

Successful 2020 Tang Prize Award Ceremony Highlights Laureates' Achievements and Influence

Written by Administrator

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[The 2020 Tang Prize Award Ceremony](#) took place virtually at 2p.m. (GMT+8) on November 20. Eight 2020 recipients of the prize from seven countries, including the U.S., the U.K., Japan, Singapore, Bangladesh, Colombia, and Lebanon, attended this heartwarming event remotely, where they were greeted with congratulations and applause from audiences all over the world. The Tang Prize Foundation would like to thank everyone participating online, sharing with us this glorious and joyful occasion, and witnessing together the celebration of the outstanding achievements and the international influence of eight laureates considered by many as pioneers in their respective fields.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Jenn-Chuan Chern, CEO of the Tang Prize Foundation, explained that the COVID pandemic that engulfed the entire world in 2020 had disrupted the plans the Foundation previously worked out. Though Dr. Samuel Yin, founder of the Tang Prize Foundation, had hoped that once the pandemic receded, the 2020 laureates could travel to Taiwan to receive the awards and take part in a series of activities, the fact that the virus continues to wreak havoc worldwide in 2021 has led the Foundation to finally decide to hold a virtual award ceremony and welcome our friends from every corner of the world to join us in recognizing and honoring the laureates' remarkable achievements and invaluable contributions. Dr. Chern also expressed his gratitude for the president and members of the Selection Committee, as well as experts and scholars who were involved in the selection process, citing their professionalism, meticulousness, unbiased judgement and great vision as reasons the best candidates could be selected as winners.

Sustainable Development laureate Dr. Jane Goodall joined the ceremony via video link from her home in the U.K. In her acceptance speech, Dr. Goodall thanked "the efforts and friendship of so many amazing people along the way," especially "the staff, the volunteers and the boards of the Jane Goodall Institutes (JGIs) around the world." With regard to many global problems facing us today, such as climate change, the loss of biodiversity, and the COVID pandemic, Dr. Goodall assured us that every JGI was doing their best to tackle them. She also praised the JGI in Taiwan for their excellent work and great accomplishment, adding that she would use the prize money to fund JGIs' many projects, specially the Roots & Shoots, a program designed to empower young people and now being run in 65 countries.

Dr. Charles Dinarello, one of the three winners of the prize in Biopharmaceutical Science, attended the ceremony through video conferencing from his workplace at the University of Colorado. In his acceptance speech, Dr. Dinarello spoke about feeling "very fortunate" to be in the position of witnessing the development of research on IL-1, which has helped "lift the burden of disease." He also acknowledged many scientists whose contributions have made "IL-1

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blocking therapeutics” and other “therapeutic innovations” possible. Finally, he encouraged young researchers to stay positive, “have ethical considerations and caution,” and dedicate themselves to their work. All the efforts will eventually pay off, because “science,” he asserted, “has no boundaries.”

Making his acceptance speech from the garden in his house in the U.K., Dr. Marc Feldmann, another recipient of the 2020 prize in Biopharmaceutical Science, pointed out that “news of this award came last year, during the pandemic,” to which many people had lost their lives. But it was an “opportune” moment, as the research of three 2020 laureates in Biopharmaceutical Science is about inflammation, which “is what kills patients with severe COVID.” Therefore, he was pleased to see the discoveries they made being used in clinical trials for the treatment of COVID patients. Receiving the prize also made him reflect on his life, and give thanks to his colleagues and family. Because of their support, he could have “the opportunity to change the world for the better, for millions of patients.”

Dr. Tadamitsu Kishimoto, also an awardee of the prize in Biopharmaceutical Science, received his prizes remotely in Japan. Speaking from Osaka University’s Immunology Frontier Research Center, he noted the significance of the recognition from the Tang Prize for his lifelong research on IL-6, which resulted in the development of the drug, tocilizumab, now being used in more than 100 countries to ease the pain of millions of patients suffering from rheumatoid arthritis.

Winner of the prize for Sinology Prof. Wang Gungwu gave his acceptance speech through a

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video call from the National University of Singapore. Pointing out that Sinology as a field deserves further exploration and hoping that “the award of the Tang Prize” would “draw more attention to the value of Sinic civilization to the betterment of the human condition,” he also commended Dr. Samuel Yin “for his wisdom and generosity in establishing the Tang Prize,” particularly for his insight that led to the prize in Sinology.

Representatives from three NGOs that were awarded the prize for Rule of Law, Ms. Syeda Rizwana Hasan of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, Prof. Vivian Newman Pont of Dejusticia: The Center for Law, Justice and Society, and Ms. Ghida Frangieh of The Legal Agenda, went online at their homes or offices to receive the awards. Appreciating how the recognition from the Tang Prize has given non-governmental organizations a much-needed boost, they promised to continue the fight for social and environmental justice, for the rights of marginalized groups, and for important issues such as judicial independence, in order to uphold the principles of the rule of law. Winning the Tang Prize has given them renewed impetus to keep soldiering on, and regardless of how difficult the challenges and circumstances are, they know they would persist in their pursuit of progress and innovation.

With the enthusiastic participation of audiences around the globe, the first virtual Tang Prize Award Ceremony has come to a successful end. We hope life will return to normal in the coming year so that an in-person award ceremony can be held in Taiwan, a tradition of the Tang Prize that has been observed since 2014.

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To relive the inspiring moments of this ceremony and witness again the charm of the eight 2020 laureates, please visit our YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/IN0ADXBNT-Q> for Chinese subtitles, or

<https://youtu.be/56GwDm3EL0g>

for English subtitles.

[https](https://youtu.be/56GwDm3EL0g)