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Chinese/American Physicists: A Transnational History¹

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As part of a broader project on “Chinese/American Scientists: Transnational Science during the Cold War and Beyond,” this paper examines the movements of American-trained Chinese physicists following the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. While a majority of these physicists chose to stay in the US (the “stayees”), a number went back to China in the 1950s (the “returnees”) against many obstacles during the McCarthy era. After the reopening of US-China relations in the 1970s, the two groups joined hands in promoting China-US scientific and educational exchanges, leading eventually to the coming to the US of a new generation of Chinese physics students and the return to China of some of the original “stayees.” This transnational history of Chinese/American physicists aims to illustrate the nature and extent of the Americanization of international science and the internationalization of American science in the post-World War II era.

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