

ROYAL OBSERVATORY, HONG KONG

TECHNICAL NOTE NO. 70

30-YEAR MEAN RAINFALL IN HONG KONG

1953 - 1982

by

W.K. KWAN

and

B.Y. LEE

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CONTENTS

	page
TABLES	iii
FIGURES	iv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. DATA	
(a) Rain-gauges	2
(b) Rainfall-observing practices at outstations	2
3. ANALYSIS	
(a) Estimation of missing records	4
(b) Adjustment of mean values from different lengths of records to the common period of 1953 - 1982	4
REFERENCES	6

TABLES

	page
1. 30-YEAR MEAN MONTHLY AND ANNUAL RAINFALL AT STATIONS IN HONG KONG 1953-1982	7
2. 30-YEAR MEAN MONTHLY AND ANNUAL RAINFALL AT STATIONS WITH LESS THAN 15 YEARS OF RECORD	9

FIGURES

	page
1. MAP SHOWING RAINFALL STATIONS GROUPED WITH THE RESPECTIVE CONTROL STATIONS	10
2. MEAN JANUARY RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	11
3. MEAN FEBRUARY RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	12
4. MEAN MARCH RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	13
5. MEAN APRIL RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	14
6. MEAN MAY RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	15
7. MEAN JUNE RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	16
8. MEAN JULY RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	17
9. MEAN AUGUST RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	18
10. MEAN SEPTEMBER RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	19
11. MEAN OCTOBER RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	20
12. MEAN NOVEMBER RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	21
13. MEAN DECEMBER RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	22
14. MEAN ANNUAL RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION MAP	23

1. INTRODUCTION

In the early 1950's, there were some 50 rain-gauges operating in Hong Kong. This number increased to 121 by 1 January 1983. Over the years several attempts were made to compute mean rainfall values obtained from these rainfall stations using data collected during various periods (1952-1962, 1952-1965, 1952-1972 and 1952-1976). However, no written account is available on the procedures used in computing these mean values.

As more data has become available, it is now possible to update the previous work to cover a longer period. A 30-year period is a logical choice as normal rainfall figures have been defined as "period averages computed for a uniform and relatively long period comprising at least three consecutive ten-year periods" (World Meteorological Organization 1979). This note presents the mean rainfall values computed for the 30-year period 1953-1982 together with a brief description of the procedures used in estimating missing data for some stations and in adjusting mean values obtained over different lengths of period to this common 30-year period. Because about 30 stations were set up during 1952, the choice of 1953, instead of 1952, as the first year of the period obviated the need to adjust or estimate missing data for the year 1952 for these stations.

2. DATA

(a) Rain-gauges

Daily rainfall from ordinary rain-gauges and monthly rainfall from monthly gauges were used. For stations equipped with both ordinary and autographic rain-gauges, data from the ordinary gauge were used in preference to those from autographic records because records from autographic gauges were disrupted from time to time due to mechanical faults which developed in the gauges. However, at a few stations where only autographic gauges were installed, data extracted from autographic charts were used. There are only three such stations, viz :

Aberdeen Lower Reservoir (Station 10)
Tai Lam Forest Reserve Compt. 16 (Station 73)
Tsuen Wan R.G. Filters (Station 159)

Siphoning losses inherent in autographic gauges were discussed by Cheng and Kwok (1966). These losses were not taken into account because they amounted to only 2% of the rainfall recorded for an intensity of 100 mm/h over a duration of 15 minutes and this intensity is very infrequent. The return period for this rainfall intensity is estimated to be about 2 years (Peterson and Kwong 1981).

(b) Rainfall-observing practices at outstations

Prior to 1 July 1955, daily rainfall recorded for a particular day referred to the total rainfall from 0800 Hong Kong Standard Time (time of observation in those days referred to Hong Kong Standard Time (HKST) which was 8 hours ahead of G.M.T.) on that day to 0800 HKST on the following day. Starting from 1 July 1955, the observation time was changed to 1500 HKST as it was noted that the maximum frequency of rainfall in Hong Kong occurred in the morning and the minimum in the afternoon (Bell and Chin 1968). However, from 1 July 1955 to the end of 1957, daily rainfall figures recorded at each of the stations manned by the staff of the Waterworks Office (now the Water Supplies Department) referred to the rainfall total from 1500 HKST the previous day to 1500 HKST on the day against which the figure was entered. This practice was adopted by all stations from 1958 to the present.

The following table summarizes the different practices in recording daily rainfall prior to 1958 :

Period	Type of stations	Reference duration for daily rainfall
1947 - 30.6.55	All stations	From 0800 HKST on the day concerned to 0800 HKST the following day
1.7.55 - 31.12.57	Stations maintained by the Royal Observatory	From 1500 HKST on the day concerned to 1500 HKST the following day
1.7.55 - 31.12.57	Stations manned by the Waterworks Office	From 1500 HKST the previous day to 1500 HKST on the day concerned

In order to conform to the current practice, daily rainfall recorded over the period prior to 1 July 1955 at all stations and those recorded during the period from 1 July 1955 to the end of 1957 at stations maintained by the Royal Observatory (i.e. those not manned by Waterworks staff) were shifted by one day and so archived on magnetic tapes. The following example illustrates the adjustment involved :

Station : Pokfulam Reservoir
Year : 1947
Month : June

Date	Record of daily rainfall	
	Original	Adjusted
1	Nil	
2	21.6	Nil
3	25.4	21.6
4	24.1	25.4
5		24.1

3. ANALYSIS

(a) Estimation of missing records

The reliability and accuracy of the rainfall data were discussed by Peterson (1964).

The U.S. Weather Bureau adopts a method (Paulhus and Kohler 1952) using three surrounding stations to fill in missing data for a particular station in the United States, where the network density is one station in about 782 000 square kilometres (World Meteorological Organization 1977). In Hong Kong, this method is not used for two reasons : (1) the coastal environment here renders it not always possible to find three surrounding stations and (2) the station density here is much higher -- one station in about 10 square kilometres.

To fill in missing data over a period of one or a few days, the corresponding rainfall from a nearby, topographically similar station were substituted (McKay 1970). Missing monthly data were estimated by one of the following two methods, in order of preference :

(i) inference, if possible, from the distribution map for the month, taking into account the mean distribution (for example, the 25-year mean for the period 1952-1976) ; or

(ii) substitution of monthly values from a nearby, topographically similar station or the average of two such stations, also taking into account the mean distribution and the statistical correlation between the precipitation for the station under consideration and the nearby station(s).

In the present analysis, the correlation coefficients involved were in general greater than 0.95. Full records of the estimation of missing rainfall data are available on file at the Hydrometeorology Section of the Royal Observatory, Hong Kong.

(b) Adjustment of mean values from different lengths of records to the common period of 1953 - 1982

A number of "control" stations with full and reliable records from 1953 to 1982 was selected (Fig. 1) for the adjustment of mean rainfall at stations with less than 30 years of data. The control stations were chosen based on the following considerations : the amount of missing data at these stations was minimal and the consistency in the data from these stations had been confirmed during the routine analysis of monthly distribution of rainfall during the 30-year period. The data for stations with 15 to 29 years of data were adjusted using the data from nearby control stations in topographically similar locations. The following formula was adopted (Wiesner 1970) :

$$N_{a,30} = \frac{N_{a,y}}{N_{c,y}} \cdot N_{c,30}$$

where

- a stands for the station of interest,
c stands for the control station,
 $N_{a,30}$ is the estimated 30-year monthly mean of the station,
 $N_{c,30}$ is the 30-year monthly mean of the control station,
 $N_{a,y}$ is the available y-year monthly mean at the station, and
 $N_{c,y}$ is the corresponding y-year monthly mean at the control station.

The use of the above formula in the analysis was supported by a high correlation coefficient (greater than 0.95) between the observed annual precipitation for the stations considered (McKay 1970).

The computed mean monthly and annual rainfall figures at stations with 15 or more years of record are presented in Table 1. The monthly and annual spatial distributions of rainfall in Hong Kong are given in Figures 2 to 14.

