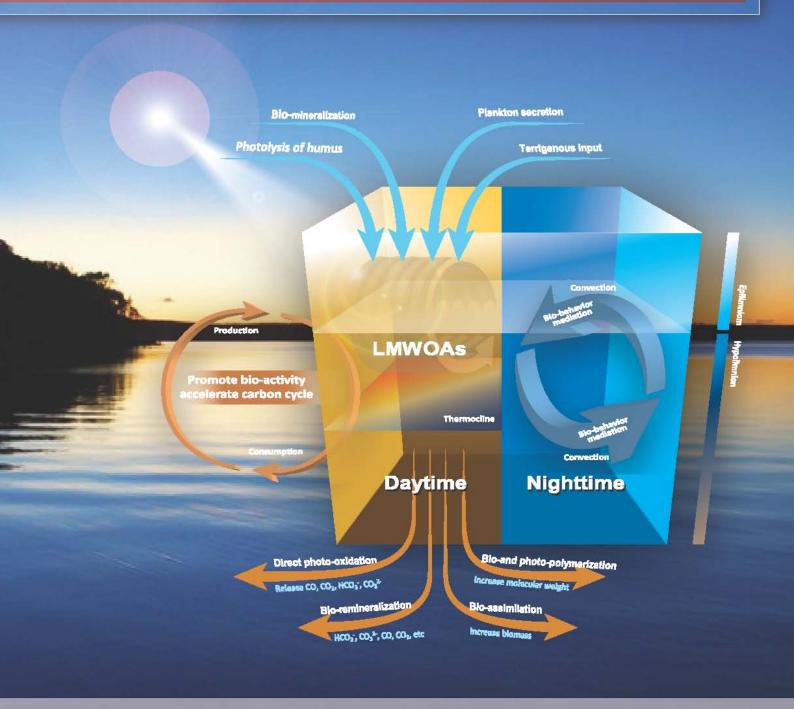
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CONTENTS

