

14/9/1999

## PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT CLIPPINGS SERVICE

Newspaper: **Riyadh Daily**

Date: **February 20, 1999**

Volume: **XIV No. 1409**

Date: **Dhul-Qada 4, 1419H**

### Subject of the Clipping: *KFIP contributing to Science*

*The King Faisal International Prize (KFIP) for Science is contributing, in the context of new scientific inventions, to human welfare either directly or indirectly, said the co-winner of the KFIP for Science, 1999, Professor Ryoji Noyori of Japan. The Japanese scientist in a fax interview said, I was greatly surprised at the news. Prof. Noyori said that he had known of the King Faisal International Prize and perhaps it is the best known in Asia.*

# KFIP contributing to science

By **FURQAN AHMED**  
Riyadh Daily Staff

**RIYADH** — The King Faisal International Prize (KFIP) for Science is contributing, in the context of new scientific inventions, to human welfare either directly or indirectly, said the co-winner of the KFIP for Science, 1999, Prof. Ryoji Noyori of Japan.

Giving his impression on receiving the news of the prize, the Japanese scientist, in a fax interview said: "I was greatly surprised at the news, because I have never visited Saudi Arabia to discuss about our research expertise nor collaborated with Arabian scientific colleagues. However, when I received a phone call from the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Tokyo explaining the details of the prize, I felt greatly honored that my scientific accomplishments were recognized with such a prestigious international prize."

Prof. Noyori further said that he had known of the King Faisal International Prize, and perhaps it is the best known in Asia.

"I have received many awards in Japan. However, this prize is very special. In addition, it would be the most prestigious prize in view of the list of the previous prize winners that include Nobel laureates as well," the co-winner noted.

He further said: "It is a privilege to share the prize with Prof. Dieter Seebach, a most respectable friend of mine, because we together over three decades made great efforts for the progress of this important scientific realm (chemistry)."

Explaining the benefits of both scientists' researches for human welfare, Prof. Noyori said: "I would emphasize that our accumulated scientific knowledge can now convert

natural resources, including petroleum and biomass, to chemical substances of a high-added value. Particularly, chiral chemical synthesis is of industrial significance, that is, in production of pharmaceuticals, agrochemicals, flavors and fragrances as well as in the creation of advanced materials."

The synthetic methods elaborated in our laboratories are now widely practiced to synthesize biologically active chiral compounds, and some processes have already been commercialized, Prof. Noyori added.

He further said that the research activities on this subject must be important in every country worldwide, but this is particularly the case in Saudi Arabia, the richest country in terms of petroleum resources.

The scientist felt that in order to generate new scientific ideas, exchange and interaction of scholars having different backgrounds, are among the most important activities.

"The KFIP has encouraged enormously the research activity of whole scientific community. Science is the key issue for the creation of sustainable civilized



**PROF. NOYORI**

world. I am very pleased that the significance of chemical synthesis was recognized this year, because we believe that this scientific realm provides a firm, logical basis for molecular sciences and related technologies," Prof. Noyori noted.

He stressed that scientists' efforts are to be directed further toward solving a whole range of social and global issues associated with health, materials, food, energy and environment, among other problems.

On the theme of his research, the scientist said: "Molecular chirality (handedness) is a key element in science and technology based on molecular substances."

On the other hand, he further said, practical access to pure enantiomers from nonchiral compounds remained extremely difficult and, in the early days, it relied largely on biochemical and biological methods using enzymes, cell cultures, or whole micro-organisms.

However, the scope of the biological methods is limited. Discovery of truly efficient chemical methods of obtaining chiral substances was a substantial challenge for chemists. The chemical methods, if feasible, are more general and flexible, he noted.

Prof. Noyori, who is involved in Nagoya University's Department of Chemistry at Chikusa, observed: "The potential impact of chemical synthesis afforded an incentive in my research."

He felt assured that these researches will further promote industrial and agricultural development to afford more opportunities to humanity at large.