



Study of Rice, its History and Importance, with a review of Nutritional Values and Rice Growing Regions in India

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Introduction : Oryza Sativa, it is believed, is associated with wet, humid climate, though it is not a tropical plant. It is probably a descendent of wild grass that was most



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likely cultivated in the foothills of the far Eastern Himalayas. Another school of thought believes that the rice plant may have originated in southern India, then spread to the north of the country and then onwards to China. It then arrived in Korea, the Philippines (about 2000 B. C.) and then Japan and Indonesia (about 1000 B. C.). When Alexander the Great invaded India in 327 B. C., it is believed that he took rice back to Greece. Arab travelers took it to Egypt, Morocco and Spain and that is how it travelled all across Europe. Portugal and Netherlands took rice to their colonies in West Africa and then it travelled to America through the 'Columbian Exchange' of natural resources. But as is traditionally known, rice is a slow starter and this is also true to the fact that it took close to two centuries after the voyages of Columbus for rice to take root in the Americas. Thereafter the journey of rice continues with the Moors taking it to Spain in 700 A. D. and then the Spanish brought rice to South America at the beginning of 17th century.

Rice is undoubtedly the most important cereal of the world providing 21% of global human per capita energy and 15% of per capita protein (Maclean et al., 2002). South Asia, one of the major centers for rice domestication, has been described as the “food basket” and “food bowl” of Asia. Among all the Asian countries, India is the prominent rice growing country accounting for about 20% of all world rice production. Apart from the traditional varieties, India is home to wide varieties of rice cultivars, landraces and many lesser known varieties that have been under cultivation since ages by farmers as well as local entrepreneurs. These cultivars were developed

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