Investigation of Inve-molecular weight organic acids and their spatrotemporal variation characteristics in Hongfong Lake, China Min Xian, Freighang Win, Liping Wang, Xinging Li, Rongschang Huang. 224 Investigation of acetylated kapok libers on the sorption of cil in water Jinto Wang, Vin Theng, Asing Wang. Growth characteristics of algae during early stages of phytoplankton bloom in Lake Taihu, China Yilong Jia, Johnson Dan, Min Zhang, Fianktang Kong. 254 Inmobilization of airtite coliciality bacteria using biopolymeric chitosam media Penne Lerisuthisvong, Danagcheewan Boorquak, Wilstornikk Pungrasmi, Sorawit Powtongsook. 266 Preliminary studies on occurrence of monosina antibiotic in Bosque River Watershed Solutarian Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambert, Anne Melartand, Forrest Mitchell 268 Aa innovative integrated system utilizing solar neezgy as sower for the tetament of decentralized wastewater Changhi Han, Junxin Liu, Hanwen Liang, Xuesong Guo, Liu Li 277. Settling and devasting characteristics of granulated melanue-oxidizing bacteria Kwang Ho Ahn, Kwang Soo Kim, Sang Won Kang, Chul Yong Um, Won Tae Lee, Kwang Baik Ko 280 Quantification, morphology and source of humic acid, kerogen and black ourbon in ofishore marine sediments from Xiannen Guif, China Yanting Chen, Jingong Zhan, Lipinar Win, Instinang Chen, Donogita yi Yunta Chen, Jingong Zhan, Lipinar Win, Instinang Chen, Donogita yi Yunta Chen, Jingong Zhan, Lipinar Win, Instinang Chen, Donogita yi Yunta Chen, Jingong Zhan, Lipinar Win, Instinang Chen, Donogita yi Yunta Chen, Jingong Zhan, Lipinarhong Shi, Yanging Song Elfects of ion concentration and natural organic marter on anenical Yremoval by nanofiltration under different transmenbrane pressures Yang Yu, Changway Zhao, Yangha Chang Shi, Zhang Zhao, Yunhu Zhan, Fengjian Yi, Jiaying Ren Characterization of cade bayer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Sin Pan, Donoging Lawa, Manghang Shang, Zhong Zhao, Yunhu Zhan, Fengjian Yi	Aquatic environment	
Insentinguiation of acetylacet lapok fibers on the sorption of oil in water Jintion Wing, Yian Zheng, Aiqin Wang. Growth characteristics of algue during early stages of phytoplankton bloom in Lake Taihu, China Yuhong Jia, Johnson Dan, Min Zhang, Fanstang Kong. Zhumobilization of intrine exidizing bacteria using biopolymeric chitosan media Peance Lerisuthikwang, Diangchecwan Boonpatak, Wiboonluk Pungrasmi, Sorawit Powtongsook. Pelluliniany studies on occurrence of monestin antibiotic in Bougue River Waterschel Sudarshan Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambert, Anne McFarland, Forrest Mitchell An innovative integrated system utilizing solar energy as power for the treatment of decentralized wastewater Changfu Han, Junxin Liu, Hamwen Laing, Xuesong Gloo, Lin Li Settling and dewatering characteristics of granulated methane-oxidizing bateria. Kwang Ho Ahn, Kwang Soo Kim, Sang Won Kang, Chu Yong Uru, Won Tae Lee, Kwang Blak Ko Quantification, morphology and source of humis acid, kerogen and black carbon in offshore marine sediments from Xiamen Gulf, China Yanting Chen, Jinping Zhao, Liquin Yi, Jinsheng Chen, Dongsing Yuan Yang Chang, Jingan Hang, Jingan Laing, Jingan Song, Jingan Yi, Changwei Zhao, Vanguyuan Wu, Hanchung Shi, Yanqing Song, Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Yanguwan Wang, Wehong Fan, Zhaokan Luan Ziletes of ion contenutation and natural organic marter on arenied Vy removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Yangu Wang, Wehong Fan, Zhaokan Luan Churacterization of cake layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Siru Pan, Dongjing Lao. 300 Zharacterization of cake layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Siru Pan, Dongjing Lao. 301 Zhanga Siru Pan, Dongjing Lao. 302 Zharacterization of cake layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Siru Pan, Dongjing Lao. 303 Zharacterization of cake layer stru	Investigation of low-molecular weight organic acids and their spatiotemporal variation characteristics in Hongfeng Lake, China	
Jintao Wang, Yian Zheng, Aiqin Wang Growth characteristics of algae during eurly stages of phytoplankton bloom in Lake Taihu, China Yuhong Jia, Johnson Dan, Min Zhang, Fanxiang Kong Immobilization of nitric oxidizing bacteria using biopolymeric chinesan media Prance Letrathiwong, Danaghewan Boonpusk, Wibconils Pungasmi, Sorawit Powrongsook ———————————————————————————————————	Min Xiao, Fengchang Wu, Liying Wang, Xinqing Li, Rongsheng Huang ·····	237
Growth characteristics of algae during early stages of phytoplankton bloom in Lake Taihu, China Yuhong Jia, Johnson Dan, Min Zhang, Fanxing Kong Immobilization of nitrite oxidizing bacteria using biopolymeric chitosan media Prance Lertsuthiswong, Duangeheevan Boonpuak, Wiboonlak Pungrasmi, Sorawit Powtongsook ———————————————————————————————————		
Yuhong, Jin, Johnson Dan, Min Zhang, Fanxining Kong Immubilization of nitrite oxidizing bacteria using biopolymeric chitosam media Prance Lertsuthiwong, Duangcheevan Boonpuak, Whoonluk Pungrasmi, Sorawit Powtongsook 266. Preliminary studies on occurrence of monerasin antibiotic in Bossque River Watershed Sudarshan Kurwaddar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambart, Anne Merfardand, Forrest Michell An imnovative integrated system utilizing solar energy as power for the treatment of decentralized wastewater Changful Han, Junxin Liu, Hanwen Liang, Xuesung Guo, Lin Li 276. Settling and dewatering characteristics of granulated methane-oxidizing bacteria Kwang Ho Ahn, Kwang Soo Kim, Sung Won Kang, Chul Yong Um, Won The Lee, Kwang Balak Ko 280. Quantification, morphology and source of humin each, Groego and black activon in offshore marine sediments from Xianen Gulf, China Yaring Chen, Jinping Zhao, Liqian Yin, Jinsheng Chen, Dongxing Yuan 286. Evaluation of oxygen transfer parameters of fine-bubble aceation system in plug flow aceration tank of wastewater treatment plant Xianoboug Zhou, Yunnyuan Wil, Hanchang Shi, Yanqing Song 297. Effects of ion concentration and natural organic matter on arsenicity) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwed Zhao, Yanqiu Wang, Welmong Pan, Zhaokam Luan 200. Characterization of cake layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Siru Pan, Dongping Lao 300. Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Luke Taihu, China Chunxiao Chen, Bingbiu Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren 301. Atmospheric environment Review of heterogenous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He 201 Pollutant emission characteristics of rice busk combustion in a vortexing fludicade bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin,	Jintao Wang, Yian Zheng, Aiqin Wang ·····	246
Ismobilization of nitrite oxidizing bacteria using biopolymeric chitosan media Prance Lertsutthiwong, Duangchewan Boonpuak, Wiboonluk Pungrasmi, Sorawit Powtongsook. 26. Preliminary studies on occurrence of monensia antibiotic in Bosque Kiver Walershed Sadarshan Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambert, Anne McFarland, Forrest Mitchell Sadarshan Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambert, Anne McFarland, Forrest Mitchell Sadarshan Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambert, Anne McFarland, Forrest Mitchell Sadarshan Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambert, Anne McFarland, Forrest Mitchell Sadarshan Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambert, Anne McFarland, Forrest Mitchell Sadarshan Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambert, Anne Sagary Sadarshan Kurwadkar, Sadarshan Kanasar, Sadarshan Kanasar, Sadarshan Kanas		
Penelmanary studies on occurrence of monensia antibiotic in Bosque Kier Watenhed Sudarshan Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambert, Anne McFarland, Forrest Mitchell An innovative integrated system utilizing solar energy as power for the treatment of decentralized wastewater Changfu Han, Junkin Liu, Hammen Linag, Nasong Gno, Liu Li 277. Settling and dewatering characteristics of granulated methane-oxidizing bacteria Kwang Ho Ahn, Kwang Soo Kim, Sung Won Kang, Chul Yong Uin, Won Tae Lee, Kwang Baik Ko 288. Quantification, morphology and source of humia exid, keropen and black carbon in offshore marine sediments from Xiamen Gulf, China Yanting Chen, Jinping Zhao, Liqian Yin, Jinsheng Chen, Dongxing Yuan 287. Settling and dewatering Zhao, Liqian Yin, Jinsheng Chen, Dongxing Yuan 288. Setahation of Oxygon transfer parameters of fine-bubble caration system in plug flow acration tank of wastewater treatment plant Xiaohong Zhou, Yuanyuan Wu, Hanchang Shi, Yanqing Song. 289. Effects of ion concentration and natural organic matter on arsenic(V) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Xangai Wang, Welshong Fan, Zhaokun Luan 300. Characterization of cake layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron proc-coagulation Jin Wang, Siru Pan, Dongping Luo Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Chunxiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren 301. Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He 301. Pollutant emission characteristics of fice buss combustion in a votersian fluidized bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso 302. Pollutant emission characteristics of fice buss combustion in a votersia fluidized bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Y	Yuhong Jia, Johnson Dan, Min Zhang, Fanxiang Kong ·····	254
Preliminary studies on occurrence of monemsin antibiotic in Bosque River Watershed Sudarsham Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lumbert, Anne McFarland, Forrest Mitchell An innovative integrated system utilizing solar energy as power for the treatment of decentralized wastewater Changfu Han, Junxin Liu, Hanwen Liang, Xuesong Guo, Lin Li Settling and dewatering characteristics of granulated methane-oxidizing bacteria Kwang Ho Ahn, Kwang Soo Kim, Sung Won Kang, Chul Yong Um, Won Tae Lee, Kwang Baik Ko Quandification, morphology and source of humin eards, kerogen and black carbon in offshore marine sediments from Xiamen Gulf, China Yanting Chen, Inping Zhao, Liqian Yin, Jinsheng Chen, Dongxing Yuan Evaluation of oxygen transfer parameters of fine-bubble aeration system in plug flow aeration tank of wastewater treatment plant Xiaohong Zhou, Yuanyuan Wu, Hanchang Shi, Yanqing Song Effects of fon concentration and natural organic matter on arsenic(V) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Yangui Wang, Welhong Fan, Zhaokun Luan Characterization of cake layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Sin Pan, Dongping Luo- Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Chunxiao Chen, Binghui Zhene, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhao, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren 31c Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He 20p Dulluan emission characteristics of rice husk combustion in a vortexing fluidized bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin,		
Sudarshan Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambert, Anne McFarland, Forrest Mitchell An innovative integrated system utilizing solar energy as power for the treatment of decentralized wastewater Changfu Han, Junxin Liu, Hamwen Linag, Nacoong Guo, Liu Liu Settling and dewatering characteristics of granulated methane-oxidizing bacteria Kwang Ho Ann, Kwang Soo Kim, Sung Won Kang, Chul Yong Um, Won Tae Lee, Kwang Baik Ko 280 Quantification, morphology and source of humic acid, kerogen and black carbon in offshore marine sediments from Xiamen Gulf, China Yanting Chen, Jinping Zhao, Liqian Yin, Jinsheng Chen, Dongxing Yuan 281 Evaluation of oxygen transfer parameters of fine-bubble earation system in plug flow aeration states of wastewater treatment plant Xiaobong Zhou, Yuanyuan Wu, Hanchang Shi, Yanqing Song. 292 Elifects of ion concentration and natural organic matter on arsenict(V) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Yangui Wang, Weihong Fan, Zhaokun Luan—300 Jin Wang, Siir Pan, Dongqing Luo—300 Jin Wang, Siir Pan, Dongqing Jin Wang, Pan, Dongqing Jin Wang, Pan, Dongqing Jin Wang, Pan, Do	Pranee Lertsutthiwong, Duangcheewan Boonpuak, Wiboonluk Pungrasmi, Sorawit Powtongsook · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	262
