

MAR14-2013-020052

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the MAR14 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

Half-Century of Chinese Condensed Matter Physics—from humble beginnings

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Half-century ago, modern condensed matter physics was almost non-existing in China. During the past 30 years, especially since the beginning of the 21 century, the situation has changed dramatically. A number of outstanding young physicists from China, with cutting edge research output, appeared on the World arena. How did this quantal transition occur? From a personal perspective, I will discuss some early attempts to build-up research capacities, interruptions during the “cultural revolution,” survival of scientific work, opening-up to the World and revival of research. The transition from total isolation to close international exchange and collaboration is a crucial factor contributing to this success.