



## GIA SƯ CHUNG CƯ

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### CHINA'S BIG DAM

Farmer Wang Zuolu grows oranges and peanuts on a hilltop overlooking China's beautiful Yangtze River. His family has lived there for generations in a farmhouse of thick, mud-packed walls. But Wang, 70, and his wife Zhang Changying, 60, know that their family's happy life on the hill is coming to an end. Soon their farm will be covered by water. They must start a new life in a new village. They will have to move their family cemetery and replant their orchards.

Wang and his wife are just two of the 1.2 million Chinese who are being forced from their homes by the construction of the Three Gorges Dam.

The Three Gorges Dam is named for three spectacular gorges, or canyons, in central China. When it is completed, the dam will use water power to create electricity. Its builders say it will help prevent flooding by the Yangtze. But it will also be very destructive, changing China's natural scenery and the lives of many of its people forever.

For hundreds of years, poets and painters have been inspired by the Yangtze's winding path and the steep cliffs and flat plains that lie on either side of its waters. But the Yangtze can rise over its banks, causing terrible floods.

Workers are building a 600-foot-high wall that will stretch across the Yangtze. Then they will install giant generators. These will provide as much energy for the area as 15 large coal-burning power stations. However, many scientists say the dam will be an ecological disaster. It will destroy the natural surroundings (including the stunning gorges) and threaten many fish and animals.

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By blocking the flow of the Yangtze, the dam will create a 370-mile lake, or reservoir, west of the city of Yinchang. It will swallow hundreds of towns and villages.

The reservoir will also threaten the habitats of hundreds of fish, plants, and animal species. Among the creatures at risk: rare river dolphins, clouded leopards, and Siberian white cranes. The government promises to monitor the environment around the dam and has set aside money to create a protective area for the dolphins.

But scientists are doubtful about promises. They warn that blocking the river will create sewage backups and perhaps even cause more floods. Some fear that the dam may collapse. Many dams in China have collapsed in the past 20 years.

China's culture and history are also endangered by the dam. Ancient pagodas (temples) and other important historic sites will be under water.

The Chinese who must leave their homes are already feeling the impact of the Three Gorges Dam. These resettlers, or yimin, have no choice but to find new homes and jobs.

Despite their worries, the Chinese are not permitted to speak out against the project, which is expected to cost more than \$24 billion. Journalist Dai Qing landed in prison after she criticized the dam. "There is only one Yangtze River," she wrote in protest. "And we have already subjected it to many stupid deeds."

1. A *gorge* is another name for a \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. valley                      B. canyon                      C. dam                      D. river
2. Why is the Three Gorges Dam being created?  
A. to create electricity  
B. to change China's natural scenery  
C. to create a protective area for dolphins  
D. to protect pagodas and temples
3. Which word or phrase does not describe Wang?  
A. farmed oranges and peanuts                      B. lived on a hilltop  
C. a yimin                      D. husband of Dai Qing
4. By building a dam, the Yangtze will \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. create a reservoir where towns and villages used to be.  
B. endanger historic sites and pagodas.  
C. generate power.  
D. *all of the above*

5. At the present time, before the generators are installed, energy comes from \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. water. B. Yinchang.  
C. coal-burning power stations. D. natural sources.
6. In what way will this cause an ecological disaster?  
A. People will have to move.  
B. Fish and other animals will die.  
C. It will create a lake.  
D. People will have to burn more coal.
7. Why don't the 1.2 million people refuse to leave?  
A. They know the dam will be good for the country.  
B. They might be sent to prison.  
C. They want a change of scenery.  
D. Their homes are old and run-down.
8. What animals will be placed in a government-funded protected area?  
A. clouded leopards B. Siberian white cranes  
C. pagodas D. rare river dolphins
9. What does a journalist do?  
A. protests B. reports the news  
C. sells homes D. advises the government
10. Why do some people fear the dam will collapse?  
A. Many of China's dams have collapsed in the past.  
B. They are poorly constructed.  
C. The river is too strong.  
D. The people will knock it down in protest.

Since the beginning of recorded history, virtually every culture in the world has reported observations of unusual animal behaviour prior to earthquakes and, to a lesser extent, volcanic eruptions, but conventional science has never been able to adequately explain the phenomenon.