An innovaive integrated system utilizing solar energy as power for the treatment of decentralized wastewater Changfu Han, Junxin Liu, Hanwen Liang, Xuesong Guo, Lin Li Settling and dewatering characteristics of granulated methane-oxidizing bacteria Kwang Ho Ahn, Kwang Soo Kim, Sung Won Kang, Chul Yong Um, Won Tae Lee, Kwang Baik Ko 280 Quantification, morphology and source of humic acid, koregon and black earbon in offshore marine sediments from Xiamen Gulf, China Yanting Chen, Jinping Zhao, Liqian Yin, Jinsheng Chen, Dongxing Yuan 281 Evaluation of oxygen transfer parameters of fine-bubble aeration system in plug flow aeration tank of wastewater treatment plant Xiaohong Zhao, Vianqiuw Mu, Hanchang Shi, Yanqing Song 292 Elifects of ion concentration and natural organic matter on ansenic (V) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Yangiu Yang, Weihong Fan, Zhaokun Luan Characterization of cake layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Siru Pam, Dongping Luo Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Chansiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren 304 Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol — A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Pollutant emission characteristics of rice husk combustion in a vortexing fluidized bed incinerator Forg Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Forg Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Hollocomium splendens (Hedw.) B.S.G. and Pleurozium schreberi (Brid.) Mitt. as trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulative properties Sabina Dolgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik BTEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChiMinh Tran Thi Ngoe Lan, Phum Anh Minh Environmental biology The Characteristic		
Changfu Han, Junxin Liu, Hanwen Liang, Xuesong Guo, Lin Li Settling and dewatering characteristics of granulated methane-oxidizing bacteria Kwang Ho Ahn, Kwang Soo Kim, Sung Woo Kang, Chul Yong Um, Won Tae Lee, Kwang Baik Ko Quantification, morphology and source of humic acid, kerogen and black carbon in offshore marine sediments from Xiamen Gulf, China Yanting Chen, Jinping Zhao, Liqian Yin, Jinsheng Chen, Dongxing Yuan 28: Evaluation of oxygen transfer parameters of fine-bubble acration system in plug flow aeration tank of wastewater treatment plant Xianohong Zhou, Yuanyuan Wu, Hanchang Shi, Yanqing Song Effects of ion concentration and natural organic matter on arsenic(V) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Yangui Wang, Welhong Fan, Zhaokun Luan 30: Characterization of cake layer structure on the microlitration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Sin Pan, Dongping Lu 30: Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Chunxiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren 31: Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxim Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He 32: Pollutant emission characteristics of rice hask combastion in a vortexing fluidized bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso 43: Psylocomium splendens (Hedw) B.S.G. and Pleurozium schreberi (Brid.) Mitt. as trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulative properties Sabima Dolgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik BTEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChilvlinh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh Environmental biology Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Ly, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhibui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqia	Sudarshan Kurwadkar, Victoria Sicking, Barry Lambert, Anne McFarland, Forrest Mitchell · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	268
Settling and dewatering characteristics of granulated methane-oxidizing bacteria Kwang Ho Ahn, Kwang Soo Kim, Sung Won Kang, Chul Yong Um, Won Tae Lee, Kwang Baik Ko————————————————————————————————————		
Kwang Ho Ahn, Kwang Soo Kim, Sung Won Kang, Chul Yong Um, Won The Lee, Kwang Baik Ko. Quantification, morphology and source of humic acid, kerogen and black carbon in offshore marine sediments from Xiamen Gulf, China Yanting Chen, Jinping Zhao, Liqian Yin, Jinsheng Chen, Dongsing Yuan 28: Evaluation of oxygen transfer parameters of fine-bubble acration system in plug flow acration tank of wastewater treatment plant Xiaohong Zhou, Yuanyuan Wu, Hanchang Shi, Yanqing Song 29: Effects of ion concentration and natural organic matter on arsenic(V) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Yangui Wang, Weihong Fan, Zhaokun Luan Characterization of cake layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Siru Pan, Dongping Luo Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Chunxiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Pollutant emission characteristics of rice husk combustion in a vortexing fluidized bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso 33: Hylocomium splendens (Hedw.) B.S.G. and Pleurozium schreberi (Brid.) Mitt. as trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulative properties Sabina Dolggowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik ETEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChiMinh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh Environmental biology Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Lv. Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhibui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang 36: Effects of nitrogen and phosphorus concentrations on the bioaccumulation of polybrominated diphenyl ethers by Prorocentru		274
Quantification, morphology and source of humic acid, kerogen and black carbon in offshore marine sediments from Xiamen Gulf, China Yanling Chen, Jinping Zhao, Liqian Yin, Jinsheng Chen, Dongxing Yuan 28: Evaluation of Oxygen transfer parameters of fine-bubble aeration system in plug flow aeration tank of wastewater treatment plant Xiaohong Zhou, Yuanyuan Wu, Hanchang Shi, Yanqing Song 29: Effects of ion concentration and natural organic matter on arsenic (V) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwed Zhao, Yangui Wang, Weithong Fan, Zhaokun Luan 30: Characterization of cake layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Siru Pan, Dongping Luo 30: Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Chunxiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren 31: Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He 20: Pollutant emission characteristics of rice husk combustion in a vortexing fluidized bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso 33: Hylocomium splendens (Hedw.) B.S.G. and Pleuroziam schreberi (Brid.) Mitt, as trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulative properties Sabina Dolegowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik BTEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChiMinh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Ash Minh 24: Environmental biology Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Lv, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang 35: Tolerance of Chrysamenum maximum to heavy metals: The potential for its use in the revegetation of tailings heaps Ma. del Carmen A. González-Chávez, Rogelio Carrillo-González Effect		
Yanting Chen, Jinping Zhao, Liqian Yin, Jinsheng Chen, Dongxing Yuan Svabation of oxygen transfer parameters of fine-bubble aeration system in plug flow aeration tank of wastewater treatment plant Xiaohong Zhou, Yuanyuan Wi, Hanchang Shi, Yanqing Song 295 Effects of ion concentration and natural organic matter on arsenic(V) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Yangui Wang, Weihong Fan, Zhaokun Luan 306 Characterization of cake layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Siru Pan, Dongping Luo 307 Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Chunxiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jirzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He 302 Pollutant emission characteristics of rice buse combustion in a vortexing fluidized bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso 333 Hylocomium splendens (Hedw.) B. S.G. and Pleuvozium schreberi (Brid.) Mitt. as trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulative properties Sabina Dolggowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik BTEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChiMinh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Ahh Minh 346 Environmental biology Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Ly, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang 357 Tolerance of Chrysantenum maximum to heavy metals: The potential for its use in the revegetation of tailings heaps Ma. del Carmen A. González-Chávez, Rogelio Carrillo-González Effects of nitrogen and phosphorus concentrations on the bioaccumulation of polybrominated diphenyl ethers by Prorocentrum donghaiense Chao Chai,		280
Evaluation of oxygen transfer parameters of fine-bubble aeration system in plug flow aeration tank of wastewater treatment plant Xiaobong Zhou, Yuanyuan Wu, Hanchang Shi, Yanqing Song Effects of ion concentration and natural organic matter on arsenic(V) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Yangui Wang, Weihong Fan, Zhaokun Luan 300. Characterization of cale layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Sira Pan, Dongping Luo 300. Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Churkiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren 310. Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He 100. Feng Duan, Chiersong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso 100. Feng Duan, Chiersong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso 100. Holtonenium sphendens (Hedw.) B.S.G. and Pleurozium schreberi (Brid.) Mitt. as trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulative properties Sabina Dobgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik 100. 100. 100. 100. 100. 100. 100. 100		
Xiaohong Zhou, Yuanyuan Wu, Hanchang Shi, Yanqing Song Effects of ion concentration and natural organic matter on arsenic (V) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwei Zhou, Yangui Wang, Weihong Fan, Zhaokun Luan		287
Effects of ion concentration and natural organic matter on arsenic(V) removal by nanofiltration under different transmembrane pressures Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Yangui Wang, Weihong Fan, Zhaokun Luan 30. 30. 30. 30. 30. 30. Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Chunxiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren 31. Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Jouan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso 32. Pollutant emission characteristics of rice husk combustion in a vortexing fluidized bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso 33. Hylocomium splendens (Hedw.) B.S.G. and Pleurozium schreberi (Brid.) Mitt. as trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulative properties 3abina Dolegowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik BTEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChilMinh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh Tan Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh Tenvironmental biology Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Lv, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang 35. Tolerance of Chrysantemum maximum to heavy metals: The potential for its use in the revegetation of tailings heaps Ma, del Carmen A. González-Chávez, Rogelio Carrillo-González Chao Chai, Xundong Yin, Wei Ge, Jinye Wang Environmental health and toxicology Umbilical cord blood mercury levels in China Meiqin Wu, Chonghuai Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou Meiqin Wu, Chonghuai Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou Mengin Wu, Chonghuai Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou Mengin Wu, Chonghuai Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou Fifect of biomass addition on the surface and adsorption characterization of carbon-based adsorbents from		
Yang Yu, Changwei Zhao, Yangui Wang, Weihong Fan, Zhaokun Luan		295
