

**Missionary Schools, The YMCA and The  
Transformation of Physical Education and Sport in  
Modern China (1840–1937)**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis focuses on the development of missionary educational institutions and the YMCA's physical education and sport programs and how they, along with burgeoning Chinese nationalism, transformed physical education and sport in modern China between 1840 and 1937. This research also considers the concepts of cultural imperialism and nationalism, and demonstrates how the historical data presented in this thesis problematize the way in which these concepts have been used to explain the development of physical education and sport to date. While missionary educational institutions and the YMCA used physical education and sport as agents of religious conversion and cultural propagation in an attempt to Christianize China, they also significantly influenced the development of modern physical education and sport in China by introducing and promoting Western sports, advocating physical education in schools, training and cultivating sport talent and leadership, and organizing various athletic games. Christian missionaries and YMCA directors thus played a significant part in instigating a process of social and cultural change in modern China, and – both intentionally and unintentionally – inculcated a particular set of beliefs, values, knowledge, and behavioural norms in China.

This process of inculturation and indigenization has been described in some existing literature as a process of cultural imperialism and an imperialist tool for foreign encroachment. However, this thesis will illustrate how any such intended direct form of imperialism was made by and large ineffective in the way the Chinese Nationalist government appropriated Western sports in its own nation-building projects. This said, these programs had long-lasting effects on how physical education and sports became the way of defining 'modern' bodies as the missionary education institutions and the YMCA's programs in particular were incorporated in the wider education program of modernizing China under the Nationalist government. While doing away with the

## **Abstract**

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religious aspects of Christian faith, this rational-instrumental form of modernity based on Christian ethics of the body informed the way in which the Chinese elite adopted Western physical education and sport as a means to achieve their political and cultural ambitions. These values were put in the service of the nation, through processes of imbuing the spirit of unity and patriotism in the Chinese people, supporting the enterprise of nation-building, educating the Chinese people, and signifying independent nationhood, as well as projecting outward an image of a modern state in international relations. This thesis makes a significant contribution to the field of Chinese sport history through tracing the historical process of indigenization of Western sport in China, and how this very process of inculturation and agentic use of physical education programs by the Chinese problematizes the notion of cultural imperialism as an adequate explanatory category to describe this process.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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## **Declaration**

DECLARATION FOR THESES CONTAINING PUBLISHED WORK AND/OR WORK PREPARED  
FOR PUBLICATION

This thesis contains **only sole-authored** work, some of which has been published and/or prepared for publication under sole authorship. The bibliographical details of the work and where it appears in the thesis are outlined below.

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Student Signature .....

## Declaration

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AAAO	Amateur Athletic Association of the Orient
AAU	Amateur Athletic Union
CAA	Canton Athletic Association
CCAA	Central China Athletic Association
CCAM	Central China Athletic Meet
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CERS	Chinese Educational Reform Society
CMAA	Central Martial Arts Academy
CNAAF	China National Amateur Athletic Federation
CNAU	China National Athletic Union
DPES	Dual-track Physical Education System
DSS	Datong Shifan School
ECAA	East China Athletic Association
ECIAA	Eastern China Intercollegiate Athletic Association
ECIAM	Eastern China Intercollegiate Athletic Meet
FEAA	Far Eastern Athletic Association
FECG	Far Eastern Championship Games
MAA	Martial Arts Academy
MES	Morrison Education Society
NAARST	National Athletic Alliance of Regional Students Team
NCAA	North China Athletic Association
NCAM	North China Athletic Meet

## List of Abbreviations

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NSC	National Sport Committee of the Ministry of Education
PAA	Peking Athletic Association
PAAF	Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation
PRC	People's Republic of China
QRS	Qinding Regulation for Schooling
RGRS	Renzi-Guichou Regulation for Schooling
RRS	Renzi Regulation for Schooling
TAAC	Tientsin Annual Athletic Contest
US	United States
WSCF	World Student Christian Federation
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association
ZHNC	Zhili Higher Normal College
ZRS	Zouding Regulation for Schooling



## Chapter 1: Introduction

Modern physical education and sport in China, as they exist in their current form, are not products of indigenous Chinese culture. They were, as Hong and Mangan argue, ‘foreign import and developed in a hot-house of modernization’ in the early twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Before the start of the First Opium War<sup>2</sup>, under the influence of traditional Chinese Confucian-informed culture, strenuous physical exercise and sports were linked to low class and status. They were looked down upon by mainstream Chinese society, and the upper classes in particular. Consequently, modern Western physical education and sport were virtually non-existent up until the 1840s, when Western powers began making military and trading incursions into China. Christian missionaries arrived in China in the wake of these inroads,<sup>3</sup> and until then proselytization of religion by foreigners had been prohibited in China. Modern Western physical education and sport<sup>4</sup> were introduced to China primarily by Western missionaries and physical (education) directors of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) from the US and the UK. From small beginnings, and in less than fifteen years, modern Western physical education and sport gradually grew from a tool for Christian evangelism to an important tool for Chinese nationalist nation-building.

This thesis focuses on describing and critically discussing this process of transformation of Chinese practices and attitudes toward physical education and sport, with a specific

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<sup>1</sup> F. Hong and J.A. Mangan, *Sport in Asian Society: Past and Present*, London & Portland, OR, Frank Cass, 2005, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> The Opium Wars occurred as a result of China’s attempts to suppress the illegal trade of opium in China by the British. The First Opium War, also known as the Anglo–Chinese War, took place from 1839 to 1842 as a result of the Chinese government’s confiscation of Opium stores in Canton and continued attempts by the British to force China to open up to trade. Their ultimate defeat in the First Opium War forced the Chinese government to pay a heavy indemnity and to cede five ports to the British, among other concessions. The Second Opium War, from 1856 to 1860, also known as the Arrow War, saw China invaded by British and French forces who wished to extend their trading rights and gain control of additional territories in China. Despite their initial refusal to ratify the treaties of Tientsin in 1858, the Qing government eventually succumbed and signed the so-called ‘unequal treaties’, which legalized the opium trade, opened several additional Chinese ports for trade, and gave freedom of travel and movement in the interior of China to foreigners and missionaries.

<sup>3</sup> These Westerners were from imperial countries (the UK, the US, France, German, Italy, Austria-Hungary), which all took part in a series arrived conflicts in China in modern times.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Modern Western sports’ in this thesis refer to sports such as basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, tennis, track and field and gymnastics. ‘Modern physical education and sports’ refers to physical education work undertaken in Western-style schools and universities, athleticism and other sporting work, which were introduced from Western countries after 1840s. The content of the physical education and sport work were modern Western sports. These modern Western physical education and sport were non-existent in China up until the 1840s, when Western powers began making military and trading incursions into China.

focus on interrogating the concept of cultural imperialism as a lens to understand this transformation of Western cultural product into an important aspect of the modernization project of the Chinese state in the first part of the twentieth century. The promotion of Christianity was the main reason the missionary educational institutions (schools and universities) and the YMCA introduced modern Western physical education and sport in modern China. The process of introducing and disseminating Western physical education and sport in China was part of a process of social and cultural change initiated by Christianity. This research asserts that Christian missionaries and YMCA directors played a significant role in instigating a process of social and cultural change in modern China, and – both intentionally and unintentionally – inculcated a particular set of beliefs, values, knowledge and behavioural norms on China. However, this research will also demonstrate how missionary educational institutions and the YMCA were also critical of their own approaches whilst improvising in writing the first programs of Western-style physical education and sport in modern China between 1840 and 1937.

This research critically outlines the development of missionary educational institutions and the YMCA's physical education and sport programs, and illustrates how they, along with burgeoning Chinese nationalism, transformed physical education and sport in modern China between 1840 and 1937. This research also endeavours to present an in-depth critique on the introduction and propagation of physical education and sport by the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA. Moreover, the questions regarding the Chinese response to Christianity and its physical education program, and how this response influenced the indigenization and transformation of physical education and sport in modern China, are also considered and evaluated in this research. While the Christian institutions focused on the promotion of the Christian mission and brought with them a much broader project of Western-style civilization and modernization, may not be helpful to frame this process simply as 'pure' cultural imperialism. This thesis will demonstrate how the way in which Western sports and physical education developed in response to the local population and state interventions

evidences a negotiated process that complicates a simplistic claim that the missionaries' and the YMCA's activities in China during this period were nothing more than an example of straightforward cultural imperialism that the local population was unable or defenceless to resist. For the missionaries, their continued presence and success in China depended on their value and usefulness to the broader nation-building project, and the willingness of local and national elites and intellectuals to support their activities.

In order to highlight the native agency in the history and development of modern Chinese sports, this study will address the following research questions:

- (1) How were modern Western physical education and sport introduced and promoted by Christian institutions in China?
- (2) What was the Chinese native response during the process of the introduction of modern Western physical education and sport by Christian institutions?
- (3) How did this native response trigger and successfully materialize the process of indigenization of modern Western physical education and sport in China in the context of Chinese nationalism?
- (4) To what extent do the native response and the indigenization process of Western sports and physical education problematize the use of cultural imperialism as the singular interpretative framework to understand the development of modern physical education and sport in China?

