

# The Central China Floods of 1931

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When pondering natural disasters here in the United States, we usually tend to talk about things that are well known, are more recent, and have usually happened in our own nation. The Attacks of September 11th, Hurricane Katrina, and the American Revolution usually come up in discussion. But, have you ever thought about a natural disaster, all the way in Asia, that killed almost 4 million people? Probably not! However, in the history of the world, this was one of the worst natural disasters to ever strike.

The cause of the Central China Floods, also known as the Yangtze River Flood, started in 1928. From then until 1930, the areas of Central China that soon would be affected by the flood experienced horrible droughts. The three rivers that caused the flood (Yangtze, Yellow, and Hai) dried out pretty bad, which led to the soil drying up. Then, once the winter of 1930 came, the area was hit by massive snow storms, followed by heavy rainfall the next spring. To add to that, in July alone, China was hit with seven cyclones! Picture that! As a result, you can only imagine the effect all of that water had on the rivers. In addition, because China was in a time of war, the government officials in charge of taking care of the rivers didn't do their jobs, and dams built to control the Yangtze River were built incorrectly. These were the most known, (and major), causes of the flood.

Once August of 1931 came, the Yangtze, Yellow, and Hai Rivers were overflowed so badly that almost all of Central China was underwater. It flooded a five hundred square mile area! Once the waters rose, towns with fields of rice and other crops were submerged. Therefore, the food was destroyed, and even months later it would not be replanted. Adding to the problem of houses being engulfed, there was pollution in the water. This caused different types of diseases to spread rapidly. One was a bacterial infection thanks to the waters, and

another one was the commonly known Typhoid, another illness where you get a fever and rashes erupt on your skin.

That seems bad enough, doesn't it? Well, it doesn't end here! As a result of the flood destroying farms, many people began to starve. This starvation would last for a while, because even in the fall of 1931, there was still visible water on the ground, making farmers unable to replenish the ruined fields. Many people were so hungry, they resorted to cannibalism to keep themselves alive! Horrible, right. Well, that goes to show you what people would do to keep on living in desperate times. It's sad, but it's true.

I believe that this is a very important topic in history, but not a very well known one. This may be because it took place so long ago, or because it happened somewhere a fair distance from the United States of America. The cause of the flood is important, and finding out how the rivers flooded is important, but the most important part is the flood itself, as in a town being submerged in water, and the aftermath. Evidently, this event was probably a once in a century occurrence, and that is why I feel it is very important.

As you can see, the Central China Floods of 1931 were no joke! They killed 3.7 million people, and the ones who did survive had to live with memories of a time words can't even describe. I believe this historic event would be a very interesting and special topic to focus an I Survived book on, and children from all over would not be able to put it down!