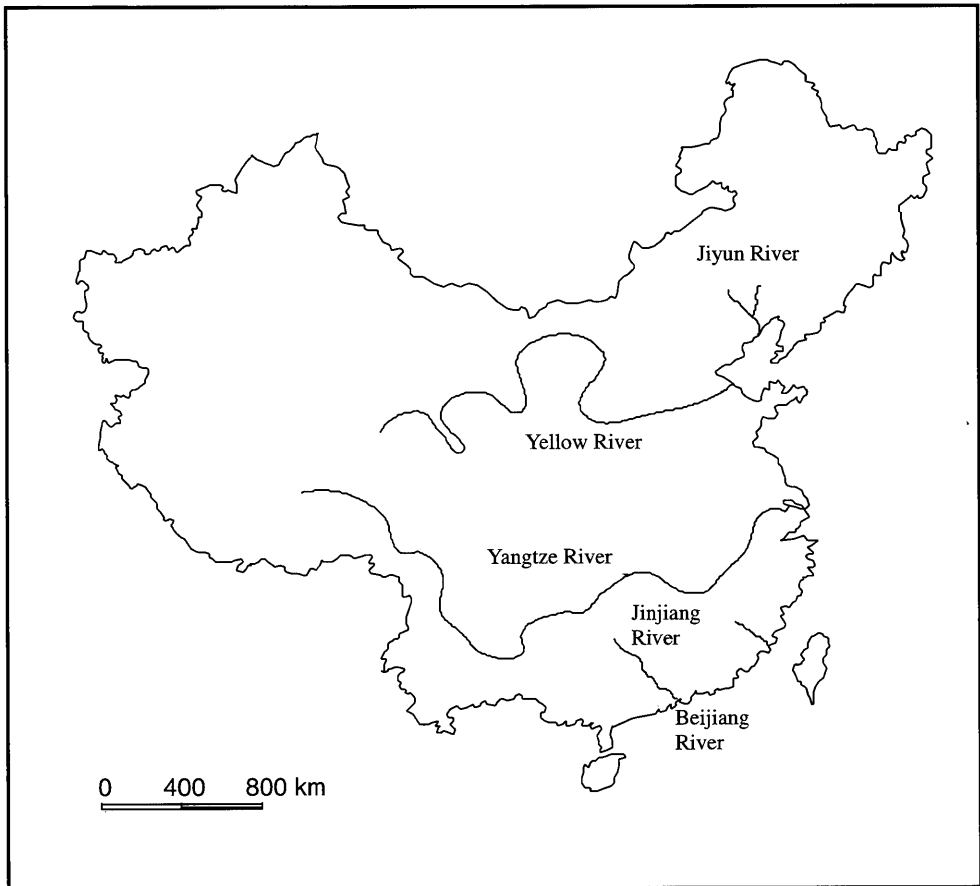


China

China-1: Bei-jiang

China-2: Jin-jiang

China-3: Jiyun-he



Introduction

China, in the south-east of Eurasia, faces the Pacific Ocean on the south-east, stretches north-westward to the interior of Asia and borders the South Asian sub-continent on the south-west. As the world's third largest country in area, China has a vast territory which spans about 62° longitude from east to west and 50° latitude from north to south, and covers an area of 9 600 000 km². The topographical conditions of China are very complex, but the general tendency is higher in the west and lower in the east. The climatic conditions of China are complex and multiple in nature. Monsoon climate is a predominant feature of the country which, with its most part under the influence of SE and SW monsoons, possesses the peculiarity that it is humid and ample in rainfall around the south-east while dry and scarce in precipitation in the north-west. Generally, the regional distribution of precipitation in China is extensively uneven. According to the quantity and character of precipitation in various areas, the country can be divided into 5 types of zones, viz. a very humid zone, a humid zone, a semi-humid zone, a semi-arid zone and an arid zone. The mean annual precipitation is 608 mm varying from over 1600 mm in the south-east and south-west to less than 200 mm in the north and north-west. China is a country having a large number of rivers. There are about 1500 rivers each with a catchment area in excess of 1000 km². The population of China in 1994 was 1.2 billion.

The three rivers catalogued in this volume are the Beijiang, the Jinjiang and the Jiyun. They are the representative rivers of the salient characteristics. The Beijiang is the largest river in Guangdong Province. The river basin takes up about 20% of the area of the province. In this basin, typhoon related floods are very frequent. Three large reservoirs have been built in the basin for hydropower, flood control and agricultural purposes. The municipal water supply in the limestone area is a problem that needs urgent attention. The Jinjiang river is located on the south-eastern part of Fujian Province. Along the river there are many diversion projects and pumping stations for irrigation purposes. The largest dam, Shanmei, serves to provide municipal and industrial water supply to Quanzhou and Jinjiang cities. There is also a large rice field under Shanmei dam. The Jiyun river is the representative river flowing to the sea in northern China. The basin often experiences floods as well as water shortages. The typhoon and cyclone related floods mostly occur during the period from late June to early September. The Yuqiao reservoir which is the largest in the basin has been providing municipal and industrial water supply to Tianjin city since 1980's. An interbasin water transfer scheme from an adjacent river has also been built for Tianjin water supply.

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