



(Invited review paper)

Xanthomonas campestris pv. *citri* infected with filamentous phage Cf1: Plaque turbidity, viral DNA integration, and immunity¹

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Abstract. Filamentous phage Cf1 isolated from *Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *citri* normally forms turbid plaques, and contains the integration life cycle. Genomic maps of Cf1, however, are still poorly defined. We show the localization of the plaque turbidity (pt) gene and of the integration-required region in the Cf1 phage genome. The involvement of pt gene in the regulation of Cf1 phage DNA synthesis was identified by substituting alternate DNA fragments between wild type and clear-plaque forming mutants. The functionally required region for integration of Cf1 were identified by analyzing the site-specific integration of plasmids containing different phage DNA fragments in the absence of any functional origin of replication. In the present study, a new phage mutant producing smaller plaques was obtained. This phage can infect Cf1 lysogens, and hence was named Cf1tv. Host cells infected by Cf1tv can release large numbers of phage particles. Furthermore, the ability to integrate Cf1tv DNA into the host chromosome is lost. Sequence data revealed that an alteration of one base pair occurred in the Cf1tv genome.

Keywords: Filamentous phage; Immunity; Plaque turbidity; Site-specific recombination.

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Introduction

Filamentous bacteriophages, 1–2 µm long and 6–7 nm wide, are hosted by gram-negative bacteria. Upon infection, the phages are absorbed at the tips of the threadlike host-bacteria appendages known as sex pili (Marvin and Hohn, 1969). Filamentous phages contain single-stranded DNA; their length is determined by the size of the DNA they encapsulate. Unlike other bacteri-

ophages, filamentous phages are released from growing and dividing cells without marked harm to the cells. These carrier-strains of bacteria can be subcultured and will continue to release virus particles (Marvin and Hohn, 1969). Many filamentous phages have been identified in various bacteria. These include: (1) F-specific phage of *Escherichia coli*: f1, M13, ZJ/2, Ec9, AE2 and HR (Russel and Model, 1988); (2) N pili-specific phage of *E. coli*: IKe (Peeters et al., 1967); (3) *Salmonella* phage: If1 and If2 (Lawn et al., 1967); (4) *Pseudomonas* phage: Pf2 and Pf3 (Minamishima et al., 1986); (5) *Vibrio* phage: v6 (Marvin and Hohn, 1969); (6) *X. campestris* pv. *citri* phage: øLf (Lu, 1985); (7) *X. campestris* pv. *oryzae* phage: Xf (Kuo et al., 1969); (8) *X. campestris* pv. *citri* phage: Cf1 (Kuo et al., 1987a,b).

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The well-known bacteriophages f1, fd, and M13 are similar to one another, differing only in a few nucleotide positions in the whole genome. The genome of f1 phage contains 6.4 kilobases (kb) of single-stranded DNA encoding ten gene products and 0.5 kb of noncoding intergenic region. Three of the phage-encoded proteins (gIIp, gVp and gXp) participate in phage replication. When a phage enters, the parental "plus" single-stranded DNA is converted into a supercoiled, double-stranded molecule (RFI). Multiplication of the f1 genome proceeds according to a rolling-circle type of replication (Geider and Kornberg, 1974). Each replication round is initiated by gIIp, which creates a DNA replication site by introducing a nick in the viral strand of RFI DNA (Meyer et al., 1979). gXp, identical to the C-terminal one-third of the gIIp, inhibits at least some of the activities of the gIIp (Fulford and Model, 1988b). gVp of f1, a 9.8-kDa single-stranded DNA binding protein, has two known functions in the late stage of f1 replication. First, it sequesters the viral strands displaced by the rolling-circle replication of the plus-strand DNA to prevent their reconversion to double strands. Second, any gVp not bound to DNA can repress the translation of gene II (Fulford and Model, 1988a). Regulation of gIIp activity is crucial to the unique life cycle of f1 phage.

A number of clear-plaque mutants of f1 have been characterized. Some contain base alterations in the leader sequence of gIIp and others contain alterations in the coding region of gIIp or gVp (Michel and Zinder, 1989 a,b; Dotto and Zinder, 1984 a,b; Faber and Ray, 1980). Furthermore, the clear plaque mutants of f1 produce a lower phage yield than do the wild type (Marvin and Hohn, 1969).