To foreground chapters on the history of the Christian missions and physical education in China in 1840–1937, the following sections of this chapter will discuss traditional attitudes towards the body and physical activities; Christianity in China before 1840; the relationship between sport, the 'Muscular Christianity Movement' and Christian missions; and the relationship between sport and the YMCA. Finally, the methodological considerations relevant to this research, the critical positioning in relation to reading history and historical records, and outline the structure of the thesis

will be discussed.

### 1.1 Background and Context

#### 1.1.1 Traditional Attitudes toward Sport in the Late Qing Dynasty

In order to grasp the profound change that missionary educational institutions and the YMCA had on the transformation and development of physical education and sport in modern China (1840–1937), it is necessary to highlight the profound contrast between traditional Chinese attitudes towards physical activities and Western attitudes to sports. Chinese attitudes towards physical activities had their roots in Confucianism and traditional Chinese culture both of which emphasize the concept of *wen* (文, civility, literacy) and the contempt of *wu* (武, martial/military) (*Zhong wen qing wu*). In a Chinese cultural context, *wen* was taken to connote culture, letters, education, literacy and civil order; whereas *wu* referred to the military, manual labour, and physical exercise. Most traditional Chinese physical training activities were associated with *wu*.<sup>5</sup>

There is evidence to suggest that the origins of such attitude in China date back to Spring and Autumn and Warring States (770–221 B.C.) periods. A section in *Guoyu-Luyu* (Discourses of the States-Discourses of Lu) – a Chinese history classic that records the history of numerous states in China from the Western Zhou to 453 B.C. – notes that a gentleman’s responsibility to the management and governance, whereas a commoner’s responsibility is to labour (*Juzi wuzhi, xiaoren wuli*).<sup>6</sup> One of the earliest Chinese works of narrative history, *Zuozhuan*,<sup>7</sup> promotes a similar idea, stating that gentlemen should avoid physical work such as farming (*Junzi qinli, xiaoren jinli*).<sup>8</sup> In this era, however, the tribal government of ancient China gradually developed into ‘a feudal system with hundreds of petty states scattered throughout the land’.<sup>9</sup> Wars

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<sup>5</sup> David M Robinson, *Bandits, Eunuchs, and the Son of Heaven: Rebellion and the Economy of Violence in Mid-Ming China*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2001, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Qiuming Zuo, *Guoyu*, Shanghai, Shanghai Guji Publishing House, 1978, p. 155.

<sup>7</sup> *Zuozhuan* is a commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals, covering the period from 722 to 468 B.C. Qiuming Zuo, *Zuozhuan*, Hunan, Yuelu Publishing House, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Zhaopeng Zhong, *Kongzi yanjiu [Confucianism]*, Beijing, Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe [China Social Sciences Press], 1990, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> G. Hoh, *Physical Education in China*, Shanghai, Shangwu yinshuguan [Commercial Press], 1926, p. 11.

among these states were frequent, and as a consequence certain sports, especially those associated with military training, became important. The warrior aristocracy occupied a higher social position than scholars, who remained the lowest class of nobility, only one step above commoners.<sup>10</sup> Thus, an ideology that emphasized *wen* and sidelined *wu* was not influential at this period.

During the Han dynasty, however, the situation gradually began to change, as more and more ideological emphasis was being put on *wen*, while *wu* was increasingly held in contempt. Eventually, *wen* gradually began to hold a greater social ethos over martial attitudes and practices,<sup>11</sup> as Confucianism was established as the guiding social and political ideology of the state, and the new four-class system (literati, peasants, artisans, merchants) emerged.<sup>12</sup> The military was not among the four-class system. The system elevated scholars to a key status in society, and required them to work in order to ‘maintain the official ideology and serve as administrators of the state’.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the highest ambition possible a free man could hold was to become a scholar in order to follow ‘the stable path to power’.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, physical activity was considered to form the fundamental ‘evil’ of militarism, because of the emerging belief that physical training made people strong and robust, promoting the perceived ‘natural tendency’ of vigorous men to join the army as soldiers. As soldiers were members of the lower social class, imitating the physical attributes of either peasants or soldiers was therefore linked with lower class status, which in turn served to increase antagonism towards physical exercise. As a non-muscular appearance was equated with a scholarly status, the elites avoided physical exercise to such an extent that the general fitness levels of the upper classes suffered.<sup>15</sup>

Another major contributing factor which led to a negative attitude towards physical activities was the implementation of the Imperial Civil Examination system. This made

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<sup>10</sup> Dingbo Wu and Patrick D Murphy, *Handbook of Chinese Popular Culture*, Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1994, p. 114.

<sup>11</sup> G. Hoh, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> G. Hoh, *Physical Education in China*, Shanghai, Shangwu yinshuguan [Commercial Press], 1926, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> G. Song, *The Fragile Scholar: Power and Masculinity in Chinese Culture*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2004, p. 46.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> G. Hoh, pp. 11-2.

the direct link between knowledge and power even more evident.<sup>16</sup> The Imperial Civil Examination system was first introduced for the recruitment of the state's bureaucracy during the Sui dynasty (581–618 A.D.). It was partly under the influence of this examination system that the Tang dynasty (618–907 A.D.) gradually shifted from being a military aristocracy to a gentrified class of scholar-bureaucrats.<sup>17</sup> During the Song-Ming dynasty (960–1644 A.D.), as Confucianism entered a new developmental period normally called 'Neo-Confucianism' (or *Songming lixue*, Confucian School of Idealist Philosophy), and during the establishment of the Imperial Civil Examination system, *wen* was increasingly emphasized while *wu* was held in contempt. This mindset pervaded the aspired ideology of the mainstream of society. This ideology also remained strongly influential during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911 A.D.), which was the last period of the feudal society. During the Qing dynasty, the Grand Council (*Junjichu*) was established. Special government officials were appointed to the Council which would share the administrative burden and prerogatives of the emperor.<sup>18</sup> All members of the Grand Council were scholars, and no military leaders or generals were appointed. The Imperial Civil Examination system rewarded scholastic achievement and ignored attributes of physicality.<sup>19</sup> As the Imperial Civil Examination system became the most important way for people to better their social status,<sup>20</sup> the perception that manual labour and physical activities were the preserve of the lower classes led to negative social attitudes toward physical fitness. All forms of sport and physical activities were neglected, with even educational institutions encouraging abstinence from running. In schools, if anyone was seen running to the classroom, the teacher would spank him five times, and warn him not to do so again.<sup>21</sup>

This attitude is also illustrated in a story that became popular as an example of 'the

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<sup>16</sup> G. Song, p. 46.

<sup>17</sup> D. Ko, J.H.K. Haboush, and J.R. Piggott, *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2003, p. 136.

<sup>18</sup> J.Z. Gao, *Historical Dictionary of Modern China (1800–1949)*, Lanham, Maryland, Scarecrow Press, 2009, p. 138.

<sup>19</sup> National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo gudai tiyushi [Sport History in Ancient China]*, Beijing, Beijing tiyu daxue chubanshe [Beijing Sport University Press], 1990, pp. 371-2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.371.

<sup>21</sup> Junwei Yu and Alan Bairner, 'The Confucian Legacy and its Implications for Physical Education in Taiwan', *European Physical Education Review*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2011, p. 223; T. Zhao, *Changrong tiyu yundong de huiyi [The Memory of Physical Education at Changrong Higher School]*, Tainan, Changrong High School, 1975, p. 351.

absurdity of the ignorance of the [Chinese] officials' and reflects attitudes towards physical education and sport in late Qing (1840–1911) society as seen through the eyes of a Western observer<sup>22</sup>:

At the end of the Qing dynasty, in the English consulate in Tientsin (Tianjin), there was a consul who once invited the highest official in the Tientsin administration – the Daotai – to dinner. After the meal the consul wanted to play tennis to entertain his guest. This Daotai had never in his life seen tennis, and he was curious, and responded with enthusiasm. It happened to be a time of scorching hot weather, and although the players were wearing shorts and singlets, they were still sweating. After the demonstration, the consul asked his guest: ‘How do you think I played?’ This Daotai shook his thumb back and forth and said: “Good! Good! Good! It’s a pity that you worked so hard; you are so tired that your whole body is covered with sweat. It would be much better if you could hire a man to come [and] play in your place.’<sup>23</sup>

Other social status markers favoured by scholars were not compatible with physical activities. The queue hairstyle, which was required of all men by imperial decree since the Manchu takeover, consisted of shaving the front of the head and braiding the remaining hair into one or several braids.<sup>24</sup> As with the long gowns and extremely long fingernails of the scholars, the queue became an important sign of elite identity. The scholars were expected to be grave in their demeanour and unhurried in their actions.<sup>25</sup> This kind of image helped these elite scholars separate themselves from the lower classes by signifying that they ‘did not have to do manual labour for a living’.<sup>26</sup> As a result, these scholars showed little interest in physical activities, including physical exercise.

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<sup>22</sup> Zhenya Wang and Daoping Wang, *Jiuzhongguo tiyu jianwen [Sports Stories in Modern China]*, Beijing, Renmin tiyu chubanshe [People's Sports Publishing House of China], 1987, p. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Susan Brownell, *Training the Body for China: Sports in the Moral Order of the People's Republic*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995, pp. 40-1.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.41.

<sup>25</sup> W.P. Fenn, *Christian Higher Education in Changing China, 1880–1950*, Ann Arbor, University Microfilm International, 1988, p. 169.

