地从远处奔驰而来，或弯腰将地下摆成一行的哈达逐一捡起，或上下翻飞地在马背上做出各种高难度动作，参观的人群中不断爆发出热烈而持久的掌声。

看完开幕式后，我们随意地在草原上走着，不失时机地拍摄着各种美景，以及漂亮的藏族姑娘和小伙子。草原上到处洋溢着节日的欢乐，到处都是临时驻扎起来的各种颜色鲜艳的帐篷，似乎是全县的人们都来到了会场。他们全家出动，男女老幼都来到会场上，在草原上观看比赛，然后在帐篷里喝酒吃肉。青年男女则乘着这大好的时光，互相寻找和追逐着自己的意中人。而且这时，你可以随意走进任何一个帐篷，里面的主人都会拿出他们认为最好的食物请你吃喝。你若是年轻人，也可与里面的年轻姑娘谈情说爱。据说，到了一年一度的赛马节，藏族同胞要放假七天，这七天，可以纵情地在草原上玩个够。

参加完赛马会后，下午我们又专门驱车，到长江的上



游通天河去看了看。通天河也是我十分向往的地方，特别通过古典小说《西游记》，对这条河流充满了无限神秘的想象。其实，昨晚我们进玉树时，已经从通天河跨过，不过当时天已很晚了，周边漆黑一片，什么也看不见，只听见隆隆的水声在静夜里格外响亮，倒更能诱发人的好奇心。今天到此一看，果然是名不虚传，一条激越的江水，在两岸陡峭的山峰间咆哮奔腾向前。江面虽然不是很宽，但水看起来极深，一个个漩涡，划出一条条弧线，急速地拥挤着向下流泻去，使人不能不生出敬畏之心。通天河旁，是一座高耸的三江源自然保护区纪念碑，造型是两只巨大的手掌，合拢地捧起，然后高高地伸向蓝天白云，伸向空幽的苍穹，似乎在乞求着什么，也似乎在宣告着什么，自有一种震撼人心的力量。我想，这应该更多的是宣告，宣告着这儿的人民对保护三江源地区生态的决心，宣告着这儿的人民守护中华水塔的坚定信念。

第三天，我们一早就出发了，兴冲冲地前往囊谦县。囊谦是玉树最南边的一个县，紧靠西藏的昌都地区。这儿气候温和，氧气充沛，是青海有名的小江南。

行前就听人说，这儿的景色美得惊人，到了囊谦一看，果然处处景色秀丽，令人惊叹。这儿也是高原，海拔平均也有4000米，但山势较为平缓，而且山上都覆盖着一层绿茸茸的植被，远远望去，如锦绣一般，格外好看。再加上湛蓝湛蓝的天、大朵大朵乳白色的云团，使得这儿真像人间仙境、世外桃源，令人心旷神怡、尘虑顿消。

一路上，但见有一条小溪逶迤相伴。一问，方知是澜沧江的源头，这又使我大吃了一惊。澜沧江在我的印象里，也是一条汹涌澎湃的大江，可在这儿却显得文静秀丽，水深不过膝，竟是千娇百媚的一支弱水。小溪的两岸缀满了黄色的小花，在她的臂弯里偶有一顶蘑菇般的

帐篷，一群花朵般正在嬉戏的藏族儿童。正是这条娇如少女的涓涓细流，不仅养育了这里的人民，也养育了下游境外好几国的人民。

囊谦格萨儿的传说也特别多。在县上同志的热情陪同下，我们继续南行，翻越了好几座高峰，来到一座雄伟的大山面前，县上的同志指着山脚下一座小村庄说，这儿是格萨尔的丞相出生的村庄。这是一座小小的、非常古朴而简陋的村落。几座藏式的房子，一个不大的嘛尼堆，但身后的大山却雄伟峻峭，像座屏风似的护卫着这小村落。山的高大与村落的简陋形成了很大的反差，倒更显出这小小村落的不凡了。这小村落，一下子就把神话与现实、远古与今天连接了起来。

在囊谦，我们还去了一个梦境般的地方。这是一座异常秀美的小山，山是绿茸茸的，长满了天然的松柏，松柏树上挂着长长的红色和白色的经幡。一条不知名的江水，静静地深情地半围着这神奇的小山。山腰上，一座不知什么年代修建的色彩鲜艳的莲花生大师的塑像，在蓝天白云之下慈祥地俯瞰着小村庄。向导竖起大拇指，用半生不熟的汉语极其自豪地告诉我们，这是藏族的神山之一。我们也满怀着崇敬的心情，绕山一周，朝拜神山。走在曾被无数朝圣者踏出的崎岖小径上，不知是什么原因，在海拔4000米的高原上，竟一点也不觉得心慌气喘，看来这神山确有灵气。站在这山坡上，向前处望去，但见满目锦绣、一片祥和。远处的群山绵延起伏，峰顶罩在乳白的祥云之中。近处的村落人家却没有鸡鸣狗吠之喧闹，只有袅袅轻烟升盈于蓝天丽日之下。面对此情此景，使人不由得神清气爽、物我两望，不知身外之世事不知岁月为几何，顿生不虚此行、乐不思归之感。■



