

**Modern Sedimentation in the Coastal and Nearshore Zones of China**, Ren Mei-i, 1987, China Ocean Press, Beijing/Springer-Verlag, Berlin, DM 238, 466p. ISBN 3-540-13149-3.

At the First Geomorphological Congress, held in 1985 in Manchester, U.K., scientists from the Peoples' Republic of China submitted the second largest number of contributions after the host country. Many of these researchers reported on the coastal work being accomplished in their country and it was the first exposure I and many of my colleagues had to the wealth of inquiry being conducted in China. It was a reminder that there are many areas of investigation that the English-speaking scientific communities are generally not exposed to and therefore not aware of. Two years later, I had the very rewarding experience of visiting the PRC and learned first hand of the large number of research institutes actively involved in conducting research along the coastal margin. The current volume under review is a step toward communicating to the English-reading scientists the broad scope of inquiry into the marine margin of the PRC. A picky reviewer would note the many misspellings and awkward sentence structures as well as the uneven treatment of the topics presented. But the objective of this volume is to translate and communicate in a series of review chapters some portion of the investigations being conducted in the PRC. Judged on the basis of this objective, the reader will be amply rewarded and will find that the grammatical and spelling errors are petty nuisances that do not impair the quality of the science.

In the classic style of review chapters, this compilation is a series of contributed chapters that cover the areas of (1) coarse sand-gravel sediments, (2) tidal mud flats; (3) modern estuary sedimentation of some large rivers in China, (4) deltaic sedimentation, (5) submarine sand ridges, and (6) coral reef sediments. The style will be of surprise to many westerners. Although the chapters are obviously syntheses of reports produced by a wide range of researchers, only topics 4 and 5 have the traditional citations to authors in a following reference section. The other chapters have lengthy reference lists but there are no citations in the chapters that refer to this listing. Photos are used sparingly and are all incorporated at the end of the last chapter.

It is both a difficult and rewarding task to summarize the wealth of research on these top-

ics. The information presented to the western world is largely new and the description of the topics is more than adequate. There are few references to work done in other areas which may be viewed as comparable systems but that was not the objective. I found myself learning a great deal on each page concerning the sedimentary topics and areas, as represented by the PRC scientists. Only in the delta chapter did I feel that I had encountered much more information than was summarized herein. I thought the excellent work (largely in Chinese) of the sedimentology research group at East China Normal University was poorly represented. But perhaps the synthetic nature of the chapter format precludes an indepth treatment of the contribution of any one group.

Not unexpectedly, the focus of the book is largely on the deltas of the several large rivers that drain eastern China, the Huanghe (Yellow) and the Changjiang (Yangtze), and the broad tidal flats that exist along much of the coastline. It is in these areas that the book brings forth the extensive knowledge that exists about the Changjiang and the paucity of information available covering the Huanghe. Further, the book sticks to its narrowly-defined purpose of covering the sedimentology of the nearshore and marine environment. There is very little geomorphology introduced except if the subheading treats a form, such as chenier or dune. And there is nearly a total absence of any ecological information (except the coral reef chapter) even though one must assume that there are many opportunities for biogeomorphological associations.

This book is of exceptional value in introducing the western world to some of the scientific inquiry being pursued in the PRC. It is not an exhaustive treatment nor are all of the coastal sections included in this compilation. There remain many areas for similar treatment, both in a topical as well as a regional approach. Prof. Ren Mei-e is to be thanked for the great effort in coordinating the development of this volume. It is a tribute to the quality of science as well as to the large number of active scientists. It is not the ultimate volume nor is it meant to be and, thus, I look forward to continuing production of review statements such as this whose purpose is to educate and inform.

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