<sup>26</sup> P.K. Nietupski, J. O'Mara, and K.J. Kucera, *Reading Asian Art and Artifacts: Windows to Asia on American College Campuses*, Bethlehem, PA, Lehigh University Press, 2011, p. 179.

Women were also discouraged from taking part in physical activities. In the Confucian-dominated Qing dynasty, women were expected to practise the ‘Three Obediences’ (*San cong*); namely, to obey her father before marriage, her husband after marriage, and her sons after the death of her husband.<sup>27</sup> She was also required to practise the ‘four virtues’ – morality, proper speech, modest manners and diligent work (*Si de*). Taking part in sports was seen as countering such desired behaviour.<sup>28</sup> Another tradition that prohibited women from participating in sports was the practice of footbinding. Upper class women had their feet bound with several metres of bandages since the age of four or five to prevent further growth. This binding process normally lasted from ten to fifteen years. As a result, women with bound feet had difficulty walking steadily or quickly, which made participation in sporting activities virtually impossible.<sup>29</sup>

The upper classes considered physical activities, including martial attitudes and practices, manual labour, and physical exercise, to be undignified.<sup>30</sup> In 1840, when modern Western physical education and sport arrived in China with the first significant wave of Western missionaries, it was received with either indifference or resistance by both the mainstream Chinese society and the upper classes.<sup>31</sup>

### 1.1.2 Muscular Christian Movement, Christianity and Sport

Contrary to the Chinese disdain of sports and physical education, the nineteenth century witnessed a significant change in the perception and practice of sport in Western countries. There are a number of reasons to explain this change. One of the major contributing factors was the emergence of the so-called ‘Muscular Christianity Movement’. This movement exerted a significant influence on the views of

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<sup>27</sup> R.L. Taylor and H.Y.F. Choy, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Confucianism: N-Z*, New York, Rosen Publishing Group, 2005, p. 496.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China*, London & Portland, OR, Frank Cass, 1997, p. 22.

<sup>30</sup> Susan Brownell, pp. 40-1.

<sup>31</sup> G.R. Gems, *The Athletic Crusade: Sport and American Cultural Imperialism*, Lincoln, Nebraska, University of Nebraska Press, 2006, p. 21; G.N. Graham, *Gender, Culture, and Christianity: American Protestant Mission Schools in China, 1880-1930*, Michigan, United States, University of Michigan, 1990, pp. 101-4.



Anglo-American, British and European Christians regarding the ‘relationship between sport, physical fitness and religion’, and ‘forged a strong link between Christianity and sport that has never [since] been broken’.<sup>32</sup>

The Muscular Christianity Movement began in the Victorian era, and the term ‘muscular Christianity’ emerged in the 1850s in England to describe the works of Thomas Hughes and Charles Kingsley, the two celebrated exponents of Muscular Christian Movement, who believed that ‘the Anglican Church of their day was becoming overly tolerant of physical weakness and effeminacy’.<sup>33</sup> To reverse this perceived negative trend, Hughes and Kingsley professed to ‘infuse Anglicanism with enough health and manliness’ that in turn could ‘make it a suitable agent for British imperialism and increase the health and wellbeing of the nation’ and all British subjects.<sup>34</sup>

Muscular Christianity emphasized both physical and spiritual development, and was influential within both Catholicism and Protestantism.<sup>35</sup> It stressed the need for ‘energetic Christian activism in combination with an ideal of vigorous masculinity’.<sup>36</sup> The basic premise of Victorian muscular Christianity was that taking part in sport could contribute to ‘the development of Christian morality, physical fitness and a “manly” character’.<sup>37</sup> Thomas Hughes described his vision for the movement as follows:

The least of the muscular Christians has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief that a man’s body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous cause, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> J. Nick Watson, ‘Muscular Christianity in the Modern Age’, in J. Parry, et al. (eds), *Sport and Spirituality: An Introduction*, London & New York, Routledge, 2007, pp. 80-94.

<sup>33</sup> Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> K.A. Roberts and D. Yamane, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 2011, p. 364.

<sup>36</sup> J. Cohen, *Citoyenneté et Diversité*, France, Presses University Blaise Pascal, 2009, p. 71.

<sup>37</sup> Nick J Watson, Stuart Weir, and Stephen Friend, ‘The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond’, *Journal of Religion and Society*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2005, p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> T. Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, London, Macmillan and Co., 1861, p. 83.

The doctrine of muscular Christianity thus stipulates that one's physical condition has a religious significance. In this context, men's efforts to obtain a strong body were regarded as reflecting their attempts to be 'good Christians in the service of the Lord'.<sup>39</sup> The doctrine promoted the idea that the body was a 'temple' within which the Spirit of God dwelt, and that, as a result, Christians 'were obligated to care for, respect and develop their physical body'.<sup>40</sup> Physical education and sport were also seen to play an important part in building other desirable virtuous Christian characteristics such as 'fair play, respect (both for oneself and others), strength (physical and emotional), perseverance, deference, subordination, obedience, discipline, loyalty, cooperation, self-control, self-sacrifice [and], endurance'.<sup>41</sup>

The doctrine of muscular Christianity also influenced the founding of the British YMCA in London in 1844 by George Williams (1821–1905). The doctrine, however, was not an instant success within the Association. The intended role at the time of the inception of the YMCA was to emphasize 'Bible-study, prayer and education', whereas 'sport and athletic activities as an unwanted distraction from evangelism' had no place in the initial working plan of the organization.<sup>42</sup> However, with such a limiting mandate to perform its specified tasks, the organization found it increasingly difficult to retain members due to competition from other secular attractions.<sup>43</sup> Gradually, towards the end of the nineteenth century, and as the concept of muscular Christianity became thoroughly institutionalized into Victorian culture, the YMCA had also embraced it as its central tenet.<sup>44</sup> The result was the proliferation of gymnasia and health and physical fitness programs within the YMCA branches around the world.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Koen De Ceuster, 'Wholesome Education and Sound Leisure: the YMCA Sports Program in Colonial Korea', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2003, p. 57.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> N.J. Watson and A. Parker, *Sports and Christianity: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, London & New York, Routledge, 2013, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> Nick J Watson, Stuart Weir, and Stephen Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond', p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> N. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 168.

<sup>44</sup> Nick J Watson, Stuart Weir, and Stephen Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond', p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

The introduction of the idea of muscular Christianity in nineteenth-century Anglo-American schools became one of the most significant instruments in the development of sport and physical training in the modern educational system.<sup>46</sup> During the late 1850s, for instance, the tenets of muscular Christianity became an integral part of the public school educational system in Great Britain. According to Parry, the primary reason for this was to ‘encourage Christian morality and help develop the character of the future captains of industry and political leaders, and in turn strengthen the British Empire.’<sup>47</sup>

The promotion of rugby in British public schools provides a good example for reflection on the encouraging outcomes of the implementation of muscular Christianity. By and large it was seen as an ideal tool for preventing schoolboys from ‘falling victims to vice and idleness’ and to instil in them the virtues of courage, loyalty and discipline.<sup>48</sup> In the words of Gerald Redmond:

The sentiments of the muscular Christian gospel – i.e. that physical activity and sport (especially team games like cricket and football) contributed significantly towards the development of moral character, fostered a desirable patriotism, and that such participation and its ensuing virtues were transferable to other situations and/or to later life (such as from the schoolboy playing-field to the military battlefield).<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, sports soon became linked with the development of profitable networks of businessmen, nationalist discourses and any other forum that required a discourse of unity and of shared purpose.<sup>50</sup> In the late 1800s, the ideology of muscular Christianity entered America and was ‘adopted to justify American sport’.<sup>51</sup> Much of Protestant

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<sup>46</sup> R.A. Mechikoff and S.G. Estes, *A History and Philosophy of Sport and Physical Education: From Ancient Civilizations to the Modern World*, Boston, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2002, p. 248.

<sup>47</sup> Jim Parry et al., *Sport and Spirituality: An Introduction*, London & New York, Routledge, 2007, p. 86.

<sup>48</sup> B. Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1978, p. 89; B. Dobbs, *Edwardians at Play: Sport, 1890–1914*, London, Pelham, 1973, p. 89.

<sup>49</sup> R.A. Mechikoff, *A History and Philosophy of Sport and Physical Education: From Ancient Civilizations to the Modern World*, New York City, US, McGraw-Hill Education, 2013, p. 248.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> H.R. Ebaugh, *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions*, New York, Springer, 2006, p. 295.

America had come ‘to view sport as a positive force for good and even as an effective tool to promote the Lord’s work’.<sup>52</sup> Consequently, many church institutions introduced the doctrine of muscular Christianity into their educational curricula in the late 1800s<sup>53</sup> to ‘build morale and *esprit de corps*’ among students.<sup>54</sup> These church educational institutions reported such positive outcomes of this approach that physical education curricula became widely adopted in the US.<sup>55</sup> Many nineteenth-century sport innovations were also introduced and developed at elite colleges such as Yale, Harvard, Brown, Dartmouth, Trinity and the University of Pennsylvania. These colleges and universities established rowing clubs in the 1850s; the building of a gymnasium in Amherst in the 1860s; the spread of baseball in the 1860s; and the development of ‘American’ football and track in the 1870s. Basketball, tennis and hockey were developed in the 1890s, completing what John Higham calls ‘the transformation’ of America’s colleges into ‘theatres of organized physical combat’.<sup>56</sup> The doctrine of muscular Christianity was also merged with ‘American revivalism, with urban reform, and eventually with the YMCA’.<sup>57</sup>

These ideals of muscular Christianity were also exported to other European and North American countries, as well as to the Asiatic countries, including China.<sup>58</sup> This history of the doctrine of muscular Christianity had huge significance because they provided an ideological justification to dispel traditional Chinese attitudes and beliefs about masculinity and athletic physique. The doctrine proved very effective also for the development of the YMCA and missionary enterprises in China, as will be shown in the relevant sections of Chapter three and Chapter four.

