

All Ears for Nobel Winner

September 6, 2007 –The RIKEN Center for Developmental Biology (CDB) was recently the stage for one of a series of lectures organized by Japan's leading newspaper, The Daily Yomiuri, and the national broadcaster, NHK. This series, titled, "Forum: Creativity in the 21st Century with Nobel Laureates in 2007," brought together Japan's Nobel laureates from the fields of science and technology, with the CDB playing host to Ryoji Noyori, president of RIKEN and winner of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 2001 for his work on chirally catalyzed hydrogenation reactions. The underlying aim of the lecture series was to foster a sense of intellectual curiosity and creativity among high school students, and the event held at the CDB saw Dr. Noyori address a group of high school students.



Touching on a broad range of subjects as part of his lecture, Noyori recounted a number of stories about his upbringing in Kobe—home to the CDB—and expounded on the work that resulted in him being awarded the Nobel Prize. The subsequent question and answer session produced a barrage of questions from the students, ranging from the expected technical questions to interest in the life of a research scientist. Taking the time to answer every question, Noyori paid particular attention to his ideal of what the relationship between science, society, and culture should entail. The lecture had been preceded by Noyori leading the students in carrying out an experiment with the help of Takasago International Corporation, in which students had the chance to gain hands-on experience in learning about optical activity generated through polar plane rotation brought about by a sugary product.

In addition to the lecture given at the CDB, this series also saw Japan's other Nobel Prize winners give similar lectures in Tokyo, Fukuoka, and Sapporo.