Characterization of cake layer structure on the microfiltration membrane permeability by iron pre-coagulation Jin Wang, Siru Pan, Dongping Luo 301 Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Chunxiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren 316 Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He 326 Pollutant emission characteristics of rice husk combustion in a vortexing fluidized bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso 336 Hylocomium splendens (Hedw.) B.S.G. and Pleurozium schreberi (Brid.) Mitt. as trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulative properties Sabina Dolegowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik BTEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChiMinh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh 248 Tenvironmental biology Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Lv, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang 357 Tolerance of Chrysantemum maximum to heavy metals: The potential for its use in the revegetation of tailings heaps Ma. del Camen A. González-Chávez, Rogelio Carrillo-González Chao Chai, Xundong Yin, Wei Ge, Jinye Wang Cenvironmental health and toxicology Umbilical cord blood mercury levels in China Meiqin Wu, Chonghual Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou Menigin Wu, Chonghual Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou Menigin Wu, Chonghual Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou Menigin Wu, Chonghual Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou Menigin Wu, Chonghual Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou Menigin Wu, Chonghual Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Wang, Pengfei Jing Influence of supports on photocatalytic degradation of phenol and 4-chlorophenol in		
Jin Wang, Siru Pan, Dongping Luo Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Chunxiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Journal Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Journal Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Journal Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Journal May Journal Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Journal May Journal Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Journal May Journal Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Journal May Journal Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Journal May Journal Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Journal May Journal Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Journal May Journal Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Journal May Journal Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Journal May Journal Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Journal May Journal May Migaszewski, Artur Michalik Environmental biology Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Lv, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang Journal May Journal May Journal May May Journal May Jou		302
Spatial distribution and pollution assessment of mercury in sediments of Lake Taihu, China Chunxiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren		
Chunxiao Chen, Binghui Zheng, Xia Jiang, Zheng Zhao, Yuzhu Zhan, Fengjiao Yi, Jiaying Ren		308
Atmospheric environment Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He September Spuan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Sabina Doltgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik Sabina Doltgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik Sabina Doltgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik BTEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChiMinh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh Cenvironmental biology Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Ly, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang 357 Tolerance of Chrysantemum maximum to heavy metals: The potential for its use in the revegetation of tailings heaps Ma. del Carmen A. González-Chávez, Rogelio Carrillo-González Chao Chai, Xundong Yin, Wei Ge, Jinye Wang Chao Chai, Xundong Yin, Wei Ge, Jinye Wang Tenvironmental health and toxicology Umbilical cord blood mercury levels in China Meiqin Wu, Chonghuai Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou Revironmental from coal combustion flue gas by modified fly ash Wenqing Xu, Hairui Wang, Tingyu Zhu, Junyan Kuang, Pengfei Jing Influence of supports on photocatalytic degradation of phenol and 4-chlorophenol in aqueous suspensions of titanium dioxide Kashif Naeem, Feng Ouyang Changzi Wu, Min Song, Baosheng Jin, Yimin Wu, Yaji Huang Changzi Wu, Min Song, Baosheng Jin, Yimin Wu, Yaji Huang Changzi Wu, Min Song, Baosheng Jin, Yimin Wu, Yaji Huang Changzi Wu, Aira Coated FeyO, nanomaterial: Preparation and application in removal of phosphate from water		
Review of heterogeneous photochemical reactions of NOy on aerosol – A possible daytime source of nitrous acid (HONO) in the atmosphere Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Jinzhu Ma, Yangchem Migaszewski, Artur Michalik Jinzhu Mitta a trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulative properties Sabina Dolęgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik Jinzhu Migaszewski, Artur Michalik Jinzhu Mitta a trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulative properties Sabina Dolęgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik Jinzhu Mitta a trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulation of polygomental biology Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Lv, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang Jintha del Carmen A. González-Chávez, Rogelio Carrillo-González Jinzhu Ma, d		316
Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He Pollutant emission characteristics of rice husk combustion in a vortexing fluidized bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso Bioaccumulative properties Sabina Dolęgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik BTEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChiMinh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh Tole of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Lv, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang 357 Tolerance of Chrysantemun maximum to heavy metals: The potential for its use in the revegetation of tailings heaps Ma. del Carmen A. González-Chávez, Rogelio Carrillo-González 616 626 637 638 646 647 648 648 649 649 640 640 640 640 640 640 640 640 640 640	-	
Pollutant emission characteristics of rice husk combustion in a vortexing fluidized bed incinerator Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso		
Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso	Jinzhu Ma, Yongchun Liu, Chong Han, Qingxin Ma, Chang Liu, Hong He · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	326
Hylocomium splendens (Hedw.) B.S.G. and Pleurozium schreberi (Brid.) Mitt. as trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of bioaccumulative properties Sabina Dolegowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik		
bioaccumulative properties Sabina Dolęgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik	Feng Duan, Chiensong Chyang, Yucheng Chin, Jim Tso · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	335
Sabina Dolęgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik 346 BTEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChiMinh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh 348 Environmental biology Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Lv, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang 357 Tolerance of Chrysantemum maximum to heavy metals: The potential for its use in the revegetation of tailings heaps Ma. del Carmen A. González-Chávez, Rogelio Carrillo-González 367 Effects of nitrogen and phosphorus concentrations on the bioaccumulation of polybrominated diphenyl ethers by Prorocentrum donghaiense Chao Chai, Xundong Yin, Wei Ge, Jinye Wang 376 Environmental health and toxicology Umbilical cord blood mercury levels in China Meiqin Wu, Chonghuai Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou 388 Environmental catalysis and materials Mercury removal from coal combustion flue gas by modified fly ash Wenqing Xu, Hairui Wang, Tingyu Zhu, Junyan Kuang, Pengfei Jing 399 Influence of supports on photocatalytic degradation of phenol and 4-chlorophenol in aqueous suspensions of titanium dioxide Kashif Naeem, Feng Ouyang 399 Effect of biomass addition on the surface and adsorption characterization of carbon-based adsorbents from sewage sludge Changzi Wu, Min Song, Baosheng Jin, Yimin Wu, Yaji Huang 409 La-EDTA coated Fe ₃ O ₄ nanomaterial: Preparation and application in removal of phosphate from water	Hylocomium splendens (Hedw.) B.S.G. and Pleurozium schreberi (Brid.) Mitt. as trace element bioindicators: Statistical comparison of	
BTEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChiMinh Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh		
Tran Thi Ngoc Lan, Pham Anh Minh	Sabina Dołęgowska, Zdzisław M. Migaszewski, Artur Michalik·····	340
Environmental biology Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Lv, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang		
Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere Di Lv, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang		348
Di Lv, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang	Environmental biology	
Tolerance of Chrysantemum maximum to heavy metals: The potential for its use in the revegetation of tailings heaps Ma. del Carmen A. González-Chávez, Rogelio Carrillo-González	Profile of the culturable microbiome capable of producing acyl-homoserine lactone in the tobacco phyllosphere	
Ma. del Carmen A. González-Chávez, Rogelio Carrillo-González	Di Lv, Anzhou Ma, Xuanming Tang, Zhihui Bai, Hongyan Qi, Guoqiang Zhuang ······	357
Effects of nitrogen and phosphorus concentrations on the bioaccumulation of polybrominated diphenyl ethers by <i>Prorocentrum donghaiense</i> Chao Chai, Xundong Yin, Wei Ge, Jinye Wang		
Chao Chai, Xundong Yin, Wei Ge, Jinye Wang	Ma. del Carmen A. González-Chávez, Rogelio Carrillo-González·····	367
Environmental health and toxicology Umbilical cord blood mercury levels in China Meiqin Wu, Chonghuai Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou		
Umbilical cord blood mercury levels in China Meiqin Wu, Chonghuai Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou Environmental catalysis and materials Mercury removal from coal combustion flue gas by modified fly ash Wenqing Xu, Hairui Wang, Tingyu Zhu, Junyan Kuang, Pengfei Jing Influence of supports on photocatalytic degradation of phenol and 4-chlorophenol in aqueous suspensions of titanium dioxide Kashif Naeem, Feng Ouyang Seffect of biomass addition on the surface and adsorption characterization of carbon-based adsorbents from sewage sludge Changzi Wu, Min Song, Baosheng Jin, Yimin Wu, Yaji Huang 405 La-EDTA coated Fe ₃ O ₄ nanomaterial: Preparation and application in removal of phosphate from water	Chao Chai, Xundong Yin, Wei Ge, Jinye Wang ····	376
Meiqin Wu, Chonghuai Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou	Environmental health and toxicology	
Environmental catalysis and materials Mercury removal from coal combustion flue gas by modified fly ash Wenqing Xu, Hairui Wang, Tingyu Zhu, Junyan Kuang, Pengfei Jing	Umbilical cord blood mercury levels in China	
Mercury removal from coal combustion flue gas by modified fly ash Wenqing Xu, Hairui Wang, Tingyu Zhu, Junyan Kuang, Pengfei Jing	Meiqin Wu, Chonghuai Yan, Jian Xu, Wei Wu, Hui Li, Xin Zhou	···· 386
Wenqing Xu, Hairui Wang, Tingyu Zhu, Junyan Kuang, Pengfei Jing	Environmental catalysis and materials	
Wenqing Xu, Hairui Wang, Tingyu Zhu, Junyan Kuang, Pengfei Jing	Mercury removal from coal combustion flue gas by modified fly ash	
Influence of supports on photocatalytic degradation of phenol and 4-chlorophenol in aqueous suspensions of titanium dioxide Kashif Naeem, Feng Ouyang	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	393
Kashif Naeem, Feng Ouyang		
Effect of biomass addition on the surface and adsorption characterization of carbon-based adsorbents from sewage sludge Changzi Wu, Min Song, Baosheng Jin, Yimin Wu, Yaji Huang		399
Changzi Wu, Min Song, Baosheng Jin, Yimin Wu, Yaji Huang \cdots 405 La-EDTA coated Fe $_3$ O $_4$ nanomaterial: Preparation and application in removal of phosphate from water		
La-EDTA coated Fe ₃ O ₄ nanomaterial: Preparation and application in removal of phosphate from water		405
		413
Serial parameter: CN 11-2629/X*1989*m*184*en*P*24*2013-2		