General Characteristics of Cf1

Filamentous phage Cf1 was isolated from *Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *citri*, which is a pathogenic

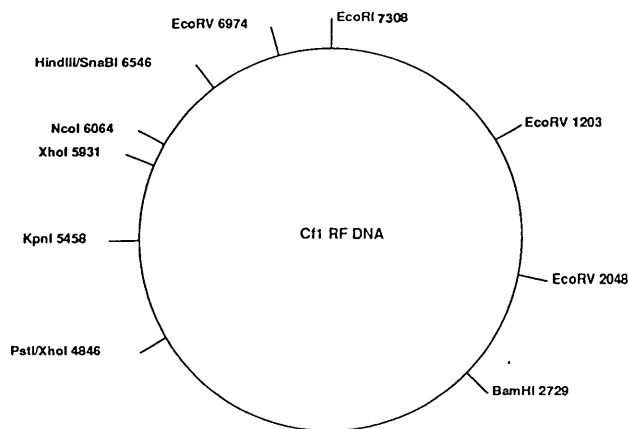


Fig. 1. The restriction map of Cf1 RF DNA.

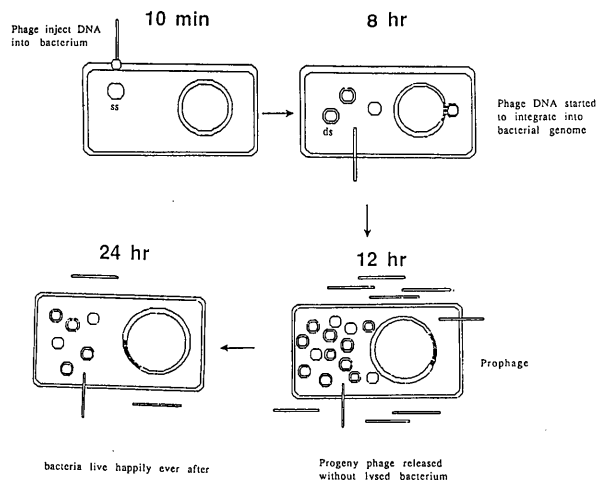


Fig. 2. Schematic diagram of the lysogenic cycle of Cf1 and phage production in infected cells. ss, single-stranded phage DNA; ds, double-stranded phage DNA.

bacterium of citrus canker. The original filamentous phage Cf and Cf16 were isolated from the same host bacterium (Dai et al., 1980, 1987). The general properties and the morphology of these three isolates are the same, but they are believed to differ somewhat in DNA sequence (Kuo et al., 1987a). The genome size of Cf1 is 7308 bp (Kuo et al., 1991). The length of Cf1 is about 1,157 nm, and its diameter is 6 nm (Kuo et al., 1987a, b). DNA isolated from Cf1 phage particles is in the single-stranded form, but after infection the phage DNA is converted into the double-stranded (RF) form in infected cells (Kuo et al., 1987a, b). The restriction map of Cf1 is shown in Fig. 1.

During infection, Cf1 phage can undergo a lysogenic cycle and does not greatly affect the growth of cells (Kuo et al., 1987a). Our experiments show that the integration of phage DNA into the host chromosome can be detected at 8 h after infection, and that both single-stranded and double-stranded phage DNA could be detected at 12 h after infection. In addition, the phage titer of Cf1-infected cells can reach 2×10^{10} pfu/ml (Shieh et al., 1991) after 12 h of infection. It is suggested that Cf1 phage are produced progressively during the lysogenic life cycle. A schematic diagram of the lysogenic cycle of Cf1 phage is shown as in Fig. 2.

The Plaque Turbidity Gene of Cf1

Under normal cultivation conditions, Cf1 forms turbid plaque, but clear-plaque mutants derived from Cf1 phage are observed at a frequency of approximately



Fig. 3. A plate showing clear-plaque mutants (marked by arrows) among the turbid plaques of Cfl.

10^{-3} . The phages that form turbid plaque are named Cflt and those forming clear plaque are named Cflc (Fig. 3). In contrast to clear-plaque mutants from fl, Cflc possesses higher phage-exporting ability and DNA replication rate than does the wild type. Analysis of DNA sequence data shows base alterations or deletions in the region upstream of the *pt* gene in Cfl (Shieh et al., 1991).

Three characteristic differences between Cflt and Cflc phages have been observed: 1) The growth of Cflc-infected cells is reduced compared with that of uninfected cells, while growth of Cflt-infected cells remains normal; 2) The number of phages released from Cflc-infected cells is 20-fold greater than that from Cflt-infected cells; 3) Spot complementation tests indicate that the phenotype of turbid plaque is dominant and that of clear plaque is recessive (Shieh, 1992). It seems that a gene linked to this plaque turbidity may act as a genetic marker.