Similar procedures were followed to adjust the data from the following stations which have less than 15 years of records :

- (1) Cape Collinson Correctional Institute (Station 140, years of record 1969-1982)
- (2) Chek Lap Kok Meteorological Station (Station 162, 1979-1982)
- (3) Cheung Uk (Station 92, 1960-1973)
- (4) High Island East (Station 152, 1975-1982)
- (5) High Island West (Station 150, 1973-1982)
- (6) Kwun Tong District Branch Office (Station 137, 1968-1979)
- (7) Lamma Island (Station 133, 1967-1970, 1977-1982)
- (8) Ngong Ping Tea Farm (Station 43, 1953-1958, 1965-1970)
- (9) Stanley Satellite Earth Station (Station 147, 1971-1982)
- (10) Tai Mei Tuk Pumping Station (Station 141, 1970-1982)
- (11) Tsing Yi Development Site Office (Station 105, 1977-1982)
- (12) Tuen Mun New Town Development Office (Station 153, 1976-1982)
- (13) Yuk Ying Primary School, Tai Long (Station 117, 1965-1978)

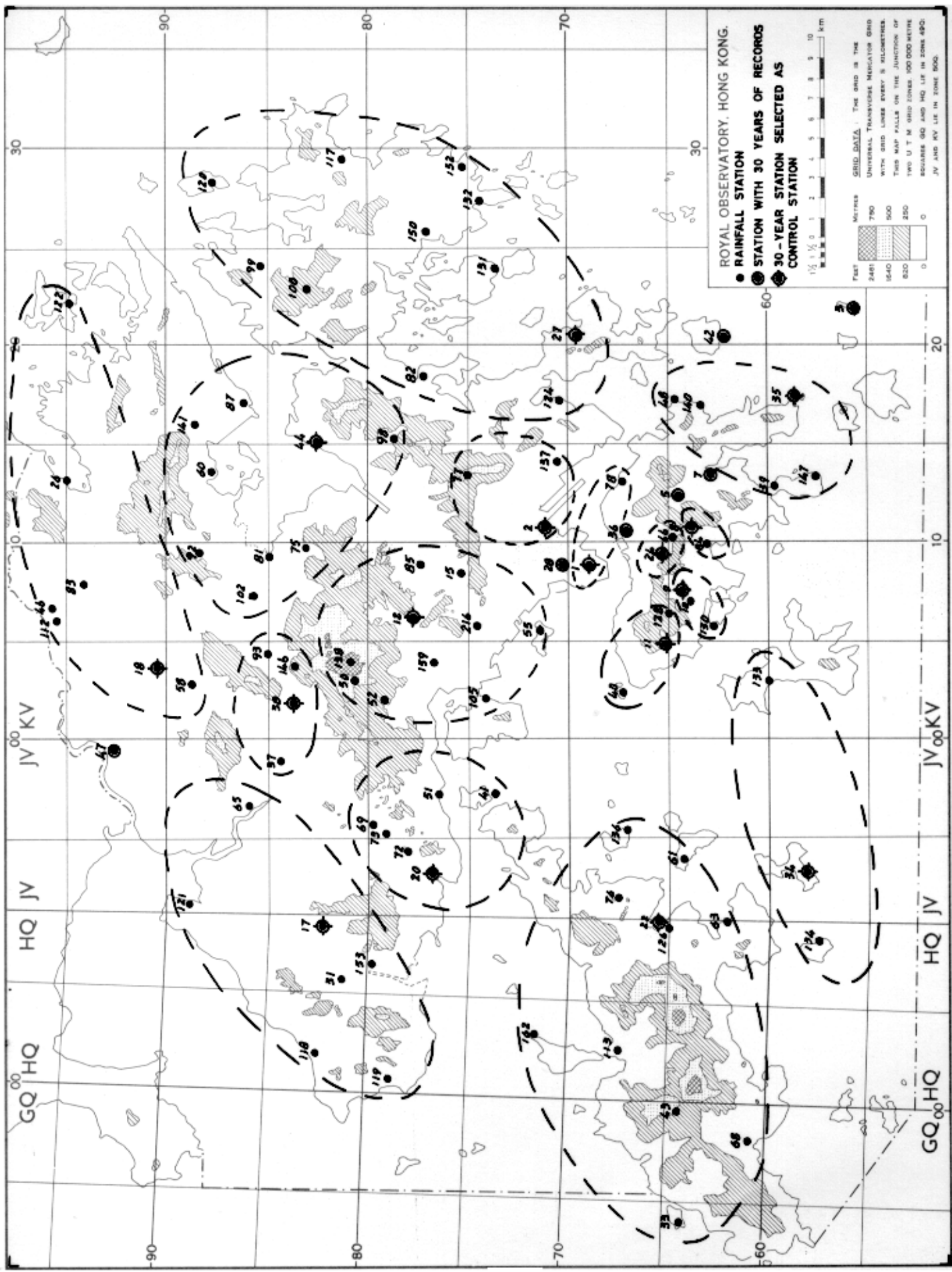
The adjusted values at these stations were taken into consideration during the construction of the isohyetal maps (Figs 2-14). The estimated mean monthly and annual rainfall values are separately presented in Table 2. These mean values were derived from relatively short periods of data. Caution must be exercised in the use of these values.

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TABLE 2. 30-YEAR MEAN MONTHLY AND ANNUAL RAINFALL AT STATIONS WITH LESS THAN 15 YEARS OF RECORDS

Station Number	Location	Ref. on Universal Transverse Mercator Grid	Height above Mean Sea Level, m	Length of record available for calculating mean values, years	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Year
140	Cape Collinson Correctional Institute	KY 167632	40	14	13.5	30.7	49.5	122.7	269.6	296.3	230.8	285.6	206.8	48.6	17.2	16.6	1587.9
162	Chuk Lap Kok Meteorological Station	RK 027712	55	4	15.2	46.2	54.3	101.3	231.0	285.9	255.2	344.1	188.4	53.9	37.9	26.4	1639.8
92	Chung Uk	KY 098866	170	14	19.3	51.3	75.7	159.3	300.6	402.3	395.5	338.1	361.0	200.1	25.0	28.3	2346.5
152	High Island West	KY 290753	125	8	22.0	38.1	61.7	122.1	393.5	393.6	308.9	348.1	245.4	87.1	39.2	15.7	2075.4
150	High Island West	KY 257773	85	10	22.0	32.0	59.9	115.7	354.2	406.7	301.7	319.9	239.0	92.8	41.1	18.0	2003.0
137	Kwan Yung District Branch Office	KY 140704	10	12	24.8	52.9	62.2	146.4	319.9	414.6	328.7	401.3	349.8	136.6	50.6	19.1	2308.9
133	Lamma Island Police Post	KY 021609	30	10	17.1	31.7	48.0	103.5	221.3	264.4	276.9	321.6	268.2	50.4	23.4	7.3	1633.8
43	Mong Ping Yau Farm	GG 994644	440	12	26.6	45.7	70.4	157.7	288.8	411.7	364.1	412.6	303.7	149.7	57.9	44.7	2335.6
147	Stanley Satellite Bath Station	KY 133575	90	12	21.5	27.8	44.3	112.9	257.2	288.5	219.8	286.0	227.6	90.5	27.3	16.3	1619.7
141	Tai Mei Tuk Pumping Station	KY 157886	10	13	27.9	42.4	62.0	123.6	278.0	430.8	377.9	364.5	290.5	115.5	43.6	26.4	2191.1
105	Tsing Yi Development Site Office	KY 021743	25	6	21.3	49.3	52.2	111.8	267.6	490.8	247.0	344.2	219.7	77.0	25.6	32.9	1939.4
153	Tuen Mun New Town Development Office	RK 060796	5	7	23.7	41.0	51.0	139.6	241.2	335.0	278.2	343.7	234.0	87.0	35.0	21.2	1830.6
117	Tuk Ying Primary School, Tai Long	KY 293815	25	14	11.2	26.8	48.5	111.8	285.0	357.1	255.4	321.2	311.0	91.7	46.6	19.9	1886.2



R.O. 128 **Fig. 1** Map showing rainfall stations grouped with the respective control stations .

