CONSTRUCTION OF A TRANSFORMATION VECTOR CONTAINING CUCUMBER MOSAIC VIRUS (CMV) COAT PROTEIN (CP) GENE AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN AGROBACTERIUM-TRANSFORMATION PROCEDURE FOR CHILLI

By

LIM JEE HIAN

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science
May 2003
CONSTRUCTION OF A TRANSFORMATION VECTOR CONTAINING CUCUMBER MOSAIC VIRUS (CMV) COAT PROTEIN (CP) GENE AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN AGROBACTERIUM-TRANSFORMATION PROCEDURE FOR CHILLI

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Chilli (Capsicum annuum L.) is one of the major vegetable and spice crops grown widely, yet it suffers great losses due to infection by various viruses, including Cucumber Mosaic Virus (CMV). The conventional breeding of chilli hybrids for improved disease resistance is a long process with problems of interspecific incompatibility. The objectives of the study were to construct a transforming vector containing Cucumber Mosaic Virus (CMV) Coat Protein (CP) and development of an Agrobacterium-transformation procedure which can offer solutions to these problems.

This study was approached primarily from the molecular aspect which the construct of a CMV CP has been successfully cloned. The cloned fragments were 655 bp and exhibited more than 90% similarity to those published CMV CP gene sequences.
SDS-PAGE analysis showed the size of the expressed coat protein to be similar to the predicted size of 30 kD based on the DNA sequences. Western blot analysis was also conducted to confirm the bacterial expressed coat proteins. All these verified that the cloned genes were translatable CMV CP genes.

A protocol for regeneration and genetic transformation was established for chilli. This study showed that GUS reporter gene can be transformed into chilli by using Agrobacterium-mediated techniques. Using Agrobacterium AGL0 with 24 hours co-cultivation was found to be the best way for chilli transformation as it showed a 100% success rate in the tested explants. However, Agrobacterium EHA 105 can also be used for chilli transformation with a shorter period, found to be 3 hours, co-cultivation period of 3 hours to achieve an 87.5% success rate.

Methods that permit normal shoot development have generally been found on regenerated decapitated seedlings. Formation of buds and elongated shoots occurred successfully by injuring the apical region of hypocotyls tissues of seedlings during curved stages. The best responses of regenerative ability showed shoot-like structures induced at the wounded sites on Murashige and Skoog’s (MSD) medium supplemented with 2 mg/L Benzyladenine (BAP) and 0.25 mg/L Indole-3-acetic (IAA). Direct shoot elongation appeared after transferring to hormone free MSD medium. These elongated shoots were excised and rooted on MSD medium with 0.05 mg/L IAA and until development into plants.
ABSTRAK TESIS YANG DIKEMUKAKAN KEPADA SENAT UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA SEBAGAI MEMENUHI KEPERLUAN UNTUK IJAZAH MASTER SAINS

PEMBINAAN VEKTOR TRANSFORMASI YANG MENGANDUNGI GEN CUCUMBER MOSAIC VIRUS (CMV) KOT PROTEIN (CP) DAN KEMAJUAN KAEDAH AGROBACTERIUM-TRANSFORMASI UNTUK CILI

By

LIM JEE HIAN

Mei 2003

Pengerusi: Profesor Marziah Mahmood, Ph.D.

Fakulti: Sains dan Pengajian Alam Sekitar

Cili (Capsicum annuum L.) merupakan salah satu sayuran utama dan tanaman rempah-ratus yang ditanam secara meluas, tetapi ia mengalami kerugian yang besar disebabkan rentan kepada berbagai jenis infeksi virus, termasuk Cucumber Mosaic Virus (CMV). Pembiakbakaan secara konvensional cili untuk memperbaiki rentan terhadap serangan penyakit memakan masa yang lama dengan wujud masalah interspesifik ketidak sepadanan. Objektif kajian ini ialah pembentukkan satu vektor transformasi yang mengandungi gen Cucumber Mosaic Virus (CMV) Kot Protein (CP) serta memajukan kaedah Agrobacterium-transformasi untuk penyelesaian masalah tersebut.

