

## 中华人民共和国 The People's Republic of China 北京 Beijing Hukou Waterfall the Yangtze River

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设 计: 多伶平面设计工作室

## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

壶口瀑布/惠怀杰摄,一北京;中国旅游出版社, 2003.8

ISBN 7-5032-2194-1

I.壶... Ⅱ.惠... 丗.黄河—中游河段—瀑布— 画册 IV.K928.42-64

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2003) 第 063761 号

## 壶口瀑布

出版发行: 中国旅游出版社

地 址:北京建国门内大街甲9号

邮政编码: 100005

http://www.cttp.net.cn

E-mail: cttp@cnta.gov.cn

印刷:利丰雅高(深圳)印刷有限公司

版 次: 2003年8月第1版

印 次: 2003年8月第1次印刷

开 本: 850×1168毫米 1/24

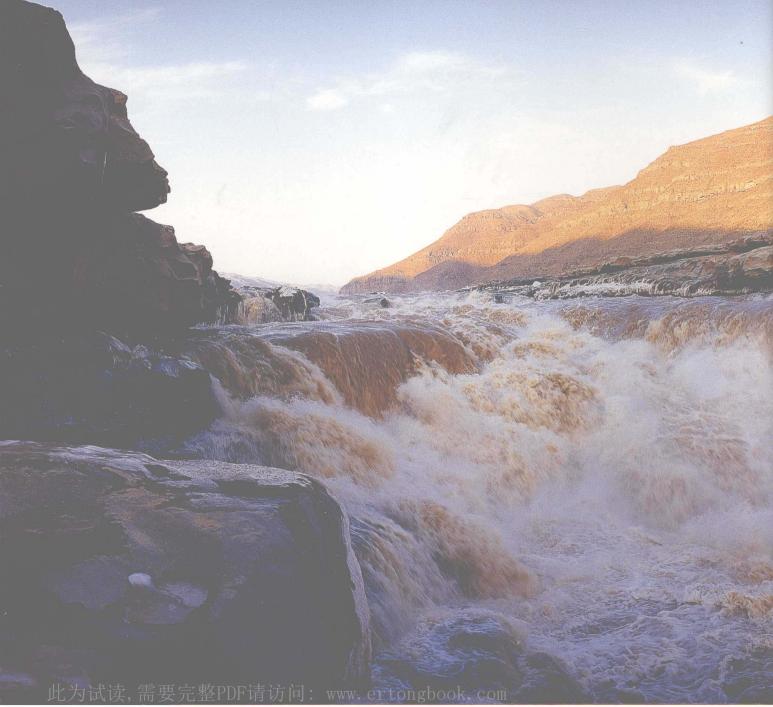
印 张: 3

印数: 7080

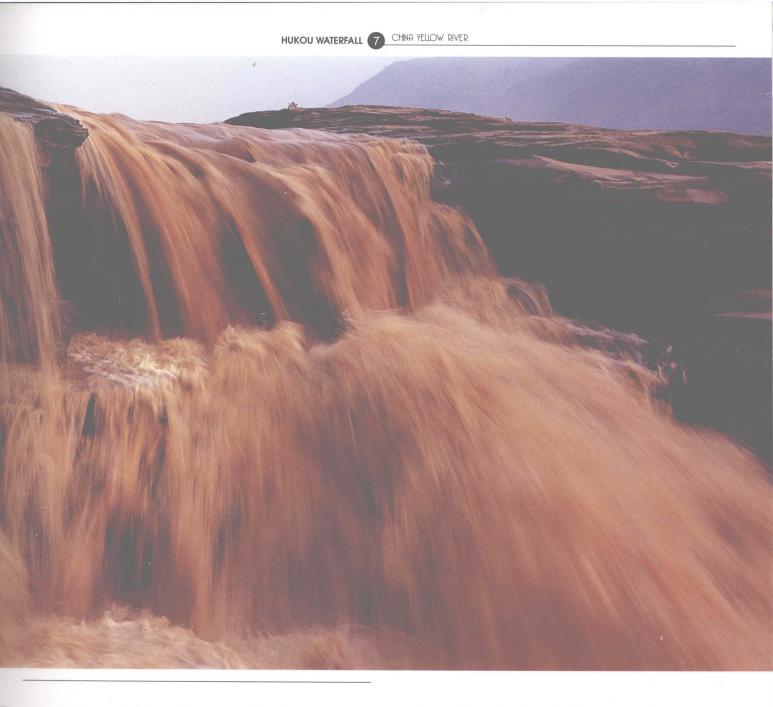
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## **Hukou Waterfall**

By Yin Sheng

The Yellow River, which originates from the Kariqu River on the northern slope of the Mount Bayankela in Qinghai Province in West China, roars down 5,464 kilometers to the Bohai Sea in the east.