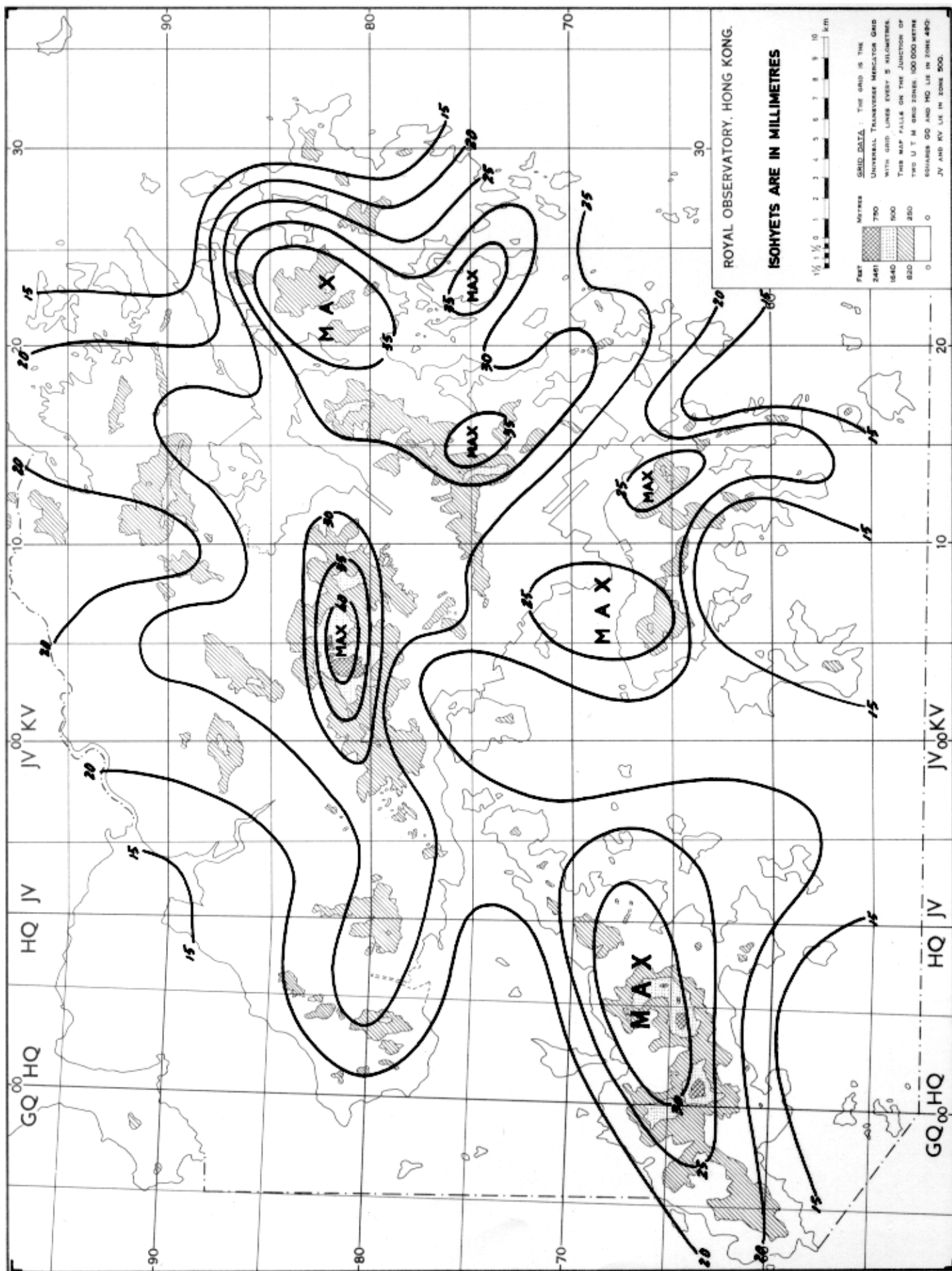


Fig. 2 Mean January rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

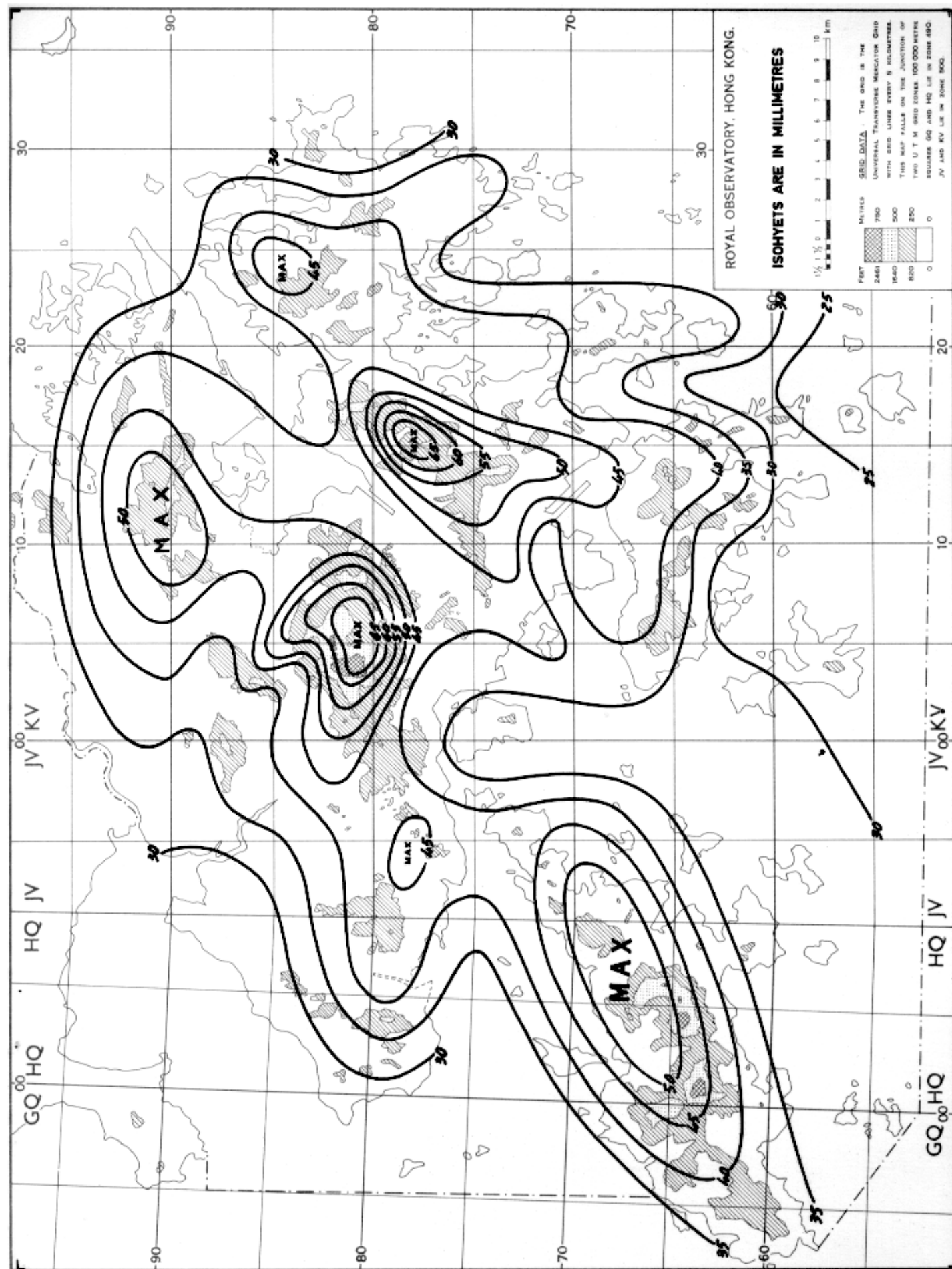


Fig. 3 Mean February rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

