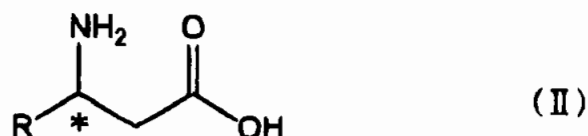


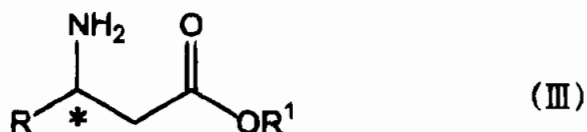
## ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to a process for preparing an optically active (S or R)- $\beta$ -amino acid  
 5 represented by the formula (II):

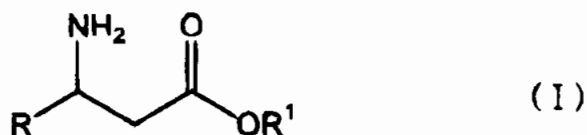


wherein R represents an alkyl group, alkenyl group, alkynyl group, cycloalkyl group, aralkyl group, aryl group or heteroaryl group each of which may have a  
 10 substituent(s), and \* represents an asymmetric carbon atom,

and an optically active (R or S)- $\beta$ -amino acid ester represented by the formula (III):



15 wherein R has the same meaning as defined above,  $\text{R}^1$  represents an alkyl group which may have a substituent(s), and \* represents an asymmetric carbon atom, provided that it has a reverse absolute configuration to that of the compound of the formula (II),  
 20 which comprises selectively hydrolyzing water and one of enantiomers of a  $\beta$ -amino acid ester represented by the formula (I):



25 wherein R and  $\text{R}^1$  have the same meanings as defined above,  
 which is a racemic mixture, in the presence of a hydrolase in an organic solvent.