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<sup>52</sup> C.S. Prebish, *Religion and Sport: The Meeting of Sacred and Profane*, Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1993, p. 90; William R. Hogan, 'Sin and Sports', in R.S.J.A. Knight (ed.), *Motivations in Play, Games, and Sports*, Springfield, III., Charles C. Thomas, 1976, pp. 133-4.

<sup>53</sup> R.A. Mechikoff, *A History and Philosophy of Sport and Physical Education: From Ancient Civilizations to the Modern World*, p. 248.

<sup>54</sup> H.R. Ebaugh, p. 295.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Clifford Putney, p. 46.

<sup>57</sup> H.R. Ebaugh, p. 295.

<sup>58</sup> Clifford Putney, p. 2.

### 1.1.3 The YMCA, Fourfold Program and Sport

The first YMCA was founded by George Williams in London, England, on 6 June 1844 with the view of tackling the perceived unhealthy social environment that was prevailing in the big cities in the UK at the end of the Industrial Revolution. With the development of transportation, commerce and industry, an increasing number of rural young men migrated to big cities such as London to find employment. These young men had to work far away from their homes, for lengthy shifts, and were living in substandard living conditions. These conditions added to their sense of loneliness and displacement, and many frequently visited pubs, brothels and gambling houses.<sup>59</sup> As a committed Christian, William organized a group of his fellow Christians to ‘substitute Bible study and prayer for life on the street’ in order to change young men’s lives through sharing his faith with them.<sup>60</sup> The aim of the organization was to ‘improve the spiritual condition of young men engaged in the drapery, embroidery, and other trades’,<sup>61</sup> and this purpose was soon enlarged to include these young men’s psychological and social needs.<sup>62</sup> In 1848, the YMCA opened a library and organized educational activities to achieve these aims.<sup>63</sup> Initially, the YMCA membership was limited to those judged as possessing a ‘proper Christian character’.<sup>64</sup> However, young men who were not Christians were admitted as associate members, but they were not given any part in the management of the organization.<sup>65</sup>

In the early stages of its development, the YMCA leaders had no plans to concentrate their energies on physical activities.<sup>66</sup> It was first and foremost an evangelical, interdenominational organization with a mission to:

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<sup>59</sup> R. Bester, *YMCA Nelson: 150 Years of Building Strong Kids, Strong Families and Strong Communities in the Nelson Region, 1860–2010*, Nelson, New Zealand, YMCA Nelson, 2009, p. 12.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> YMCA of the USA, *Physical Education: In the Young Men's Christian Associations of North America*, New York, Association Press, 1920, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

...unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour, according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be his disciple in their faith and in their life and to associate their efforts for the extension of his Kingdom among young men.<sup>67</sup>

The YMCA expanded quickly, first in the Great Britain, then abroad. Between 1850 and 1855, it extended its activities to Australia, Canada, the US, Italy, France, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, India and New Zealand.<sup>68</sup> The first Canadian YMCA was founded in Montreal on 25 November 1851, and the first YMCA in the US was established in Boston on 29 December in the same year.<sup>69</sup> These YMCAs were constituted on the same principles as those of the British Associations, their work being similar in character and scope.<sup>70</sup>

Physical education programs in the YMCA began to expand in subsequent years, especially in the North American YMCAs. In 1866, the Constitution of the New York City YMCA stated that: ‘the object of this Association shall be the improvement of the spiritual, mental, social, and physical condition of young men.’<sup>71</sup> Through this Constitution, the fourfold program of spiritual, mental, social and physical development of young men was formed. Physical education gradually became a permanent feature of YMCA activities in the YMCAs.<sup>72</sup> In 1891, Luther H. Gulick, a gymnastic instructor at the YMCA Springfield Training College, proposed adopting the symbol of the Red Triangle as the logo for the YMCA. The fourfold program was eventually transcribed into the triangle of mind, body and spirit. The circle on the triangle is symbolic of the social goal of this fourfold program.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> R. Bester, p. 14; Martti Muukkonen, *Orandum Est Ut Sit Mens sana in Corpore Sano- Formation of the Trangle Principle of the YMCA*, in The Finnish Youth Research Society, edited, Helsinki, 20 September 2001.p.1.

<sup>68</sup> R. Bester, p. 13.

<sup>69</sup> K. Page, *The Young Men's Christian Associations of China*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1916, p. 7; YMCA of the USA, p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> YMCA of the USA, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>72</sup> Clifford Putney, p. 72.

<sup>73</sup> Martti Muukkonen, p.9.

Picture 1.1: Red Triangle



1891–1895



1895–1896



1897–1967

(Source: <http://www.ymca.net/sites/default/files/pdf/y-logo-history.pdf>)

The above figurative representation denotes that the fourfold program was not just a simplistic evangelical undertaking, but rather that it was ‘the major strategy of the Association’s work’, which focused on promoting all aspects of health and wellbeing,<sup>74</sup> and on teaching ‘civic virtues, democratic values, and respect for authority’.<sup>75</sup> At the Second World Conference of the YMCA in Geneva in 1895, physical education and sport obtained their first theological justification in the YMCA, which further established sports and physical education as one of the YMCAs key areas of outreach.<sup>76</sup> Seven years later, the Fourth World Conference adopted a resolution advocating that all its members ‘strengthen their bodies’ through swimming, gymnastics and sport.<sup>77</sup> The physical department of the YMCA conducted its work related to physical education and sport not only inside YMCA buildings, but also in schools, churches, settlements and playgrounds. They organized physical education leadership training, sports clubs and classes, along with formal and informal competitive games and physical examination and health education programs.<sup>78</sup>

However, the emphasis on physical education did not mean that religious activities were

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<sup>74</sup> Martti Muukkonen, *The YMCA and Globalisation of Physical Education*, in the Globalisation and Sport Stream of the IIS Conference edited, Stockholm, 5-9 July 2005.

<sup>75</sup> G.R. Gems, p. 10.

<sup>76</sup> Martti Muukkonen, *Orandum Est Ut Sit Mens sana in Corpore Sano- Formation of the Trangle Principle of the YMCA*, p.4.

<sup>77</sup> C.P. Shedd, *History of the World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations*, Geneva, World's Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations, 1955, p. 169.

<sup>78</sup> YMCA of the USA, p. 20.

to be sacrificed. On the contrary, the idea of inculcating ‘perfection in manhood’ was understood as a means of evangelization.<sup>79</sup> The physical education work of the YMCA was recognized as an integral support to their religious work, and the YMCA’s concentration on social work was another useful means of achieving the goal of evangelization. The YMCA was ‘not content simply to inject athleticism into Christianity’, as it also wanted to ‘bring Christianity closer to men’ and ‘lead men to glory [to faith] by athleticism’.<sup>80</sup> L. Wilbur Messer, General Secretary of the Chicago YMCA, asserted this conviction in his address in the Basle World Conference in 1898:

The YMCA seeks to preach the Gospel to young men – [the] good news [of] full and free salvation, which purifies the heart, redeems and sanctifies the body, enlightens the mind, and brightens and makes attractive the social nature.<sup>81</sup>

The World Service of the International Committee of YMCAs of the United States and Canada (hereafter the International Committee of the YMCA) had perhaps the most profound effect on the mission view of the global YMCA movement.<sup>82</sup> The YMCA’s international expansion, which started in the 1880s, was intimately linked to the work of the International Committee of the YMCA, principally in Asia, South and Central America and Europe from 1888–1955.<sup>83</sup> The International Committee of the YMCA supplied many leaders for international service. Some of the Committee members served as members on various boards, with others on the staff. For example, famous YMCA secretaries, such as Luther D. Wishard and John R. Mott who both worked in China, began their careers with the International Committee of the YMCA.<sup>84</sup>

The model of the International Committee of the YMCA was largely conceived in view of the precepts of the Association’s fourfold program. Because of the influence of the International Committee of the YMCA, it was inevitable that the model would also

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<sup>79</sup> Martti Muukkonen, *The YMCA and Globalisation of Physical Education*, p.8.

<sup>80</sup> Clifford Putney, p. 72.

<sup>81</sup> Martti Muukkonen, *Orandum Est Ut Sit Mens sana in Corpore Sano- Formation of the Trangle Principle of the YMCA*, p.5.

