

preface

メタデータ	言語: eng 出版者: 公開日: 2017-10-05 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2297/6310

Preface

Forests play an important role in keeping environmental conditions suitable for life on earth. Even though vegetation varies largely in spatial and temporal scales, there are signs of rapid degradation in East Asia due to human activity and which affect the local climate.

The EMEA (Environmental Monitoring in East Asia) project has been designed to promote cooperation in vegetation research with a particular focus on the remote sensing and its ground truth, and consisted of contributions from China, Korea and Japan. It started in 2002, and we have had field works, meetings and symposium.

As a major component of the Earth system, the role of forests is essential for analyzing climate change. Forests store carbon dioxide, one of the greenhouse gases, as emphasized in the emissions reduction resolution at the world climate convention held in Kyoto in December 1997.

Managing forest resources in a sustainable manner requires forest monitoring at various spatial resolutions. Satellite remote sensing is a useful tool for obtaining data over large areas consistently and repeatedly. However, there are problems in methodology and accuracy to overcome for the technique to be utilized successfully. Therefore, it should be emphasized that field work remains essential when applying remote sensing techniques.

In 2005, the last year of this project, we have organized the meetings both in Beijing and Seoul, and symposium in Kanazawa. The symposium was organized by the EMEA project, and hosted by Kanazawa University 21st-Century COE Program "Environmental Monitoring and Prediction of Long- and Short-Term Dynamics of Pan-Japan Sea". The symposium focused on giving an overview of current trends in environmental research and discussing recent scientific activities in East Asia. In these areas, we are facing problems of large-scale deforestation, and no immediate solutions have been proposed. In the midst of it, it was an opportunity for researchers from China, Korea and Japan to get together and discuss these issues.

I believe that this project contributed not only to environmental preservation in East Asia but also to a global one.

20 March 2006

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