AWARD OF MEDALS

The Seventy-first Annual Award of Medals was held on Wednesday, June 10, 1981, at 10:00 a.m., in the presence of His Majesty the Emperor.

The function was opened with an address by the President, in which he made a brief statement of each award. Then the Medals and Prizes were presented to the respective recipients.

After this, congratulatory addresses were given by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education.

The function was closed at 11:20 a.m.

THE RECIPIENTS OF THE PRIZES AND THE SUBJECTS OF THEIR STUDIES

Yasuiti NAGANO

Studies on Interferon

The research accomplishments of Dr. Yasuiti Nagano on the phenomena of antiviral immunity and on interference in viral infection have been accorded world wide acclaim. Since 1940, he conducted a series of experiments to determine precisely the time when antiviral immunity appears in the organism. Rabbits were inoculated with vaccinia virus on multiple skin sites which were then vaccinated at various time intervals and observed for inhibition of skin lesions. The inoculum used for these tests was a combination of animal tissue components and inactivated virus prepared by ultraviolet irradiation of homogenates of rabbit tissue infected by vaccinia virus.

The onset of infection could be inhibited even by vaccination one day after virus inoculation. Furthermore, viral replication was inhibited as early as four hours after vaccination, when immune antibody was not yet detectable in the local tissue. Thus it was confirmed that a factor other than immunity was at work. This factor was found to be present in the centrifuged supernatant, but not in the virus particles of the vaccine, leading to the conclusion that the infected tissue contained a non-immune antiviral component (1954). This was the first report leading to proof of the existence of a substance later named interferon. Nagano then went on to prove that this factor was unrelated to immune antibody. In fact, there