<sup>82</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *World Service: A History of the Foreign Work and World Service of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and Canada*, New York, Association Press, 1957, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Martti Muukkonen, *The YMCA and Globalisation of Physical Education*, p.16.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.



spread to other parts of the world through its work abroad. Through the work of the International Committee of the YMCA, Western physical education and sport were also introduced, promoted and regulated in China, India, Japan and Korea.<sup>85</sup>

### 1.1.4 Christianity in China before 1840

Introducing the YMCA's operations to China was not entirely straightforward, as Christian missions had for centuries been perceived as potentially disruptive influences. Since Roman times China and Europe had been aware of each other's existence through limited trade contact, yet prior to 1500 A.D. there was little direct interaction between the West and China.<sup>86</sup> It was not until Vasco da Gama opened the sea route to India in 1498 that the civilizations of Europe, India and China ended their isolation from each other.<sup>87</sup> Christianity did not have much influence on China until the sixteenth century when the Roman Catholic missionary organization, Society of Jesus, commenced their mission work in China, led by several prominent figures, including Matteo Ricci.<sup>88</sup> Ricci was assigned to the Society of Jesus' China mission in 1582.<sup>89</sup> Through his and his missionary colleagues' efforts, the Society of Jesus won the support of Chinese emperors who allowed them to undertake certain developments.<sup>90</sup> Ricci brought both Western knowledge (of mathematics, astronomy and geography) and Christianity into China, which appealed to many among the Chinese scholar-official class. When Ricci died in 1610, there were approximately 2,500 Chinese people, majority being from the educated classes, who had converted to the Catholic faith.<sup>91</sup> For example, Hsu Kuang-chi (1562–1663), a converted Chinese scholar, believed that 'Confucianism and Christianity could be developed in China in a parallel fashion.'<sup>92</sup> From 1724 onwards, however, the propagation of Christianity in the interior of China was prohibited by the

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World-System A.D. 1250–1350*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. xii.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> J. Zhou, *China's Peaceful Rise in a Global Context: A Domestic Aspect of China's Road Map to Democratization*, Lanham, MD, Lexington Books, 2010, p. 168; D.H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*, Malden, MA, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp. 19-21.

<sup>89</sup> J.D. Young, *Confucianism and Christianity: The First Encounter*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1983, p. 25.

<sup>90</sup> Murray A Rubinstein, *The Origins of the Anglo-American Missionary Enterprise in China, 1807–1840*, Lanham, Maryland, Scarecrow Press, 1996, Vol. 107, p. 2.

<sup>91</sup> 'Matteo Ricci, SJ (1552–1610)',

<http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-voices/16th-and-17th-century-ignatian-voices/matteo-ricci-sj/>.

<sup>92</sup> S. Teng and J.K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839–1923*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1979, p. 12.

emperor Yongzheng (1678–1735) of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Yongzheng and his court were firmly against Christian converts among the Manchu people. He warned that the Manchus must follow only the Manchu way of worshipping Heaven, since different people worshipped Heaven differently.<sup>93</sup> Thus, by 1807, there were only a few foreign Catholic missionaries and no Protestant missionaries in China, despite the fact that the number of Chinese Christians held steady through indigenous evangelization.<sup>94</sup>

By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, China and Europe began to have a more frequent contact as a result of trade in opium, tea, silk and cotton goods. With this increase in trade, a new Christian missionary era began.<sup>95</sup> On the 4 September 1807 the Directors of the London Missionary Society sent Robert Morrison<sup>96</sup> to Macao by Ship to become the first Protestant missionary to reside in China.<sup>97</sup> Because of the restrictive imperial edicts against evangelism, it was difficult for Morrison to carry out his work openly, which is why he held a post as a translator at the East India Company in Macao while he learned the Chinese language.<sup>98</sup> During this time, however, he worked on translating the Bible into Chinese and baptized Chinese converts. These tasks were essential to the London Missionary Society's goal of preaching the Gospel in China and of converting the Chinese.<sup>99</sup> Between 1810s and 1830s, Morrison's Protestant colleagues, including William Milne, Samuel Dyer and Karl Gutzlaff, joined him, but there were only a relatively small number of Protestant missionaries who worked in China before 1840.<sup>100</sup>

Morrison played an instrumental role in the establishment of one of the earliest

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<sup>93</sup> M.C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 240.

<sup>94</sup> D.H. Bays, pp. 32, 37.

<sup>95</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850–1950*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1971, p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> Robert Morrison was a Presbyterian minister, translator, and the London Missionary Society's first missionary to China; he is considered the father of Protestant mission work there. After studies in theology and Chinese, Morrison was assigned by the society to Canton. In 1809 he became translator to the East India Company, a post he held until his death. Only 10 converts were baptized during the 27 years of his service in China. With his colleague William Milne, Morrison founded the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca (moved to Hong Kong in 1843). He translated the New Testament and the entire Bible into Chinese in 1813 and 1821 respectively. After his death another school for Chinese youth, located first in Macau (1838) and later in Hong Kong (1842), was established by the newly founded Morrison Education Society.

<sup>97</sup> Stephen Evans, 'The Morrison Education Society School and the Beginning of Anglo-Chinese Education in Hong Kong', *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1998, p. 17.

<sup>98</sup> C. Daily, *Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2013, p. 128.

<sup>99</sup> Lindsay Ride, *Robert Morrison: The Scholar and the Man*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1957, p. 28.

<sup>100</sup> Weixing Gu, *Wanqing yingyu jiaoxue yanjiu [English Education in Late Qing Period]*, Suzhou, Suzhou daxue chubanshe [Soochow University Press], 2004, p. 4.

missionary schools for the Chinese, the London Missionary Society's Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca in 1818.<sup>101</sup> He hoped that the Anglo-Chinese College would exert a 'favourable influence on the peaceable diffusion of Christian principles and on the general civilization of the eastern hemisphere'.<sup>102</sup> A few other missionary schools were also established in China prior to 1840. For example, in 1830, Elijah Coleman Bridgman, an American Protestant Christian missionary, was appointed to China and he set up the Bridgman School in Canton (Guangdong). In 1835, Mrs Mary Wanstall (Karl Gützlaff's wife), from the British Society for Promoting Female Education in the Far East, founded the Gützlaff School in Macao. The Morrison School, another famous missionary school, opened in Macao in 1839, although it was later moved to Hong Kong in 1842. Henrietta Hall Shuck<sup>103</sup> of the the American Baptist Gospel Mission in Macao established the first Christian school for girls in 1836.<sup>104</sup> Due to the small number and scale of these schools, and the fact that most of them were located outside of mainland China, their influence on the general population remained limited.

Therefore, when the first Protestant missionaries arrived to China and began promoting both Christianity and ideas of muscular Christianity, they were not only faced with negative attitudes toward the body and physical exercise, but were viewed with suspicion as potentially disruptive foreign influences. Before moving on to discussing how Christian missions negotiated these tensions, and the indigenous response to their work, we will first outline some key methodological considerations central to this research.

### 1.2 Methodology

This research adopts historiography as its methodology, and the first part of this section outlines the process of data collection and the methods of analysis employed for this research. The second part reflects on the ontological assumptions and epistemological

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<sup>101</sup> R.L. O'Sullivan, "The Anglo-Chinese College and the Early 'Singapore Institution'", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 61, no. 2, 1988, p. 46.

<sup>102</sup> E. Morrison, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours Robert Morrison*, London, Longman, Orme, Brown, and Longmans, 1839, p. 513.

<sup>103</sup> The first American female missionary came to China.

<sup>104</sup> Weixing Gu, p. 5.

positioning of the researcher vis-à-vis the data collected.

### 1.2.1 Data Collection

Data collection has been carried out using various documents, which are based on the records of missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, from the archives and libraries; print and visual media coverage of modern physical education and sport in modern China; and reports, diaries and memoirs of famous sportsmen and sport experts. The evidence includes primary, secondary and archival sources. The primary sources for this study include correspondence between public and Christian functionaries, newspaper and magazine articles from 1840–1937, diaries, government documents and sport-related legislation located at places, such as the Shanghai Library, the Shanghai Archive, Soochow University Library, the Soochow Archive, the Guangzhou Archive of China, the Kautz Family YMCA Archives of the University of Minnesota, the Springfield College Archives and Special Collections, and Yale Divinity Library of Yale University, and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Archive of University of London in the UK. This section outlines the archival documents and the government and media sources that are fundamental to this work.

First, the archival material was obtained from the Kautz Family YMCA Archive of the University of Minnesota, the Springfield College Archives and Special Collections and the Yale University Divinity School Library Special Collections with the assistance of the University archivists. The Kautz Family holds abundant materials relating to modern China. The documents obtained from the Kautz Family were as follows: (1) the annual and quarterly reports and report letters written by the foreign secretaries serving in China, which provide information on the programs and activities of the National Committee and the local associations. Physical education work was also included in the reports and report letters. (2) The record of the National Conventions and other conference records.

The Springfield College Archives and Special Collections also have a rich selection of materials documenting the history not only of Springfield College since its earliest days, but also of the School for Christian Workers and the International YMCA Training School to the present day. The documents obtained from the Springfield College were as follows: Special collections of publications and manuscripts which focus on the areas of the birth and history of basketball and volleyball, physical education and physical training of the North American YMCA, the Olympic movement, and so forth.

The Yale University Divinity School Library Special Collections include documentation of Protestant missionary endeavour and of religious work among college and university students. This is the initial accession of materials, received in 1982. It contains records relating to the early work of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in China, including Fukien Christian University, Ginling College, Hangchow Christian University, Lingnan University and St John's University, among others. A number of valuable image databases about Chinese missionary colleges and universities have been collected for this research.

