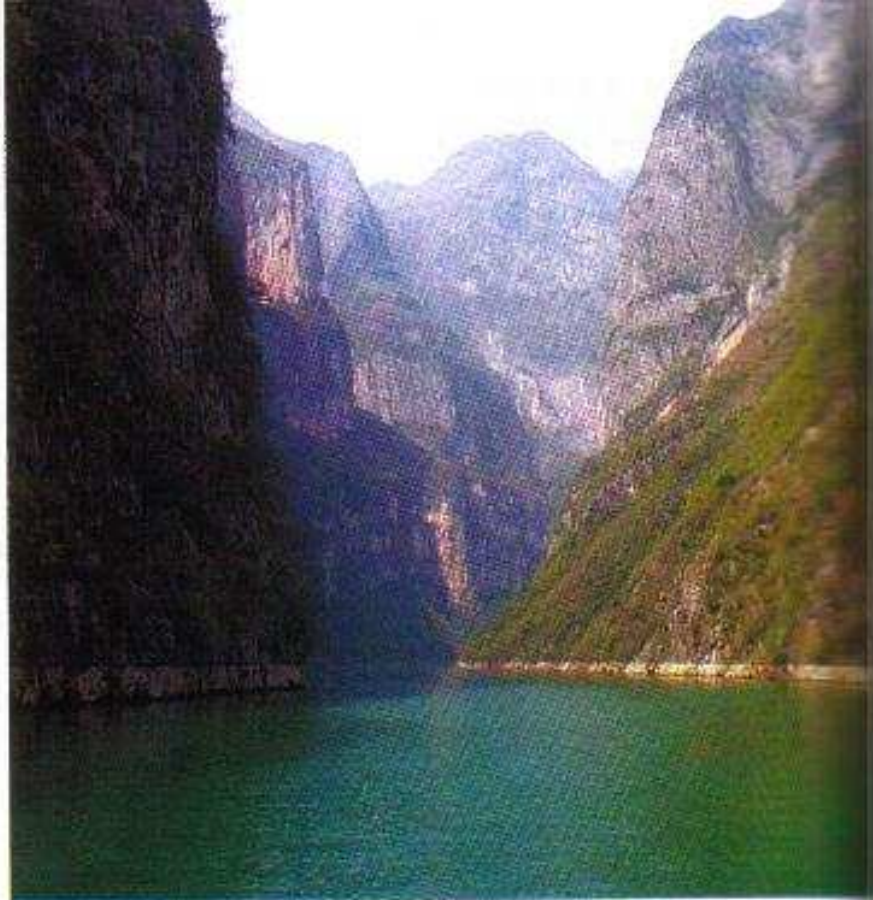


Sailing down the river

China's Yangtze River is the world's third longest river after the Nile and the Amazon



With a total length of 3,434 miles (5,526 km), the Yangtze rises in the highlands of Tibet and runs the width of China, flowing into the East China Sea near Shanghai. The Yangtze River Valley is famous for its landscapes, which include spectacular gorges and steep mountains.

Traditionally Yangtze River cruise passengers were able to observe scenes of rural village life along the river's narrow cliff-lined course as well as some of China's cultural and natural treasures. While the recent construction of the 1.5-mile-long (2,395-kilometer-long) Three Gorges Dam has meant that many villages along the Yangtze are currently in the process of being inundated, travelers will still find it interesting to view the riverside inhabitants' transition to new housing. Too, the rising waters have actually served to ease navigation through the narrowest of the Yangtze River

gorges; and the most important cultural relics and antiquities are being moved or otherwise protected.

Construction of the Three Gorges Dam, China's largest construction project since the building of the Great Wall, began at

generating capacity of 18,200 MW, equivalent to that of 18 nuclear reactors. The output of the Three Gorges Dam will be 44% greater than the output of Brazil's Itaipu Dam, which contains eighteen 700-MW turbines. Itaipu is the world's second largest dam. When it is completed in 2009, the Three Gorges Dam is

Travelogue Ted Cookson

Sandouping along the Yangtze River in December 1993. Closure of two-thirds of the river was achieved in November 1997. Then in June 2003 total river closure was finally completed, so the reservoir finally began to fill and electricity generation also commenced.

The world's largest hydroelectric power plant with twenty-six 700-megawatt (MW) turbines, the Three Gorges Dam will have a total electrical

The Shibaozhai Temple, a 12-story architectural gem dating to the eighteenth century, sits atop a 721-foot (220-meter) cliff.

slated to provide 84.8 billion kilowatt hours per year, or nearly 10% of China's energy requirements.

Additional reasons for dam construction include navigation, irrigation and flood control. Historically the Yangtze has flooded about once every decade; more than a million people died in these devastating floods in the twentieth century alone.

The magnitude of the USD 30 billion Three Gorges Dam project is overwhelming. When completed, this dam will have required double the concrete used to construct Brazil's Itaipu Dam. It will also create a 5,000,000,000,000-gallon (18,927,000,000,000-liter) reservoir some 385 miles (620 km) long. The total rise in water level behind the dam will be 361 feet (110 meters) by 2009. This new lake will displace some 1.5 million people. While it lies near a fault zone, the Chinese claim that the Three Gorges Dam is being built to withstand