## From Madoi to Yushu

The headwaters of the Three Great Rivers were once a distant place that I could only see in my dreams. Speaking of the place, I would visualize Tibetan antelopes, the soul of the prairie, the sacred and clean snow-capped mountains, expanses of flowers, and mysterious, primitive white clouds floating in the azure sky.

In summer 2005, I finally fulfilled my long-cherished wish. I had an interesting and unforgettable travel to the headwaters of the Great Rivers.

On 24 July we set out in a car from Xining and rode across fields covered with yellow rapeseed flowers and green grassland, over several mountains veiled by white clouds, and by the noon, arrived at Doima County, at an altitude of 4,000 meters above sea level. Soon after we passed by the county town, we saw a bridge ahead of us, with a sign by it reading, "The First Bridge Over the Yellow River". In Doima we could say that we had reached the source of the Yellow River. Yet we uttered a cry in surprise when we saw the bridge. We stopped our car and ran down the bridge. There we saw a stream, about three metres wide. That was the great Mother River of our nation, the same river that runs wild in China's heartland. It quietly flowed under the blue sky and white clouds. The stream was so calm, so gentle. Some children were playing. Some children

held a string with a hook at its end and a stone in their hands. They began angling without using a fishing pole. As we approached them, we found that they had caught many fish, and some of the fish were rather large. Our mother river, like a loving mother with an open chest, gave us what it had.

Having passed the First Bridge Over the Yellow River, we saw numberless ponds on the extensive grassland ahead of us. Those ponds were like bright eyes gazing at the sky. They were also like stars twinkling at us. I had a sudden brainwave. I was by the Stars' Sea recorded in many ancient documents, a place where ancient people sought the headwaters of the Yellow River. Ancient people believed that the place was where the stars slept over the day. I had read about the place many a time in ancient poems. Then, I physically arrived at the place with the Stars' Sea in sight. I was intoxicated by the dream-like scene. I wonder if I was in a dream or a fairyland.

The section of road near Yushu was being repaired. We arrived at the seat of Yushu Prefecture at a late hour. Our friends there had waited for us half a night. Upon our arrival, they dragged us to a dining hall and treated us to a dinner. They were Khampa men, generous and humorous. They made us drink a lot and told us a great deal about their place. From their talks we learned more about the



place. Yushu is at an average altitude of 4,000 metres above sea level and there are 2,000 high peaks. Yushu is the well-known home of mountains and rivers and dancers. Yushu is also home to the mysterious Khampa culture, part of the Tibetan culture. The so-called Khampa people are Tibetans living in Qamdo of Tibet, Yushu of Qinghai and other Khampa-dialect speaking areas. They are of high stature, courageous and romantic, and love wandering, hence the name the Gypsy on the plateau. Khampa men like to weave their hair into a knot and tied it with red or black silk threads on top of their head. The knot is called "hero's knot". The courageous and intrepid Khampa men are well-known in areas dwelt by Tibetans and loved by women.

We talked in high spirits at the table. One of my friends began to sing a song written by himself, "On the grassland you hear colourful songs. From the milk you taste sweet songs. Out of the long sleeves you hear passionate songs. From the bosom of our heart you hear cheerful songs".

I got up early the next morning. After washing up, I followed the team of cars of the Prefecture Committee to watch the annual horse race.

We drove twenty or thirty kilometres along a torrential river until we saw colourful streamers ahead of us and heard songs. As we approached the site, gaily dressed Tibetan people holding hada scarves, danced and sang to greet guests from distant places. We were immersed in a sea of gaiety. On the grass were Tibetan people in festive costumes. In the distance were tents in various colours. Farther still white smoke rose on mountain peaks. The smoke rose from bonfires made by local people with pine branches that emitted sweet. In the azure sky were clouds in the shape of broad petals of flowers. From time to time hawks flew up, drawing beautiful curves in the air with their wings. The platform was decorated in red. Being there you couldn't help but being moved by the traditional Tibetan culture and the festive atmosphere.

