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[\[Agriculture\]\[Food Security\] To Respond to Climate Change, Scholars Look for Regional Upland Rice Species](#)
[Agriculture][Food Security] To Respond to Climate Change, Scholars Look for Regional Upland Rice Species
([Chinese Version](#))

The Liberty Times (2010/11/15) Taiwan has been described as the rice kingdom. Present major rice species in Taiwan farms, the so-called “paddy rice” of Penglai rice strains, was introduced in the Japan-govern period, while the earlier farmed, drought-enduring upland rice species almost extinct now. Since ten years ago, a research team has kept visiting aboriginal tribes and collected about fifty species of upland rice. Among these species, about six are selected to be developed as local specialty, hoping that new drought-enduring rice species could be developed against the global warming and water shortage under the present circumstance of extreme climate change.

Rice is the staple food of Taiwan people. In the earlier days, because of the poor irrigation infrastructure at that phase, only the drought-resistant indica rice (*Oryza sativa* subsp. *hirsutum*, locally called “Tsailai rice”) could be farmed solely depending on the natural rainfall irrigation. During the Japan-governed period, Penglai rice species with better taste and texture was introduced in and developed, while the irrigation system was built as well; “paddy rice” began to appear in the farms in Taiwan. Because of paddy rice's high productivity and good taste, it had higher economic value and gradually replaced most of the farmed rice species in low lands. By now, only in some aboriginal tribes in mountain areas such as Ali Mountain area such drought-enduring upland rice species could be found.

About ten years ago, the research group, teamed up with Professor Mao-Sheng YEH at the Department of Agronomy, National Chung Hsing University, Chief of Chiayi Branch of Tainan District Agricultural Research and Extension Station Jeng-Chung LO, and Professor Chii-Dong LIU at National Chiayi University, began to collect the genetic resources of the folk plants. By now, about fifty kinds of upland rice have been collected, and five to six kinds among them have been selected for further development in Chiayi Branch.

Chii-Dong LIU said, actually these upland rice species were alien species that had been through long-term farming and hybridization, gradually adapting the environment. However, these rice strains seem to disappear. It is also difficult to observe them in the aboriginal tribes now. Because these upland rice strains could be steadily farmed in dry and infertile lands, they may be able to be developed into local special products, especially under the circumstance of climate change. Besides, the farming of these upland rice species could also benefit the aboriginal communities.

Further Information:

[The Liberty Times 2010/11/15](#) (Chinese)

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