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BTEX pollution caused by motorcycles in the megacity of HoChiMinh

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Abstract

Monitoring of benzene, toluene and xylenes (BTEX) was conducted along with traffic counts at 17 roadside sites in urban areas of HoChiMinh. Toluene was the most abundant substance, followed by p,m-xylenes, benzene, o-xylene and ethylbenzene. The maximum observed hour-average benzene concentration was 254 μ g/m³. Motorcycles contributed to 91% of the traffic fleet. High correlations among BTEX species, between BTEX concentrations and the volume of on-road motorcycles, and between inter-species ratios in air and in gasoline indicate the motorcycle-exhaust origin of BTEX species. Daily concentrations of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, p,m-xylenes and o-xylene were 56, 121, 21, 64 and 23 μ g/m³, respectively. p,m-xylenes possess the highest ozone formation potential among the BTEX family.

Key words: air pollution; benzene; BTEX; HoChiMinh; motorcycle exhaust

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Introduction

Rapid global industrialisation in the last half-century has resulted in a rapid increase in the urban population and the formation of megacities with high population and population density. This phenomenon has been most dramatic on the least-urbanised Asian and African continents. Currently, Asia alone has more than 10 megacities, including Shanghai, China (23 million, 2011), Beijing, China (19.6 million, 2011). Dhaka, Bangladesh (16 million, 2011). Tokyo, Japan (13 million, 2011), Karachi, Pakistan (13 million), Delhi, India (12.8 million, 2011), Guangzhou, China (12.7 million, 2011), Mumbai, India (12.5 million, 2011), Manila, the Philippines (11.5 million, 2009), Seoul, Korea (10.6 million, 2011) and Jakarta, Indonesia (10.2 million, 2011). Most of the megacities in developing countries are currently experiencing serious air pollution by particulate matter and volatile organic carbons (VOCs) due to the uncontrolled expansion of private means of transportation. Among the VOC pollutants, special attention has been paid to BTEX species, especially to benzene, due to their adverse effects on human health. A main source of BTEX in urban areas is gasoline evaporation and vehicle emission. It is accepted that benzene is a human carcinogen (US EPA, 2012). The risk of leukaemia by lifetime exposure to benzene at 17, 1.7 and 0.17

 $\mu g/m^3$ is, respectively, 10^{-4} , 10^{-5} and 10^{-6} (WHO, 2000). Additionally, benzene and other aromatic hydrocarbons also contribute to the formation of ground ozone, photochemical smog and toxic peroxyacylnitrates through atmospheric photochemical processes. Benzene is highly toxic; therefore, the WHO and US EPA do not specify any save level for benzene exposure. The Vietnamese National Air Quality Standards (NAQS) for time-weighted average hour and annual ambient concentrations of benzene are 22 and $10~\mu g/m^3$, respectively.

Benzene pollution is an important issue for the megacities of developing countries. The annual average roadside benzene concentration in Delhi, India was $(86.47 \pm 53.24) \,\mu\text{g/m}^3$ in 2001–2002, and has increased continuously despite the full implementation of compressed natural gas (CNG) in a the public transportation system in December 2002. Average benzene concentrations of the pre- and post-CNG periods at two traffic intersections in Delhi were (116.32 \pm 51.65) and (187.49 \pm 22.50) µg/m³, respectively. The reason for these enhanced concentrations has been solely attributed to the increase in the vehicular population from 3.5 million in 2001–2002 to 5.1 million in 2007 (Khillare et al., 2008). Benzene concentrations have been found to be 67 µg/m³ in Cairo, Egypt (Khoder, 2007), 14.7 µg/m³ in Mumbai, India (Gauri et al., 2011), 11.8 μg/m³ in Manila; the Philippines (Balanay and Lungu, 2008); 51.5 μg/m³ in Guangzhou, China (Wang et al., 2002) and 27 µg/m³ in Algiers, Algeria

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(Rabah et al., 2006).