Relevant material has also been collected from the archive of School of Oriental and Asian Studies (University of London)<sup>105</sup>, and the archives of Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Suzhou, China. The material and documents which have been included in this research provide very crucial information on the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA's work, especially their physical education work. This material supplements the other archival documents and media sources detailed above to complete the overall understanding of the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA's physical education and sport work, along with the transformation of physical education and sport in modern China.

Old newspapers and journals published in modern China which have been collected by

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<sup>105</sup> SOAS holds the largest collection of Christian missionary archives in the UK; as well as personal papers of many individual missionaries. These collections span the 18th to 20th centuries and include a wealth of primary source material, such as correspondence, reports, minutes, journals, photographs and films.

Shanghai Library, Soochow University Library and Shan'xi Normal University Library were consulted. A few notable names among these newspapers and journals are *Shenbao*, *Tientisn Young Men*, *Da Gong Bao*, *Qinfen tiyu yuebao*, *Guowen zhoubao*, *Jiaoyu jikan*, *Jiaoyu zazhi* and *North Herald*. These newspapers, journals and documents provide abundant historical information about big sports events, and contain some significant sporting reviews that point towards a revolution in sport and changing attitudes towards Western sports in modern China.

Finally, books and research articles authored by Chinese and non-Chinese historians and scholars on the subject have also been used to ensure the neutral view on the Chinese perspective that this study endeavours to bring to light. To investigate details of the Western introduction of modern Western sport to modern China, literature which describes missionary activity has also been examined.

### 1.2.2 Interpretation of Data

According to Grix, discovering answers to questions is the purpose of research. He suggests that it is our ontological and epistemological positions that shape the very questions we ask in the first place, how we pose them and how we set about answering them.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, ontology and epistemology are the two foremost issues to be clarified in every research. This section reflects on the key considerations underlying knowledge and research, which have been taken to frame the ontological and epistemological interpretative positions for this study.

Ontology is the first step in all research endeavours, after which one's epistemological and methodological positions logically follow.<sup>107</sup> From a philosophical point of view, ontology is concerned with 'what is the nature of social reality?'<sup>108</sup> With regard to ontology, there are two major positions: foundationalism and anti-foundationalism. Foundationalism is based on empirical science. It posits that there is a real world 'out

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<sup>106</sup> J. Grix, 'Introduction Students to the Generic Terminology of Social Research', *Politics*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2002, p. 175.

<sup>107</sup> Norman Blaikie, *Approaches to Social Enquiry: Advancing Knowledge*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007, p. 13.

<sup>108</sup> Norman Blaikie, *Designing Social Research*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007, p. 13.

there' that is independent of our senses.<sup>109</sup> This means that so-called 'reality' exists independently of whether we acknowledge it or not, and that claims about reality have a rational and universal value.<sup>110</sup> This implies that objective notions of truth are 'foundational'.<sup>111</sup>

Anti-foundationalists doubt whether the 'real world' actually does consist of regularities, patterns and recurrences at all levels of inquiry.<sup>112</sup> They suggest that the world does not exist independently from our knowledge of it, emphasizing that we are involved in the construction of an external social world. Consequently, the nature of 'reality' cannot be rationally or universally grounded.<sup>113</sup> This is related to constructivist ontological traditions, which indicate that social reality, which includes phenomena and meanings, are constantly reconstructed by social actors. Therefore, reality is a fully constructed phenomenon.<sup>114</sup>

If a simple definition of ontology is that it is about what exists, then epistemology is about what and how we can know about the things that exist.<sup>115</sup> Epistemology focuses on the knowledge-gathering processes that tie in with one's ontological position. There are three primary epistemological positions: positivism, interpretivism and realism.

Positivism is well known as an approach used in the natural sciences, but a growing number of social scientists have argued that this approach can be applied to study social phenomena as well.<sup>116</sup> There are three principles at the core of positivism. First, the basis for positivism is foundational ontology. The positivists believe the world exists independently of our knowledge of it.<sup>117</sup> Second, positivists are concerned to establish causal relationships between social phenomena in the social sciences, and they seek to

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<sup>109</sup> J.W. Moses and T. Knutsen, *Ways of Knowing: Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 50-2.

<sup>110</sup> Ben Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it Can Succeed Again*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 130; J. Grix, *The Foundations of Research*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 60.

<sup>111</sup> J. Grix, *The Foundations of Research (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 61.

<sup>112</sup> J.W. Moses and T. Knutsen, pp. 142-9.

<sup>113</sup> J. Grix, *The Foundations of Research (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, p. 64.

<sup>114</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 16-8.

<sup>115</sup> J. Grix, *The Foundations of Research (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, p. 68.

<sup>116</sup> J. Grix, *The Foundations of Research*, p. 64.

<sup>117</sup> E.G. Guba and Y.S. Lincoln, 'Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research', in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 1998, p. 204.

employ scientific methods to observe and analyze social phenomenon.<sup>118</sup> Third, positivists consider that we can separate empirical and normative questions, and that it is possible for social science to be objective and value-free.<sup>119</sup>

Interpretivism is a term that covers many variations of perspectives in the social sciences.<sup>120</sup> According to Boland, interpretative researchers started out with the assumption that access to reality is only possible through social constructions such as consciousness, shared meanings and language.<sup>121</sup> There are three key principles at the core of interpretivism. First, interpretivist positions are based upon the anti-foundational position of ontology. Interpretive research rejects the notion that the world exists independently of our knowledge of it. It considers that the world is socially constructed.<sup>122</sup> Second, it is impossible for interpretivism to establish a causal relationship between phenomena, as its emphasis is on understanding.<sup>123</sup> Third, interpretivists, in general, concentrate on the meaning of behaviour and the emphasis is upon understanding rather than explaining because they believe that ‘social phenomena do not exist independently of our interpretation of them’ and ‘it is these interpretations which affect outcomes’.<sup>124</sup>

According to Marsh and Furlong, realism is the third major position of epistemology. Realism shares an ontological position with positivism. Marsh and Furlong describe three major views of classical realism. First, realist researchers acknowledge that the world exists independently of people’s knowledge of it, which is in line with positivist thinking and which belongs to the foundational ontological position. Second, realist researchers contend that people can make causal statements because social phenomena or structures do have causal powers. This point of view also aligns with the positivists. Third, realist researchers do not accept that social phenomena and the inside

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<sup>118</sup> J. Grix, *The Foundations of Research (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, p. 81.

<sup>119</sup> D. Marsh and P. Furlong, 'A Skin Not a Jacket: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science', in D. Marsh and G. Stoker (eds), *Theory and Methods in Political Science, Second Edition*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 18.

<sup>120</sup> J. Grix, *The Foundations of Research (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, p. 83.

<sup>121</sup> R. Boland, 'Phenomenology: A Preferred Approach to Research in Information System', in E. Mumford (ed.), *Research Methods in Information Systems*, Amsterdam, North-Holland, 1985, pp. 193-202.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> J. Grix, *The Foundations of Research (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, p. 84.

<sup>124</sup> D. Marsh and P. Furlong, pp. 472-96.



relationship can be observed directly. It is impossible for people to observe the deep structures and what can be observed may offer a false picture of the structures and their effects.<sup>125</sup> In this context realism differs from positivism.

There are two major forms of realism: empirical realism and critical realism. According to Bryman, empirical realists simply argue that reality can be understood through the use of appropriate methods. This notion is sometimes referred to as naïve realism to reflect the fact that it is often assumed by the realist that there is a perfect correspondence between reality and the term used to describe it.<sup>126</sup> Critical realism, on the other hand, endorses ‘sharing the foundational ontology with positivism and allowing for interpretation in research’.<sup>127</sup> Grix indicates that critical realism is the position which can stand midway between positivism and interpretive research.<sup>128</sup> According to Marsh and Furlong, modern critical realism not only acknowledges that there is a world out there which is independent of people’s knowledge, but also considers that there is a causal relationship between structure and agency in social phenomenon.<sup>129</sup> Both views are in agreement with the positivist position. However, critical realism asserts that ‘while social science can use the same methods as natural science regarding causal explanation (in line with positivism)’, it also needs to ‘move away from them by adopting an interpretive understanding.’<sup>130</sup> In addition, it posits that individuals cannot observe all of the things in social phenomena because of deep structures rooted in specific social backgrounds which affect the observers’ results. The point of view is similar to the interpretive view.<sup>131</sup>

These considerations are important for this research. Even though the actual historical process of the introduction and spread of modern Western sports in China by the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA – and the transformation of physical education and sport in modern China – was a reality which cannot be changed by our

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 30-1.

<sup>127</sup> J. Grix, *The Foundations of Research*, p. 85.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> D. Marsh and P. Furlong, pp. 472-96.

<sup>130</sup> A. Sayer, *Realism and Social Science*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 2000, p. 17.

<sup>131</sup> D. Marsh and P. Furlong, pp. 472-96.

sense and which is independent of our knowledge, the data sources themselves present these historical realities according to their specific objective view point.

