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2008 Awards

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2008 Awards
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We are healthily skeptical about the newsworthiness of award recipients — prizes don’t, after all, always go to the right people. But a well-bequeathed award can draw attention to an intriguing book or piece of writing that one might have otherwise missed. In an attempt at a premature 2008 awards wrap-up, here are a few that you might have overlooked.

1. There was consternation from the Chinese state in August and September over the mention that activist Hu Jia might be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. While he didn’t win the Nobel, he was awarded the Sakharov Prize by the European Parliament. Hu Jia is now in prison for sedition, but he was under house arrest prior to that. You can view a video that he made during that time here.

2. Noted Sinologist Francesca Bray was part of a team that won a prize (the Sally Hacker Prize) for their seven-volume study Technology in World History.

3. For regular China Beat readers, Susan Mann’s book The Talented Women of the Zhang Family won’t be new; Nicole Barnes reviewed it last January. The book was just awarded the Fairbank Prize (the American Historical Association’s top prize for East Asian history) and earlier this year it was a finalist for the Kiriyama prize.

4. We just recommended Ching Kwan Lee’s new book, Against the Law; it was recently awarded the Sociology of Labor Book Award.

5. We haven’t read this novel, but this summer Chinese writer Yang Yi won a Japanese book prize for a Tiananmen-themed novel (written in Japanese).


7. And for those who missed the announcements last spring of the Levenson winners (the book prize given by the Association for Asian Studies for the best pre-1900 and best post-1900 China book, respective), they were:
   2008 Pre-1900 Category: Martin J. Powers, Pattern and Person: Ornament, Society, and Self in Classical China (Harvard University Asia Center, 2006)

Neither of these recent winners of the prize have contributed to China Beat (yet), but we’re pleased to see that a list of past Levenson award recipients includes some names that should be familiar to readers of this blog, as they’ve either written for us, been interviewed by us, or had their names show up in the Table of Contents for our forthcoming China in 2008 that was recently posted at the site. To cite just two examples, 21st century winners of the post-1900 prize have included Yan Yunxiang (whose comments on Chinese youth will be featured in the book) and Geremie Barmé (who has contributed to the blog and will be well represented in China in 2008 as well).