HoChiMinh has a population of around 8.5 million, and is the financial, industrial and commercial centre of Vietnam. Urban transportation in HoChiMinh, like in any urban area in Vietnam, depends on motorcycles. The motorcycle and automobile populations in the city in March 2008 were 3,444,868 and 346,355, respectively; these numbers increased to 3.9 million and 386,000. respectively, in June 2009. The estimated number of motorcycles in the middle of 2012 is around 5 million. A large number of vehicles employ old technology. Traffic volume is extremely high and traffic jams are frequent; as a consequence, pollution by VOC and particulate matter has resulted in a dramatic decline in air quality. VOC monitoring is not obligatory in Vietnam, hence VOCs have been desultorily monitored in Hanoi and HoChiMinh through some short-term programmes carried out by the EPA or university research groups. A study on 73 hydrocarbons and chlorinated hydrocarbons at nine sites in HoChiMinh in 2002 using Compendium Method TO-15 (US EPA, 1999) revealed a high total VOC concentration of 1262 ppbv and a benzene concentration of 63 ppbV (Lan et al., 2006). The weekly average benzene concentrations measured by the HoChiMinh EPA using Radiello passive samplers on six streets in HoChiMinh in July 2008-June 2009 were 7.9–72.9 μg/m³ (HoChiMinh EPA, 2009), additionally, benzene concentrations at all sites in the first half of 2009 were 1.07-1.46 times higher than those in the first half of 2008. Hanoi is the capital city of Vietnam with a population of 3.5 million. Truc and Oanh (2007) reported a roadside benzene level of 65 µg/m³ on a busy street in Hanoi. The EURO II standard came into effect in Vietnam in July 2008.

This study aimed to investigate roadside BTEX in urban areas in HoChiMinh and the impact of different means of transportation on BTEX pollution.

1 Materials and methods

1.1 Sampling sites

Samples were collected at 17 sites (S1–S17) located on main roads in nine residential districts (**Fig. 1**). All sites have wide pavement for pedestrians. Sites S13–S17 are located in the central district of HoChiMinh.

1.2 Sampling and analyses

The NIOSH 1501 method (NIOSH, 2003) using active sampling and solvent extraction was applied for air sampling. Sample tubes containing 200 mg of activated charcoal were purchased from Sibata (Japan). A programmable minipump (MP∑30, Sibata, Japan) was calibrated using a bubble flow meter. A breakthrough experiment was conducted by pumping air at a flow of 130 and 150 mL/min in 56 min through two sample tubes connected in series. Sampling was done during rush hour



Fig. 1 Locations of sampling sites (S1–S17).

at the entrance of a university motorcycle park. Sample tubes were sealed with polypropylene caps and sent to the laboratory. The charcoal was transferred into GC vials and extracted with 1 mL of benzene-free carbon disulphide containing fluorobenzene and chlorobenzene as the internal standards. The transfer was performed in a glove box filled with zero air. Vials were shaken occasionally for 45 min, and left for 1 hr in a refrigerator for the charcoal to settle. Aliquots were quantified using a Hewlett Packard HP 5890 II gas chromatograph equipped with a flame ionisation detector, an autosampler and an HP-5MS 30.0 m \times 0.25 mm \times 0.25 µm column. An amount of any BTEX species in the second tube was not more than 0.9% of that in the first tube, confirming the applicability of the sampling procedure.

Sampling at sites was performed on work days in the fourth quarter of 2009. Sampling was performed at a flow rate of 130 mL/min in 56 min. The total sampling volume was 7.41–7.42 L. Sampling was carried out each hour consecutively for 24 hr at site S1; during rush hour (7:00–8:00 and 17:00–18:00) and non-rush hour (12:00–13:00) at sites S2–S13; and from 8:00–9:00 at the remaining sites. The inlet of sample tube was placed 1.7 m above the ground and 1.5 m away from the roadside. In total, 64 samples were collected. A blank was transported to the sampling sites and back to the laboratory. Samples were sealed with polypropylene caps, kept in an airtight polypropylene tube packed in a aluminium zippered laminar envelope and cold-stored until analysis.

Samples were analysed within one week of sampling. Analysis was carried out as reported above. The concentration of a pollutant in air $(C, \mu g/m^3)$ was evaluated using

the following equation:

$$C = \frac{W_{\rm s} - W_{\rm b}}{V \times \rm DE} \times 1000$$

where, W_s (µg) and W_h (µg) are the collected and the blank amount of the pollutant by analysis, V (L) is sampling volume and DE is the desorption efficiency. DE was given by the manufacturer for each lot of activated charcoal and was 98% in this study.

Two gasoline types marketed in Vietnam, RON92 and RON95, were analysed. Gasoline was diluted in benzenefree carbon disulphide containing internal standards and injected into the gas chromatograph for quantification.

1.3 Traffic observation

Traffic was recorded by a video camera. Recorded videos were replayed for traffic counts. Means of transportation were divided into the following groups: motorcycles, under 9-seat cars, 12-24-seat passenger cars, above 25-seat passenger cars, light-duty trucks and heavyduty trucks.

2 Results and discussion

2.1 Hour-average BTEX concentrations

Toluene was the most abundant species, followed by p,m-xylenes (p,m-X), benzene (B), o-xylene (o-X) and ethylbenzene (E) in all samples. Figure 2 shows the diurnal variation in hour-average BTEX concentrations at site S1. Pollutant levels were high in the daytime and low at night. Peaks were observed during rush hour at 7:00-9:00 and 17:00-18:00. The benzene concentration was lower than the NAQS only for a short period of time at night from 0:00-5:00. Daily average concentrations of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, p,m-xylenes and o-xylene at site S1 were, respectively, 56, 121, 21, 64 and 23 $\mu g/m^3$.

The BTEX concentrations at 17 sites are reported in Fig. 3. Commonly, BTEX concentrations were low at midday and high during rush hour, and they were higher in the afternoon than in the morning. High BTEX concentrations were observed at sites S1, S6, S7, S8, S9 and S11 located on narrow roads with dense traffic fleets and high buildings. All observed benzene concentrations during the day were higher than the NAQS. Maximum hour-average concentrations of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, p,mxylenes and o-xylene were 254, 619, 95, 263 and 116 μg/m³, respectively.

2.2 Relationships between benzene and C_1 , C_2 -benzene

The inter-species ratios of BTEX pollutants depend on fuel composition, sources, climatic conditions as well as the age of air parcels since BTEX species sink at different rates under sunlight due to their different photochemical activities. Inter-species ratios are an important indicator of sources. A main source of BTEX species in urban areas is vehicle emission. It is accepted that benzene originates from traffic emissions and gasoline evaporation only, while other BTEX species may be airborne from other additional sources like industry or construction. C₁,C₂-benzene/ benzene (C₁,C₂-B/B), especially toluence/benzene (T/B) ratios, are often used to identify sources. T/B values below 3 have been found to be characteristic of traffic emissions worldwide, including in Vietnam and China (Perry and Gee, 1995; Brocco et al., 1997; Heeb et al., 2000b; Monod et al., 2001; Chan et al., 2002; Hiesh et al., 2006; Kumar and Tyagi, 2006; Khoder, 2007; Truc and Oanh, 2007; Hoque et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2009; Matysik et al., 2010). T/B values of 1.5–4.3 are considered an indicator of traffic emissions, as reported by Hoque et al. (2008) and Liu et al. (2009). For T/B values > -4.3, solvent source impacts are likely. A specific B/T ratio below 0.20 has been proposed and used as an indicator of samples strongly affected by industrial emissions in Dongguan, China (Barletta et al., 2008), while a ratio of 0.4-1.0 has been used as an indicator of air propelled by vehicular exhaust in Beijing (Wang et al., 2012). T/B > 4.3 was used to identify sources

