News on China?

China:
Natural Environments

Group Discussion

What are the most significant physical features in China?
Name two

What are their implications for China?

Outline

- Topography
- Hydrology/river systems
  - Three-Gorges Dam
  - South-North Water Transfer Project
- Major environmental regions

Territory and Location

Neighbors
Implications of Physical Landscape

- Encircled with mountains and oceans, less accessible to outsiders, isolated from the rest of the world
- Diverse environments → diverse cultures and economies, large regional differences
  - Uniting different cultures/regions rather than external expansion is more important
- Limited habitable land → population pressure on the environment → over exploitation of the environment → sustainability
- Centrality, ethnocentrism
The Middle Kingdom

中华人民共和国 (Zhong guo)

Centrality: center of the world, spatially and culturally

River Systems

The Yellow River (Huang He)
The Yangtze River (Chang Jiang)
The Pearl River (Xi Jiang)

The Yellow River: “China’s Sorrow”
Numerous floods in history

ZHANG Yimou’s movies

Figure 4.7 Sand-storms and dust-storms distribution and frequency
The Yellow River
- Importance in Chinese civilization
- Cut through the Loess Plateau
  - China’s Sorrow
- Three Gates Gorge (San Men Xia)
  - Dam – an attempt to control the river
- 1999: logging bans and mandatory reforestation projects on the upper and middle stretches of the river

The Yangtze River (the Chang Jiang)
- The longest river in Asia, 3rd longest in the world (6300 km)
- Largest annual discharge
- Provide water to the central part of China
- Flood control and efficient use → Three Gorges Dam

Supports lots of people and industries
The Dam is 175 m high, 2309 m long

Chongqing Port
Three Gorges Dam

- **Pros:**
  - Low-cost and clean power for the growing economy and population
  - Flood control
  - Fishing industry and tourism ...

- **Cons:**
  - 1.2 million people displaced
  - Archaeological sites/culture relics lost
  - Environmental consequences
  - Possible military target/structure failure ...

- **Questions:**
  - What are pros and cons of Three Gorges Dam? (according to the video)
  - Was it a smart idea to build the Three Gorges Dam?

- **China’s Mega Dam**, by Discovery Channel
The Pearl River (The Xi Jiang)

- Rapidly growing and urbanizing region
- Massive migrants
- "Factory of China"
- HK, Macau
- SEZs, overseas connections

Climate

N.W.: Continentality
S.E.: Monsoon

South-North Water Transfer Project
Temperature regimes vary by north-south location.

Rice in the south
Wheat in the north

LAND USE in CHINA

The Southwest -- Guilin
“Land of Fish and Rice”

“Land of water”

The Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau

The Northwest: Xingjiang-Mongolia
The Northeast

- Snow and Ice Festival in Haerbin

Xinjiang
Re-cap

- Diverse topographies
  - Major physical features
  - Implication of physical environment
- River systems
  - The Yellow River, Yangtze River, Pearl River
  - Three-Gorges Dam, South-North Water Transfer
  - Implication of the river systems
- Coast-inland, south-north contrast in precipitation, temperature, crops & land use
- Major environmental regions
  - Different environmental challenges