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"When you come to the edge

Kristi Parker

of all that you know, you must believe one of two things: There will be earth upon which to stand, or you will be given wings to fly."

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Thursday, April 29, 2004

China's dammed Yangtze Riv a cesspool of sewage, poison

By Tim Johnson KRT CAMPUS

WANZHOU, China - When this city decided to dam a tributary to the mighty Yangtze River, the city fathers searched for a suitable name for the beautiful artificial lake they said would form. They settled on Goddess Lake.

They planned a tree-lined park along its shores, a tranquil respite from city life. Little boats would ply its waters.

Six months after Goddess Lake began filling up; it's become a cesspool filled with pig blood, dead fish, raw sewage, dye and runoff from tanneries.

"Can you see the sewage pipe dumping into the lake over there?" taxi driver Lu Yongheng asked. He pointed to effluent cascading into the lake, which is a few hundred yards from the Yangtze River.

Similar stories of environmental degradation are unfolding along the Yangtze upriver from the Three Gorges Dam. As the huge dam and smaller dams along the river's tributaries block the water, the flushing and selfcleaning action of the Yangtze River basin has slowed.

Reservoirs are becoming sewers, filled with trash and smelly water. Local officials refuse to shut down polluting factories, fearful that unemployment will rise. Edicts from Beijing on controlling industrial waste go unheeded.

Begun in 1994, nearly a mile across and 575 feet high, the controversial Three Gorges Dam is the biggest hydroelectric project in the world. The dam began



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A sign on an apartment building marks the expected 175-meter height of the waters the Yangtze

blocking the Yangtze, the world's third-largest river, on June 1. By the time it's completed in 2009, the project will fill a reservoir that will stretch 350 miles upstream.

If all goes according to plan, the dam will supply a 10th of China's huge energy needs and limit catastrophic flooding of the Yangtze. It also will displace 1.3 million people.

River will reach in Wanzhou, once the Three Gorges completed in 2009.

tion that accompanies the University billion project shows how University of authorities can thwan the University less dictates of Beijing and Oklahoma zeal to sustain China's econf growth often trumps and match Baylo about pollution.

The central government ordered hundreds of far b along the river closed has conference, they were heavy pollules. James Wadl

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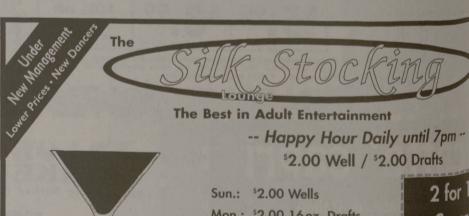
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