

# Hailan Hu for Ju Gong Prize Lectureship

**Professor Hailan Hu has emerged as one of China's brightest young neuroscientists, making fundamental discoveries about the neural circuits underlying depression and social behavior while actively engaging in science advocacy, public education, and mentorship - embodying Gong Ju's spirit of intellectual courage, integrity, and service.**



Professor Gong Ju bowed to no dogma and no authority—only to truth. With homemade instruments in a tiny office, he overturned 50 years of doctrine on anterior pituitary regulation. He defied surgical convention to restore mobility to paralyzed patients. He demanded absolute integrity from his students and worked alongside them late into the night. He rejected titles like "Giant" or "Master," saying: *"I have only lit a single candle."*

In Professor Hailan Hu, we see the same spirit - now lighting a new candle for the next generation.

## Scientific Contributions

Her laboratory at Zhejiang University has made fundamental discoveries about the neural circuits underlying depression, social behavior, and stress resilience. Using *in vivo* electrophysiology, optogenetics, and circuit tracing, she identified the lateral habenula as a critical node in depression pathophysiology, work replicated worldwide that has opened new antidepressant targets. Her discovery of the medial prefrontal cortex circuit's role in social behavior has reshaped our understanding of how the brain processes social information.

## Service and Recognition

Beyond the lab, Professor Hu is an active advocate for science in China, engaging in public education, mentoring young researchers, and promoting women in science. She serves on numerous editorial boards and advisory committees. Her major awards include the **IBRO-Kemali International Prize** (the first Chinese scientist to receive this honor), the Tan Kah Kee Young Scientist Award, and the National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars.

## Conclusion

At a time when Chinese neuroscience is growing rapidly on the world stage, Professor Hu represents the best of this new generation: rigorous, innovative, collaborative, and deeply committed to integrity and service. She is a role model for young Chinese scientists - especially young women - demonstrating that international recognition and deep roots in the Chinese scientific community go hand in hand.

For these reasons, Professor Hailan Hu is a fitting candidate for the **Gong Ju Named Prize Lectureship** - a scientist whose candle burns brightly, illuminating the path for those who follow.