

Message from Shing-Tung Yau : Triumphant over Adversity is Integral to Noble Visions

編輯: Stella 責編: Stella

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By Tianzi Liu

The Shaw Prize winners list has been released on May 30th. On the Announcement of The Shaw Laureates 2023, Vladimir Drinfeld and Shing-Tung Yau were awarded in Mathematical Sciences.

Professor Shing-Tung Yau is famous all over the world for his contribution to the mathematics field. He was the founder of the discipline of geometric analysis, including the positive mass conjecture, and the Calabi conjecture. Calabi-Church manifold, named after him, is a fundamental concept of string theory in physics, making important contributions to the development of differential geometry and mathematical physics. We had a brief talk with him and learned his point of view on difficulties and failures in his research process and what's the most important thing in your whole life.

When asked about having faced any difficulties or not and how to overcome them, he replied by saying that he considers them as a part of the process of accomplishing good work even though many people call them difficulties. He acknowledges that completing each important part is difficult and that there will be many failures and obstacles, which every researcher must experience. Some important research problems take five or six years to accomplish, and Professor Yau has said that he has had to think about them day and night, sometimes pausing for a while before reconquering them. But these difficulties will be transformed into energy that will propel your research.

Ending with a piece of rich advice from Professor Yau, he suggested that curiosity is the most important thing in your whole life. "Curiosity is the most important element to do research. If you have no curiosity, you can never be a creative man or woman." Furthermore, he also illustrated that if you simply only have an interest without any basic stock of knowledge, it is very difficult for you to succeed. Basic theoretical knowledge may be tedious, but you have to "swallow" it. You must have the basic knowledge to be able to apply it in the search for truth. No one can do research without knowing the basics. The last, only when you are curious about a thing and are passionate about it you will want to study it. "You will feel that's my life, I want to know how to do it."

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