

Foreword

The present editor has been carrying out a research project on the origin and differentiation of cultivated rice in the world for the past 20 years. For the purpose of observing and collecting the cultivated and wild rice species, several scientific tours in the Asian countries had already been done by many researchers, including the present authors. Those reports and experimental results had contributed not only to the theoretical studies but also to the breeding programs of the cultivated rice.

Theoretically, following the studies carried in Asian countries, studies in African areas loom up to be a necessary condition for realizing these purposes, because it has been well known that there is a long history of rice cultivation in Africa, and that the primitive types of cultivated species and wild species are now growing there. Rice species including both wild and cultivated ones show a great diversity in Africa. There are two kinds of cultivated species, as well as their respective wild relatives, and several wild species distantly related to the cultivated ones. Two or more species are often sympatric in the same habitat though some are annual and others perennial. Their habitats are surrounded with savannah, the environment varying in the wide range.

Accordingly, as a part of the project, Kagoshima University organized a scientific survey team for the purpose of studying on the distribution and ecotypic differentiations of wild and cultivated rice species in Africa. In 1984, they travelled through 4 countries, *i.e.*, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania after having got some informations in France. In 1985, they travelled through 5 countries, *i.e.*, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Liberia and Senegal.

Although these reports are concerned only with the limited items of the problem, it is hoped by the editor that these informations obtained could contribute towards a better understanding of the origin and alternation of cultivated rice, and towards a gene pool preservation and valuable using of rice.

We would like to express our deep gratitudes to the government officials of the African countries concerned. We must also express our thanks to the members of the Japanese Embassys in African countries, who helped us greatly in the travelling affairs and to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of the Japanese Government*.

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