

China Rewards Scientists for Achievement and Innovation

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The Chinese government hosts an annual science and innovation awards ceremony. This year, the ceremony was held in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. The ceremony honors pre-eminent scientists for their research achievements. The fact that science and innovation are important to Chinese government officials is underscored by the fact that this year's ceremony was attended by more than 3,300 officials belonging to the Communist Party of China. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang were both in attendance as well. This strong support for academic research may be due to the fact that many government officials have science or engineering degrees. There are also many funding opportunities for both basic and applied research because of an understanding that research is important and because of the strength of the Chinese economy.

Chinese National Awards

This year's ceremony saw awards being given to 295 research endeavors and also to seven foreign scientists to honor their scientific contributions. The [State Preeminent Science and Technology Award](#) went to Tu Youyou (who won a [Nobel Prize in Medicine in 2015](#) for her discovery of artemisinin as an anti-malarial drug) and Zhao Zhongxian who is a thought leader in superconductivity. The winners of the State Natural Sciences Award at this year's ceremony were relatively young with the majority being under 50. The winner in the Natural Sciences category was Pan Jianwei, 45. Pan is a quantum scientist at the University of Science and Technology of China. He led a team which developed quantum communications equipment that was later used at the 18th Party Congress in 2012 and at the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of victory in against Japanese Aggression.

The Chinese Nobel Prize

The Future Science Prize, established in 2016, aims to honor those making extraordinary contributions to the progress of science and technology in China. The prizes are supported by scientists and entrepreneurs and aims to supplement the work

already being done by the Chinese government to acknowledge the good work being done by scientists. The award follows the pattern of the Nobel Prize and each winner receives \$1 million. The first prize for life science and physical science were won by Yuk-Ming Dennis Lo of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Xue Qikun of Tsinghua University. The life science prize was an acknowledgment of Yuk-Ming's work on non-invasive prenatal testing of fetal DNA in the maternal blood. This technique allows for the identification of genetic abnormalities in a fetus without posing the risk of loss of pregnancy. The physical science prize recognized Xue's groundbreaking work in molecule beam epitaxy which led to novel discoveries about quantum phenomena. The organizers have recently added a mathematics and computer science award category. The new prize is being supported by funding from entrepreneurs including Ma Huateng, CEO of Tencent.

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