

Yangzi River

The Yangzi River (or *Chang Jiang*, which translates as 'Long River') is 6,300km in length. It is the longest river in China and third longest in the world. It originates in the mountains in the south-west of Qinghai province and its mouth is at Shanghai on the east coast.

The Yangzi has always been an incredibly important trade route. In the early 19th century the Yangzi ports handled amounts of shipping equal to any in the world. Rivers and canals were Ancient China's primary means of communication. Over 4000km of the river are navigable. Grain, coal and other materials for the steel industry account for nearly of the modern day carriage.

The Yangzi Valley has traditionally been an important food producer. The river has been the centre of economic life, bringing trade and influences from distant places. The river is prone to flooding and often there is great loss of life. To help combat the flooding and improve the navigation on the river a 2km wide dam is being built across the river. This will also provide an electricity supply. The dam is at one end of the Three Gorges, which are considered to be some of the most beautiful scenery in China.