

Who is Feng Zhang, one of world's most influential biologists?

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No one would guess that Feng Zhang, at 34, is widely considered the most transformative biologist of his generation, a double threat to win a Nobel Prize in the near future. Or that his discoveries could finally bring cures for some of the greatest causes of human suffering, from autism and schizophrenia to cancer and blindness. Or that he has touched off a global furor over the possibility that a genetics tool he developed could usher in a dystopian age of designer babies.

At that moment, Zhang was simply a young father, husband, and son struggling to explain what drives him, why it isn't unusual for him to arrive home from his lab at 1 or 2 or even 3 in the morning.

Colleagues note his ability to identify promising ideas early, to stoke the creative fires of his junior lab members, and to resist the temptation to pursue likely-to-succeed but incremental advances and instead to take risks.

Zhang helped create two revolutionary genetic and neuroscience technologies. As a graduate student, he was a key member of the team that figured out how to light up neurons in the brain, allowing scientists to unravel which circuits control which behaviors and search for the roots of mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Just a few years later, Zhang made the discovery that would vault him into the front ranks of the world's biologists: how to edit the genomes of plants and animals — including humans — quickly, easily, and efficiently.

Read full, original post: [Meet one of the world's most groundbreaking scientists. He's 34.](#)