As I saw people swarming in, I guessed that people from surrounding areas must have all come. Some people had come with seniors and children. Some had propped up their tents around the racing field. Women were dressed in festive costumes. I had been told that Tibetan people's fortune was all worn by women. Then I was convinced of that. Every woman wore a brilliant brocaded

Tibetan robe, with the collar, cuffs and the lower hem ornamented with luxury fur. They wore various gems all over them. Even knives they wore were decorated with gold, silver and gems. I was told that a Tibetan woman's attire might cost a million yuan. That was presumably true. Tibetan people are nomadic people and they have no fixed places to store their wealth. So the safest way to keep their wealth was to convert it with various jewellerys for their beloved women. A beautifully dressed wife is a man's pride. Furthermore, the Tibetan people have a fine tradition of respecting women and loving daughters. When a daughter is married off, her parents would give her a substantial dowry. A dowry is an inheritance and so over generations it may grow into an enormous fortune.

The horse race began. After the county magistrate in the ethnic costume announced the opening of the race in Tibetan language, the most heart-stirring performance in the opening ceremony was the Yushu dance. As teams of contestants entered the race court, a fierce competition of dance started. All contestants, men and women alike, to accompaniment of songs, danced to their hearts' content with energy pent up over the last year. Especially, the Khampa men with "hero's knots" on their head and bright ox-hide boots on their feet, danced, swirling in the air. On the grassland their vigorous and graceful dance was echoed by the clattering of their boots and drums. Everyone in presence was infected by the Tibetan people's enthusiasm.

After the opening ceremony was the horse race and competition of equestrian skills. One Khampa man after another galloped up like lightening. They rode while bending themselves to pick up a line of hada scarves from the ground, or turned up and down on horseback to perform different movements. Lasting applause broke out from the spectators from time to time.

After watching the performance in the opening ceremony, I walked on the grassland and took pictures of the beautiful scenes and Tibetan young men and women with my camera. The grassland was immersed in a festive atmosphere. Everywhere you saw tents in brilliant colours. It seemed that the whole county had come. Whole families came to watch competitions and after that they ate meat and drank wine in their tents. Young men and women seized the opportunity to court their other halves. You may enter any of the tents and the host would treat you to their best food. If you were a young



man, you may court the girl in the tent too. Over the horse race Tibetan people have seven days off. They play to their heart's content in the free time.

After the horse race, we drove to Tongtian River, the headwaters of the Yangtze. Stories of the river in the classical novel *Journey to the West* made it fascinating. In fact, we had driven across it the previous night when we were entering Yushu County. But it had been dark and so we had been able to see nothing clearly. But the gurgling of waves in silent night aroused our curiosity about the river. As we saw it the next afternoon, we did see a clear river dashing between steep cliffs. The river was not wide, but seemed deep. Whirls spinning down the river held us in awe. By the river stood a monument in the form of two hands holding a brilliant pearl. Against the azure sky, the towering monument seems to be praying or declaring something. I suppose it is manifesting people's determination to safeguard the ecology at the headwaters of China's three great rivers, the water supply for the Chinese nation.

On the third day, we set out in the early morning for Nangqen County at the southernmost end of Yushu. Bordering on Qamdo Prefecture of Tibet, it is a warm place, praised for the abundance of oxygen in the air.

Before I set out for Nangqen I had heard of the beautiful scenery there. In Nangqen I did see stunning landscape. The place is on a plateau at an altitude of 4000 metres above sea level, but hills there are not steep. They are also covered with vegetation. Against the azure sky with white clouds, the enchanting place is a fairyland.

