

Discussion Question Answer Key Chien-Shiung Wu, Chinese Nuclear Physicist

1. Where did C.S. Wu enroll in college in 1930? What was her major?

The school that came to be known as National Central University in Nanjing. She initially studied mathematics, but switched to physics.

2. When and where did C.S. Wu conduct her first experimental research?

From 1935 to 1936, Wu worked in a lab at the University of Hangzhou on X-ray crystallography.

3. Who was C.S. Wu's supervisor while earning her Ph.D.? Where did she study?

Officially, her advisor was Ernest Lawrence, but she most directly studied under Emilio Segré, at the University of California at Berkeley.

4. What was unique about C.S. Wu's position at Princeton?

She was the first female instructor hired by Princeton.

5. Where did C.S. Wu spend a majority of her career?

After the Manhattan Project, C.S. Wu stayed at Columbia University in New York for the rest of her career.

6. Do you think C.S. Wu should have been included in the Nobel Prize in 1957?

Student answers will vary, but students will likely agree that Wu should have been included.

7. Describe some of C.S. Wu's honors and awards.

Honors and awards include:

- The National Medal of Science in 1975
- Research Corporation Award in 1958
- President of the American Physical Society in 1975
- Inducted into the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 1994
- and many others

8. What was C.S. Wu's message for the symposium at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1964?

Wu advocated for recognition of women's contributions to physics despite social and cultural limitations.

9. How did C.S. Wu interact with the Taiwanese and Chinese governments in the 1980s?

She advised both governments on science policy, education, and she received many awards.

10. Can you name any other scientists who engaged in activism?

Student answers will vary, but students may consider Albert Einstein, Rachel Carson, Linus Pauling, or many others.