Kajian ini dimulakan dengan pembentukkan cassette gen CMV CP yang telah berjaya diklonkan. Fragmen yang diklonkan ialah 655 bp dan mempamerkan lebih daripada 90% persamaan antara rangkaian CMV CP yang telah diterbitkan. Analisis SDS-
PAGE mempamerkan saiz kot protein yang diekspresikan adalah sama dengan saiz ramalan 30 kD berdasarkan rangkaian DNA. Analisis “Western” juga dijalankan untuk mengesahkan pengekspresan kot protein. Kesemua ini membuktikan bahawa gen yang diklon merupakan gen CMV CP yang berupaya diterjemahkan.

Suatu protokol untuk penjanaan dan transformasi genetik telah dibentuk untuk cili. Kajian ini menunjukkan gen penyaringan GUS berjaya tertransformasi ke cili dengan kaedah berperantarakan Agrobacterium. Penggunaan Agrobacterium AGL0 dengan 24 jam kokultivasi didapati adalah cara terbaik untuk transformasi cili dengan 100% kadar kejayaan dalam eksplan yang diuji. Walau bagaimanapun, Agrobacterium EHA 105 juga boleh digunakan dengan 3 jam kokultivasi untuk mencapai 87.5% kadar kejayaan.

Kaedah penjanaan anak benih “decapitated” membolehkan perkembangan pucuk kelihatan normal. Penghasilan tunas dan pemanjangan pucuk terbentuk pada bahagian apical tisu hipokotil, anak benih melengkung yang dilukakan. Keupayaan penjanaan struktur “shoot-like” yang terbaik dijumpai pada bahagian luka anak benih di atas media Murashige and Skoog’s (MSD) dengan tambahan 2 mg/L Benzyladenine (BAP) dan 0.25 mg/L Indole-3-acetic (IAA). Pemanjangan pucuk secara langsung kelihatan selepas pemindahan di atas media MSD tanpa hormon. Anak pucuk yang memanjang akan dipotong dan dipindahkan ke media pengakaran dengan tambahan 0.05 mg/L IAA dan sehingga menjadi tumbuhan.
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I certify that an Examination committee met on 8th May 2003 to conduct the final examination of Lim Jee Hian on his Master of Science thesis entitled “Construction of a Transformation Vector Containing Cucumber Mosaic Virus (CMV) Coat Protein (CP) Gene and Development of an Agrobacterium-Transformation Procedure for Chilli” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulation 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

[Signature]

LIM JEE HIAN

Date: 3 Jul 2003
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL SHEETS</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION FORM</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

### 1 INTRODUCTION
1.1 Distribution                                                          1  
1.2 Economic Importance                                                    1  
1.3 Production Related Problem                                             2  
1.4 Aims of This Thesis                                                    4  

### 2 LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Properties of Cucumber Mosaic Virus (CMV)                              5  
2.1.1 CMV Infection in Chilli                                              7  
2.1.2 Transmission of CMV                                                 7  
2.2 Control in Family *Solanaceae*                                         9  
2.2.1 Conventional Methods                                                9  
2.2.2 Non-Conventional Methods                                            10  
2.2.3 Coat Protein-Mediated Protection                                     12  
2.3 Tissue Culture as a Basis for Plant Biotechnology                     15  
2.3.1 Tissue Culture and Regeneration                                      17  
2.3.2 Tissue Culture of Chilli                                            18  
2.4 Gene Transfer                                                         20  
2.4.1 Goals of Gene Transfer                                              20  
2.4.2 Gene Transfer by Particle Bombardment                                21  
2.4.3 Gene Transfer by *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*                         22  
2.5 *Agrobacterium* System                                                 23  
2.5.1 Ti Plasmids Vector Development                                      24  
2.5.2 Description of Plasmid Used *(pCAMBIA 1301)*                         26  
2.6 Plant Transformation                                                  27  
2.6.1 Factors Affecting Transformation Frequency                           29  
2.6.2 Verification of Transformants                                       29  

x
MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Construction Recombinant Coat Protein (CP) Gene

