



21 January 2026

2026 Japan Prize Laureates Announced

**Field Eligible for the Award:
Electronics, Information, and Communication**



Prof. Cynthia Dwork

**Field Eligible for the Award:
Life Sciences**



Prof. Shizuo Akira



Prof. Zhijian "James" Chen

The Japan Prize Foundation announced the winners of the 2026 Japan Prize at 1:00 p.m. on 21 January 2026. Prof. Cynthia Dwork (USA) has been awarded the Japan Prize in the field of *Electronics, Information, and Communication*. Prof. Shizuo Akira (Japan) and Prof. Zhijian "James" Chen (USA) have been awarded the Japan Prize in the field of *Life Sciences*.

For this year's Japan Prize, Prof. Dwork is being recognized for her *Contribution to leading research for building an ethical digital society, including differential privacy and fairness*. Prof. Akira and Prof. Chen are being recognized for their *Discovery of the nucleic acid sensing mechanism by the innate immune system*.

For the 2026 Japan Prize, the Foundation asked approximately 16,000 prominent scientists and engineers from around the world to nominate researchers working in this year's fields. We received 107 nominations for the field of Electronics, Information, and Communication, and 185 nominations for the field of Life Sciences. This year's winners were selected from a total of 292 nominees.

About the Japan Prize

The establishment of the Japan Prize in 1981 was motivated by the Japanese government's desire to create an internationally recognized award that would contribute to scientific and technological development around the world. With the support of numerous donations, the Japan Prize Foundation received endorsement from the Cabinet Office in 1983.

The Japan Prize is awarded to scientists and engineers from around the world who have made creative and dramatic achievements that help progress their fields and contribute significantly to realizing peace and prosperity for all humanity. Researchers in all fields

of science and technology are eligible for the award, with two fields selected each year in consideration of current trends in scientific and technological development. In principle, one individual in each field is recognized with the award, and receives a certificate, a medal, and a monetary prize. Each Presentation Ceremony is attended by the reigning Emperor and Empress, heads of the three branches of government and other related officials, and representatives from various other elements of society.