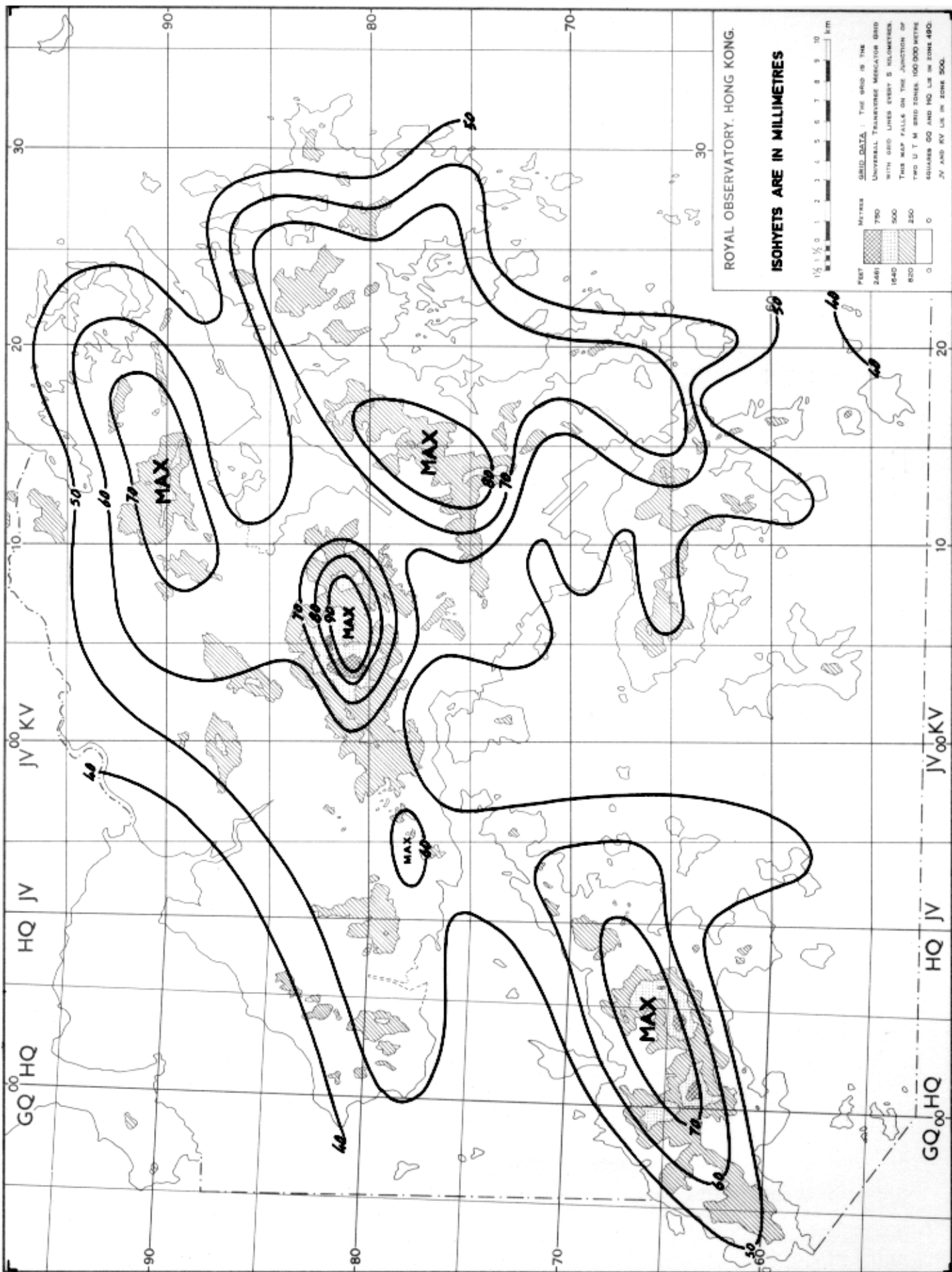


Fig. 4 Mean March rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

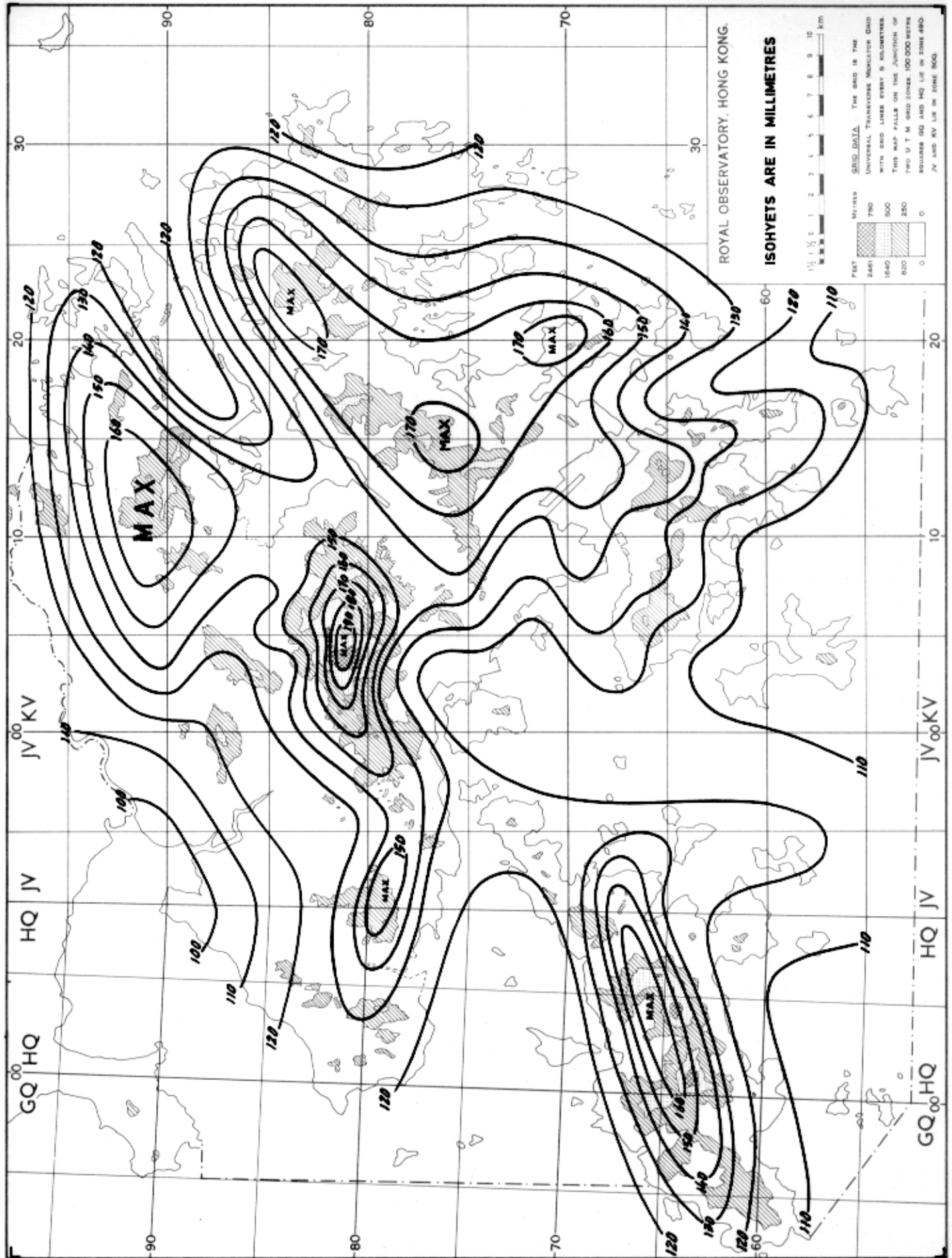


Fig. 5 Mean April rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

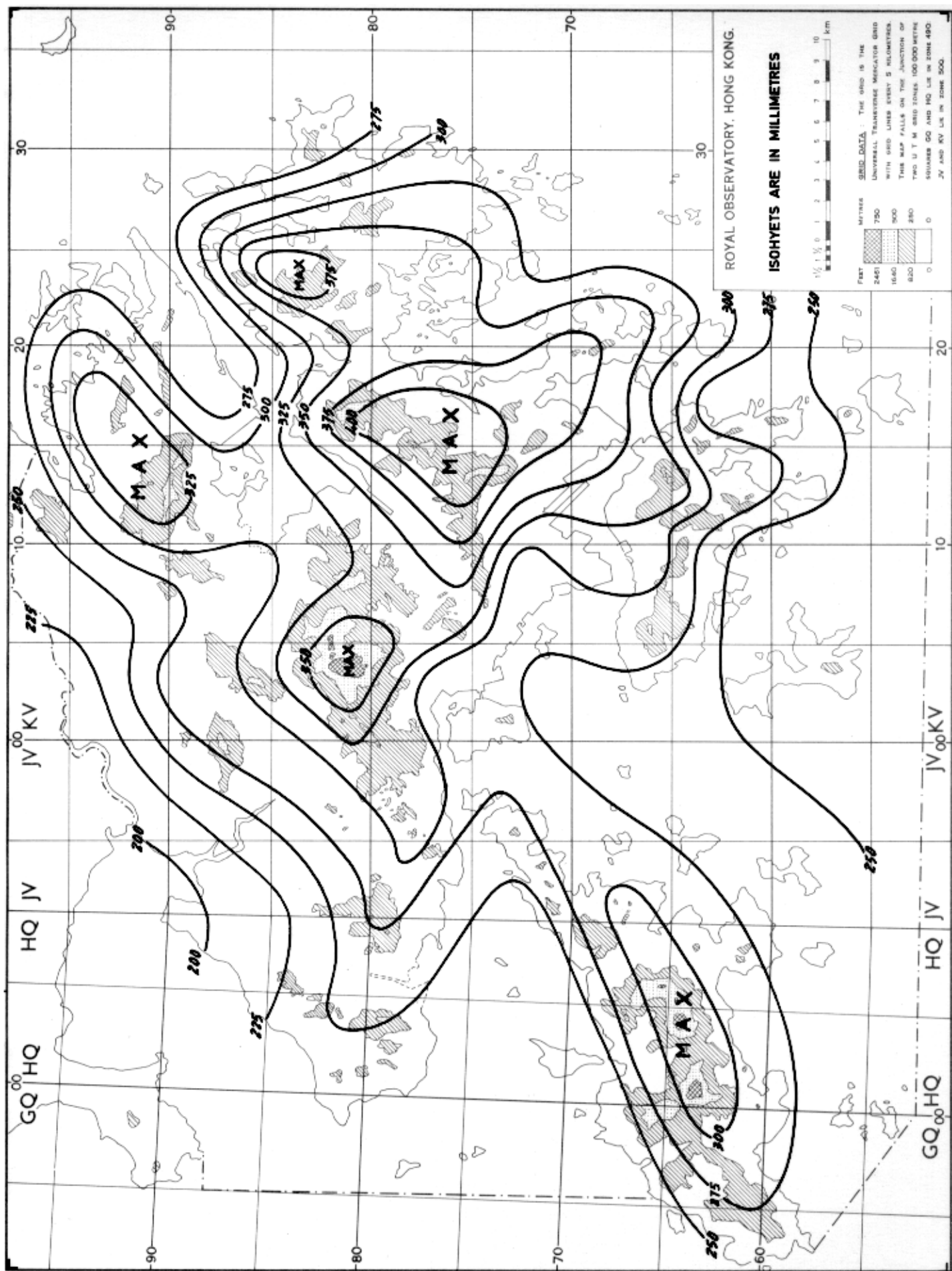