3.1.1 Cucumber Mosaic Virus Isolation and RNA Extraction

3.1.2 Primer Design for Coat Protein (CMV CP)

3.1.3 RT-PCR Amplification of the CP Gene Fragments from Total RNA of CMV Infected Chilli and Cucumber Leaves

3.1.4 Cloning of the RT-PCR Product (CP Gene) into pRSET Vector

3.1.5 Transformation of the Ligated Products into E. coli (TOP10F') Competent Cells

3.1.6 Protein Expression of CP Gene

3.1.7 Cloning of the CP Gene Containing cMyc Tag Gene Fragment into pJIT117 Vector

3.1.8 Cloning of the CP Gene Construct into Plant Expression Vector pCAMBIA 2300

3.1.9 Introduction of Plasmids (pCAMBIA::CMVCP) into Agrobacterium

3.1.10 Determination of Correct Incorporation of PCAMBIA::CMVCP into Agrobacterium

3.2 Tissue Culture Studies

3.2.1 Direct Regeneration from Explants

3.2.2 Explants Materials

3.2.3 Media Assessment

3.2.4 Rooting Media

3.3 Direct Regeneration from Decapitated Seedlings

3.3.1 Plant Materials

3.3.2 Explants Treatment

3.3.3 Explants Culture

3.3.4 Elongation Medium

3.3.5 Rooting of Shoots

3.4 Chilli Transformation

3.4.1 Effect of Various Concentrations of Hygromycin on Explants

3.4.2 Effect of Various Concentrations of Kanamycin on Explants

3.4.3 Mobilisation of pCAMBIA 1301 (GUS) into Agrobacterium

3.4.4 Transformation of Chilli

3.4.5 Verification of Putative Transgenic Plants

4 CLONING OF CMV CP GENE AND EXPRESSION OF CP GENE IN BACTERIA

4.1 Introduction
4.2 Results and Discussions 57
4.2.1 RT-PCR Amplification of the Coat Protein (CP) Gene Fragments from Total RNA of CMV Infected Leaves 57
4.2.2 Cloning of the RT-PCR Products into pRSET Vector 57
4.2.3 Sequence Comparison of the RT-PCR Products with Similar Sequences from Genebank 62
4.2.4 pRSET Vector as Expression Vector 62
4.2.5 Protein Expression and Western Blotting of pRSET::CMVCP 65
4.3 Conclusion 67

5 AGROBACTERIUM-MEDIATED TRANSFORMATION OF CHILLI 69
5.1 Introduction 69
5.2 Results and Discussions 71
5.2.1 Cloning of the CP with cMyc Tag Genes into pJIT117 Vector 71
5.2.2 Cloning of the CP Gene Construct in Plant Expression Vector pCAMBIA 2300 73
5.2.3 Introduction of Plasmids Pcambia::CMVCP into Agrobacterium 77
5.2.4 Mobilisation of pCAMBIA 1301 (GUS) into Agrobacterium 77
5.2.5 Effect of Various Concentrations of Hygromycin on Explants 80
5.2.6 Effect of Various Concentrations of Kanamycin on Explants 82
5.2.7 Chilli Transformation 84
5.2.8 Correlation Effect of Co-Cultivation Period and Expression of the GUS Gene in Transformed Tissues 84
5.3 Conclusion 97

6 DIRECT REGENERATION OF CHILLI 98
6.1 Introduction 101
6.2 Results and Discussions 101
6.2.1 Direct Regeneration from Explants 101
6.2.2 Direct Regeneration from Decapitated Seedlings 107
6.3 Conclusion 113

7 CONCLUSION 115

REFERENCES 117
APPENDICES 131
VITA 145
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tables</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Comparison of the percentage of positive GUS assay in transformed *Capsicum* explants with different strains of *Agrobacterium* and co-cultivation period on MS medium supplemented with 2 mg/L BAP and 0.25 mg/L IAA

