Prof Chak K. Chan, Professor of the Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Department, was conferred the 2009 State Natural Science Award (SNSA), second class, in recognition of his achievements in the project “The characteristics of emission and complex pollution of atmospheric particulate matter and its precursors”.

The project is a collaborative effort between Prof Chak K. Chan and Prof Kebin He, Prof Jiming Hao and their colleagues of Tsinghua University. Through laboratory and field experimental work, they studied the formation of atmospheric particulate pollution and the properties. Prof Chak K. Chan specializes in the studies of the phase transformation and water uptake properties of atmospheric particles using single particle levitation technique. His work has made significant contributions to understanding the role of hygroscopic growth of particles and their effects on visibility degradation as well as cloud droplet formation, which is a critical issue in predicting climate change.

The SNSA is China's most prestigious award in the field of natural sciences. It aims to recognise academic excellence in basic and applied research in natural science. The highly competitive selection exercise involves a three-stage review by panels of experts and the award committee. In 2009, more than 120 entries competed for the State Natural Science Award (SNSA). Only one first-class SNSA award and 27 second-class awards were presented. Both Prof Chan and Prof Xiren Cao, Chair Professor in Electronic and Computer Engineering received this prestigious honor.

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