Honorary Degrees

**Doctor of Laws honoris causa**

Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma’s pro-democracy leader and Nobel Peace Laureate, is a world-renowned figure who symbolises the struggle of Burma’s people to be free. She was the daughter of Burma’s independence hero, General Aung San, who was assassinated when she was two years old. Aung San Suu Kyi was educated in Burma, India, and the United Kingdom. She returned to Burma in 1988. She soon became engaged in the country’s nationwide democracy uprising, and was a key figure in forming a new pro-democracy party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) calling for freedom and democracy. She was placed under house arrest since 1989 and was finally released in 2010. Aung San Suu Kyi received the honorary degree *in absentia*. She presented a video message at the 186th Congregation on March 15, 2012 upon accepting the degree.

**Doctor of Science honoris causa**

Professor Sir Leszek Krzysztof Borysiewicz (2nd left) is the 345th Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. He has served as Chief Executive of the UK’s Medical Research Council, and as Principal of the Faculty of Medicine at Imperial College London, and later as its Deputy Rector. At the University of Wales in Cardiff, he led a research team that carried out pioneering work on vaccines and conducted clinical trials for a therapeutic vaccine for human papillomavirus (a cause of cervical cancer) — the first in Europe. He was knighted in 2001.

Dr John Craig Venter (3rd left) is an American biologist and entrepreneur, most famous for his role as one of the first to sequence the human genome and for his role in creating the first cell with a synthetic genome in 2010. Dr Venter founded Celera Genomics, The Institute for Genomic Research and the J Craig Venter Institute, working at the latter to create synthetic biological organisms and to document genetic diversity in the world’s oceans. Synthetic Genomics, a firm he co-founded, conducts research aimed at developing next-generation biofuels.

Professor Xu Zhihong (2nd right) is the 30th President of Peking University (1999-2008) and is a professor at its College of Life Sciences and at the Shanghai Institute of Plant Physiology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. His research interests include plant development, plant cell culture and genetic manipulation, and plant biotechnology. Professor Xu is a member of the Standing Committee of China’s National People’s Congress, an academician of the Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), and of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which he has also served as Vice-Chairman.

Citations and photos: [www.hku.hk/hongrads/](http://www.hku.hk/hongrads/)