2. Comparison of the percentage of shoots induced on MS medium supplemented with (A) 4 mg/L BAP, (B) 2 mg/L BAP, (C) 2 mg/L BAP and 0.5 mg/L IAA or (D) 2 mg/L BAP and 0.25 mg/L IAA

3. Percentage of buds initiated in MS medium supplemented with (A) 2 mg/L BAP and 0.25 mg/L IAA, (B) 2 mg/L BAP and (C) hormone free
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Electron microscopy of CMV
2. CMV infected chilli plant
3. Fruits and seeds of chilli var Kulai
4. Explant materials from day 10 seedlings
5. Explant materials were dipped in *Agrobacterium* for 5 min of inoculation time
6. RT-PCR of CMV coat protein gene
7. Schematic diagram of the CMV coat protein gene construct
8. PCR screening of pRSET::CMVCP construct
9. Confirmation of pRSET::CMVCP construct by R.E. digestion with *Nco I* and *Xba I* resulted in 2 bands
10. Alignment of CMV coat protein genes
11. SDS-PAGE of bacterial expressed CMV coat protein
12. Western Blot analysis of bacterial expressed CMV coat protein
13. Confirmation of the CP with cMyc insert was performed by digestion of the pJIT::CP vector with *Nco I* and *EcoR I*
14. pCAMBIA::CMVCP plasmid isolated from colonies and digested with *Kpn I*
15. Schematic diagram of CMV CP cloned into T-border of pCAMBIA 2300 vector
16. Strain of *Agrobacterium* harbouring pCAMBIA::CMVCP grown on LB plate supplemented with 100 µg/mL kanamycin and 100 µg/mL rifampicin
17. Confirmation of pCAMBIA::CMVCP plasmid transformed into *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Different concentrations of hygromycin to be used for selection of transgenic tissues after transformation with <em>Agrobacterium</em> containing GUS gene</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Different concentrations of kanamycin to be used for selection of transgenic tissues after transformation with <em>Agrobacterium</em> containing GUS gene</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Expression of GUS in cotyledon explants</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Expression of GUS in hypocotyl explants</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Graph showing the different co-cultivation period of strain AGL0</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Graph showing the different co-cultivation period of strain EHA 105</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Graph showing the different co-cultivation period of strain AGL1</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Comparison of GUS expression in control and transformed explants</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>(A) Picture showing the shoot-like structures and shoots produced were more vigorous and numerous on 2 mg/L BAP + 0.25 mg/L IAA media (B) Shoots emerged from cotyledon explants (C) Shoots emerged from hypocotyl explants</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Picture showed high amounts of vegetative buds that did not elongate or produced distorted leaves with the appearance of cauliflower leaves without any further elongation</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Picture shown buds formation can be obtained after a week of puncturing by syringe needle on media MSD (BAP + IAA) which produced the highest initiated buds. All seedlings which were able to produce buds managed to elongate further and develope into plants</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Picture shows different stages of shoot elongation within 2 months</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ABBREVIATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \mu L )</td>
<td>micro liter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \mu M )</td>
<td>micro molar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \mu g/mL )</td>
<td>microgram per milliliter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAP</td>
<td>benzylaminopurine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bp</td>
<td>base pair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cm</td>
<td>centimeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMV</td>
<td>Cucumber Mosaic Virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>deoxyribonucleic acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNTP</td>
<td>deoxynucleoside 5'-triphosphates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTA</td>
<td>ethylene diaminetetra acetic acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>gram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUS</td>
<td>( \beta )-glucuronidase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCl</td>
<td>hydrochloric acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAA</td>
<td>indole-3-acetic acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPTG</td>
<td>Isopropyl ( \beta )-D-Thiogalactopyronidase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kb</td>
<td>kilo base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kg</td>
<td>kilogram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LB</td>
<td>Luria and Bertani media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>molar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MgCl(_2)</td>
<td>magnesium chloride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mg/L</td>
<td>miligram per liter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MgSO₄  Magnesium sulphate
min       minute
mL        milliliter
mM        millimolar
MS        Murashige and Skoog (1962)
MSD       Murashige and Skoog with Dextrose
MW        molecular weight
NaCl      sodium chloride
NaOH      sodium hydroxide
NptII     Neomycin phosphotransferase II
°C        degree centigrade
%         percentage
PAGE      Polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
PBS       Phosphate buffered saline
PCR       polymerase chain reaction
PEG       polyethylene glycol
ppm       part per million
RNA       ribonuclease acid
SDS       Sodium dodecyl sulphate
TDZ       thidiazuron
TEMED     tetramethyl-ethylenediamine
Ti        tumor inducing
UV        ultra violet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v/v</td>
<td>volume over volume ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>var.</td>
<td>variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/v</td>
<td>weight over volume ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X-Gal</td>
<td>5-Bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl-β-D-galactoside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEB</td>
<td>yeast extract broth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Distribution