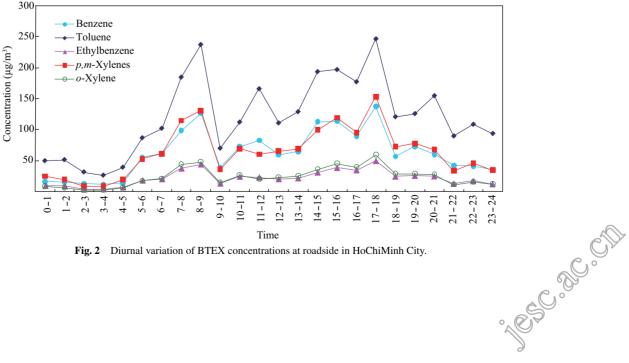
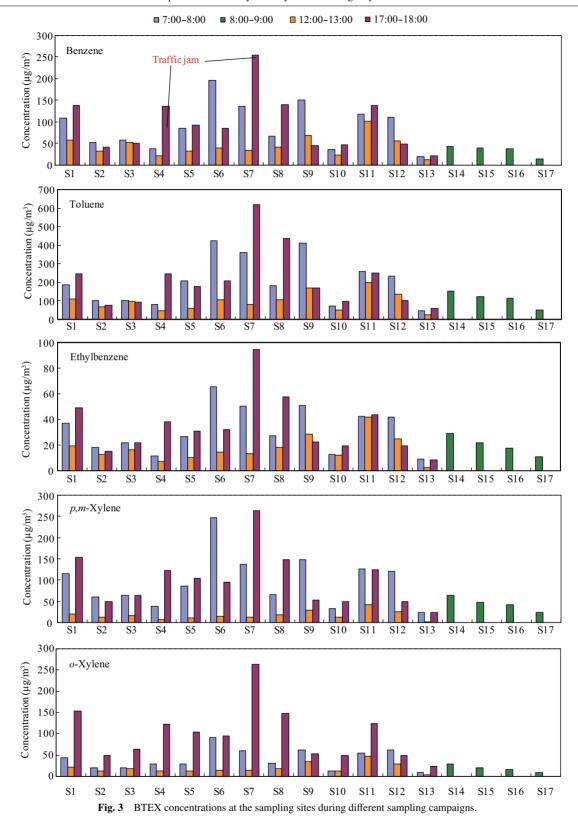


Fig. 2 Diurnal variation of BTEX concentrations at roadside in HoChiMinh City.



influenced by solvent use in Windsor, Ontario, Canada (Xu et al., 2010). A high T/B ratio (8.6) in a neighbourhood of an industrial park in Taiwan suggested large additional sources of toluene from industry (Hiesh et al., 2006). An

overview of inter-species ratios between BTEX species in different environments in Asia, Europe and South America was provided by Monod et al. (2001). A T/B value of 2.3 ($R^2 = 0.91$) and a B/E value of 2.16 ($R^2 = 0.87$, E/B = 0.46)

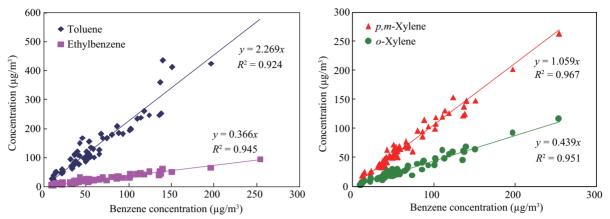


Fig. 4 The correlation between benzene and other BTEX species.

were reported for a traffic microenvironment.

A good linear correlation between concentrations of benzene and other BTEX species at all sites (**Fig. 4**) indicates a same main source of BTEX species. The contents of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, *p,m*-xylenes and *o*-xylene in RON92 and RON95 gasoline were 1.81, 4.55, 0.30, 1.21, 0.45 and 1.85, 4.20, 0.54, 1.70 and 0.77 wt.%, respectively. Thus, the T/B, E/B, *p,m*-X/B and *o*-X/B ratios in A92 and A95 gasoline were 2.5, 0.17, 0.7 and 0.25 and 2.3, 0.29, 0.9 and 0.42, respectively. The C₁,C₂-B/B values obtained in roadside air were very close to those in A95 gasoline. All these findings confirm that traffic emission is the main source of BTEX alongside roads in HoChiMinh.

2.3 Diurnal variation of inter-species ratios

The diurnal variation in inter-species ratios is shown in Fig. 5. Roadside BTEX originates from fresh vehicle emissions, so their inter-species ratios should be close to those in vehicle emissions. The observed diurnal variation in inter-species ratios was possibly related to a variation in the constituents of a traffic fleet. The p,m-X/E ratio was almost unchanged throughout the day, while the o-X/E and p,m-X/o-X ratios increased at night. A clear increase in the C₁,C₂-B/B and T/C₂-B ratios at night was due to the increased contribution of trucks in the traffic fleet as reported below. Another reason is likely an increase in the contribution of toluene released from construction painting or solvent use due to low traffic volume at night. The elevated T/C₂-B ratio from 11:00 -12:00 at site S1 was possibly due to nearby biomass burning in household cooking. According to Monod et al. (2001), T/B and T/E ratios in biomass burning environment are 0.45 and 9.41. The T/p,m-X and T/o-X ratios for biomass burning have not been reported, but they can be easy evaluated from the m-X/p-X, m-X/o-X, m-X/E and T/E ratios. The evaluated T/p,m-X and T/o-X ratios for biomass burning are 8.9 and 8.5, much higher than for traffic emission. Thus, a contribution from biomass burning would result in an increase in the T/C_2 -B ratio.

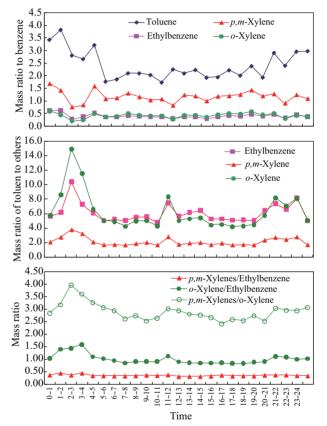


Fig. 5 Diurnal variation in the inter-species ratios.

2.4 Relationship between BTEX and traffic

Figure 6 shows the BTEX concentrations and traffic volumes at site S1. Traffic volume was extremely high at 10,500–22,300 vehicles/hr during the day, and decreased to 780–16,600 vehicles/hr at night. It was low at 0:00–5:00. Motorcycles contributed to 74%–97% of the traffic fleet, with an average of 92.5%. The constituents of the traffic fleet varied during the day. Heavy trucks were only seen at night since they are allowable in the city only from 20:00–6:00, according to local traffic regulations.

Traffic volumes at other sites were 880–22,876 vehicles/hr. Traffic jams were seen at sites S4 and S7 in

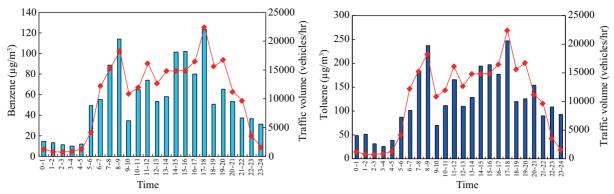


Fig. 6 BTEX concentrations and traffic volume at Site 1.

the afternoon rush hours. Motorcycles were always the predominant means of transportation. The contribution of motorcycles was the lowest (58%–86%) at site S13, located in the city centre and surrounded by luxury hotels and shopping malls. The contribution of motorcycles at other sites was 83%–98%. The average contribution of motorcycles in the traffic fleet in the whole city was 91%. This is the same as the motorcycle population within the total vehicle population in the city.

The correlation between benzene and toluene concentrations and traffic volume at site S1 is clearly seen in **Fig. 6**. The correlation coefficients (R^2) for the linear regression of BTEX concentration versus number of motorcycles in the traffic fleet at all sites were 0.595, 0.455, 0.559, 0.574 and 0.548, respectively, for benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, p,m-xylenes and o-xylene. The impact of different means of transportation on BTEX pollution are summarised in **Table 1**. These relationships between the total concentration of BTEX species and the number of motorcycles point out that the biggest contributor to roadside BTEX in HoChiMinh is motorcycle exhaust.

