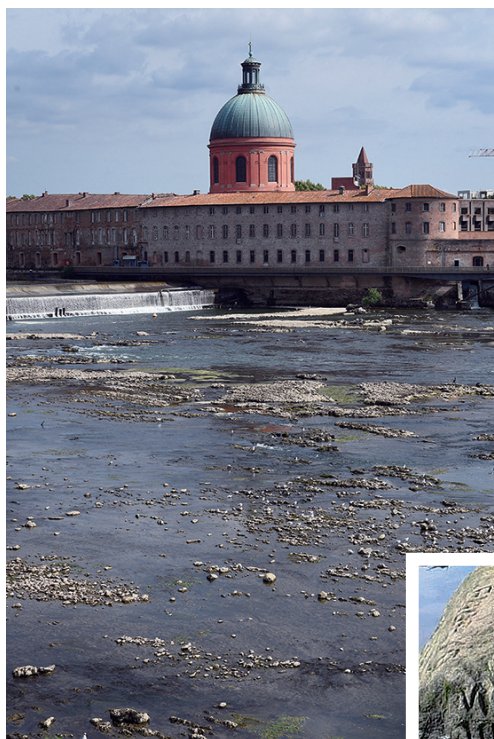




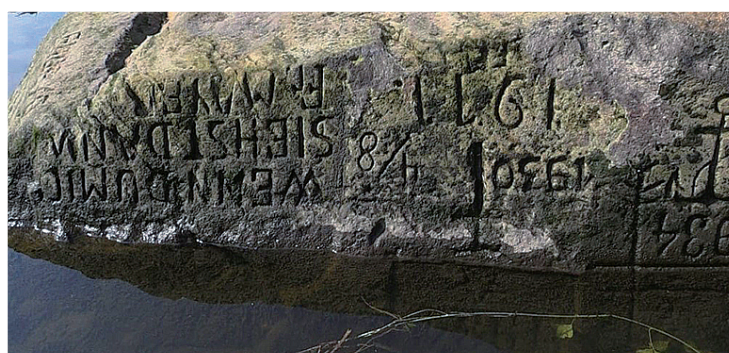
The water volume of Poyang Lake dropped 70 percent in August, forming the landscape that is nicknamed “the tree of earth.” — IC

## ‘If you see me, weep:’ the scourge of global warming



**Below: One boulder in the town of Decin, north of Prague, records a long-ago drought, bearing the foreboding inscription: “When you see me, weep.” Recent drought has revealed so-called “hunger stones” in the Elbe River in the Czech Republic.**  
— AFP

**Above: In Toulouse in southwest France, the rocky bed of the Garonne River is exposed due to lack of water.**  
— AFP



**Lu Feiran**

**T**his is a summer that will not be forgotten anytime soon. An exceptional heatwave is searing memories into the public psyche — grapes in a Sichuan Province vineyard drying into raisins in mere days; people in the city of Chongqing hiding in ancient stone grave sites to escape the scorching heat; windows breaking from calefaction in the city of Hangzhou.

Though the worst of the

heatwave is now on the wane, its legacy of crop failures, wildfires and electricity shortages remains.

The Ministry of Finance has announced it will allot 10 billion yuan (US\$1.5 billion) in drought relief to Yangtze River valley farmers suffering through the worst heat and drought since 1961.

The water volume in large lakes such as Poyang and Dongting dropped 70 percent in August, which should be the normal “flood season.”

In Jiangxi Province, parts of Poyang Lake, the largest freshwater lake in China, are now a vista of dried, huge cracks forming tree-like images. Fish have died.

China News Weekly quoted Wu Guocai, director of Duchang County Water Resources in Jiangxi Province, as describing the entire lake as only a “riverway in the middle, at most 100 meters wide.”

“Usually, the lake enters the dry season in October, but seldom in September,” Wu said.

In the southwestern province of Sichuan, the retreating water table has revealed the pedestal of the Leshan Giant Buddha. The giant stone statue is carved in a cliff at the intersection of three tributaries of the Yangtze River. Part of its pedestal is normally under water.

The Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area Management Committee said on August 18 that the water level at the statue was 1.69 meters below normal for that day.

Drought-affected provinces, such as Jiangxi and Hubei, have taken measures to try to support flagging agriculture. Millions of people joined efforts to create irrigation by digging water channels.

China is not alone in the merciless scourge of an abnormal summer.