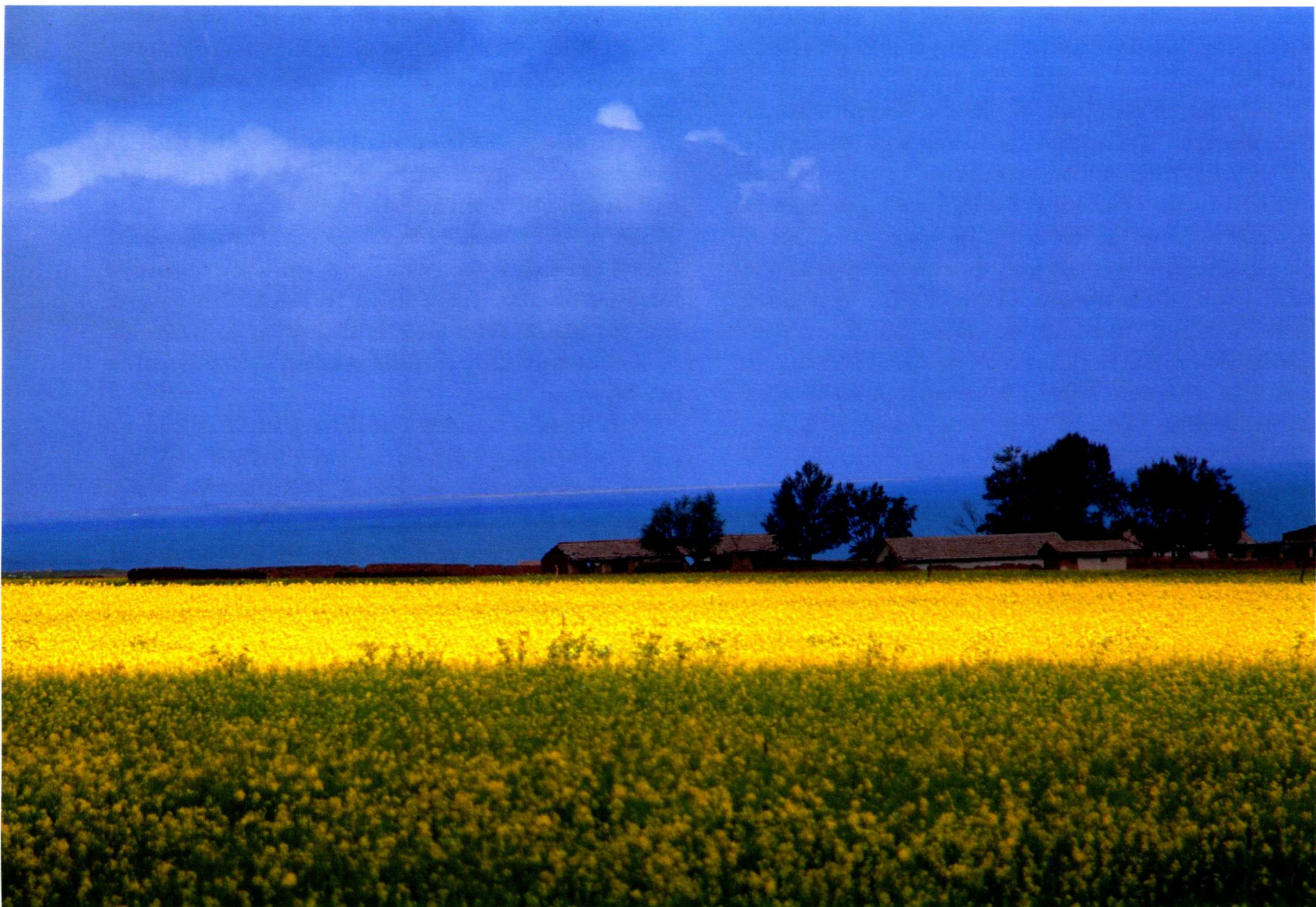
All the way we had been driving by a stream. As we asked the local people, we were told that it was the headstream of Lancang River. I used to think Lancang River is a torrential flow. But in Nangqen I saw a narrow stream flowing calmly. The water in it was not deeper than my knees. Its banks were studded with tiny yellow

flowers. At a turning of the stream was a tent, by which a group of Tibetan children were playing. The narrow stream has nourished the local people and at its lower reaches, it nourishes people of several nations.

In Nangqen are many legends about the King Gesar. In accompaniment of officials of the county government, we proceeded southward, crossing mountains, and arrived at a towering peak. Local officials told us that a small village at the foot of the mountain was Gesar's birthplace. It was a small village with a few Tibetan-style houses and a small Mani Stone Mound. The mountain, however, was steep and majestic, like a screen standing behind the village. The small village immediately associated mythology with reality, and the past with present.

In Nangqen, we visited a dream-like place, an attractive hill covered with verdant vegetation and pines. Red and white long streamers with inscriptions on them hang on pine branches. A quiet unnamed river half circled the hill. On a side of the hill was a statue of Padmasambhava, founder of the Tibetan sect of Buddhism. The statue was in brilliant colour and we didn't know when it had been erected there. The statue amiably looked at the small village, and with his thumb raised, he was telling us that the hill was one of the sacred hills in Tibet. We piously walked around the hill to pay our homage to it. As we walked on the path trodden by countless pilgrims, to our surprise, we didn't gasp as inlanders do on a plateau at elevation of 4,000 metres. It seemed that the hill was really a divine one. As we cast our eye onto the distance, we saw a beautiful scene imbued in the air of harmony. Peaks in distance were veiled by white clouds and mist, but no barking of dogs or crow of roosters were heard from the village near us. We felt as if we had forgotten the time and our whereabouts. ■





2005/07/24 青海省西宁市青海湖畔

*By the Qinghai Lake*

Xining, Qinghai Province, 24 July 2005

金灿灿的油菜花

青溜溜的青海湖

我的三江源之旅

从这梦幻般的地方开始