

Dear esteemed guests, Deans, Fellows, ladies and gentlemen:

Receiving a Nobel Prize is the ultimate recognition for a lifetime spent questioning, exploring, experimenting; passing through the valleys of anguish to climb the mountains of success.

For me, receiving this honor was a 50-year dream come true.

For anyone living on the planet earth, there is a statistical chance of one in ten million ($1/10^7$) for winning a Nobel Prize. Realistically, it sounds utterly hopeless. However, if one thinks of it as a series of seven competitions, in each of which there is one winner among ten contestants, one just needs to keep winning seven times without losing. As a graduate of any of the top-notch universities, one must already be a one-in-a-thousand level of intellect. If so, and if he/she has an academic area of liking, I strongly urge that person to pursue it to a higher level, and hopefully all the way to the top.

Do not forget that there is always one or more chances for “repechage,” a second chance, or even a change in direction, perhaps until one reaches 35 or perhaps 40.

In my case, coming from Japan to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia as a graduate student (1960-1963) on a Fulbright Scholarship to earn a Ph.D. degree in Chemistry was my 4th step in my path to become one in 10^7 . On the US-Japan Fulbright Scholarship Program over the past 60 years, several thousand Japanese went to America, of whom several including Tonegawa (Physiology-Medicine), Koshiba (Physics), Shimomura (Chemistry), and myself (Chemistry) have received Nobel Prizes.

Equally or more important was the 5th step toward becoming one in a hundred thousand ($1/10^5$) kind of scientist by spending two years as a Postdoctoral Associate and four more years as a Personal Assistant in Professor H.C. Brown’s group at Purdue University (1966-1972). Looking back, I firmly predicted his winning a Nobel Prize already in 1962, although it became reality much later in 1979.

As in many other competitive areas including classic music and other arts as well as athletics, receiving a one-to-one coaching from a world top-level coach, I believe, is critically important. If one successfully goes through this process, you will be a one-in-a-hundred kind of candidate for any kind of the highest level recognition in the world. One still must climb through the most competitive final two or so steps on his/her own, which took me nearly 40 years.

Finally, on behalf of the “Asian College of Knowledge Management”, I warmly congratulate all the recipients of honour today.