

## Preface

It is our great pleasure to present the first volume of the Catalogue of Rivers for Southeast Asia and the Pacific published. This volume contains the catalogue of 25 rivers from 11 countries - Australia, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. It is an outcome of the international co-operation of the 12 countries in the region which formed the Regional Steering Committee for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (RSC) under the auspices of the UNESCO International Hydrological Program Phase IV (IHP-IV, 1990 - 1995). We can proudly say that this is the first achievement of this kind in the region in the field of hydrology and water resources.

The objectives of publishing the Catalogue of Rivers are as follows:

- To promote mutual understanding of hydrology and water resources of the region and of the neighbouring countries. This is essential for better regional co-operation in hydrological sciences as well as for water resources development and management.
- To promote intra-national information exchange among different organisations in each country. This is essential for the development of hydrological sciences and for better development and management of the water resources within each country.
- To promote the establishment of an international data exchange and collaborative research network in the region. This is expected to serve as a hop towards the start of an Asian FRIEND (Flow Regimes from International Experimental and Network Data) Project in IHP-V, 1996 - 2001.

The importance of the first objective is self evident. Although we are living closely together in the region, many of us are not familiar with each others' similarities and dissimilarities. We are not mutually well acquainted with nor informed of rivers in neighbouring countries. It is certainly an impediment for promoting regional understanding and brotherliness and an obstacle for better co-operation and development in the fields of science, economics, cultural exchanges and the like. The second objective is also quite important. In any country, water resources are managed by many ramified administrative organisations and it is often difficult to gather information belonging to different organisations in order to draw a comprehensive picture of a basin. We believe that this Catalogue, in the course of the preparation of the manuscripts, has helped to promote inter-organisational communication in many countries. The third objective of establishing an Asian FRIEND, along the lines of the European FRIEND started in 1985 and which is spreading to other parts of the world, is a project much awaited for by the international hydrological community.

The formation of the Regional Steering Committee for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (RSC) was first initiated in August 1990 by Takahasi, then the Vice-chairman of the IHP Inter-Governmental Council, who wrote invitation letters to all the IHP member countries of the UNESCO Jakarta Office. He received 12 affirmative answers including one from Japan after which concrete planning commenced. The first step towards the publication of the Catalogue of Rivers was a visit by Takahasi and Takeuchi in January 1992 to the IHP National Committees of Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines and, in June 1992 to Vietnam and Thailand, where the objectives of the RSC and the publication of the Catalogue of Rivers as one of its action plans were proposed and discussed. The idea was well received by all the countries with enthusiasm and encouragement. The RSC was formally established in January 1993 at the Regional meeting of IHP in Manila, where Takahasi and Takeuchi were elected as Chairman and Secretary respectively. The RSC would provide a platform for the IHP member countries in the region to get together periodically and exchange their experiences, discuss their problems and possible solutions and promote scientific co-operation. The publication of the Catalogue of Rivers is one of the most appropriate media for this purpose.

In the preparation of the first volume of the Catalogue, the items of information to be included and the format of presentation were discussed first in Japan and then proposed at the first RSC meeting in Yokohama in July 1993. The following points were agreed upon:

- The Catalogue is an explanation of rivers rather than a data book.
- Seven items of information will be included. They are: a general description, geographical information, climatic information, hydrological information, water resources information, socio-cultural characteristics and a list of references.
- When comprehensive data collection is difficult, hydrological information shall get priority over water resources information.
- The local name of river should be used as the title.
- Long series of precipitation and runoff data are particularly requested in order to observe the long term changes of river regime.

The revised format along with the sample Catalogue "Yoshino-gawa, Japan" was distributed in March, 1994 followed by sample sheets (blank sheets to be filled in) in June 1994. The first drafts were gathered and reviewed at the second RSC meeting in Siem Reap, Cambodia in December 1994 where Jayawardena joined as an invited editor. The revised drafts of the country contributions were then sent to Jayawardena, Hong Kong, during the period from February to April 1995. Takeuchi and Jayawardena got together in Hong Kong and in Kofu to review the manuscripts and make editorial judgements, followed by a countless number of faxes and e-mail exchanges. A few iterations of review comments and revisions were also exchanged between contributors and editors.

We would like to express our sincere thanks and respects to all the contributors of all the countries who co-operated with us patiently by responding to many requests. It is really a difficult task for all of the contributors to collect and assemble ramified data and draw a comprehensive picture of a basin. We also express our sincere thanks to all the institutes, agencies and other organisations that provided basic data, maps, facilities and various funds and co-operated with the Regional Steering Committee members. In particular, we would like to thank the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, Japan, and the Infrastructure Development Institute of Japan for the generous financial support provided for the publication of this Catalogue.

This is only the first volume of the Catalogue. Successive volumes will be published in series one after another as soon as sufficient contributions are compiled and made available. On behalf of all the RSC members, we sincerely ask readers to provide critical comments to improve the future volumes and ideas to make use of the Catalogue to achieve its very objective - promoting mutual understanding of rivers and people of the neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

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Yutaka Takahasi  
Kuniyoshi Takeuchi  
A. W. Jayawardena