Within this context, the notions of validity and reliability, which are both classical criteria for assessing the procedure and results of qualitative research, become important.<sup>132</sup> Researchers are required to present the procedure they use so as to enable others to confirm that their methods are reliable and their conclusions valid.<sup>133</sup> In qualitative research, validity and reliability are conceptualized as rigorous quality and trustworthiness.<sup>134</sup> Seal also argues that the ‘trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability’.<sup>135</sup> While Yin highlights that a valid study is one that has properly collected and interpreted its data, so that the conclusions accurately reflect and represent the real world that was studied,<sup>136</sup> the bias inherent in these materials needs to be recognized and accounted for. According to Maxwell, bias is a specific validity threat often raised in relation to qualitative studies.<sup>137</sup> In order to combat threats to validity, this study collected converging historical documents, including a vast number of reports, diaries and newspaper articles in English and Chinese, which came from both China and a number of Western countries. After comprehensive consideration of these historical documents, this study interprets and analyses these historical phenomena objectively. It is also argued and shown later in this thesis that existing interpretative lens such as cultural imperialism and nationalism can add to this bias, and obscure aspects of historical truths. To counter this, this research adheres to the foundational explanation of this historical reality. Therefore, this research adopts a foundational ontological position and an epistemological position of critical realism.

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<sup>132</sup> U. Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 2009, p. 385.

<sup>133</sup> D. Silverman, *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 2013, p. 201.

<sup>134</sup> Nahid Golafshani, 'Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research', *The Qualitative Report*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2003, p. 601.

<sup>135</sup> C. Seale, *The Quality of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 1999, p. 266.

<sup>136</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, New York, Guilford Publications, 2010, p. 78.

<sup>137</sup> J.A. Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 1996, p. 90.

### 1.3 Structure of the Thesis and Periodization

The following chapter presents a literature review and conceptual framework, with a specific focus on cultural imperialism, Christianity and sport, as well as nationalism and sport.

The rest of the chapters follow the periodization of the historical process of the transformation of physical education and sport to provide an organizing structure for this thesis. Chinese scholars normally define ‘modern China’ as the years from 1840 to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. The years 1937–1949 constituted a period of war in modern China, with the Second Sino–Japanese War from 1937 to 1945 and the Civil War from 1945 to 1949. Under the influence of these wars, physical education and sport in China were seriously compromised. Therefore, this research is mainly concerned with the transformation of physical education and sport in China from 1840 to 1937. The history of this process is divided into four periods for analytical purposes. The data is analyzed and interpreted in chronological order as outlined below.

Chapter 3 considers the period, from 1840 to 1908, which fell within the context of a series of social reformations in China, such as the Hundred Days’ Reform, the Self-Strengthening Movement and the ending of the Imperial Civil Examination of the Qing government. This period also witnessed the introduction into China of modern Western physical education and sport by the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA. In the context of China, they were also seen as good instruments for the missionaries to reach out to the Chinese people. This chapter illustrates how modern Western physical education and sport were institutionalized in China due to the efforts of missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, which laid a strong foundation for proselytizing modern Western physical education and sport during the ensuing years of Christianity’s influence in China.

## Chapter 1

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Chapter 4 considers the expansion of the physical education and sport work of the Christian institutions and the native response to it in China between 1908 and 1919. The year 1908 was chosen as the starting point for this discussion because the first special physical director of the YMCA, M.J. Exner, was appointed in that year. Exner played a central role in changing the Chinese mindset as regards physical education and sport, and indeed he may be seen as the pioneer of the propagation and promotion of Western physical education and sport in modern China. In addition, with the overthrow of the Qing government in 1911, the social environment in China was conducive for change, in particular for the development of missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, and their physical education work. Christian educational institutions and the YMCA promoted modern Western physical education and sport by introducing certain basic reforms to classroom curricula and teaching methodology; conducting regular sports, athletic and extracurricular activities; providing leadership training; organizing various outdoor and indoor sporting activities; and holding local, regional, national and international athletic games. Missionaries' work did bear fruit, which produced marked social change. More and more Chinese people not only imbibed the Western cultural ways in character and conduct, but also underwent an intellectual transformation, as they now relinquished indigenous dogmas, and embraced the physical, spiritual, social, moral and intellectual ideas propagated by missionary educational institutions and the YMCA. This chapter illustrates how the success of the missionary institutions' physical program not only depended on the efforts of the missionaries and physical directors, but on the changing attitude of the Chinese elites towards modern physical education and sport. The local governors, educators and students worked with the YMCA personnel to modernize Chinese society, and this chapter illustrates how the Chinese began to gradually accept and embrace Western physical education and sport as part of a wider national modernization agenda.

Chapter 5 considers the issue of rising nationalism which was reflected through the May Fourth and Anti-Christian Movements, and their influence on Christian institutions and their physical education and sport work in China from 1919 to 1928. The May Fourth

Movement paved the way for the rising nationalism of the 1920s. Nationalism in China had been steadily increasing since the May Fourth Movement in 1919. Missionary educational institutions and the YMCA suffered significant setbacks at this time. During this period, Christian influence was severely affected by these movements which incited the Chinese people to claim their sport sovereign rights from foreigners' hands. The role of missionary educational institutions and the YMCA in physical education and sport declined dramatically, and Western physical education and sport in China were beginning to undergo a process of indigenization and inculturation. In addition, indigenous sports, and in particular martial arts, began to receive greater attention from the Chinese people. This process of indigenization marked an aspect of Chinese nationalism that was borne out of Chinese nationalists' response to Western imperialism and the influence of the Christian institutions. These feelings of nationalism were coincidentally appropriated by the Nationalist Party whose drive to power was entirely based upon promoting nationalism through institutional means. In fact, this aspect to the spread of nationalism is the focus of Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 considers the development of nationalism in China that simultaneously resulted in the indigenization of both the Christian institutions and their physical education and sport programs, as well as in the transformation of sport in China from 1928 to 1937. In 1928, the Nationalist Party overthrew the Beiyang government and later formed the first modern legitimate national government in Nanking. As Chinese nationalism was asserted in all matters of state sovereignty, the direct influence of the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA was already in decline, despite their continued work in China. However, due to the Sinification of these institutions and of the YMCA, along with their cooperation with the Nationalist government, they managed to recover to a certain degree, especially when compared with the period of 1919 to 1928. This chapter outlines how Christian institutions relinquished sports administration over to the hands of the Nationalist government and indigenous sport organizations, and how modern Western physical education and sport now came to be utilized as a means of showcasing Chinese nationalism. Even traditional Chinese sports

underwent certain reforms and started to become modernized.

Chapter 7, the conclusion of this thesis provides a discussion of the findings of this research, and outlines how it has addressed the research questions set out in the introductory chapter. The conclusion will demonstrate the limits of employing the theories of cultural imperialism and nationalism as exclusive categories to explain the introduction of Western physical education and sport in China.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter will critically assess the existing literature on the history of Christian sport engagement in China, specifically in relation to how the existing literature has approached the issue of cultural imperialism and physical education and sport. As the main focus of this thesis concerns the ways in which cultural imperialism intersected with emerging discourses of nationalism, modernity and Westernization in China, this chapter will aim to show how the existing literature has either failed to engage with this question altogether, or has not recognized how this particular instance of Western cultural imperialism was not simply a straightforward process of the violence of an enforced cultural enculturation, but a more negotiated process within which the local populations and intellectuals had an important input. To illustrate this division in existing research that either condemns Christian sports movements as negative or fails to address the glaring issue of cultural imperialism altogether, the two sections of this chapter will analyse and evaluate research related to the role of Christianity in the promotion of physical education and sport in modern China, focusing on missionary schools, the YMCA and sport in modern China. The specific foci of this thesis, namely sport, Christianity and cultural imperialism, as well as sport and nationalism, are discussed in the third section of the chapter. An exploration of these two themes will be used as the basis for foregrounding the conceptual framework that will be used to inform this research; namely, cultural imperialism. This concept will inform analyses of the interplay between Christian discourses of sports as a form of evangelical engagement and sports as a somatic expression of modern nationalism.

### 2.2 The Existing Research on the Sport Program of the Christian Educational Institutions and the YMCA in Modern China in English

The missionary educational institutions and the YMCA were the two most important agents for the dissemination of modern Western physical education and sport in modern China.<sup>1</sup> Kirby Page conducted the earliest research on the YMCA and sport in modern China in 1916. In his PhD dissertation, ‘The Young Men’s Christian Association of China’<sup>2</sup>, Page gives a brief description and overview of the services and functions of the YMCA’s physical education and sport work in modern China, detailing in particular its pioneer work, its promotion of track and field events, the introduction of modern sport equipment, and development of specific sport policies of the YMCA in China. In his research, Page argues that physical education and sport were being used by the Chinese YMCA not only as an effective means of avoiding ill health among the local population, but also to help the YMCA to promote Christian ethical and moral values among the Chinese, especially the youth.<sup>3</sup> Page was clearly very impressed by the rapid developments and achievements of the YMCA’s physical education engagement in China, especially in terms of the societal change which he found to be truly remarkable, considering it took place within the short span of only eight years. Page fails, however, to turn his critical attention to the motives of this Christian institution, and views the YMCA’s activities as purely beneficial to the aim of modernizing China. He observes how the attitude of the Chinese towards athletics changed very quickly, and expresses his personal strong hope that the next generation would possess ‘stronger bodies and a more vigorous vitality’.<sup>4</sup> Page’s work, then, is clearly driven by his own personal views that posit the Chinese bodies as ‘weak’ as opposed to the modern, strong

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<sup>1</sup> Qing Chen, *Qingmo minchu xinshi tiyu de chuanru yu shanbian [The Introduction and Transformation of Modern Sport in Late Qing and Early Republic China]*, Wuhan, Huazhong shifan daxue chubanshe [Central China Normal University Press], 2007; Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3]*, Zhongguo tiyu tongshi [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport], Edited by L. Cui, Beijing, Renmin tiyu chubanshe [People’s Sports Publishing House of China], 2008, Vol. 3; Gang Chen, ‘Jiaohui xuexiao yiyu dui zhongguo jindai tiyu fazhan de yingxiang [The Influences of the Missionary Schools on the Development of Physical Education and Sport in Modern China]’, *Tiyu wenhua daokan [Sports Culture Guide]*, no. 6, 2007, pp. 93-5.