GCAACGCACAAACCGCCTGGGAAAAAGTAGGCAGTGGTGTGCGCCACAGAACGAGCAGGTG	60
CCATCAGCCACGATAGAACTCCATGGCAGCGTCACGTGCATCAGCAGCATCGGTGCGCGA	120
TGCAAAATAGCTCTGTTC AACAGCGTTGCCGTTGACGACGATGGTCAAGACGTAAATGCG	180
GGGGCCGCCCTGCACTCGAGCTGGCGCAATCATCCATGCAACAGATCGAGACTCAGCCAC	240
GACGCACCTCGCGATATGCGATAGCGACCAATGCGGGCTTGCTCAATTTGAGCAACCATCG	300
CGTCGTGCTTGCGATCAAGACACCAACAGATCACAGCGACGATTGCGTACCCGGTGAGCA	360
CGCAGATCGACACGAGAATGTGCAGCGCCAAAAGCTGGCCCAGGATCGAATATGGATGCA	420
CGGTGTAGCCCCCTCCCCCTGCCCCCTTGACGCGGACCCCGGAGGGGAGCCGGGGGTGCGCG	480
GTGCTTAGGGTTGCCTAAGCACGGGAGCATGTATAGTTTCACTGTCTCTGTCAAGA	540
AAAACCTGTCATGGACCATGTAAATAATTTGCTTGACACCGTGCGCAAGTCGTGCGCCAT	600
K P V M D H V N N L L D T V R K S C A I	31
ACCGTCAGACAACATGTTGAGCAAAAAAATTGGAGTGACGCGGGCGCTGATAAGCGGCTG	660
P S D N M L S K K I G V T R A L I S G W	51
GCGCGTTGGCCGGTACCCGGTTCCCTGACGCACGAATTGCAGAGCTATACGCTATGGCACA	720
R V G R Y P V P D A R I A E L Y A M A H	71
TCTGGATGGCGCGCAATGGATGGCGAAAAATTCAGCCGAAGCAGCGGCATCGCCGGCTGA	780
L D G G E W M A K I H A E A A A S P A E	91
AAAAGCGCTATGGCGATCAGTGTGGACAGGCTAAGCGCGGGCCGCGGTTGGTGGCGCT	840
K A L W R S V L D R L S A A A A V V A L	111
GCTGGTCTGCGGGTACACACAGGGGCGCATGAGGCGCTGCTAGCGGCCCTCTCGCCGGT	900
L V L A V H T G A H E A L L A A L S P V	131
AGCCGTTACCCACCCCTATACATTATGCGAAGTGTGCTGTTGACGCTGCTGTGCGCCCT	960
A V T H P L Y I M R S V L L T L L C A L	151
GGCGGCCTATCACTGCTGGTCCCTCCACAGGAAGCGGACTGGACAATGACGCTAGACACC	1020
A A Y H C W S L H R K R T G Q *	166
TACGATCGCGTAGACCTGACCGGCCCTTGGGCGGGTTTGGTTTTCAGGGGCACCGGTTC	1080
TTACCCCCGAGAAATTACGACATCGAACCCTGCGATATGCGGTATTGGGCGCTGACATGC	1140
GCGATCGCACGGGAATGGTCACTGTTGATGTCAGAAGAACGCAATGCGCGATCGGCGAAT	1200
CCTCGAAAGCCTACTGCCACAAGATCTCCAGGGTCTCGTTTGTCTCGAGGCGCAGACGTG	1260
ATCTATCTGCGGGACGTGCTGCTGCAG	

Fig. 4. The nucleotide sequence of the Cflt *pt* gene. The predicted amino acid sequence is shown below the Cflt DNA sequence. The base alterations in Cflc (nucleotide 442 and 491) and in Cfltv (nucleotide 509) mutants are shown with capital letters above the Cflt DNA sequence. The deletion site is marked by an arrow. The potential ribosome binding site and terminator signal are underlined.

