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The situation in the seven Asian countries presented today differs greatly. Postharvest technology, the acquisition of which is crucial to the food industry, may be divided into two major areas. One is the reduction of postharvest loss, which is important for every nation in the world, in particular in the developing countries. Indeed, statistics show that more than 30% of the harvested grain is lost during storage in Southeast Asia. Efforts are being made to reduce the loss and the construction of the Rice Processing Complexes introduced by Dr. Lee, is an excellent solution to this problem in Korea. The other area is the production of value-added foods. Although basic research is required in this field and infrastructure must be put in place, there is a high potential for developing innovative value-added products and processes.

The seven Asian countries showed a similarity in the structure of the food industry, namely in the role of multinational food manufacturing companies. Multinational food manufacturing companies have established a strong foothold in Asia, accounting for a large share in the market in Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia. By transferring technologies and offering know-how in management, these large companies have so much to give and undoubtedly they are important to the region. However, we must always be cautious about the excessive dependence on these companies. Domestic food industry is important especially for developing countries in terms of supply of good food to the nation and promotion of economic growth. Although the current economic crisis is far from over, Southeast Asia remains a region with a wealth of raw materials. Plants and microbial flora occur here in abundance. Furthermore, we have a large variety of traditional foods on which emphasis should be placed because they can contribute to the activation of the industry. An in-depth analysis of traditional foods such as fermented foods in Asia may enable us to expand our own food industry, and in the long run, to contribute to the advancement of the local economies.