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SIV-3

How the plant disease resistance genes can continue to recognize pathogen's infection.

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Most of plant R-gene's function is based on its recognizing ability, directly or indirectly, of the pathogen's corresponding avirulence gene products. Not to be overcome by the rapid mutation of pathogen's genome, plant R-genes also need to have some diversification mechanism, in addition to its maintenance mechanism in population. In order to analyze the mechanism of plant R-genes diversification, we have compared the base changes in the neighborhood region of rather isolated resistance genes, between the resistant and susceptible cultivars in rice and then in *Arabidopsis*. At the first search on the rice blast resistance gene *Pi-b*, the mutation rate was found to be more than ten times higher than the average of the genome, in about 60-80 kb region around the gene. This high-variability was not confined within the R-gene, of which LRR domain, the specificity determining factor, may have been subject to some diversification selection. Major types of the mobilization were accumulation of less than a few bases of small substitutions and insertion-and-deletions (indels). Density of small transposable elements like mites was about the same level as the other regions.

This tendency of high genome mobilization around R genes or its analogues was confirmed in *Arabidopsis* too, by comparing their sequences between ecotypes Columbia and Landsberg. Analysis about 15 kb around some rather isolated R gene and analogues revealed that the variability of the genome in this region is about 5 times higher than the average of the total genome, although there are variatons in the extent of this variability, from the normal level to more than ten times of that. Hypothesis that the mutations of *Arabidopsis* are explained as biallelic origins was refuted for R-genes that are experiencing high rate of genome mobilization.

To further characterize the R-gene analogue in the genome, more than 1000 R-gene analogues (RGA) were fine mapped in the rice genome by a combination of HEGS (High Efficiency Genome Scanning) system and RGA-scanning, both of them were developed by us. These systems can be readily applied for any other crops irrespective of the presence of genome sequence database.

SIV-4

Molecular marker assisted breeding for blast resistance in rice

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Rice blast disease caused by the fungal pathogen *Magnaporthe grisea* is one of the most serious and widespread diseases of rice worldwide. The deployment of resistant cultivars is the most effective and economical way of controlling blast disease, so breeding for resistant cultivars continues to be a priority in rice improvement (Kim *et al.* 1994). Comprehensive genetic studies on blast resistance have been conducted. At least 20 dominant genes conferring complete resistance to rice blast and 10 quantitative trait loci associated with partial resistance have been identified and several have been located via linkage to molecular markers (McCouch *et al.* 1994) and two of them, *Pi-b* and *Pi-ta*, have been cloned (Wang *et al.* 1999, Bryan *et al.* 2000).

Ilpumbyeo is an elite line widely cultivated in Korea. However, this cultivar has become increasing susceptible to blast, resulting in a decline of the area planted to this cultivar. The objectives of this study were to improve the blast resistance of Ilpumbyeo by introgressing the blast resistance gene(s) of *Moroberekan* by molecular marker-assisted selection in the backcrossing process; and to evaluate the effects of such improvement on the agronomic performance of Ilpumbyeo and the