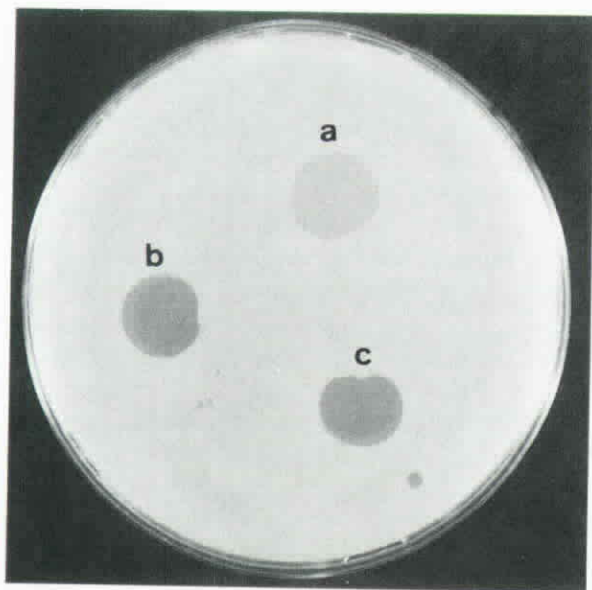


Fig. 5. Spots formed by a) Cf1t, b) Cf1c-1, and c) Cf1tdK.

In an attempt to identify the genomic differences between Cf1t and Cf1c, DNA fragment substitution studies were performed. They indicated that a NcoI/KpnI fragment of 591 bp was responsible for the determination of plaque turbidity. The analysis of sequence data for four Cf1c isolates revealed base pair alterations (Cf1c-1, Cf1c-2, and Cf1c-3) and a deletion (Cf1c-4) located in the upstream region of an open reading frame II (ORFII) which might encode an 18.2 kDa protein (Fig. 4).

KpnI cuts exclusively in the ORFII codon region between codons 55 and 56, without interrupting other ORFs (Fig. 4). KpnI digestion of Cf1t RF DNA followed by Klenow enzyme treatment generated a -4 frameshift mutant, which has a new stop codon TGA between codon 69 and 70 of ORFII. The resulting recombinant phage was named Cf1tdK, and forms clear plaque (Fig. 5) (Shieh, 1991). These observations suggest that ORFII participates in the conversion of turbid plaque into clear plaque, and hence this gene was named the plaque turbidity (pt) gene.

The 5' upstream sequence has two unique aspects: the start codon of ORFII is preceded by a sequence which shows good base pairing with the 3' end of 16 S rRNA (Fig. 4), and the 70-nucleotide sequence in the upstream region of ORFII is able to form stem-loop structures. It has been shown that specific single-strand nucleotides in terminal loops or bulges are required in translational operator sequences (Romaniuk et al., 1987). The remaining nucleotides must be specified so that RNA can fold into its characteristic secondary hairpin loop structures (Romaniuk et al., 1987; Peattie et al., 1981). In the clear-plaque mutants of Cf1c, nucleotides 442 and 491 are located in the potential stem-loop structures up-

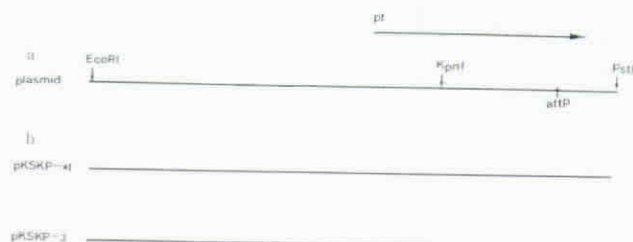


Fig. 6. Schematic diagram of pt gene carried by plasmids pKSKP-3 and pKSKP-4. a) localization of pt gene in EcoRI/PstI (2.5 kb) DNA fragment of Cf1 phage. b) EcoRI/PstI and EcoRI/KpnI DNA of Cf1 in plasmid pKSKP-4t and pKSKP-3.

stream of the pt gene (Fig. 4). The deletion or the C to G transitional mutation at nucleotide 442 will create single-base bulges in addition to the original bulge in the structures, whereas the T to C substitution at nucleotide 491 in clear plaque mutants will alter one of the four bases in the terminal loop of the structures. Based on these observations we believe that base alterations or deletion in clear-plaque mutants may influence the expression of the pt gene, and that this in turn affects plaque turbidity (Shieh, 1991).

Function of pt Gene

Synthesis of phage DNA, both single-stranded and double-stranded, and production of phages were lower in Cf1t-infected cells than in Cf1c- and Cf1tdK-infected cells. The transformants of host cells carrying the integration plasmid pKSKP-4t, which contains the intact pt gene, showed lower phage yield than did transformants carrying pKSKP-3 plasmid, which contains the disrupted pt gene (Fig. 6). This suggests that the function of pt gene is related to the inhibition of phage DNA synthesis and hence contributes to low phage yield (Shieh, 1992). In f1 phage of *E. coli*, clear-plaque mutants are attributed to the mutation of gIIp and gVp, both of which are required for phage DNA replication. Based on these observations, we have compared the peptide sequence of Cf1 pt gene with those of gIIp and gVp of f1, but we could not find significant homology between them. Although pt gene protein shares up to 59.6% amino acid homology with gIIp and up to 15.4% homology with gVp, they share only a few identical amino acids.

