

Preface

Some time ago, several colleagues proposed that a festschrift be published for my sixtieth birthday. I thought about it and concluded that a collection of some of my papers with Commentaries might be more interesting. That is the origin of this volume.

There was no uniform criterion for deciding which papers to include. Papers that were unpublished before, or had appeared in journals that are not easily available, were given preference. Recent papers in easily available journals were, as a rule, given low priority.

The papers are generally labeled according to the year they appeared in print, but a number of exceptions have been made to this rule. The labeling of papers in one year by a, b, c, . . . was mostly by chance. A double bracket indicates that the paper is reprinted in this volume. A single bracket indicates that the paper is not reprinted here.

The Commentary is intended primarily to trace my personal development as a physicist and to sort out my interests and ideas starting from my days as a graduate student. It is not meant to be an assessment of my work. No general effort was made to follow up on the developments after the publication of the papers.

A scientist is not expected to give a balanced assessment of his papers. But he is the one who knows their stories best:

文章千古事
得失寸心知 (杜甫)

*A piece of literature
Is meant for the millennium.
But its ups and downs are known
Already in the author's heart.*

Tu Fu, AD 712–770

I am grateful to a few close friends who have given me valuable advice and criticism. For her help in preparing the manuscript, I am indebted to Catherine Turpin. Special thanks are owed my friend Ping-Ming Hsiung for his calligraphy on the cover.

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