Like a giant untamed dragon, it pushes forward along a zigzag watercourse to the north, east and then south, where it is abruptly stopped by a huge mountain and thus accumulated momentum to cut out the mysterious Jinshan Valley. Again it meets Mt. Mengshan at the border of Yichuan County of Shanxi Province and Jixian County of Shanxi Province. Once more, the river wins the battle and creates a world-renowned miracle on the Yellow River-the Hukou Waterfall at 45 kilometers west of Jixian County.

Standing by the thundering waterfall on the Loess Plateau, you could view the majestic Luliang mountains in the distance.

If you go upstream along the Yellow River in the foggy world of water spray, you will find many reefs, in animal or hillock sizes standing, sitting or even lying in the riverbed. They are creations of the Yellow River. Some of the reefs have such vivid postures that you will tend to believe they have just walked or even flown here from somewhere. Looking far into the north in the river water you will see two giant fishes that will later prove to be two huge stones as you go near. It is Mengmen Gate, which according to some classic works handed down from ancient China was the result of movement of earth's crust.

How does the Hukou Waterfall come into being? According to record of the famous ancient Chinese geographical book Commentary on the Waterways Classic written in the 6th century, the waterfall is pertinent with Great Yu, one of the first three emperors in Chinese

myths and legends, and who has been well-known and respected in China as a hero in controlling river water. It is said that Great Yu began his first river water control project at Hukou in 2140 BC, when it was covered by an immense space of muddy water. People had long suffered from the disaster.

Dispatched by the Emperor Shun Great Yu came to Hukou, where he saw a high stone mountain stopping the way and river water had nearly approached the summit of the mountain. He thought that if only he could cut a hole in the mountain, then the water flow would then be released easily. It was easy to say than to do. Since the upper reaches of the river had already been flooded, the cutting work proved to be a challenge to him. Some had compared the work to the removal of a tooth from the mouth of a tiger, for any neglect could bury him in the river water.

Great Yu had endured numerous hardships and bent his mind on the river control. His stories have been handed down generations after generations. The story of "Not Back Home While Passing Through Gate Three Times, describing how he had got married with a local girl and didn't go home once while passing through three times during cutting work, is the most popular one among people.

Under his leadership, subjects began the work with stone axes, stone blade, stone shovels and some wooden tools. He first used a stone drill and then changed to a sharp divine axe, with which he made a slim slot with the energy of his lifetime. With stars sprinkling and earth cracking, the yellow water ejected down and formed a spectacular waterfall at the Mengmen Gate. Today as we come here, we can still see four big red Chinese characters engraved in the Mengmen Mountain

Standing by the Hukou Waterfall, one might be petrified by the spectacular view. The Yellow River water seems like a golden belt meandering form distant green mountains, to be exact, from sky, and

flowing leisurely and smoothly away along the bared banks full of time and water eroded stones. The five hundred meters wide watercourse is unexpectedly narrowed to only 30-50 meters at Hukou, where the river water is forced to spurt down like from a kettle full of boiling water, hence the name of Hokou, meaning the mouth of a kettle in Chinese.

Unlike other waterfalls that pour down from the highland, the Hukou Waterfall falls down from where you stand to the valley under your feet. The clashing waters have made a five- kilometer long narrow trough known as Dragon

Trough, a formless hole that can take up all the river water. The water that falls down on the stone will continue its way downward until it disappears as fog and mist.

The Hukou Waterfall is just like a warrior in yellow war armor, riding on a yellow violent-tempered horse galloping from the horizon. The water is not flowing but flying among the yellow dust. Billows after billows restlessly beat rocks and cliffs, and the yellow swells jump and thunder among the chaos, implying the meaning of the word "evil". It seems that the Dragon Trough contains a pot of boiling water.

Billows rising high into sky help create a smoky and misty world.

While there seems to have thousands of male lions roaring or billions of snakes dancing inside the Dragon Trough, you will only feel the touch of water smoke on your clothes. That is because numerous spoondrifts that have been thrown into sky immediately turn into fog and may later accumulate again into rain.