Nevertheless, the Chinese and Japanese have used such observations for hundreds of years as an important part of their earthquake warning systems.

Most significantly, on February 4, 1975 the Chinese successfully evacuated the city of Haicheng several hours before a 7.3 magnitude earthquake, saving nearly 90,000 lives. This was based primarily on observations of unusual animal behaviour.

Helmut Tributsch's classic work on the subject of earthquakes and unusual animal behaviour – *When the Snakes Awake* – details numerous consistent accounts of the phenomenon from all over the world. However, although these behaviour patterns are very well-documented, most American specialists do not take them very seriously. In fact, most conventional geologists do not believe that there are any earthquake prediction techniques which perform any better than chance; this includes unusual animal behaviour. In fact, the notion that odd animal behaviour can help people predict earthquakes is perceived by most traditional geologists in the West as folklore and is often treated as seriously as sightings of ghosts, Elvis Presley, and the Loch Ness Monster.

Unusual behaviour is difficult to define, and determining if there is a typical behaviour pattern is not a simple, clear-cut process, although there are some distinct patterns which have emerged. An example of this, which has often been reported, is an intense fear that appears to make some animals cry or bark for hours, and others run away in panic. Equally typical is the phenomenon of wild animals losing their usual fear of people.

Although the majority of accounts relate to dogs and cats, there are also many stories about other types of animal in the wild, on farms, and in zoos. Unusual behaviour has been reported in many other animal species as well, including fish, reptiles, and even insects. This strange behaviour can occur at any time in advance of a quake – from weeks to seconds.

A number of theories have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, and what the signals that the animals are picking up on might be. Because many animals possess auditory capacities beyond

the human range, it has been suggested that some animals may be reacting to ultrasound emitted as microseisms from rock breaking below the earth's surface.

Another possibility is fluctuations in the earth's magnetic field. Because some animals have a sensitivity to variations in the earth's magnetic field (usually as a means of orientation), and since variations in the magnetic field occur near the epicentres of earthquakes, it has been suggested that this is what the animals are picking up on.

Other mysterious phenomena are often connected with earthquakes. The regular eruptions of geysers have been interrupted. Water levels in wells have been reported to change, or the water itself has become cloudy. Magnets have been said to lose their power temporarily. Many people report that there is suddenly an inexplicable stillness in the air, and that all around them becomes completely silent. Strange lights are often seen glowing from the earth, and unusual fogs have been reported. These phenomena are all consistent with the notion that the odd animal behaviour may result from changes in the earth's electromagnetic field. More puzzling is the fact that a number of people even claim to have sighted UFOs hovering around earthquake sites.

Currently Western science does not have any reliable means of forecasting earthquakes. Any clues that may be used to help us predict when and where the next quake is coming should be approached with an open mind.

1. What does the writer say about the occurrence of unusual animal behaviour before earthquakes?
  - A. It does not happen everywhere in the world.
  - B. Many countries use it to predict earthquakes.
  - C. It is equally common before volcanic eruptions.
  - D. There is no generally approved scientific explanation for it.
2. According to the writer of the article, most conventional geologists \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. use unusual animal behaviour to predict earthquakes.
  - B. think *When the Snakes Awake* is well-researched.
  - C. believe there is no sure way of predicting earthquakes.
  - D. support scientific study of unusual animal behaviour.
3. What does the writer say about how animals behave before an earthquake?
  - A. Both wild and domesticated animals show unusual behaviour.
  - B. Cats and dogs show more unusual behaviour than other animals.
  - C. All animals become frightened of people.
  - D. Some pets run away from home.

4. What is a possible cause of animals' strange behaviour?
  - A. They feel the earth beginning to move.
  - B. They sense changes in the earth's magnetic field.
  - C. They are highly sensitive to magnets.
  - D. They hear loud sounds below the earth's surface.
5. How does the writer react to claims that UFOs have been seen around earthquake sites?
  - A. He thinks the claims are probably true.
  - B. He is surprised by the claims.
  - C. He doesn't believe the claims.
  - D. He is concerned about the claims.
6. What is the main point the writer of the article is trying to make?
  - A. More studies need to be done on animal behaviour and earthquakes.
  - B. Western scientists should listen to new ideas about how to predict earthquakes.
  - C. People who say they can predict earthquakes are not of sound mind.
  - D. It is impossible to predict when earthquakes will occur.

