

## Preface

# International symposium on acid–base catalysis III, Rolduc, April 20–24, 1997

The Symposium was organized under the auspices of EFCATS. It followed earlier conferences on acid–base catalysis which took place in Lyon (1984) and Sapporo (1988 and 1993). All of them were performed with the aim to provide the catalysis community with a discussion forum on a broad range of topics within the acid–base catalysis. The former meetings were more focussed on the acidity and its role/application in catalysis. This time, base catalysis was strongly emphasized and synthesis, characterization and applications of basic catalysts were discussed extensively.

The field of acid–base catalysis has undergone a dramatic change over the last decades. After a period of domination by petroleum refining applications, the emphasis has shifted to intermediates and fine chemistry. Each new application has resulted in the discovery of new catalysts. Fine tuning of acid–base properties and designing the nature and environment of acid and/or base sites have always been considered as crucial for successful applications. Among the scientists who have proposed and applied this approach, Prof. Kozo Tanabe holds a very prominent position. The Symposium has been dedicated to his scientific achievements. Despite his official retirement from the Hokkaido University Prof. Tanabe participates in the international catalysis community with unbroken enthusiasm. Prof. Tanabe has been honoured by a special session organized on the occasion of his birthday.

During the Symposium, six plenary lectures were presented which were thought as introductions to particular sessions devoted to specific subjects, as:

- Organic Synthesis
- Reaction Mechanism

- Base Catalysis
- Bifunctional Acid–Base Catalysis
- Characterization of Catalysts
- Theory, Model Reactions/Catalysts, Miscellaneous.

The six plenary lectures are published in this issue of Catalysis Today. These papers are thought to present an up-to-date report on the present status of acid–base catalysis.

The sessions altogether contained 32 oral presentations. In parallel, 63 poster presentations were displayed throughout the whole Symposium period and the participants had an opportunity to discuss them during two separate poster sessions.

The participation of 169 scientists from 24 countries from all over the world clearly documents the undisputed importance of the subject of acid–base catalysis. The resonance from the participants was very positive. Therefore, it has been decided to organize a further meeting of this series which will take place in Ehime University at Matsuyama, Japan, in 2000.

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many

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