However, the Hukou Waterfall has longt cut off by inconvenient

transportation and endless wars. It had not been in favor with ancient men of literature until the Ming Dynasty when a man of literature named Huang Guangwei happened to come to visit it. Deeply impressed with the majestic scenery, Huang wrote An Ode to the Hukou Waterfall overnight, in which he described the magnificent scene and its colorful profiles in different seasons.

In the 15th year in the reign of Emperor Qianglong in the Qing Dynasty, Wu Bing, the magistrate of Yichuan County ventured hardships and came to Hukou on donkey's back. He explored the waterfall and

presented for the first time a full picture of the attraction to the world in his A Study at Hukou. Also, he had cited examples to prove Hukou was the Dragon Gate in ancient times and corrected mistakes made in the past dynasties. He was the very first person who had ever listed the Hukou Waterfall as a place of historical interest.

The waterfall was not well known until the last two decades in the 20th century, when the travel motivations of Chinese were greatly stimulated by the political and social progress. Since then, the value of Hukou Waterfall as a tourist attraction has been much realized.





Hukou was an abyss in the past. The high difference has hindered people from navigating on the river. Falling down into the waterfall was considered dropping into an abysm.

Conquering Hukou Waterfall is a dream for those who have cherished a strong will. On September 3, 1987, Wang Lai'an, a young man from the Ma'anshan Rafting Team specializing at drifting on the Yellow River, successfully conquered the waterfall in Changjiang, a pressurized rubber boat. He was the first man struggling out of the "mouth of the tiger" living, creating a miracle of rafting through the Hukou Waterfall without impetus in human history. The awareness of the waterfall has gradually improved with rafting activities, such as the "viewing waterfall" program for photographers from both sides of the Taiwan Straits and auto and motorcycle flying over the waterfall. Hukou Waterfall has been printed on the 50-yuan note of Renminbi. It is national-level key scenic area and was appraised as one of the top 40 tourist attractions in China.

Observing closely, it is not difficult to find the waterfall has different appearances in four seasons. In the early spring, the ice will break into pieces. They float to Hukou and are suddenly driven forcefully down. The huge boom caused will stop any timid person from approaching.

When Midsummer comes, the river is full of howling water with the vigor of thousands of armed forces. The Hukou Waterfall cannot contain all the water, some water just compete with each others to find an escape, thus many small waterfalls beside called subordinate waterfalls formed along the banks of the Dragon Trough. The main waterfall and the subordinate waterfalls match with each other constructing a unique view.

If you come in the mid-autumn when mountains are covered with red leaves far and wide, the Hukou Waterfall is quite different. The Jinshan Valley, where the Hukou Waterfall is located, is flanked with precipitous cliffs and high peaks perched with stones in different sizes and shapes. In particular the stones along the banks of the Dragon Trough have been engraved and polished by water. When water is low, you may climb down to the bared stones to view the waterfall. Getting closer to the Dragon Trough, as if stepping on the evil swells, you will feel the quivering of the water force.

In midwinter, ice gates, ice palaces, rows of ice pillars and stalactites hung down over the rolling water and ice bridges at the low reaches of the Dragon Trough, all contribute to build a world of fairy tales.

The scene of the waterfall also changes with time in a day. When the sun rises, the fog over the waterfall is refracted forming a bewitching rainbow, which plugs into water like a colorful bridge over river. If you come in a fine day, very likely you are greeted with the waterfall in a veil of mist and decorated with a rainbow. When the sun sets, the

huge billows like a golden snake dancing in the river. The mountains and river waters all turn to gold, becoming part of a fine landscape painting.

On the moonlit night, you can still hear the thunder of the billows and feel its force while sleeping in the Viewing Waterfall House. The bed is slightly swayed just like on board of a ship navigating in the sea. The water seems a little tamed, becoming less fierce, and the waterfall becomes a mystery behind the thin mist woven by the moonlight.

There are many attractions at the Hukou Waterfall, such as Smoking from the Bottom of the Water, Rainbow Playing with Water, Flying Mountain and Standing Sea, Raining on Fine Day and Thunderstorms on Dry Day, to name only a few.

