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RIKEN, Toppan, RIKEN Venture Capital tie up in joint venture for SNP genotyping technology

New firm RIKEN Genesis devoted to practical uses of SNP genotyping, key technology for personalized medicine

RIKEN, Toppan Printing Co., Ltd., and RIKEN Venture Capital Co. Ltd. have tied up in a joint venture to promote RIKEN's research achievements related to SNP (single nucleotide polymorphism) genotyping, a key genetics technology that is crucial in the development of personalized medicine.

RIKEN President Ryoji Noyori, Toppan President Naoki Adachi and RIKEN VC President Akito Arima agreed to establish RIKEN Genesis Co., Ltd., on Oct. 4, 2007. Under the agreement, RIKEN authorizes the new company as a RIKEN venture company and renders assistance to promote the strategic and practical cultivation of SNP genotyping technology.

The mission of the new company RIKEN Genesis is to disseminate the research achievements of RIKEN researchers concerning the genotyping of SNPs and related technologies, which are essential for pharmacogenomics in indicating factors that cause diseases from a genetic viewpoint. RIKEN Genesis will also promote the technology's practical use for personalized medicine, which allows doctors to treat patients with individual genetic differences, and hence to provide better efficacy of drugs and fewer side effects.

Under Director Yusuke Nakamura, since 2000 RIKEN's SNP Research Center has been developing SNP genotyping technology for medical care, which enables effective diagnosis of genetic transformations. The SRC has established an SNP genotyping system with unprecedented precision and performance utilizing a variety of systematized facilities and sophisticated techniques. With this system, SRC researchers analyzed 24.3% of the entire human genome in the International HapMap Project Phase I (a project from 2002 to 2005 to catalog common genetic variants that occur in humans) and contributed the most of any single organization in the world.

The analysis of SNPs is a fundamental area of research for pharmacogenomics and will be a key technology in the coming era of "personalized medicine." Therefore, SNP

genotyping technology like that developed by the SRC has long been desired by hospitals, research organizations and corporations all over the world. Unfortunately, there has been no private company in Japan providing SNP genotyping services at the same level as the SRC. Therefore, RIKEN decided to establish RIKEN Genesis by transferring technology and provide SNP genotyping services, aiming at the further development of pharmacogenomics and personalized medicine in association with Toppan and RIKEN VC. As a result, RIKEN can expect its research to be disseminated and to contribute to improving patients' quality of life.

Toppan has conducted joint research with RIKEN since 2004 and developed a small SNP genotyping system that can be used in hospitals. Toppan's role includes administrative management and the transfer of technology that was developed in the joint research with RIKEN.

RIKEN VC is included in the tie-up because it was established for the purpose of investing in and supporting the growth of venture companies that are organized on the basis of RIKEN research.

RIKEN Genesis was officially established on Oct. 15, 2007, and after six months of preparation, will commence operations in April 2008.

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