

Restoration of Yangtze River (China)

Along the midstream and downstream of Yangtze River, the number of lakes connected to the river drastically decreased from a hundred to three. As a result, the lakes' ecology was badly destroyed, and their flood prevention and water storage abilities were quite damaged. In 1998, Yangtze River experienced the secondly largest flood after 1954. As post-disaster measures, total measures including constructing hydraulic systems, preventing epidemic, rebuilding housing areas, restoring ecosystem, and appealing for international cooperation, are decided as the nation and are now in operation. Nature restoration has been underway, focusing on wetlands.

◆ Key to Restoration

- “Living Yangtze” program
- Restoration of basin water conservation function
- Restoration of wetland and forest

◆ Overview of the River

Yangtze River's total length is 6300 km, the third longest in the world, and the basin dimension is 1.8 million km² which is five times as big as the whole of Japan.

The river is quite important economy-wise as the forty percent of the country's freshwater resources live in this river.

More than one third of the population live along the river, and it a cradle of “fish and rice-oriented culture of China.” The flat land and water in downstream enables high-density population and industries and the growth of the cities.



◆ Project Efforts for Restoration

["Living Yangtze" program]

In 1998, right after the catastrophic flood, the government announced a total flood prevention policy which focused on wetland restoration and forest restoration. “Living Yangtze” program was started aiming at giving a practical support to this policy and at penetrating the sustainable basin management vision and methods in Yangtze River basin.

It is planned to recover a vigorous state of the river within 25 years, starting from 1998, so that it can keep serving as a cradle for Chinese public.

[Restoration of basin water conservation function]

The lakes with flood control basins or such a function in China were drained one by one, and the lack of flood control functionality became a social problem. Given that, it was decided to remove the closing banks and to restore the flood control basins. The number of removing banks is 877 nationwide, and 9770 km² will return to flood control basins. The total number of people to move is 4 million, among which 1.9 million moves from Yangtze River basin where the dimension of 2900 km² is affected.

Flood control function restoration is also found in the measures taken in Rhine and Mississippi.

[Restoration of wetland and forest]

Chinese government focused on wetland conservation and joined Ramsar Convention in 1992. In 1994, it included wetland conservation and its reasonable usage into “China agenda 21,” prioritizing the conservation of the wetland.

Source: Foundation for Riverfront Improvement and Restoration
(<http://www.rfc.or.jp/kawa/sizensaisei/05Yangtze.pdf>)

National Land Technology Policy Research Institute document “Toward human-nature symbiotic basin for urban restoration -- people, water, land, and environment -- ” Katsuhide Yoshikawa
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