2.5 Ozone formation potential of BTEX species

Ozone formation potential can be evaluated using Carter's maximum incremental reactivity (MIR). Unitless MIR is the amount of ozone formed when one gram of VOC is added to an initial VOC-NOx mixture under relatively high NOx conditions (Carter, 1990, 1994). It was impossible

to evaluate the daily-average BTEX concentration for the city; therefore, ozone formation potentials were evaluated from the daily-average concentrations of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, *p,m*-xylenes and *o*-xylene at site S1 and are given in **Table 2**. Among the BTEX species, *p,m*-xylenes were the biggest contributors to ozone formation followed by toluene, while benzene was the lowest contributor.

2.6 Comparison of BTEX pollution in HoChiMinh and in other cities

Benzene is monitored and controlled throughout the world. Table 3 summarises roadside benzene concentrations reported in the literature. Antwerp (Belgium), Melbourne (Australia) and Tokyo (Japan) are considered clean. Guangzhou (China), HoChiMinh, Hanoi (Vietnam), Cairo (Egypt) and Delhi (India) are badly polluted with benzene. Vehicle exhaust is the main source of BTEX in the above mentioned polluted cities, except in Guangzhou. Traffic in HoChiMinh, Hanoi, Cairo and Delhi is characterised by very high traffic volume and a high number of motorcycles in the traffic fleet. The contribution of motorcycles in the traffic fleet has been found to be 91% in HoChiMinh (this study), 94%–96% in Hanoi (Truc and Oanh, 2007) and 63% in Delhi (Hoque et al., 2008). Motorcycles are an important means of transportation in Cairo, with a motorcycle population of 300,000. Most motorcycles in Delhi and Cairo are two-stroke engines (Hoque et al., 2008; CAIP, 2000), while over 95% of motorcycles in

Table 1 Correlation coefficient (R^2) between BTEX concentrations and traffic volumes

	Motorcycles	4–9-seat cars	12-24-seat cars	25-50-seat cars	Light trucks	Heavy trucks
For site S1	0.783	0.551	0.347	0.441	0.034	0.171
For all sites	0.529	0.011	0.001	0.095	0.002	0.004

 Table 2
 Ozone formation potential

Hydrocarbon	Benzene	Toluene	Ethyl benzene	m,p-Xylenes	o-Xylene
Daily-average concentration at site S1 (μg/m ³)	56	121	21	64	23
MIR	0.42	2.70	2.70	8.20	6.50
O ₃ formation potential ^a (μg/m ³)	24	327	57	525	150

 $^{^{}a}VOC (\mu g/m^{3}) \times MIR.$

Table 3 Benzene concentrations in some cities in the world

City	Benzene	Reference
Antwerp, Belgium	2.5	Buczynska et al., 2009
Melbourne, Australia	2.8-3.6	EPA Victoria, 2006
	(0.85-1.1 ppb)	
Tokyo, Japan	3–7	Laowagul et al., 2009
UK	Up to 6.3	UK DEFRA, 2012
	(1.9 ppb)	
Nanjing, China	6.4	Wang and Zhao, 2008
Christchurch, New Zealand	5.65 -9.10	Myles, 2005
Kathmandu, Nepan	13-20	Chiranjibi, 2004
Nanhai, China	20.0	Wang et al., 2002
Hongkong, China	26.7	Chan et al., 2002
Bangkok, Thailand	35	Leong et al., 2002
Macau, China	34.9	Wang et al., 2002
Guangzhou, China	51.5	Wang et al., 2002
HoChiMinh, Vietnam	56	This study
Hanoi, Vietnam	65	Truc and Oanh, 2007
Cairo, Egipt	67	Khoder, 2007
Dehli, India	87	Hoque et al., 2008

Hanoi and HoChiMinh are four-stroke engines. There are numerous reasons for the high BTEX levels in the above mentioned urban areas: high traffic volume, a high number of motorcycles in the traffic fleet, high benzene content in gasoline and a high emission factor for motorcycles. The current benzene content in gasoline is ca. 1.8 wt.% in Vietnam, almost double the 1% in the US, Europe and Japan. Motorcycles do not have any exhaust gas treatment system; hence, a motorcycle emits much more benzene than a gasoline-powered car equipped with a converter. Our research on 23 in-use motorcycles in HoChiMinh showed average emission factors of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes at 105, 195, 32 and 137 mg/km with geometric values of 61, 118, 16, 49 and 18 mg/km and median values of 54, 142, 21, 66 and 23 mg/km (Lan et al., 2010). The benzene emission factor (BEF) was much higher than the BEFs of 3.8 mg/km, 5.9-17 mg/km and 12.2 mg/km found for catalytic-converter cars in Europe, the US and Japan, respectively; almost the same BEF range of 71–96 mg/km has been found for pre-catalyst cars in the US (Heeb et al., 2000a; Dasch and Williams, 1991; Kaga et al., 2004).

Inter-species ratios of BTEX species for traffic-related sites are similar to those in vehicle exhaust due to a short spatial and temporal distance from sources. They depend mainly on fuel composition and vehicle technology. The average T/B ratio was about 2.3 in this study, 1.8–2.54 in Delhi (Hoque et al., 2008), 0.7–1.3 in Hanoi (Truc and Oanh, 2007) and 1.29–2.45 in Cairo (Khoder, 2007). The above mentioned values were lower than values commonly found in developed countries such as 3.7 in Naples (Pasquale et al., 2009), 3.8–4.4 in Antwerp (Buczynska et al., 2008), 6.4–8.5 in Tokyo (Hoshi et al., 2008) and 9.2–11.5 in Hong Kong (Ho et al., 2004). The E/B values in this study were around 0.38, in the same range of 0.23–0.43 found in Hanoi (Truc and Oanh, 2007). They were remarkably lower than the E/B values of 1.2 and 1.0

found for roadsides in Tokyo (Hoshi et al., 2008) and in Bangkok (Laowagul et al., 2008), respectively, but higher than 0.15–0.21 found in Delhi (Hoque et al., 2008). The same phenomenon was observed for the p,m-X/B and o-X/B ratios. The p,m-X/B and o-X/B values in HoChiMinh were 1.06 and 0.44, respectively; these values were much lower than 2.1 and 0.8 found in Tokyo (Hoshi et al., 2008), but higher than 0.64–0.87 and 0.31–0.47 found in Delhi (Hoque et al., 2008).

In this study, the interspecies ratios for roadside air were similar to those in gasoline. The low C_1, C_2 -benzene/benzene ratios in HoChiMinh, Hanoi, Delhi and Cairo are possibly related to the composition of gasoline available locally. One possible reason that could lower the C_1, C_2 -benzene/benzene ratio is evaporation from the gasoline tanks of cheaply made motorcycles with the high atmospheric temperatures in hot tropical regions. Benzene vapour pressure is higher than that of other BTEX species, so according to Raoul's law, its content in a vapour is richer than in a liquid mixture.

From the discussion above, it is clear that the interspecies ratios in both the gas phase and liquid fuel are important for the assessment of sources.

3 Conclusions

- (1) Roadside BTEX levels were monitored at 17 urban sites in HoChiMinh. All the observed hour-average benzene concentrations during the day were much higher than the NAQS of 22 $\mu g/m^3$. The maximum observed benzene level was 254 $\mu g/m^3$.
- (2) Traffic emission is the main source of roadside BTEX in HoChiMinh. Motorcycles are the biggest contributor to BTEX pollution in HoChiMinh.
- (3) Daily concentrations of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, p,m-xylene and o-xylene in HoChiMinh were 56, 121, 21, 64 and 23 μ g/m³, respectively.
- (4) BTEX pollution in Vietnam is characterised by a high benzene level and low C_1 , C_2 -benzene/benzene ratios. The inter-species ratios of BTEX species in roadside air and in gasoline are similar.

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