In addition, clear-plaque mutants have also been observed in other phages. For example, ϕ C31 phages of *Streptomyces* possess c gene mutations and produce clear plaque. It is well known that c gene (repressor gene) is essential for the maintenance of lysogeny (Harris et al., 1980; Sinclair and Bibb, 1988). In lambda phages of *E. coli*, mutations that occur in the cI repressor cause clear plaque phenotype and concomitantly

destroy the ability of lambda to integrate by site-specific recombination (Arber, 1983). Both the *cI* gene protein of lambda phages and the *c* gene protein of ϕ C31 phages contain the potential helix-turn-helix motif, a characteristic of DNA binding proteins (Pabo and Sauer, 1984). In light of this we have searched for potential DNA binding motifs in the *pt* gene protein. Residues 34 – 53 of *pt* gene protein appear to be likely candidates for this function (Shieh, 1992).

The Integration of Cf1t and Cf1c DNA into Host Chromosome

It is well known that some bacteriophages can integrate their DNA into host chromosomes as part of their reproduction cycle. This has been shown for restricted double-stranded DNA phages (Barksdale and Arden, 1974). Phage Cf1 undergoes a lysogenic cycle, which does not gravely affect the growth of cells, has a low phage yield, and renders its host immune to superinfection. The prophage is not cured by agents such as acridine orange, antiphage serum, or ethidium bromide (Russel and Model, 1988). The integration of Cf1 DNA into host DNA has been shown by Southern blot analysis (Kuo et al., 1987a). Furthermore, since the integrated DNA fragment patterns were always identical in different infected cells, one copy of Cf1 DNA is integrated at the same site on host chromosomes (Kuo et al., 1987a,b).

There are many well-characterized examples of site-specific recombination among Gram-negative bacteria. The integration and excision of bacteriophage lambda is the most thoroughly studied system, but others include resolution of *Tn₃* and gamma-delta transposition (Kitt et al., 1983), bacteriophage P1 integration (Hoess et al., 1980), and site-specific inversion (Plasterk et al., 1983, 1984; Kahmann et al., 1985). Lambda is a temperate bacteriophage that can establish stable lysogeny by turning off its lytic functions and integrating its DNA into the host chromosome following the Campbell model. Integration occurs by a single reciprocal site-specific recombination event between the phage attachment site (*attP*) and the *attB* site on the host chromosome (Nash, 1977). As a result of integration, two additional attachment sites, *attL* and *attR*, are generated on the left and the right site of the prophage genome, respectively. The recombination takes place within a 15-base-pair sequence that is common to both attachment sites (Nash, 1977; Landy and Ross, 1977), and requires the phage protein Int (Gingery and Echols, 1967; Zissler, 1967; Gottesman and Yarmolinsky, 1968) and several host proteins (Arber, 1983). Excision of the prophage, a reversal of the integration process, requires an additional phage protein, named Xis, which works in concert with Int (Kaiser and Masuda, 1970; Guarneós and Echol, 1970). Control of site-specific recombination and direction (integration

vs. excision) depend upon the regulatory mechanisms governing production of the two phage proteins: Int and Xis. The *xis* gene, *int* gene, and phage *att* site map adjacent to one another and thus form a compact 1.5-kilobase cluster of functions devoted to site-specific recombination (Enquist and Weisberg, 1977).

In Cf1, the phage attachment site has been localized to a unique KpnI/PstI fragment approximately 600 bp long (Kuo et al., 1987a). Furthermore, the integration region in the phage and in the host chromosome, and the two junctions in the lysogen chromosome have been isolated and sequenced. The phage and host attachment sites share an identical 15-bp core, 5'-TATACATTATG CGAA-3' (Fann, 1988).

It is suspected that a Cf1 phage-encoded protein exists which participates in integration and in retaining *attP* site binding ability. Hence, we are also interested in characterizing the minimal information necessary for Cf1-directed site-specific recombination in the Cf1 genome. We investigated whether integration required any region in addition to the *attP* site of Cf1 by analyzing the site-specific integration of plasmids containing phage *attP* sites and different Cf1 DNA fragments in the absence of any functional origin of replication. Our results suggest that besides *attP*, 2.0 kb of EcoRI/KpnI DNA fragments of Cf1 are also required for the integration function (Fig. 7). The participation of these DNA fragments in integration was severely impaired by adding amber stop linkers at NcoI, SnaBI, and EcoRV sites. This implies that EcoRI/KpNI DNA fragments might encode protein(s) (Shieh, 1992). Sequencing data analysis will be performed in the near future to identify an open reading frame involved in this DNA region.

