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Math Maestro S S Chern Speaks at HKUST

Winner of the first Shaw Prize in Mathematical Sciences and the greatest living Chinese mathematician, Prof Shiing Shen Chern, presented his official Shaw Prize Lecture today (8 September 2004) at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Prof Chern was awarded the Shaw Prize on 7 September 2004 for his "initiation of the field of global differential geometry and his contribution to the development of mathematics in the last 60 years."

Prof Chern has made great contributions to mathematics in China and the world. From an entirely new perspective, he constructed the "Chern Characteristic Classes" in 1944, laying a solid foundation for the study of global differential geometry.

The 92-year-old mathematician has received numerous prominent awards. In 1975, he was presented the US National Medal of Science, the highest honor that can be bestowed upon US scientists. In 1984, he won the Wolf Prize in Mathematics, the foremost international mathematics award, for his significant contribution to the field of differential geometry, which has affected the entire study of mathematics.

He continues to promote mathematics actively and nurture students in his retirement. In 1981, he became the founder and first director of the Research Institute of Mathematics at the University of California at Berkeley. In 1984, Prof Chern returned to his *alma mater*, Nankai University in Tianjin, and created the Nankai Research Institute of Mathematics, which he rapidly built into a world-renowned center for mathematical study.

In honor of Prof Chern's distinguished achievements, the University established the Shiing-Shen Chern Lecture in November 2002, and conferred an honorary Doctor of Science upon him last year.

The [Shaw Prize](#) was established in November 2002 to honor scientists who have made a distinguished contribution to modern civilization.

The annual award consists of three prizes, in astronomy, life science and medicine, and mathematical sciences, each bearing a cash award of US \$1 million.

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