



Manny Warman

From left: Physicists Ren Hai-cang, Chen Chengjun, Qian Yu-kun, Chen Tian-jie, Xu Yi-xie, Tao Rong-jia, Wu Zhen, Qiu Zhao-ming, and T.D. Lee

T.D. Lee's Exam in China Brings Physicists to The U.S.

When American students take that all-important qualifying examination this month for entrance to graduate work in physics, hundreds of their Chinese counterparts will be doing the same thing, thanks to the efforts of the University's Enrico Fermi Professor of Physics, Tsung-dao Lee.

To help bring physics students from the People's Republic of China to American universities, the Nobel Prize-winning physicist prepared the examination to serve at least temporarily as an effective substitute for this country's Graduate Record Examination (GRE) which is not yet given in China. Lee's test, given on a limited basis in China in 1979, has already enabled eight graduate students in physics to enroll at Columbia.

Now the test will be given to more than 500 students throughout China on behalf of a consortium of 57 American universities, organized by Lee to form CUSPEA, the China-US Physics Examination and Application Program.

"We believe Columbia's physics department should not be the only one having access to this pool of excellent students," Lee says. "This is especially true because this month's examination

will be taken by the first class to complete the standard four-year college program since the re-establishment of regular university instruction in China in 1977.

"Our good experience encourages us to believe that until the GRE program becomes available in the People's Republic of China, the Columbia physics examination will be useful on a nationwide basis. We are grateful this idea has received strong support from the scientific community in China and this country."

Five of the physics students have been in residence at the University for a year. They joined the regular first-year program for graduate students, which required them to teach as well as take courses. "All have performed their tasks admirably," Lee says. "They all passed the qualifying examination given at the beginning of spring semester, with three ranking in the first, third, and fourth positions. The student who scored first probably broke all our records."

The five who are beginning their second year of graduate study are Chen Chengjun, Qiu Zhao-ming and Wu Zhen, all of the University of Science

and Technology, Peking; Chen Tian-jie, Peking University, and Tao Rong-jia, Peking Institute of Theoretical Physics, Academia Sinica. New to Columbia this fall are Ren Hai-cang, Institute of Theoretical Physics, Qian Yu-kun, Peking University, and Xu Yi-xie, University of Science and Technology.

As in 1979, the qualifying exam will be administered in China by the Graduate School of Academia Sinica and Peking University. These institutions will prepare and administer a written examination in English for all applicants. The physics problems for this year's exams were made up by Columbia and Cornell University under the CUSPEA guidelines. Professors Norman H. Christ of Columbia and D.B. Fitcher of Cornell will be in China in November to interview the top-ranking participants. Last year Lee interviewed the top students after both exams.

Since so many schools and students are participating this time, careful procedures have been worked out to ensure that the process of application to and acceptance at American universities goes smoothly.