Chilli (Capsicum spp.) is an important nontuberous vegetable of the family Solanaceae besides tomato and potato. It is grown worldwide. Through its important contribution to nutrition and the economy, chilli becomes very closely associated with the Malaysian people and inextricably woven into their lives. Today this important cultivated plant is a source of income for many thousands of farmers. Since cultivation of chilli, people have noted the exceptional flavours, aroma and colourings, as well as its excellent spice quality. As a rich source of vitamins, it has become a popular and widely used spice throughout the world.

1.2 Economic Importance

Chilli is consumed throughout the world. Forty per cent of this crop is produced in Asia, and India is the leading producer in area and production. Greenleaf (1986) has reviewed the economic importance of this crop. In Malaysia, chilli ranks as the most popular fruit vegetable and occupies the highest hectarage among the fruit vegetables in this country (Ong et al., 1979, Inon et al., 1999). Capsicum annuum and Capsicum frutescens are the two main types of chilli cultivated in Malaysia. Between the two, C. annuum is more important in terms of economic and area cultivated. Recent report indicated that over 3,055 ha were planted with this crop, with a production of 21,890 tonnes chilli per year (Inon et al., 1999)
1.3 Production Related Problem

Although chilli is economically important it is highly susceptible to microbial diseases especially viral diseases, resulting in significantly reduction of crop yields. and sometimes even complete crop failure. Five types of viruses have been reported in infecting chilli in Malaysia, namely Cucumber Mosaic Virus (CMV), Chilli Venial Mottle Virus (CVMV), Tobacco Mosaic Virus (TMV), Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (TSMV), and Tobacco Leaf Curl Virus (TLCV) (Ong et al., 1979; Fujisawa et al., 1986; Mohamad Roff and Ong, 1992). Among these, CMV and CVMV were found to be the most common viruses infecting and damaging chilli in Malaysia which results in the losses of yield ranges from 10%-15% if infection came in late and may reach up to 60% if plants were infected at early stage (Ong et al., 1979). As a result, production of chilli is insufficient to meet the local consumption, and approximately RM30 million worth of chilli is imported annually (Ong et al., 1979).

The use of pesticides to control insect vector populations implicated in transmission of the virus represents an important tool to limit the incidence of viral disease outbreaks. However, none of these non-genetic control measures is likely to provide the long term answer to combat viral diseases, because of their expense and their sometimes questionable effectiveness and reliability. Moreover, current concerns about pollution and food safety are forcing hazardous pesticides out of the market.

Since pesticides are progressively abandoned, there is a growing urgency for the development of alternative methods to control viral diseases. Breeding for virus
resistance generally provides the best prospect for virus control in the long term. In the past, the introgression of genetic sources for host plant resistance that are naturally present within the gene pool of the crop involved, has been successfully applied to develop virus resistant crop cultivars for a considerable number of agronomically important crops (Hoisington et al., 1999).