Fig. 6 Mean May rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

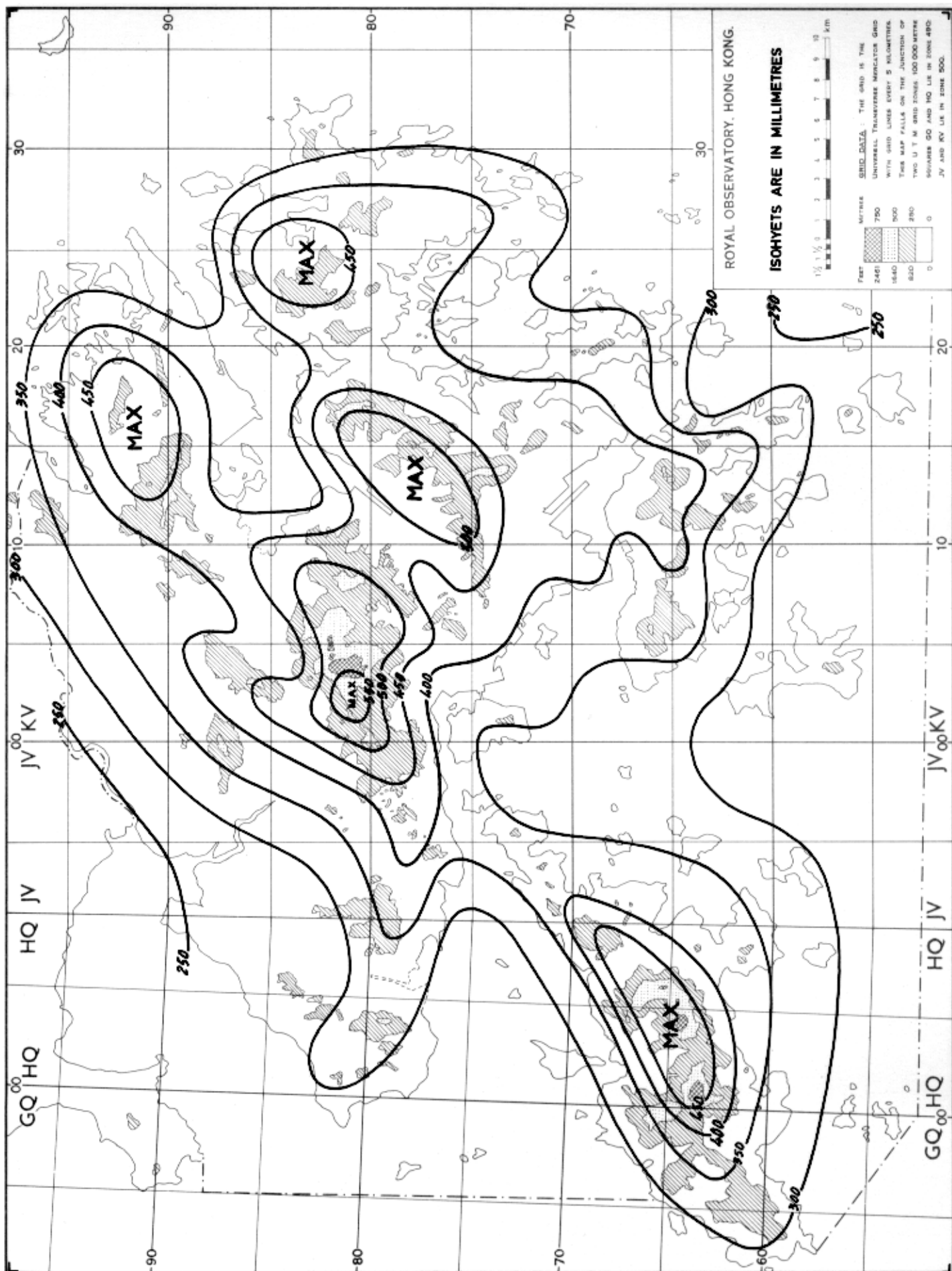


Fig. 7 Mean June rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

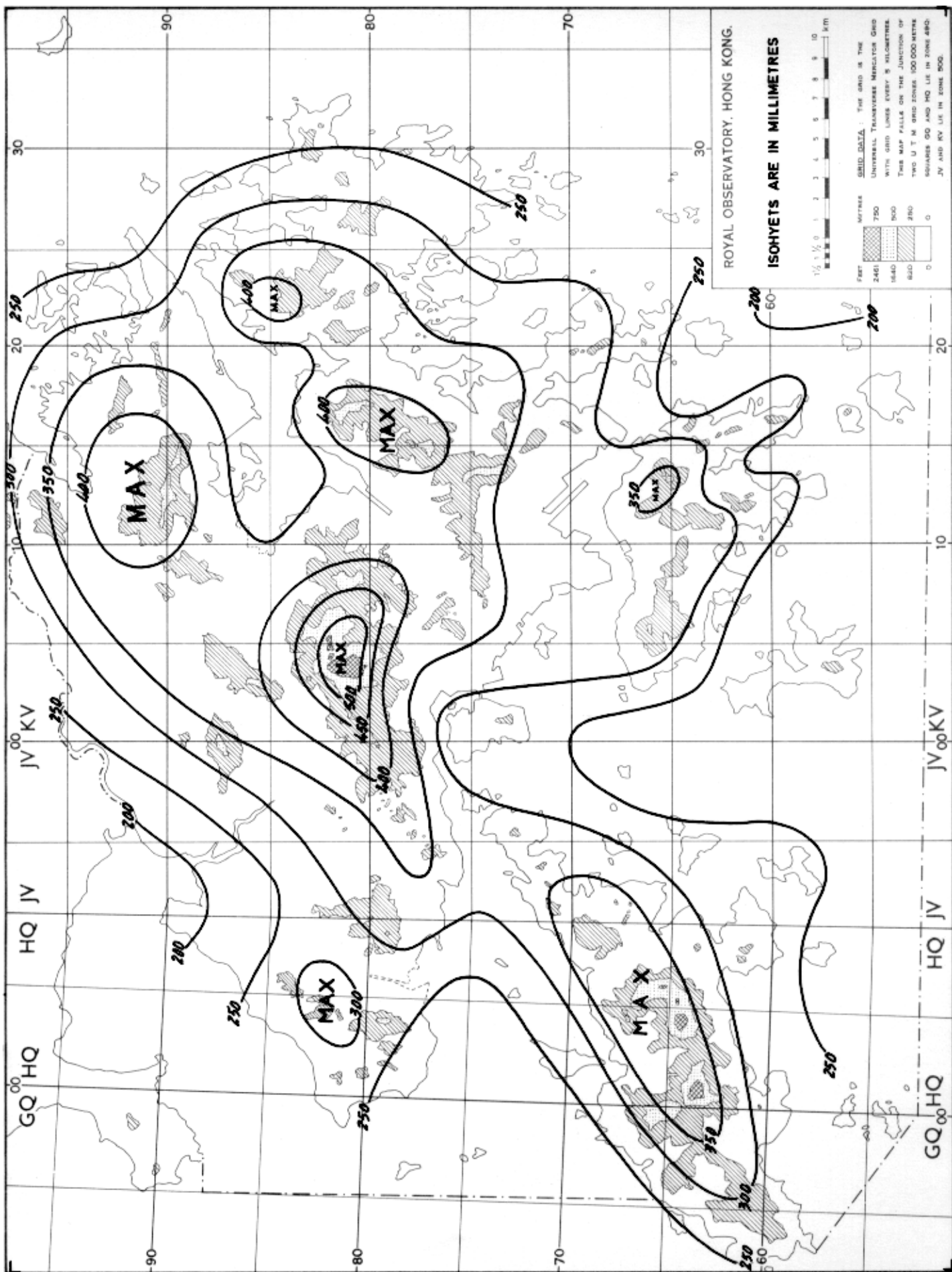


