COLLECTING WATER FROM THE YELLOW RIVER

Tshe rang mtsho (images) and Tshe ring mtsho and Tshe ring bsam grub (text)

ABSTRACT
Collecting water from the Rma chu (Yellow River) near oM skor Village, Mang ra (Guinán 貴南) County, Mtsho lho (Hǎinán 海南) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sgon (Qīnghǎi 青海) Province is shown in eleven photographs.

KEY WORDS
oM skor, collecting water, Tibetan, pastoralist, Mang ra
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These images were taken in the summer of 2007 near oM skor (Bon skor)¹ Village, in Mang ra (Guinán 贵南) County, Mtsho lho (Hǎinán 海南) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Mtsho sgon (Qīnhǎi 青海) Province.

oM skor Village is on Mu ge thang Plain, between Mang gzhung and Bya gzhung valleys, adjacent to Mang ra'i bye ma Desert, the largest desert in Mtsho lho Prefecture. Mu ge thang is arid, a problem somewhat alleviated by a water project implemented by a local company² in the upper plain area in the early 1980s.

oM skor Village is situated above the Lóngyáng 龙羊 Reservoir (built 1989) on the Rma chu (Yellow River), which is also the nearest drinking water source. During the winter, the water level drops and villagers collect drinking water from several springs. The water level rises, covering the springs in summer and locals then must fetch drinking water directly from the reservoir, which requires an entire day and at least two people to collect enough water for an average household, which consumes two truck tire inner tubes every two days.

Many rural Qīnhǎi residents suffer from problems associated with water supply. If you wish to help alleviate such problems, please see www.friendshipcharity.org/ and www.shemgroup.org for details.

¹ 'oM skor' was created by a local writer and many disagreements ensued between locals because 'Bon skor' and 'oM skor' suggest different religious backgrounds. Local Tibetans follow both Bon and Buddhism.
² Guinán Pasture Industry Development Limited Liability Company (Guinán cǎoyè kāifā yǒuxiàn zérèn gōngsī 贵南草业开发有限责任公司). The company's focus was raising horses for the military at the time it implemented the water project. The company focused on growing oil-bearing plants and fodder in 2009.
Figure One: Preparing to Depart. Klu mo prepares a donkey and a pair of tire inner tubes. The second-oldest daughter in her family, Klu mo, and her cousin, Bkra shis, need one full day to fetch water.

Figure Two: The Flat Plain. Klu mo leads a donkey along the flat plain where village families graze sheep for about an hour. Klu mo's donkey balks and the sheep must be driven with a slingshot. The sheep are in the distance in the right of this image.

Figure Three: Sheep Moving Down the Mountain. The sheep slowly edge downslope to the Rma chu.

Figure Four: The Rma chu. The Rma chua was dammed in 1989. Its rising waters caused serious desertification on certain riverbanks. Klu mo and Bkra shis go downslope to the river. It takes about an hour to walk from the Mu ge thang Plain to the river. They carry their lunch in a bag.

Figure Five: Donkey Drinking. The donkey drinks from the river's edge.

Figure Six: Sheep Drinking. Sheep cool in the water after reaching the river. Sheep need to drink every second day in summer and every third day in winter.

Figure Seven: Preparing to Collect Water. Bkra shis prepares inner tubes to collect water. Klu mo rests, while the sheep drink for about an hour.
Figure Eight: Scooping Water. Bkra shis scoops water into the inner tubes for about twenty minutes.

Figure Nine: Securing the load. The two inner tubes are carried by the donkey. Two people are required to lift each tube.

Figure Ten: Setting out for home. Bkra shis and the donkey begin the journey from the riverbank back to Mu ge thang Plain.

Figure Eleven: The road home. The heavy livestock traffic erodes the soil. The donkey knows the way home and does not need to be led.
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