

## Preface

Shinshu University International Symposium 2008, entitled “Sustainable Coexistence with Forest – Dietary Usage of Wild Plants and Agriculture in Bhutan–” was held on November 22, 2008 at Faculty of Agriculture, Shinshu University, Ina, Nagano in commemoration of publication of “Edible Wild Plants of Bhutan and Their Associated Traditional Knowledge”. This book is the first fruit of the joint research project “Wild Edible Plants of Bhutan” by Graduate School of Agriculture, Shinshu University and the Council for Renewable Natural Resources Research of Bhutan for three years.

The kingdom of Bhutan locates at the Himalayan southeastern foot and has a wide geographical variation from northern high Himalayan Mountains to southern sub-tropical lowland area. The forest covers most of the country and is an abundant source of wood and non-wood forest products (NWFPs) for the people. Edible wild plant is one of the important NWFPs. On the other side, forest has been conserved as a renewable natural resource by the people under their sustainable use. This means that people and forest have been coexisting with each other in Bhutan. Especially for the people living in mountainous area, sustainable forest use and traditional knowledge or belief in the effects of edible wild plants on human health are essential for their life and culture.

However in recent years, many kinds of foreign culture and technologies as well as everyday goods have been flowing into Bhutan. As for agriculture, we have serious apprehension that introduction of new vegetable cultivars and cultivation techniques may reduce the demand for edible wild plants and decrease sustainable forest use by the people. As a result, sustainable coexistence of people and forest will be disrupted and their associated traditional knowledge will disappear in near future. This situation is common to Bhutan and Japan. Especially in Shinshu (Nagano prefecture), most of mountainous villages have been severely suffering from depopulation and ruined forest causing from disruption of sustainable coexistence with forest.

From the viewpoint described above, two research scientists from Bhutan and three from Japan did the presentation on sustainable coexistence with forest from each specialty in the symposium. Information exchange and serious discussion among Bhutanese and Japanese scientists will promote successful development of this joint research project. In addition, proceedings of this symposium must be an edifying reference for people concerned with sustainable development, because sustainable development is a global problem in common to developing countries and developed countries.

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