

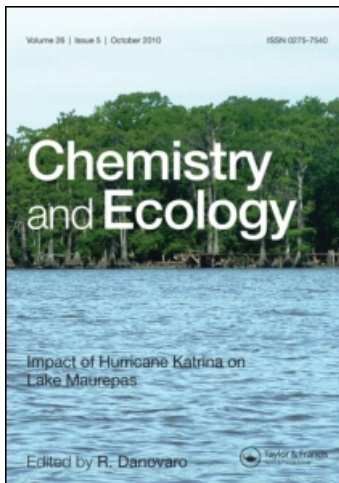
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### Preface

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## PREFACE

**CURRENT ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE IN TAIWAN:** Taiwan provides an unusual environmental challenge and I have found it has required considerable ingenuity to select for publication in this dedicated issue of *Chemistry and Ecology* reports of the most significant aspects of current environmental investigations being undertaken in Taiwan.

Taiwan is located about 130 km from the southwestern coast of mainland China, and has an area of 36000 km<sup>2</sup>. About 70% of the land is occupied by high mountains, of which 32% is the Central Mountain Range (over 1000 m above sea level) extending from north to south of the country. The western part of Taiwan is a plain with high agricultural and aquacultural productivity and intensive industrial activity. About 90% of the total population (i.e. 21 million) lives and works within this area along the western coast.

During the past three decades, the country has concentrated on economic development. The gross productivity of agriculture has doubled and that of industry has increased 30-fold in this period. The expansion and urbanization of the population and the rapid growth of industry has led to environmental pollution problems in Taiwan. The increased quantity of chemical fertilizers and pesticides being used for agriculture and the greater use of motor vehicles, coupled with rapid acceleration in energy consumption, all contribute to pollution, especially in urban and industrial areas. Clearly the threat of excessive use of chemicals to the ecological environment must be recognized. One of the important goals in any highly industrialized country such as Taiwan is that scientists must respond by advising on hazards from industrialization and by proposing effective and appropriate measures to protect the environment.

The importance of environmental research to the survival of biological species on our planet has become apparent to all. It was this awareness that prompted many scientists at local universities and research institutes in Taiwan to initiate investigations in this vital area many years ago. Working with limited funds and facilities, they have made significant progress over recent years. In areas of environmental toxicology, Taiwan can be a leader in developing centres of excellence, particularly in agriculture and aquaculture. It is important, as scientists, that we recognize the hazards of multiple and combined chemical exposures resulting from agricultural and aquacultural practices and promulgate measures to avoid damage to man and his environment.

I hope that this dedicated issue of *Chemistry and Ecology* affords a welcome opportunity for Taiwan scientists to engage in an exchange of views and experience with their European and North American scientific colleagues about current and past

findings of their research, and on their future plans. This exchange will, I am sure, prove to be of mutual benefit.

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