

CHINA CROSSROADS

Monday, May 11th, 2026, 19:30 – 21:00

The End of Physics? Human Barriers to Progress in Fundamental Science

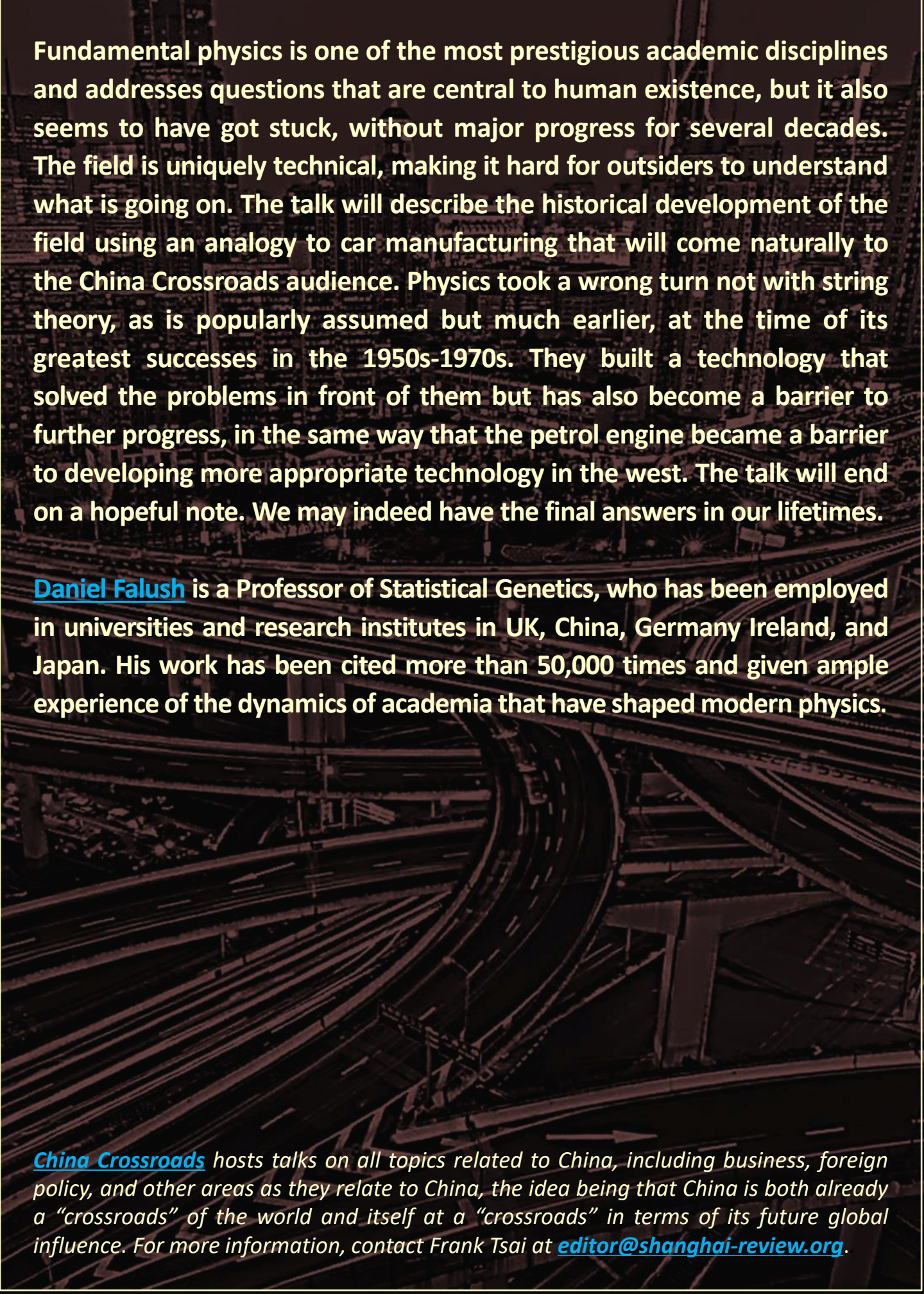
Daniel Falush

Professor of Statistical Genetics

Author of [Edge of Understanding](#) (forthcoming)

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Fundamental physics is one of the most prestigious academic disciplines and addresses questions that are central to human existence, but it also seems to have got stuck, without major progress for several decades. The field is uniquely technical, making it hard for outsiders to understand what is going on. The talk will describe the historical development of the field using an analogy to car manufacturing that will come naturally to the China Crossroads audience. Physics took a wrong turn not with string theory, as is popularly assumed but much earlier, at the time of its greatest successes in the 1950s-1970s. They built a technology that solved the problems in front of them but has also become a barrier to further progress, in the same way that the petrol engine became a barrier to developing more appropriate technology in the west. The talk will end on a hopeful note. We may indeed have the final answers in our lifetimes.

[Daniel Falush](#) is a Professor of Statistical Genetics, who has been employed in universities and research institutes in UK, China, Germany Ireland, and Japan. His work has been cited more than 50,000 times and given ample experience of the dynamics of academia that have shaped modern physics.

[China Crossroads](#) hosts talks on all topics related to China, including business, foreign policy, and other areas as they relate to China, the idea being that China is both already a “crossroads” of the world and itself at a “crossroads” in terms of its future global influence. For more information, contact Frank Tsai at editor@shanghai-review.org.