Stone Socket Treasure Mirror is one of the best things to see at Hukou. There are stone slabs with patterns of leaf, insect and bird fossils on the 5 kilometers long banks of the Dragon Trough. On the light brown slabs, there are some stone sockets full of clear water mirroring the mountain and river scenery. The big ones like urns and small ones are only in the size of a cup. The stone sockets have a smooth inner wall, no man-made trace. They are in the shape of hoof of an ox or horse. Visitors to Hukou will be able to see many of these Stone Socket Treasure Mirrors.

"Boating on the Dry Land" is a special scene that is not rare to view now. In ancient times, transportation along the banks of the upper and middle reaches of the Yellow River was obstructed, local produces, such as lumbers, china wares, coal, dates, salt and herbs were shipped south for sales. Due to the high difference of the Hukou Waterfall and swift currents in the narrow Dragon Trough, freighters were not able to pass through. So all the freighters would go ashore for miles. The freighters pillowed with logs were pulled and drawn several miles before they entered the river at the lower reaches. Think of what a view it was with hundreds of people hauling and singing at the same time. You can still feel it while lingering along the ancient ferry and take a short break in cave houses of boatmen.

The Hukou Waterfall is composed of four geographic features of the Loess Plateau, the Yellow River, the Yellow River Valley and waterfall. The imposing and unsophisticated loess topography characterized by crisscrossed ravines emphasizes the individual charm of the scenic area. Majestic and dangerous Jinshan Valley featuring with broad river valley, changeable river surface and deep and blue sky, showcases its secluded beauty. The waterfall has fully showed the grand nature of attractions in the north of the country.

The Hukou Waterfall is a battlefield with thunderstorms, an insurmountable pass on the Yellow River and a spectacular painting of strength and beauty. Its yellow color, vastness, patience, lenience, strength, vigor, profound connotation and strong visual wallop combine to form its unique charm.

Looking down from the air, the Loess Plateau is just like a strong man, mountains and hills are his artery, bones and muscles, while the Yellow River likes very much a gentle woman. So, often it has been called Mother River. But it is another picture while you view it on the ground. The Yellow River gallops down from the Qinghai and Tibetan Plateau and the Loess Plateau like a wide horse. When it came to Hukou, it suddenly jumps into the Dragon Trough and is there bridled for the first time. It kicks and bites to make the river, the waterfall and fog restless without moments of peace.

Viewing the Hukou Waterfall, one cannot help recalling the melody of the Chorus of the Yellow River. The composer got inspirations from the Hukou Waterfall and his passionate work has encouraged generation after generation. The Hukou Waterfall has represented all major features of Chinese nation and its vastness, lenience, bravery, steadfastness is the essential spirit and symbol of the Chinese nation.

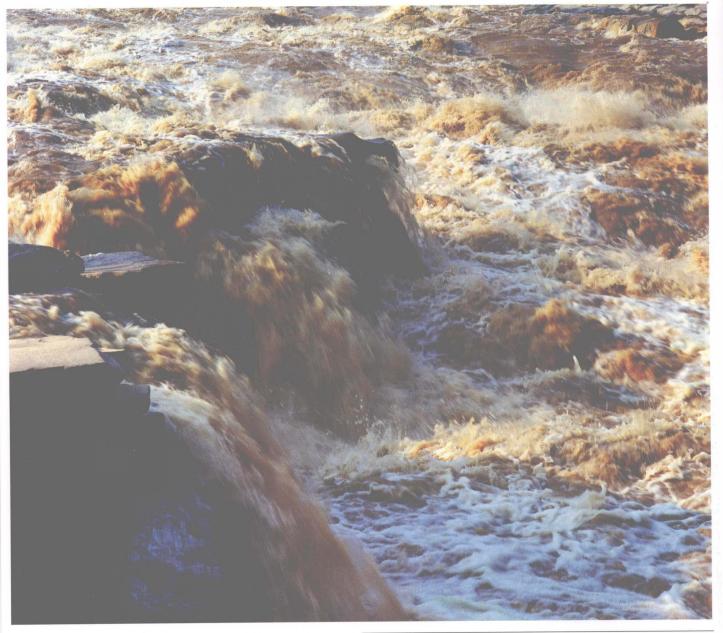
February, 2003













The section of the Yellow River in Qinghai Province. 青海境内的黄河



When the sun sets, the huge billows like a golden snake dancing in the river. The mountains and river waters all turn to gold, becoming part of a fine landscape painting.

那浪花由浑黄变成金黄,一河的浪花像金蛇狂舞,也似万金落盘。山变成了金,水变成了金,成了精美绝伦的风景画。