
FOREWORD

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Director General

IRRI first organized a symposium on rice genetics and cytogenetics in February 1963. The proceedings of that symposium, published in 1964, contain an excellent summary of the knowledge then available concerning different aspects of rice genetics and cytogenetics. Drs. T. T. Chang and Peter R. Jennings played an important role in organizing that gathering. Unfortunately, since then no major international symposium on rice genetics seems to have been organized, either at IRRI or elsewhere. In contrast, in other major cereals like wheat and barley, international symposia are held once in 5 years to review the state of knowledge of genetics and to develop collaborative research in fields such as gene mapping, identification and conservation of genetic stocks, and gene symbolization and nomenclature.

In spite of the great importance of rice to both human nutrition and the rural economy in many nations of the world, there has been no systematic effort to organize at periodic intervals symposia on rice genetics. A continuous updating of knowledge of the genetics of the rice plant and the precise identification of the nature of the genetic control of important economic characters have become particularly urgent in the context of recent advances in molecular biology and genetic engineering.

We at IRRI, therefore, welcomed a proposal from our Japanese colleagues for organizing the present meeting. Scientists of the Japanese Committee on Rice Gene Nomenclature and Linkage Groups and IRRI joined together and planned the details of the symposium. I am particularly grateful to Prof. M. Takahashi, who agreed to serve as Co-chairman, and Dr. H. I. Oka, who assumed the role of Secretary of the International Organizing Committee. Most of the preparatory work at IRRI was done by Dr. G. S. Khush and his colleagues in the Plant Breeding Department. Our gratitude also goes to the other members of the Organizing Committee, namely, Drs. J. N. Rutger, R. C. Chaudhary, S.M.H. Zaman, B.H. Siwi, Min Shao Kai, T. Kinoshita, M.H. Heu, M. Jacquot, A. Abifarín, T. T. Chang, Ray Wu, and M. Van Montagu.

After the idea of organizing the symposium was finalized, we were fortunate to have had the benefit of discussions with Dr. Alva App, Director for Agricultural Sciences of the Rockefeller Foundation, who generously came forward with the assurance of financial support. His address discusses the new initiative of the Rockefeller Foundation in the field of genetic engineering in rice. We are most grateful to Drs. App and Gary Toenniessen and the Rockefeller Foundation for their support.