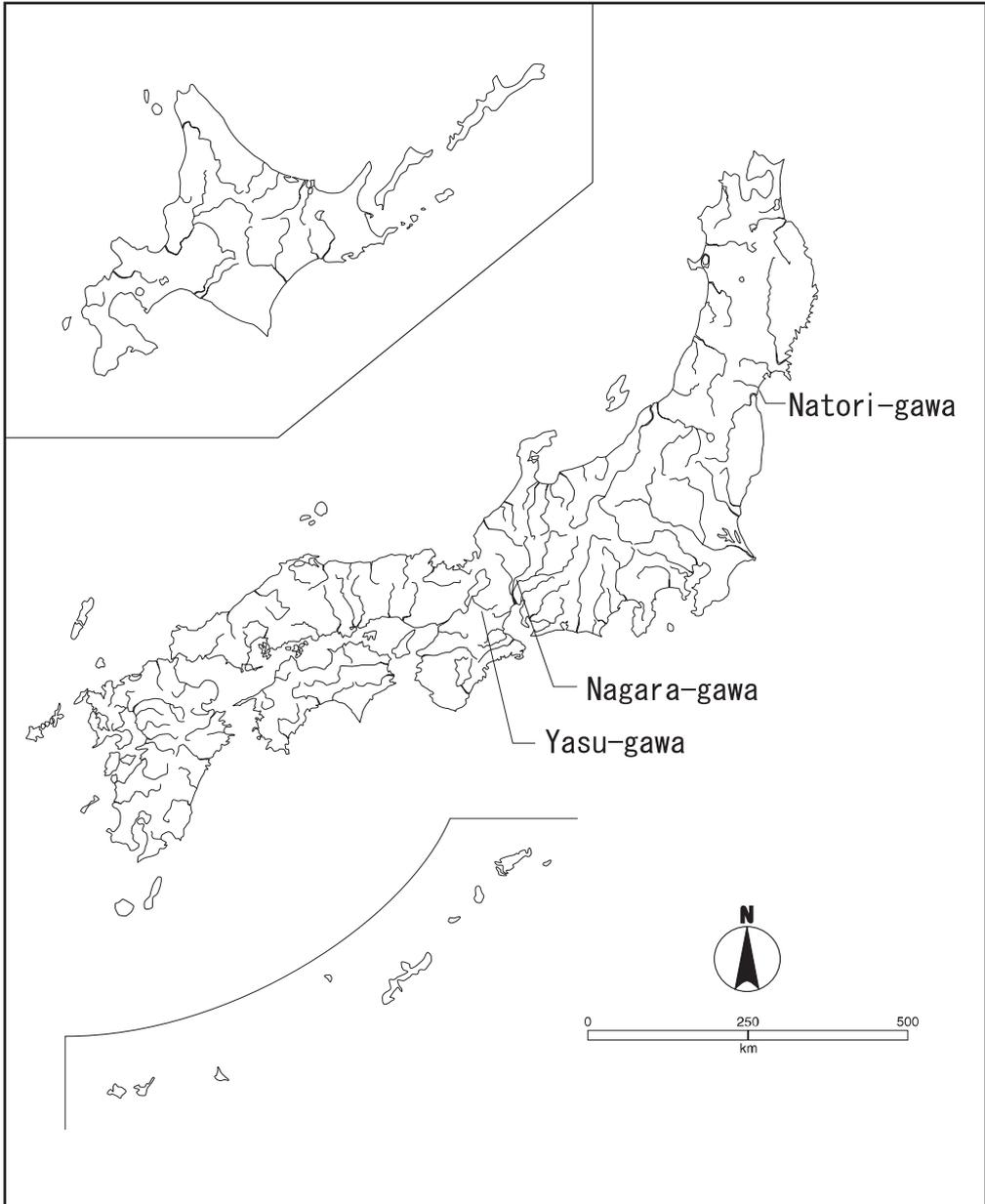


Japan

Japan-13: Nagara-gawa

Japan-14: Natori-gawa

Japan-15: Yasu-gawa



Introduction

The three rivers compiled into this volume are: the Nagara-gawa, the Natori-gawa and the Yasu-gawa, all of which are in Honshu Island. These rivers have long histories especially in terms of the politics, economy and culture of Japan.

The Nagara-gawa is one of the three large rivers which flow through the Nobi Plain, located at the center of the Chubu Economic Region in Japan. In the past, the three rivers named the Three Kiso Rivers (Kiso-sansen) flowed as one turbulent river in the lower reaches. It was divided into the three rivers as we know today by the improvement project from 1887 to 1911 during the Meiji Era. The abundant water resources are used mainly for irrigation and hydroelectric power generation for sustaining the industries in the Chubu area.

The Natori-gawa flows through the metropolitan area of Sendai, the capital city in the Tohoku district. The population in the basin is about 429,600, which is 4% of the population nationwide and 42% of that in the city of Sendai. The lower Natori-gawa basin is covered with mainly wide paddy fields. The areas are one of the most famous rice production areas in Japan. Snowfall in the mountainous areas of the basin is an important water resource for rice planting.

The Yasu-gawa is the largest river flowing into Lake Biwa which is the largest fresh water lake in Japan. The river flow is highly regulated in the lower reaches with several irrigation schemes and weirs which divert water from the natural river courses. Lake Biwa is water source for 14 million people in the Kansai area which includes Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe; thereby the water quality management of the basin is a quite important issue for the water resources of the Kansai area through Lake Biwa.

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