

PEOPLE

Eminent Immunologist Prof. Tasuku Honjo Awarded Prestigious NTU Honorary Doctorate

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President Wen-Chang Chen of National Taiwan University (right) presents the Honorary Doctor of Medicine degree to Prof. Tasuku Honjo (left), recipient of the 2018 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, at Kyoto University in Japan.

In a memorable occasion on April 23, 2024, a distinguished gathering convened at Kyoto University (KU), where President Wen-Chang Chen of National Taiwan University (NTU) conferred the esteemed Honorary Doctor of Medicine degree upon Prof. Tasuku Honjo.

Graced by the presence of delegates from NTU and representatives from KU, the event marked a pinnacle in academic recognition and celebration. Prof. Tasuku Honjo, a luminary in the field of immunology, is a true trailblazer renowned for his seminal contributions to cancer immunotherapy. Presently a Specially-Appointed Professor at Kyoto University Graduate School of Medicine, Prof. Honjo also serves as Deputy Director-General and Distinguished Professor of KUIAS as well as Director of the Center for Cancer Immunotherapy and Immunobiology (CCII) at KU.



Nobel Laureate Prof. Tasuku Honjo, Awarded an NTU Honorary Doctorate.

His groundbreaking efforts in the 1980s laid the groundwork for understanding immunoglobulin class switching and genetic variation modeling. Of paramount importance, Prof. Honjo's identification of the pivotal role of PD-1 (Programmed cell death protein 1) in activating T lymphocytes in 1992 revolutionized cancer treatment, ushering in a new era of hope against this devastating disease. He was honored for his momentous achievements with the eminent Tang Prize in Biopharmaceutical Science in 2014 and with the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2018, which he shared with Prof. James P. Allison.

President Chen extolled Prof. Honjo's unparalleled expertise in immunology and his steadfast dedication to academic excellence. Prof. Honjo's innovative approach to cancer therapy transcends disciplinary boundaries, profoundly reshaping the landscape of medical science. His commitment to research and its potential transformative impact on society epitomize the pinnacle of academic excellence and achievement. During the ceremony, President Chen bestowed Prof. Honjo with the NTU Honorary Doctor of Medicine degree in accordance with the "National Taiwan University Directives for the Conferment of Honorary Doctorates," marking a historic milestone as the first citizen of Japan to receive this accolade from NTU.

NTU and KU share a longstanding strategic alliance, underscored by 58 collaborative agreements since 2005 and joint research endeavors across 14 disciplines. These collaborative efforts have nurtured dynamic exchanges among faculty and students, enriching the academic fabric of both institutions. The Memorandum on Strategic Partnership inked in 2023 further solidifies this alliance, fostering reciprocal visits and exchanges among faculty and students. Committed to nurturing transnational educational and research collaborations, NTU and KU aspire to deepen their strategic partnership and collectively contribute to the global academic community.



NTU Honorary Doctorate Award Ceremony.

From left to right:

Front row: Executive Vice-President for Research Promotion Susumu Kitagawa, Prof. Tasuku Honjo, President Wen-Chang Chen of NTU, Vice-President Shan-Chwen Chang of NTU.

Back row: Dean of KU Faculty of Medicine Tadashi Isa, Director-General of KU Institute for Advanced Study (KUIAS) Shigefumi Mori, NTU Former President Pan-Chyr Yang, Executive, Dean of NTU College of Medicine Yen-Hsuan Ni.