Fig. 8 Mean July rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

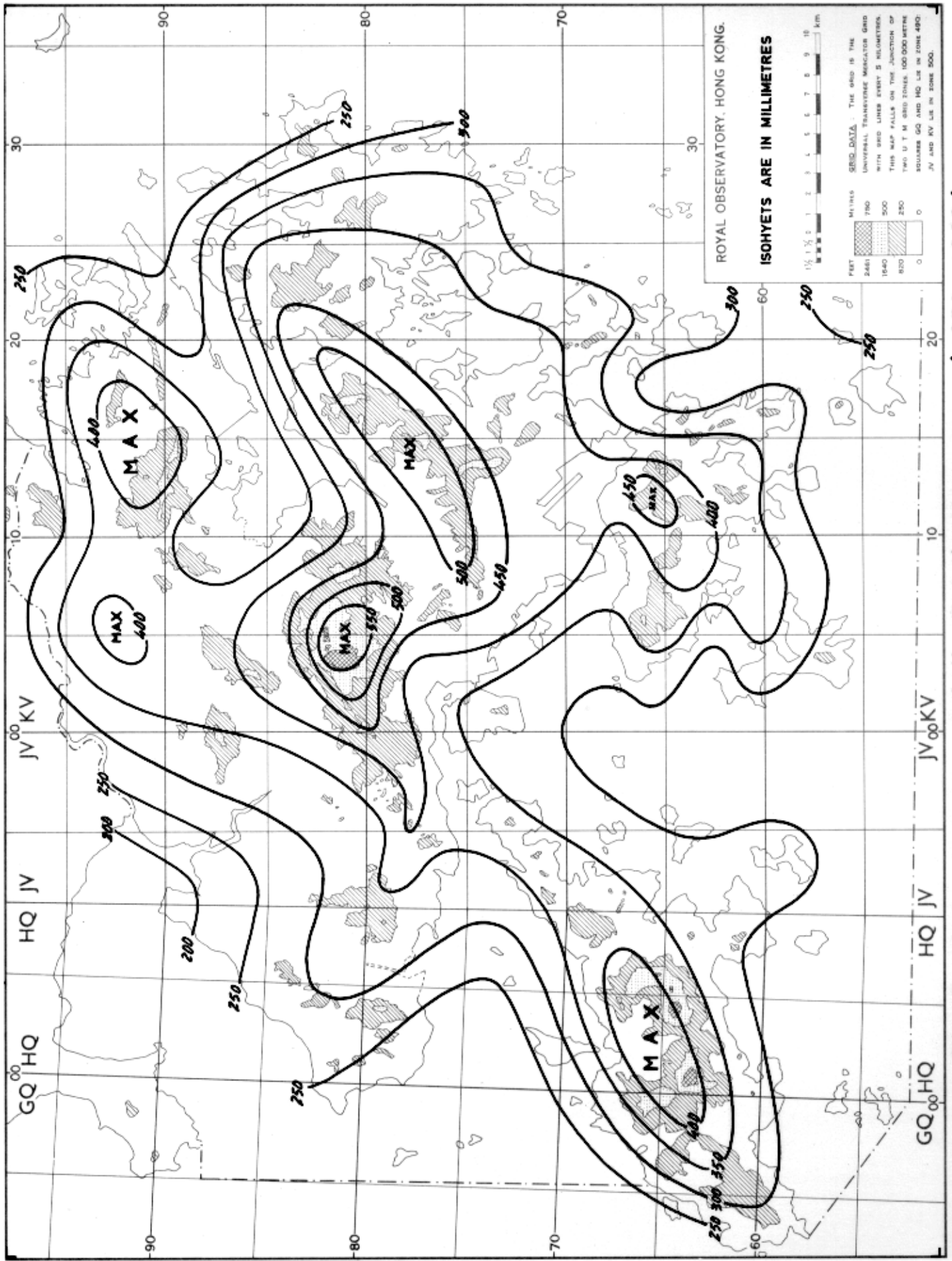


Fig. 9 Mean August rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

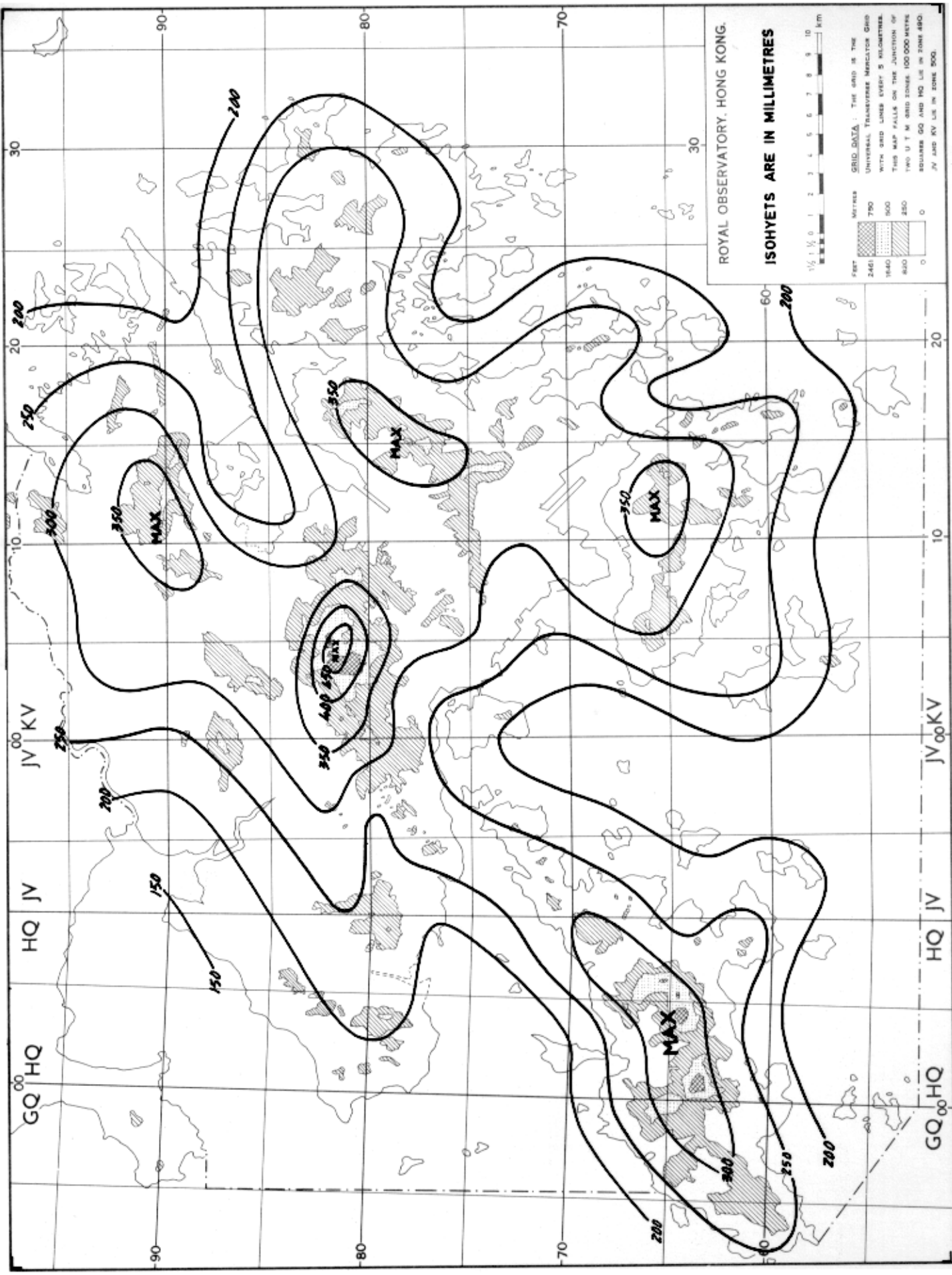