The integration abilities of Cf1t and Cf1c have also been analyzed by using site-specific integration of plasmids in the absence of any functional origin of replication in *X. campestris* pv. *citri*. Results suggested that both Cf1t and Cf1c have the integration function (Shieh, 1992).

Virulence and Immunity Gene

A new phage mutant was isolated through enrichment of Cf1t lysogen cultures. This phage, designated Cf1tv, could superinfect Cf1t lysogens and cause them to lose their immunity. When the host bacteria were infected with Cf1tv, all infected cells released large quantities of phage particles. There was no latent period or burst found in the phage's one-step growth curve. Instead, the phage were continuously released soon after infection.

Cf1tv mutants can spontaneously arise from Cf1t with a high frequency. Therefore, we determined the gene responsible for immunity. DNA fragment substitution studies showed that a 590 – bp NcoI/KpnI fragment was responsible for the determination of phage immunity.

Sequence data revealed that only one base pair differed between Cf1t and Cf1tv (Fig. 4). When T was changed to A at nucleotide 509, located in the region required for integration, Cf1t phage lost its immunity and concomitantly lost its integration ability. It seems that Cf1tv is a virulent derivative form of Cf1t. The exact open reading frame(s) involved in phage immunity will be identified in the near future.

Conclusion

In filamentous phage systems, the infected cells are not killed or lysed. On the contrary, infection can persist for an indefinite number of cell divisions. To establish and maintain such a persistent infection, the phage must be able to adapt its replication cycle to the metabolic growth and division requirements of the host. In f1, gVp mediated translational repression of the synthesis of gIIp, which is the phage-specific DNA replication, has been envisioned as one of the mechanisms by which the phage exerts this control.

In Cf1, the infected cells containing intact pt gene have a lower phage yield than do those infected with phage containing a disrupted pt gene (Shieh, 1992). This implies that the pt gene participates in negative regulation of phage DNA production. Moreover, pt gene protein of Cf1 is not directly related to the phage integration function, but it contains the potential DNA-binding domain as observed in cI repressor of lambda and other phage DNA-binding proteins. Further studies are in progress to identify the target binding site of the pt gene protein.

It has never been reported that f1 possess a lysogenic life cycle. Cf1, however, retains the lysogenic life cycle (Kuo, 1987a,b). The participation of the integration function is impaired by adding amber stop linkers at the restriction enzyme sites in 2.0 kb of EcoRI/KpnI DNA fragments of Cf1. This implies that the phage-encoded protein(s) participate in integration (Shieh, 1992). Development of an in vitro assay system and identification of proteins participating in phage integration are in progress.

In lambda phage, immunity is determined by the cI gene, the cro gene, and the operator sites where they act. Both the cI gene and the cro gene of lambda determine the entry into the lysogenic or lytic life cycle (Arber, 1983). In Cf1, our results show that Cf1tv phage may lose the lysogenic life cycle due to a one-base pair alteration. We are now looking for evidence of regulation of the lysogenic life cycles in Cf1.

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柑橘潰瘍病病原菌線狀噬菌體 Cf1 之溶菌斑混濁度，病毒 DNA 之插入及免疫性

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線狀噬菌體 Cf1 的寄主為柑橘潰瘍病病原菌，所呈現的溶菌斑為混濁型（turbid），而且具有潛溶性的生活史。然而 Cf1 的基因組尚未被研究完全，本篇論文將溶菌斑混濁度基因及插入染色體所需的區域定出。關於溶菌斑混濁度基因是利用突變株及野生株之噬菌體 DNA 片段交換的方法定出的；而插入寄主染色體所需的區域乃是利用不具複製功能的質體來分析。目前本實驗室亦純化出一較小溶菌斑之突變株，此突變株會感染 Cf1 之 lysogen，被感染之寄主，會釋放出大量的噬菌體，並且失去將噬菌體 DNA 插入寄主染色體的現象，因此將此突變株命名為 Cf1tv，經由 DNA 序列分析結果顯亦在 Cf1tv 之基因組中有一鹼基發生突變。

關鍵詞：線狀噬菌體；免疫性；溶菌斑；特定位置基因重組。