

Lesson 7

READ THIS STORY #1, Basic

The Yangtze River

The mighty Yangtze river flows for 3,900 miles from the highlands of Tibet through the heart of China until it empties into an arm of the Pacific Ocean called the Yellow Sea. It is the third longest river in the world.

The Chinese are erecting one of the world's largest dams to harness the power of this mighty river. The twenty billion dollar project was started in 1994 and is expected to take twenty years to complete. The dam will be as high as the Space Needle in Seattle and as wide as the length of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Proponents of the dam say it will prevent disastrous floods that have caused great damage in the past. Also, its hydroelectric power plant with twenty-six generators is expected to supply ten percent of China's total power.

Opponents of the dam are concerned about the 300-mile-long reservoir that will be created by the dam. The weight of that water might cause existing faults in the earth's crust to slip. Geophysicists believe that the chance of the dam failing because of an earthquake are very slim. However, it would be a catastrophe for the millions of people living downstream from the dam.

Do you think the project should proceed?