

## *Who is the best mathematician in the world?*

My unhesitating answer for at least one year now has been *Shinichi Mochizuki*. Even a cursory look at, for example, his 1999 book, *Foundations of  $p$ -adic Teichmueller Theory*, should suffice to convince any competent mathematician that this here was already worth a Fields Medal, and besides he has done much else -- all vetted by his peers and solidly established to use the hackneyed phrases -- which is also of the very highest quality. Though individual comparisons are best avoided, in this case it needs to be said that this work puts him ahead of even the brilliant mathematician under whose guidance he wrote his thesis. So the opinion that I am expressing here is not dependent on whether or not all those famous diophantine conjectures do in fact follow in full from his *Inter Universal Teichmueller Theory* of 2012. And neither, like many who apparently are getting some perverse pleasure by yapping at the heels of this master mathematician, do I insist that he or some disciple of his should obligingly pen for lazy us a shorter and quicker way of proving the A B C conjecture. For -- as happened long ago when Deligne found an elegant way of partly short-circuiting Grothendieck's more natural programme -- this will inevitably take attention away from developing the theory itself, and making its nuts and bolts more clear to one and all. It would be a great pity indeed if once again, like Grothendieck, this perhaps even more profound mathematician is also hounded out into the wilderness by the businessmen of mathematics. I salute too the host of young mathematicians who, disregarding the tut-tutting and pooh-poohing of some trustees of the mathematical establishment, are delving deeper and pushing bravely into this exciting new world which the ideas of this very original mind has opened for us.

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