Fig. 10 Mean September rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

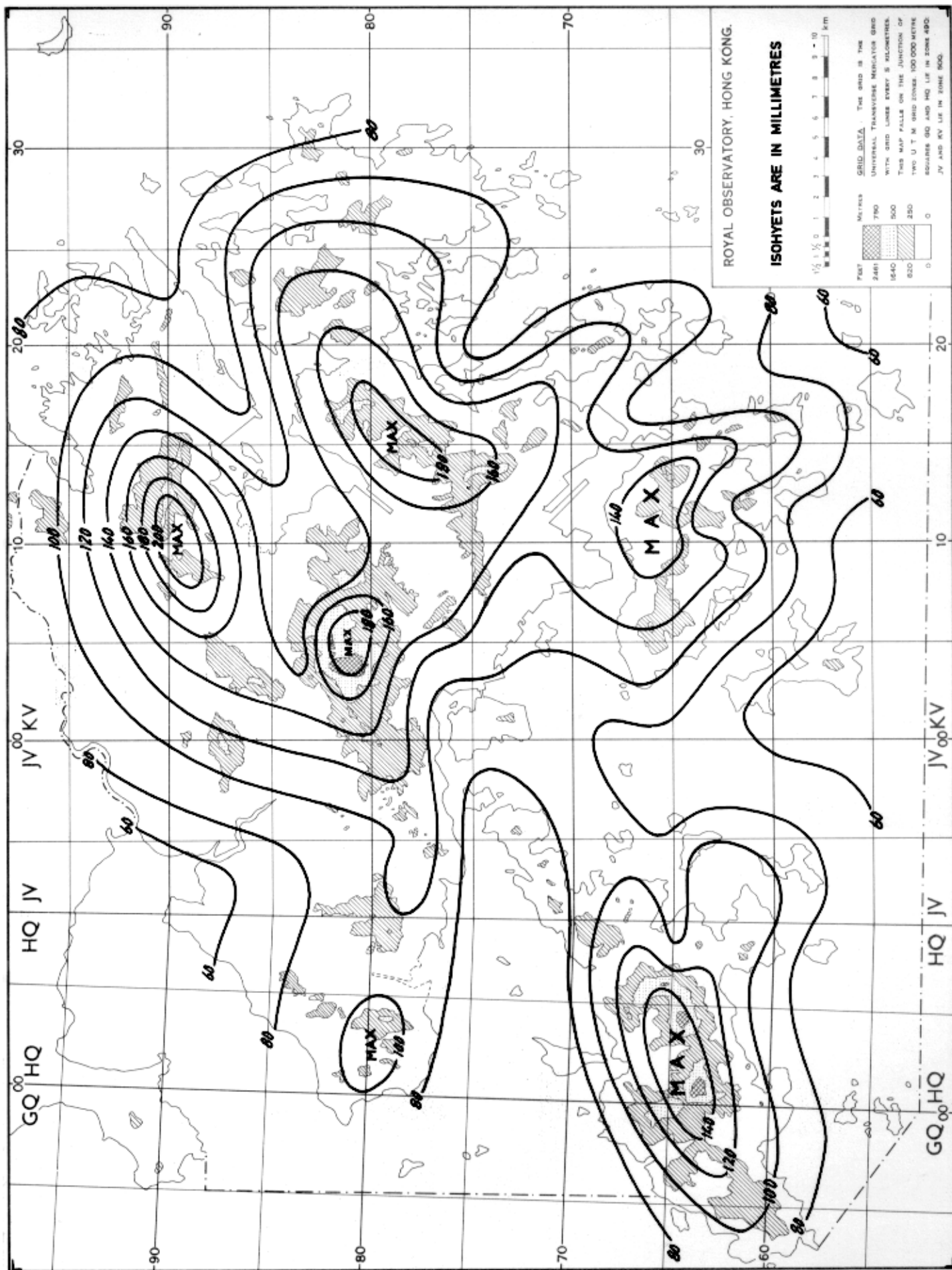


Fig.11 Mean October rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

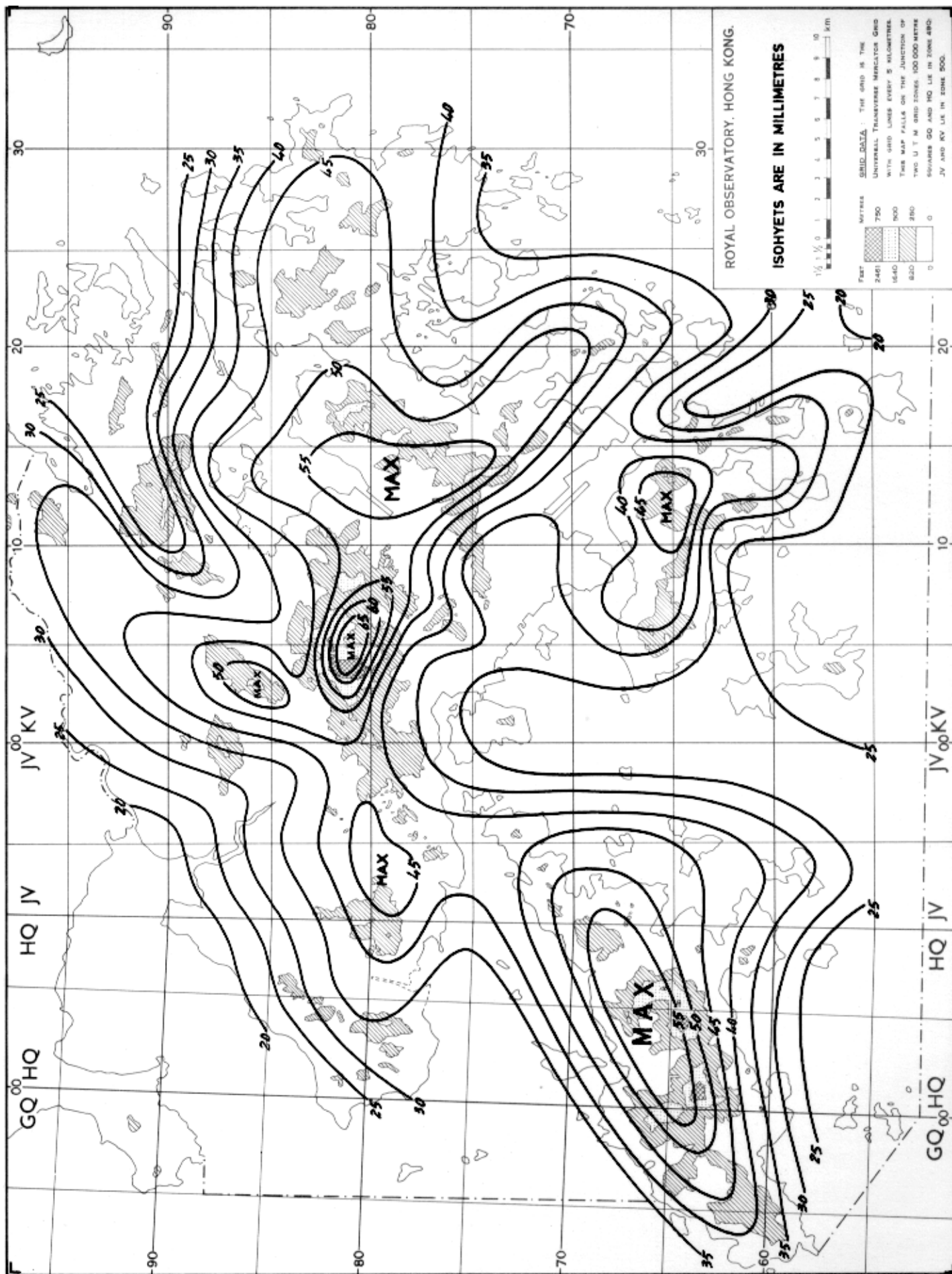


Fig. 12 Mean November rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

