Coastal province of southeast China, bounded to the north by Jiangsu, to the east by the East China Sea, to the south by Fujian, and to the west by Jiangxi and Anhui; area 101,800 sq km/39,300 sq mi; population (2013 est) 54,980,000. The capital is Hangzhou. There are silk, chemical fibre, canning, tea-processing, and handicrafts industries. Rice, cotton, sugar, jute, maize, and timber are grown; silkworms are farmed and there is fishing. Zhejiang is the second smallest of the Chinese provinces, and densely populated.

**History** Zhejiang was the base of the Song dynasty during the 12th and 13th centuries. It was at that time the most prosperous part of China, and even into the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Hangzhou was reputed to be China's largest and richest city. In the late 19th century, Zhejiang was a centre for opposition to the dynasty, and in the early 20th century it built China's first successful privately-financed railway between Shanghai and Hangzhou. The south of the province was less wealthy than the north, and in the early 20th century many people from the area emigrated to Europe.

**Topography** Zhejiang consists mainly of southeast trending uplands which continue into the neighbouring province of Fujian. The hills reach the sea, and the coastline is rugged with the exception of a few small delta areas. The Zhoushan Archipelago is situated at the entrance to Hangzhou Bay. Major rivers are the Chang Jiang, Qiantang, Fuchun, and the Ou.

**Features** The province contains the West Lake gardens and pavilions, and early Zen (Chan) Buddhist Lingyin Temple at Hangzhou; Tiantyige Library (1516), Ningbo, China's oldest surviving library; and Putuoshan Island, a Buddhist holy mountain and mythical home of Guanyin, goddess of mercy and fertility. Towns include Ningbo and Wenzhou.

**Climate** Winters are short and mild, with January temperatures averaging from 2°C/36°F in the northeast to 8°C/46°F in the southwest coastal area. July temperatures average around 28°C/82°F. Most of the rain falls in the summer months, the annual average being 850 mm/33 in in the north to 1,700 mm/67 in in the south. The coastal area is subject to typhoons in the summer and autumn.

**Economy** Zhejiang is the second smallest, most densely populated of China's provinces, and cultivation takes place wherever possible. The northern part of the province, north of Hangzhou, is part of the delta of the Chang Jiang and is intensively cultivated. There is valuable timber on the sparsely populated uplands, and lumbering is an important industry. Fisheries are important along the coasts. There is a dense network of waterways and irrigation ditches in the Chang Jiang delta area and the chief products are rice, wheat, jute, silkworms, and cotton; two crops of rice are possible each year. Further south agricultural land is much more restricted; maize and sugar cane are important in addition to rice. Citrus fruits and tea are also grown.

Zhejiang is China's leading silk producer, accounting for one-third of its raw silk output. Other important manufactures are cotton, jute, synthetic fibres, tinned foods, tea, cement, beer, chemicals, agricultural equipment, machinery, and paper. Major industrial centres have developed at Hangzhou, producing...
machinery, textiles, agricultural tools, and radio and television sets; and at Ningbo, producing tractors, electronic goods, and petrochemicals. Traditional crafts are also important; these include brocades, fans, scissors, embroidered clothes, lace, bamboo products, and carving in stone and wood. In the 1980s and 1990s many towns and villages developed light industries producing a wide range of products, principally for export.

There are three major hydroelectric schemes on the Qiantang River at Huangdankou, Xin'anjiang, and Fuchunjiang, providing power to Hangzhou and Shanghai.

**Famous people** The writer Lu Xun (1881–1936).
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