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Millions of people tune into the weather forecast each evening on television. Most of them imagine that the presenter does little more than arrive at the studio a few minutes before the broadcast, read the weather, and then go home.

In fact, this image is far from the truth. The two-minute bulletin which we all rely on when we need to know tomorrow's weather is the result of a hard day's work by the presenter, who is actually a highly-qualified meteorologist.

Every morning after arriving at the TV studios, the first task of the day is to collect the latest data from the National Meteorological Office. This office provides up-to-the-minute information about weather conditions throughout the day, both in Britain and around the world. The information is very detailed and includes predictions, satellite and radar pictures, as well as more technical data. After gathering all the relevant material from this office, the forecaster has to translate the scientific terminology and maps into images and words which viewers can easily understand.

The final broadcast is then carefully planned. It is prepared in the same way as other programmes. The presenter decides what to say and in what order to say it. Next a "story board" is drawn up which lays out the script word for word. What makes a weather forecast more complicated than other programmes are the maps and electronic images which are required. The computer has to be programmed so that the pictures appear in the correct order during the bulletin.

The time allocated for each broadcast can also alter. This is because the weather report is screened after the news, which can vary in length. The weather forecaster doesn't always know how much time is available, which means that he/she has to be thoroughly prepared so that the material can be adapted to the time available.

Another related complication is that the weather forecast has to be a live broadcast; it cannot be pre-recorded. Live shows are very nerve-racking for the presenter because almost anything can go wrong. Perhaps the most worrying aspect for every weather forecaster is getting the following day's predictions wrong. Unfortunately for them **this** is not an unusual occurrence; the weather is not always possible to predict accurately.

The weather is a national obsession in Britain, perhaps because it is so changeable. It's the national talking point, and most people watch at least one daily bulletin. It can be mortifying for a weather man or woman who has predicted rain for the morning to wake up to brilliant sunshine.

These days, a weather forecaster's job is even more complicated because they are relied upon to predict other environmental conditions.

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For example, in the summer the weather forecast has to include the pollen count for hayfever sufferers. Some also include reports on ultra-violet radiation intensity to help people avoid sunburn.

The job of a weather forecaster is certainly far more complicated than just pointing at a map and describing weather conditions. It's a job for professionals who can cope with stressful and demanding conditions.

1. What perception do most people have of weather forecasters?
  - A. They have many qualifications.
  - B. They do a hard day's work at the studio.
  - C. They work very short hours.
  - D. They always tell the truth.
2. Meteorologists get their forecasting information from \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the TV studio.
  - B. the country's main weather centre.
  - C. satellite and radar information.
  - D. their office.
3. Creating a weather report is complex because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. maps have to be drawn.
  - B. a lot of data has to be interpreted.
  - C. radar pictures are technical.
  - D. the information includes unreliable predictions.
4. The computer has to be carefully programmed \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. so that the visuals are sequenced correctly.
  - B. so that the script is visible to the presenter.
  - C. because the script has to be written on a story board.
  - D. because electronic maps are used.
5. Weather forecasters have to know the material well because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the broadcast is pre-recorded.
  - B. the forecast may be incorporated into the news broadcast.
  - C. the content of the report may have to change.
  - D. the length of the report may have to change.
6. What does "**this**" in the last sentence of paragraph 6 refer to?
  - A. the weather forecaster's worry
  - B. reading the weather 'live'
  - C. giving a forecast that doesn't come true
  - D. an accurate prediction
7. In Britain, people's attitude to the weather \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. is not changeable.
  - B. makes it a top discussion topic.

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- C. depends on the prediction being for a sunny or rainy day.  
D. is a national problem.
8. Nowadays, weather forecasters have to \_\_\_\_\_
- A. do experiments to determine the pollen count.  
B. simply point at maps and describe weather conditions.  
C. cope with professionals.  
D. be able to cope under pressure.

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