Conventional breeding programs for viral resistance genes in local chilli varieties have been conducted (Ong et al., 1979), only a small group of genotypes were found to be resistant and they do not possess resistance to both CMV and CVMV. The limitations of conventional breeding and routine culture practices urge the need for the development of alternative forms of virus control that can be fully integrated within traditional methods.

This whole concept is an interesting trend. It started with the intention of Takebe in Japan to facilitate the infection of plants cells (tobacco) by plant viruses. A protoplast-to-plant system was achieved (Takebe et al., 1971), and the virus infected the protoplasts and replicated in them. Due to vast progress in molecular methodologies and fruitful investigations in several plant molecular-biology laboratories, especially on the biology and molecular genetics of the plant pathogen *Agrobacterium* spp.- did genetic transformation of plants become a reality.

In recent years, a lot of progress has been achieved on the understanding of plant virus genome organisation and functions (Martin et al., 1997; Parniske et al., 1998; Speulman et al., 1999). This knowledge, together with the virus derived resistance strategies, has been used for developing virus resistant cultivars.
Various DNA sequences (coding for the coat protein, movement protein, the polymerase gene as well as non-coding sequences) have been introduced, through genetic engineering into plant genomes in order to create viral resistance varsity. In some instances, high levels of resistance which justify for commercial applications have been successfully obtained (Comai et al., 1985; Powell et al., 1986; Gerlach et al., 1987; Hider et al., 1987). The viral coat protein (CP) gene, however, has thus far been more widely applied than any other viral sequence (Powell et al., 1986; Beachy et al., 1990). Beachy et al. (1990) reported that the transformation of tomato with the CP gene from Cucumber Mosaic Virus was shown to generate high levels of protection to CMV infection in tomato hybrids, not only when challenged by mechanical inoculation, but also when exposed to repeated inoculation by viruliferous aphids in open field.

1.4 Aims of This Thesis

It is foreseen that similar strategies can, therefore, be utilised to give coat protein-mediated protection against CMV diseases in chilli. The objectives of this research are

(a) to obtain a full-length translatable Coat Protein (CP) gene of a local strain of chilli infected CMV in bacteria and sub-clone it into plant expression cassette

(b) to develop and optimise an efficient Agrobacterium transformation protocols using GUS reporter gene as well as CMV CP gene

(c) to develop plant regeneration system for chilli.
2.1 Properties of Cucumber Mosaic Virus (CMV)

CMV (Figure 1) is an isometric particle, about 30 nm in diameter and consists of 180 subunits in pentamer-hexamer clusters. The molecular weight of the particle is about 5.8-6.7 \( \times \) \( 10^6 \) daltons and has a tripartite genome composed of four RNA species, three genomic and one subgenomic RNA (Peden and Symons, 1973). RNAs 1 (3.3 kb) and RNAs 2 (3.0 kb) encode proteins with molecular weights of 111 kDa and 97 kDa respectively, both of which are essential for virus replication (Nitta et al., 1988; Matthew, 1992). RNA 3 (2.2 kb) encodes for the viral coat protein with a mass of about 24 kDa (Daniels and Campbell, 1992). An additional protein with molecular weight of about 30 kDa, encoded by subgenomic RNA 3, is involved in the cell to cell movement of the virus (Davies and Symons, 1988).

CMV exists as a collection of strains with overlapping host ranges encompassing over 800 plant species (Douine et al., 1979; Kaper and Waterworth, 1981; Palukaitis et al., 1992). CMV exists as a variety of isolates which can be divided into two major serological subgroups defined as DTL and ToRS (Francki et al., 1979). DTL commonly induced more severe symptoms and occurred predominantly in the tropics and subtropics, whereas the ToRS isolates are prevalent in the temperate regions. Most of the approaches for virus detection could be used for characterization and relationship study of a virus. A number of methods and techniques which including biologically, serologically or physically approaches have been used to characterize CMV isolates.
Figure 1: Electron microscopy of Cucumber Mosaic Virus (CMV).