

Water Voices from Around the World

William E. Marks, Editor

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Reviewed by Irene Watson for Reader Views (9/08)

Mesmerizing! That is my first comment as I flip through the book. However, that said, this is not a “flip-through” book. “Water Voices from Around the World” is a coffee-table book that takes you on a journey of many hours and days through 400 photographs and over 100 biographies of writers around the world. The letters are from well-known authors, politicians, religious leaders, and water scientists and researchers. Each has their own distinctive water knowledge and shares it with the reader.

But, there is more to this journey. It’s not just another coffee table book with pictures and some text, it is a compilation of science; philosophy; politics; history; art; economics; religion; society; music and culture. As I kept reading through “Water Voices” my constant comments were “wow, I didn’t know that.” For me, this book is an eye-opener indeed.

My first “wow” came at the beginning of the book when I saw the beautiful photo of Lake Sarez in Tajikistan, a natural dam named Usoi Dam, created by an earthquake in 1911. The dam is considered the largest natural dam in the world and if it fails, it will jeopardize the lives of 5 million people. The letter written by Emomali Rakhmonaov, president of the Republic of Tajikistan, explains his country is “the source of freshwater for most of Central Asia and possesses more than sixty percent of the water resources in the region.” He further explains even though the country has a large number of rivers, lakes, and glaciers, they still experience difficulties with their drinking water supply. Personally, I have never heard of Tajikistan before and had no idea of the issues this country has surrounding their water supply.

This is only one example of the impact “Water Voices from Around the World” has. William E. Marks, in his three years of compilation of the photographs and information, takes the reader to another realm of understanding of issues surrounding our world fresh water supply. He sums up the concerns as “If we fail to awaken to a new water consciousness – our surviving civilization will only have stories of mythological proportion about the Living Age of Water – an Age when clean water and life once existed in abundance.” What a scary thought!

“Water Voices from Around the World” edited by William E. Marks awakens us to a point where we, as collective readers and concerned citizens, must make a distinctive effort to save our planet from fresh water destruction. Until I pursued Marks’ book, I had no idea of the devastation that is occurring worldwide. Personally I am committing to doing my part in conserving our fresh water supply and if each one of us is mindful, jointly we can make the difference.