

Rice Varieties Developed in the Japanese Empire 1930s-1950s

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This paper focuses on high-yield rice varieties in the Japanese Empire. The breeding was based on the Mendel's Law. For example, <Rikuu No.132> was the most famous and popular variety in the first half of 20th century in Japan. It prevailed not only in East-North Japan but also North Korea. <Norin No.1> was used in Manchuria as well as in Hokuriku-region. <Taichu No.65> spread in Taiwan and Java (and India after the WWII). All of them were developed by Japanese breeders such as TERAO Hiroshi (1883-1961), NAMIKAWA Shigesuke (1897-1937), and ISO Eikichi (1886-1972).

Even after the Empire had collapsed, a lot of Japanese rice varieties were still planted in some Asian countries. Then TOBATA Seiichi (1899-1983), an agronomist in Japan, insisted that ISO should be called a pioneer of the "Green Revolution" led by American large companies in 1960s-70s. Actually, some Japanese varieties were used in developing new variety by IRRI and CIMMYT. Certainly, such a rice breeding project succeeded in supplying a great deal of Japonica sticky-rice to Japan. However, after introducing such a new variety from Japan, a lot of discrepancies and conflicts appeared in colonial rural areas. The situation was similar to that of the "Green Revolution".

This paper aims at clarifying not only advantages but also - in particular - disadvantages of the "Green Revolution" in the Japanese Empire.