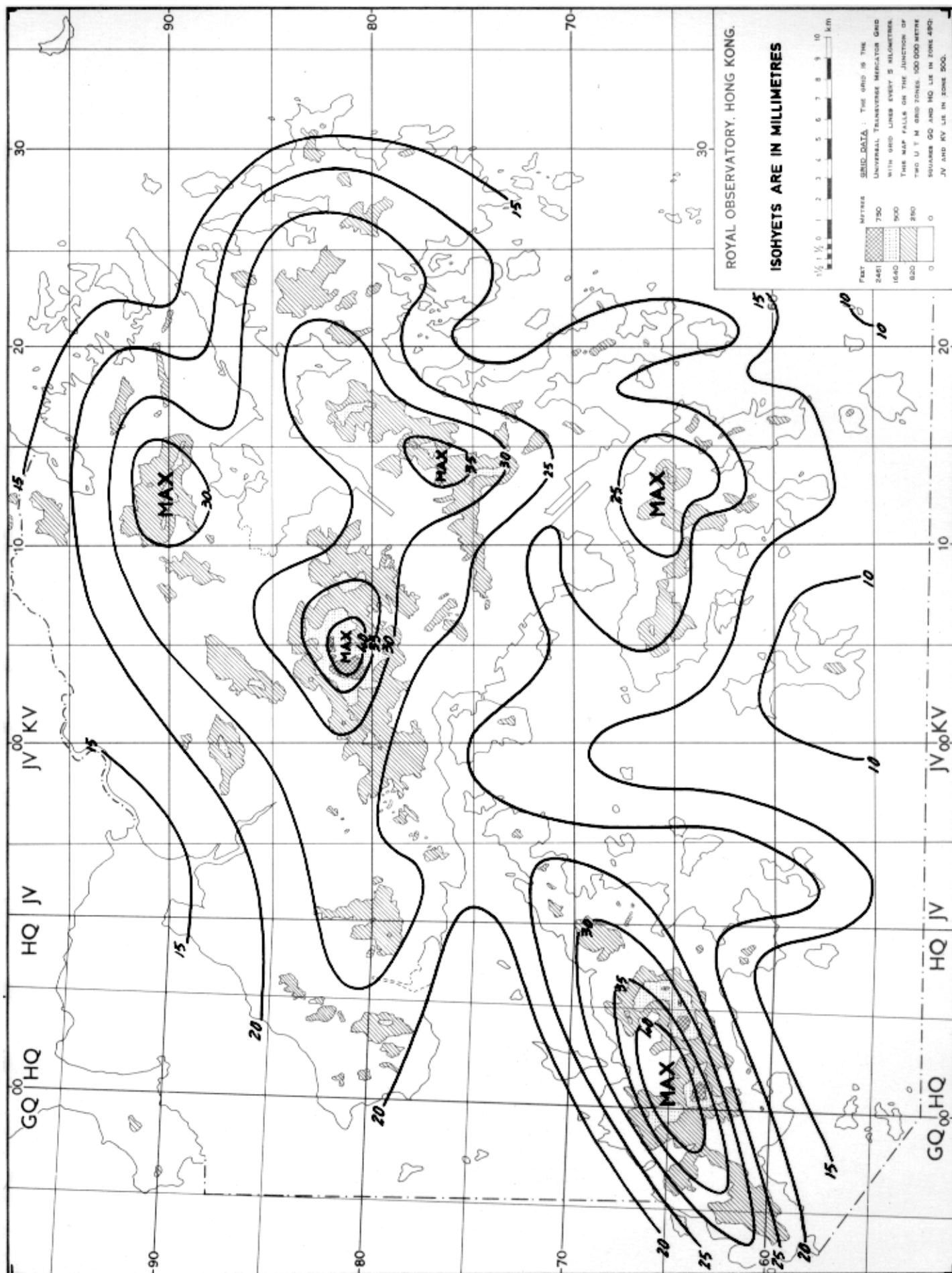


Fig. 13 Mean December rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)

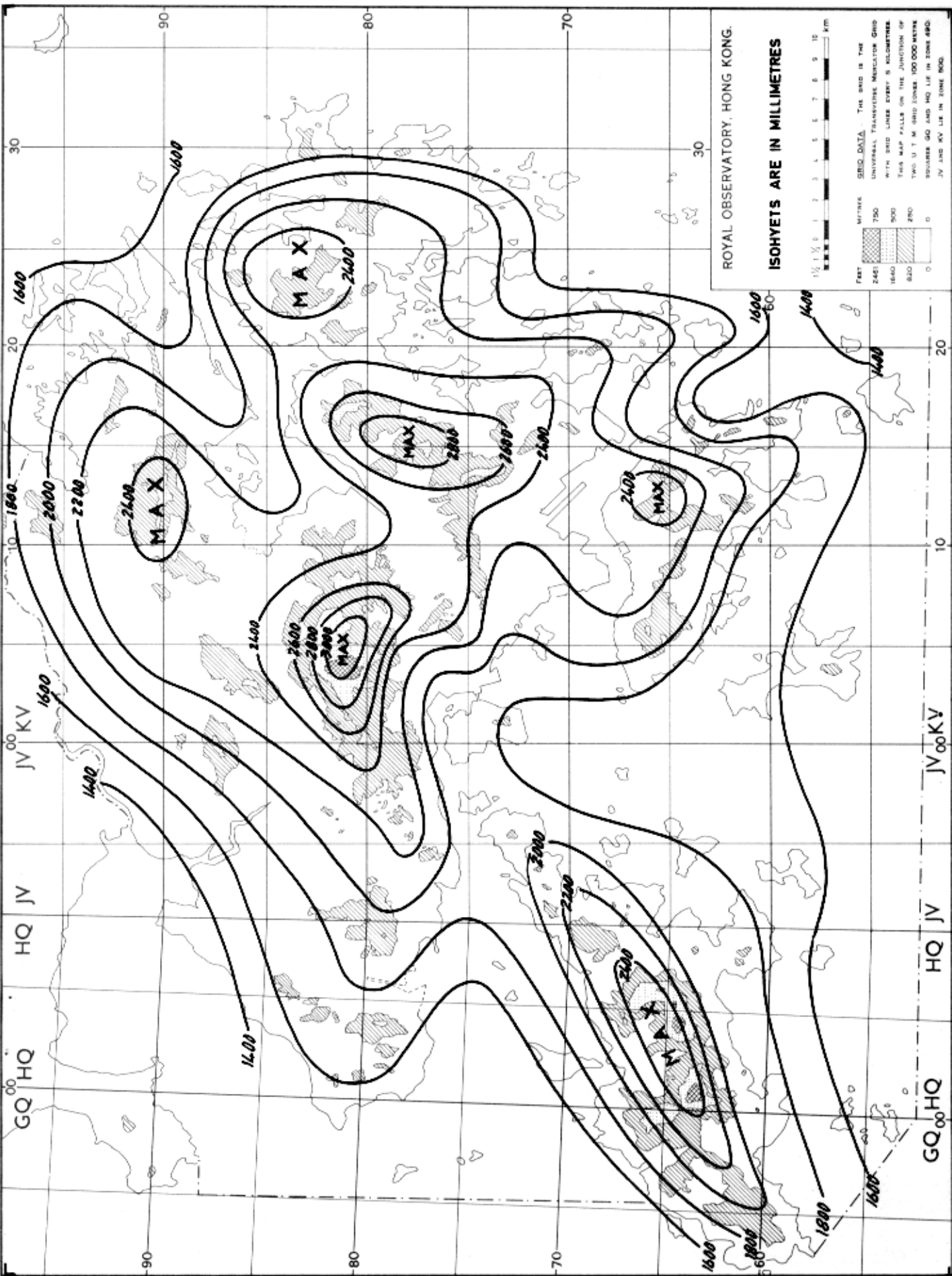


Fig. 14 Mean annual rainfall distribution map. (1953 - 1982)