

## Preface

Asia is a vast continent, containing more than half of the world's population. The Asian countries are economically very diverse, ranging from a developed country and the second largest economy of the world, Japan, to many of the least developed countries. Cultural, religious and social practices are also often radically dissimilar, as also their institutions, legal frameworks and governance practices. The Asian countries also have very different physical and climatic conditions, ranging from some of the rainiest places of the world to absolute deserts. Thus, it is impossible to define and discuss a common Asian water management landscape.

Even in one single country such as China or India, it is impossible to define a common ground for water management. Cities such as Beijing and Shanghai can now compete, and often exceed, important cities of the Western world in terms of infrastructure and facilities. Yet, outside the main urban centres, the hinterlands present totally different landscapes. Thus, it is impossible to define a common water problem for Asia as a whole, let alone suggest a common solution that will be applicable for the entire continent. As the late Prime Minister Nehru once said, if one said something about India, it is likely to be correct. Equally, if exactly the reverse is said, it is also likely to be correct, but at a different location.

In this special issue, several Asian professionals from the Institute of Water Policy, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore, review, assess and analyse different water-related problems from their own perspectives in their own countries. They come from different professional backgrounds, ranging from animal husbandry to law, from countries of different sizes and level of economic development, ranging from China to Singapore, and Fiji to Tajikistan. The authors were educated, trained and worked at different institutions. The only thing that binds them together is that they are very bright, and happen to be in the Institute of Water Policy at the same time. They are all at their mid-careers, aged between 35 and 40. The task that was assigned to them is to look at a specific water issue from their own countries and from their own disciplinary and sectoral perspectives.

The papers discuss a wide variety of water issues: legal aspects of water management in China, terrorism and water, water management experiences from Singapore and Fiji, transboundary water issues facing Tajikistan, and water as a human right from a Nepali perspective. These diverse papers are important and interesting because they show how water issues vary from one Asian country to another, and also how different water issues and their potential solutions appear from the perspectives of different disciplines. We are confident that readers will find these papers stimulating.

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