

◆ 請將下列英文原文翻譯成符合繁體中文慣例、風格的譯文，並使用正確的標點符號。

In 1997 the Yellow River dried up. The last remaining puddles and trickles of water soaked into the thick expanse of sediment on the riverbed or evaporated under the high, hot July sun of the North China Plain. The Yellow River had dried up on several occasions since the 1970s, but in 1997 the desiccation reached an unprecedented 400 miles inland from the river's mouth on the Bohai Sea. It is true that the inhabitants of the North China Plain have long struggled with water, at times with too much, but more persistently with too little. Indeed, historical records abound with chronicles of famine induced by drought in the Yellow River valley and the North China Plain. Yet the dry up in 1997 signaled something different—a particularly egregious set of water challenges embedded in the longer-run ecological setting of the North China Plain and, at the same time, conditioned by the forces of dynamic change in contemporary China.

The onset of a series of Yellow River dry-ups in the early 1970s was a relatively early indicator of water stress on the North China Plain. Beginning in 1978, this phenomenon became manifest, as demand for water resources skyrocketed during the remarkable economic growth of the post-Mao reform era. Rural reforms erased communal obligations by granting farmers long-term leases on their land and afforded them greater decisions over what to cultivate and where to market their goods. Shortly thereafter, the restructuring of the state-owned industrial sector and the introduction of market forces generated a manufacturing boom and a massive migration to urban centers, where rising incomes supported expanding patterns of consumption. A consequence of each of these reforms was the increased consumption and pollution of water. Per capita water availability plunged from 735 cubic meters (m³) in 1952 to 302 m³ in 2009. At the same time, in 2009 fully one-quarter of the water in the Yellow River system did not meet government Grade V standards (i.e., the water was unfit for human consumption or agricultural use). China's consumption of water is projected to continue to increase, from 41 billion m³ in 2009 to 46.2 billion m³ in 2020. Further clouding tenuous future prospects, a recent joint publication by several government and research organizations in China forecasted a 27 percent decline in glacial volume on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and in the Himalayas. This region is the “water tower” of Asia and is the source of many of China's rivers, including the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers, as well as transboundary arteries, such as the Salween, Ganges, Mekong, Ayeryawady, Brahmaputra, and Indus Rivers. (430 words; from *The Yellow River: The Problem of Water in Modern China*, by David A. Pietz)