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Patterns of rice diversity from SNP delineated the origin of the atypical *O. sativa* group in Madagascar from intermediary forms of the Indian sub-continent.

Nourollah AHMADI¹, Claire BILLOT^a, Gaëtan DROC^a, Dominique BRUNEL^c, Julien FROUIN^a, Alain RAMANANTSOANIRINA^b, Kenneth MCNALLY^d, Brigitte COURTOIS^a Jean-Christophe GLASZMANN^a

a: CIRAD, UMR AGAP, F-34398 Montpellier, France

b: FOFIFA, Ampandrianomby, B.P. 1690, 101 Antananarivo, Madagascar

c: Centre National de Génotypage 2 rue Gaston Crémieux CP 5721 91 057 Evry Cedex,

d: International Rice Research Institute, DAPO Box 7777, Metro Manila 1301, Philippines

1: Corresponding author: CIRAD, UMR AGAP, TA-A 108/01, Avenue Agropolis, 34398 Montpellier Cedex 5, France. e-mail: Nourollah.ahmadi@cirad.fr

Madagascar Island was one of the last major Old World areas where human settlement was accompanied by the introduction of *Oryza sativa*. Early studies had reported the presence of a rice group specific to Madagascar. Using 1536 SNP markers, we compared diversity patterns between a panel of 147 Malagasy rice varieties, a reference panel of 370 Asian varieties and representatives of wild relatives of *O. sativa*. Migration bottleneck has resulted in 30-40% reduction of diversity among the *indica* and *japonica* groups in Madagascar. The Malagasy panel showed many fewer *indica* x *japonica* recombinations compared to the Asian panel, suggesting that the two groups had undergone much less recombinations when migration to the Island occurred. The existence of the Malagasy-specific group (*Gm*) was confirmed. Its diversity patterns positioned it halfway from *indica* and *aus* groups. Madagascar also hosted cold tolerant tropical *japonica* varieties, with very long grain. The *Gm* group most probably arose from founder effect from intermediary forms of rice originated from either India or Sri Lanka that did not belong to the four majors *O. sativa* groups. It then underwent human selection for cold tolerance. Signs of inter-group recombinations were also observed, but recombinations did not seem to have played a major role in the dynamics of rice adaptation to the Island's agro-ecological constraints. Connections between *Gm* and *O. rufipogon* from its putative area of origin reinforce the hypothesis of multiple and diffuse domestication of *O. sativa* as opposed to two independent domestications occurring in two distinct geographical areas.