

Japanese 'Nobel Prize' for two Canadians

A Canadian cell biologist and a philosopher, along with an American computer scientist, have been given this year's prestigious Kyoto Prize by Japan.

Toronto-based cell biologist Anthony Pawson, Montreal-based social philosopher Charles Taylor, and US computer scientist Richard Karp were Friday named winners of this year's prize by the Inamori Foundation of Kyoto.

The Kyoto Prize, which is Japan's equivalent of the Nobel Prize, is given annually to those who make significant contributions in advanced technology, basic sciences, arts and philosophy. Nominations for the prize are made by Japanese and international experts.

Each prize carries a diploma, a 20-karat gold medal and \$470,000 in cash. This year's awards will be presented at a ceremony in Kyoto Nov 10.

Pawson, 55, who is a world-renowned cell biologist at Toronto's Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute of Mount Sinai Hospital, has been given the award for his pioneering work on cancer cell signalling - how cells control one another's behaviour through chemical signals.

Reacting to the news from Kyoto, Pawson said: 'It is an extraordinary honour to receive this year's Kyoto Prize for our work on communication between human cells.'

Pawson, who was inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame in 2006, added: 'It is a real endorsement of the importance of fundamental scientific discovery in the fight against diseases such as cancer, and it is particularly exciting to see Canadian biomedical research being recognized by such a prestigious award.'

His research has promoted the understanding and treatment of cancer, diabetes, and disorders of the immune system.

Montreal-based Charles Taylor, 76, has been named for the Kyoto Prize for arts and philosophy. He has been awarded for designing a social philosophy for peaceful co-existence among diverse communities in his Quebec province.

Taylor is the past winner of the prestigious Order of Canada and the Templeton Prize.

The two Canadians join California's computer scientist Richard Karp who has been given the Kyoto Prize for his work in designing computer algorithms.

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