

## Convener's Address

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Respected Participants,

As the convener, I have the great pleasure and honor to welcome you at this symposium. I very much appreciate the participation of nine scientists from foreign countries to this symposium which the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Japan has projected.

The aim of this symposium is such as shown in the opening remarks by Dr. Ogura, Chairman of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Japan is very much interested in the development of research on agricultural technique in the Southeast Asian region and keenly feels the necessity that the researchers in these countries of this region would present their mutual problems in research on agricultural technique, introduce the present status of their researches and also take up the common problems among the countries to resolve them.

In the past years, the exchange of information and mutual visiting of researchers among some countries have often been done. However, there is no need to say how important and significant it is for the researchers to meet together in a hall to exchange their information and discuss about their common interests.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Japan took up the rice disease as the subject of this first symposium and appointed me to organize the symposium. So I formed a committee for this symposium and after many discussions, it was decided to have the symposium on the subject of "Rice diseases and their control by growing resistant varieties and other measures."

Concerning the kinds of rice diseases in this symposium, we have taken up mainly rice blast, bacterial leaf blight, and *Helminthosporium* leaf spot which are important at present or supposed to be important in the near future of the Southeast Asian region.

Virus diseases of rice plant, in spite of their importance, were not taken up in this symposium, because a symposium on virus diseases of rice plant had been held last April at the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines.

Needless to say, rice is the most important crop in the Southeast Asian region and the increase in rice production is an urgently important problem, meeting the increase in population.

Coping with this situation, the researches to improve the rice cultivating technique and increase the rice yields must be promoted actively and effectively.

At the same time, it is absolutely important to promote the researches on the factors which prevent the increase of rice yields. We cannot expect the increase of rice yields without the removal of these factors, and it is undeniable that the disease is one of the most important factors.

We have often gone through hard experiences in the past that the crop diseases broke out when we had taken the measures to increase the yields. Taking these experiences into consideration, we must develop the researches on the rice diseases and their control.

Features of disease occurrence and damages by diseases, and practical control measures must be different among the countries, according to the difference in their soil, climatic con-

ditions, cultural practice of rice and so on.

But if the participants in this symposium will exchange the information and discuss the problems with each other, taking this good opportunity, it will undoubtedly contribute to the development of their researches on rice diseases.

And it will also be helpful to establish the control measures of the present important diseases of rice in their countries, and to cope with diseases which are expected to break out in the near future.

I hope that this symposium will be the guiding star for the development of research on rice diseases and their control.

Great hopes are expected for this symposium which the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Japan has started as a part of the link in the programs for the development of agricultural researches in the Southeast Asian region.

Although there are supposedly some difficulties in language, I believe it is not so hard to overcome these difficulties, if we would proceed with this symposium in mutual understanding.

I want to say repeatedly my sincere gratitude to the appreciation and co-operation which every participant has shown for this symposium and I sincerely hope this symposium will result in success by our joint efforts.

Thank you.