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The World's Great Rivers: The Yang-tze-Kiang

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When the various regions have been thus examined, the conclusion may be reached, and the general principle formulated.

A wise use of a geographical text in itself alone necessitates good teaching.

In general it may be said that the selection of larger and more pertinent units is fundamental to better results. Units should be larger. Regions should be studied rather than parts of regions in the form of political divisions. Material irrelevant to the life of today should be eliminated. This done, the lesson assignment should assume the form of a problem for solution, an inference to verify, or a principle to develop.

THE WORLD'S GREAT RIVERS

THE YANG-TZE-KIANG

By ELIOT BLACKWELDER

University of Wisconsin, Madison

Almost as long as the Mississippi, as easily navigated as the Amazon and yet flowing through a land more populous than Europe, the Yang-tze river of China is second to none in importance to the human race. Its ultimate sources are among the snowy ranges of Tibet, in a region still but little known. The river assumes prominence as it enters the basin of Sze-chuan, the extreme western province of the empire.

Sze-chuan, one of the richest provinces in China, is completely isolated from the outer world by belts of rugged mountains. Within these barriers lies a fertile lowland from which an intelligent population produces some of China's most valued articles of commerce, such as silk, wax, laquer, and grain. For the export of this produce there is now only one avenue of any importance, the Yang-tze river. River navigation is usually an easy matter, and in China it has been brought to great efficiency; but in the exit from the western basin the difficulties which beset the traffic are enormous. After leaving the garden of Sze-chuan, the great river passes through a series of gorges of unsurpassed grandeur. Instead of a smooth avenue of commerce it becomes a powerful and dangerous flood, full of whirlpools and rapids. On both sides it is shut in by cliffs 3000—4000 feet in height. Where the cliffs recede a little, there are towns in the open spaces,—the people all engaged in the river trade.

The Yang-tze carries every year an enormous burden of commerce between eastern and western China. Travel down stream is rapid and easy, although dangerous here and there where hidden rocks and rapids have to be passed. On the return journey junks of all sizes are laboriously dragged up the stream by thousands of coolies tugging at bamboo ropes. The trip requires several weeks. A railroad from Hankow, often

called, "the Chicago of China," to this rich western province would be an expensive undertaking, and would require a high order of engineering skill to build it, but it would pay handsomely. The thirty millions of industrious people of Sze-chuan and its mountain dependencies would create a traffic of stupendous proportions.

From the gorges to the sea the great river traverses the densely populated central provinces, here hilly and there flat. It passes by the cities of Hankow, Nanking, Shanghai and many others almost as large. Its deep channel permits big ocean freight steamers to ascend 600 miles to Hankow for cargoes of tea, and steamers larger than many of the passenger vessels on our own Great Lakes go up to the mouth of the gorges, 1100 miles back from the sea, while the number of native junks that ply its water runs far into the thousands.

NEW YORK STATE SYLLABUS IN GEOGRAPHY

FOURTH YEAR

North America, the United States and the remaining continents in outline

When the children enter upon the work of this year, they already know about the world as a whole, its continents and great oceans; and it seems natural, therefore, that the year's work should begin with a more detailed study of some one of the continents. This will, of course, be the one in which they live.

For this work the children should have a textbook, their lessons should be assigned from the textbook, and they should be held to a careful preparation of these lessons. The textbook should be descriptive in character, and the use of the same sort of text should be continued until the first study of the several continents and countries of the world has been completed. In later years the textbook should be of an entirely different character.

The elementary textbook in geography is usually the first book placed in the hands of the children which they are expected to study for the purpose of obtaining information, and for that reason it is extremely important that its use should be carefully taught. This is best done by discussing each day in class the lesson for the next day, and at the close of the oral work, assigning the same lesson for study. Later the children should be called upon to recite upon the text. After a little it will be sufficient to point out during the assignment of the lesson the items of greatest importance, adding thereto "search questions," the answers to which may be found in the text. While this makes the teacher's work more difficult at first, it pays in the end because of the added clearness and interest.