<sup>2</sup> Page, K., *The Young Men’s Christian Associations of China*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1916.

<sup>3</sup> K. Page, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.81.



Caucasian bodies that the YMCA's programs were set to achieve among the Chinese population, and this strong bias also remains the key weakness of this early work. However, Page's work was too early an exploration (having been carried out in 1916) into the history of the YMCA, which at this point was very short, as the YMCA had only come to China in 1895. Even so, it provides some important data for this research project, and that is why his work can be seen as ground-breaking in nature in the field of modern Chinese sports history.

An early work examining this engagement was Kok Ann Wee's *Physical Education in Protestant Christian Colleges and Universities of China* (1937)<sup>5</sup>, which focused on tertiary educational institutions. Primarily, the focus of Wee's research is on describing the development of physical education in the Protestant Christian colleges and universities in China in the 1940s. It is the earliest and most extensive source available that investigates the working strategy of the missionaries' tertiary educational institutions. In order to make an objective and comprehensive survey of physical education in Christian institutions in China, Wee conducted several studies. He twice sent questionnaires to the Christian schools, first during the academic year of 1930–1931, and then again during the academic year 1934–1935. Then, between 1932 and 1935, Wee visited eight of the 13 missionary institutions in China. As a follow-up to the questionnaires, Wee interviewed some of the students and faculty members at these institutions. Wee put on record in the book some the opinions and suggestions of these interviewees as first-hand evidence of his findings regarding the state of Christian education in China. Wee's research also utilized catalogues, bulletins, records, registers, announcements and reports from some Christian institutions as an integral part of his data.

Wee also examined the standards and policies regarding physical education in the Protestant Christian colleges and universities in China, and their counterparts in the US, which allowed him to make some recommendations for the Chinese missionary

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<sup>5</sup> K.A. Wee, *Physical Education in Protestant Christian Colleges and Universities of China*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1937.

educational institutions of the 1930s as to how to improve their curriculum. For instance, for women's physical education, it was recommended that for at least the first two years of college every female student be required to follow a program of physical education for two hours a week. In terms of equipment and facilities, Wee reports that every institution was required to provide several fields for soccer, baseball, field hockey, archery, basketball, volleyball and mass games. For intramural sports, the Christian institutions put preponderant emphasis on intramural athletics as a part of their physical education programs, organized and controlled by the physical education department.<sup>6</sup> Wee concluded that the missionaries were the prime exponents and pioneering contributors to the development of physical education in China.<sup>7</sup> Wee was extremely positive about the missionaries' contribution to the development of organized physical education, and was advocating a broadening or expansion of the physical education program in the Christian colleges and universities.

On the whole, Wee's research provides comprehensive qualitative data on the situation of physical education in missionary higher educational institutions in the 1930s and is relevant to this research because the interviews and questionnaires included relate to the twentieth century. Most importantly, Wee's first-hand database provides a window into the nature of physical education in missionary schools in 1930s China. However, Wee's work only describes physical education in the Christian institutions in China, examines the standards and policies of physical education in American institutions, and presents recommendations in this field for the Christian institutions in China from a subjective perspective that appears to have been coloured by the author's own Christian convictions. Perhaps for this reason, he does not discuss the missionary tertiary institutions' religious motivation and neglects the evangelical and cultural component of their work as a driving factor in carrying on their physical education in Christian institutions in China. In particular, he does not discuss what cultural impact these educational programs had on modern Chinese society.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.100.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.96.

Similarly to Wee, Chih-Kang Wu, in his 1957 PhD thesis entitled ‘The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China’, explores the positive influence of the YMCA on the development of physical education and sport in modern China. Wu identifies four principal periods of the development of the YMCA in China: the Period of Introduction (1895–1908); the Period of Expansion (1908–1915); the Period of Consolidation (1915–1927); and the Period of Transition (1927–1955).<sup>8</sup> Wu argues that from 1895 to 1955 the YMCA was a major driving force behind the sport reform movement in China. In his view, the YMCA leaders promoted pioneering developments in sport, and the organization played an important role in the modernization of China.<sup>9</sup> Wu notes that the YMCA leaders needed to overcome many obstacles, such as limited finances, equipment and leaders, during the course of their work in China. He suggested that to compensate for these limitations, they relied heavily on their creative planning and enthusiasm for their work. Importantly, Wu notes that the YMCA leaders were also assisted significantly by the cooperation of the Chinese people, especially those of higher social status, which suggests that the YMCA found an effective way of engaging with the local population in ways that transformed existing attitudes to sports and physical education.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, Wu was the first scholar to highlight how the YMCA exerted significant influence on the development of physical education and sport in modern China between 1840 and 1955. For example, the YMCA was responsible for the establishment of almost all local, regional and national athletic organizations. The first physical education leadership training classes were established by the YMCA as part of its plans for the development of physical training centres. Wu also claims that the quality of this leadership program is evidenced by how some of its earliest established subjects have endured in the curriculum of the Chinese physical education department to the present day; for example, history of education, sport history and sport philosophy.<sup>11</sup> Wu’s work

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<sup>8</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, *The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China*, PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 1957, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

also emphasizes the long-lasting positive influences and contributions of the YMCA's work in the development of modern physical education and sport in China through, for instance, their initiation and organization of various athletic games and the promotion of physical leadership training classes.

Wu's work provides extensive historical data on the YMCA's operations. However, Wu too remains conspicuously silent about the organization's religious foundations, which have played a pivotal role in influencing its operations, and the ways in which the YMCA prioritized certain sports while overlooking others. In this aspect, Wu fails to critically assess how, similar to other realms of culture, physical education and sport are often dominated by the hegemonic values of powerful nations. Wu is impervious to the YMCA's religious foundations and the ways in which the Christian missions intersected with the contemporaneous influx of Western imperialism,<sup>12</sup> and how, at the heart of the YMCA's work in China, sports were first and foremost a means of propagating Christianity – and, by extension, Western culture.

Wu's most glaring shortcoming is his failure to take into account the question of the motives of the missionary institutions and the YMCA within the development and reform of activities. If the intent was truly altruistic, development should have reflected, to some extent, the changing indigenous socio-economic and cultural environment. For instance, the negative Chinese response to the YMCA's work, including physical education work, which paradoxically led to the development of Chinese nationalism against the anticipation of the Christian administration, is an important consideration, and one that is not addressed by Wu at all. In addition, his research does not acknowledge how the Chinese response impacted upon the process of transformation of physical education and sport in China under YMCA patronage, but focuses mostly on the ways in which the Western missionaries contributed to the development of sports in China. For example, for the period when Chinese nationalism and the Anti-Christian Movement were on the rise, Wu's study makes no comment on the decline of the

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<sup>12</sup> A. Guttman, *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994; G.R. Gems.

YMCA's erstwhile influence on physical education and sport from 1922 onwards. Therefore, his work provides rather a one-sided and biased view of the importance of the role of the YMCA in the development of Chinese sports. It is telling that Wu fails to address the issue of how, in certain cases, the connections between the missionaries and the Chinese upper classes had grown stronger because of the missionaries' ideological support of the Chinese nationalist – to the extent some missionaries were even 'going native' and becoming strong advocates of the Chinese nationalist movement and educational enterprise (as this research will demonstrate). Wu does not touch upon these complications in his work.

Moreover, Wu's work draws heavily on American research archives, with little reference to material from contemporaneous Chinese newspapers, magazines and books – a gap that this research will address. For example, some Chinese sport experts and scholars advocated promoting and practicing traditional Chinese martial arts. According to the material from old journals and newspapers like *Da Gong Bao*, the growing nationalism of the 1930s gave rise to a series of debates between Chinese sport specialists (who advocated traditional Chinese martial arts) and those who favoured Western sports such as track and field, volleyball and tennis. As a result of this discourse, modern Western physical education and sport continued to develop in China and traditional Chinese martial arts underwent a process of transformation and modernization.

Jonathan Klatch was the first Western scholar to examine the players responsible for the development of modern Western physical education and sport in China in *Sports, Politics, and Ideology in China* (1972). Klatch divides his analysis into two parts, the first covering the pre-Communist period, and the second the Communist period from 1949 onwards.<sup>13</sup> Part I comprises of three chapters. In the first chapter, Klatch defines the period from 1895 to 1928 as the 'YMCA era'.<sup>14</sup> In this era, Klatch asserts, the YMCA's physical program played an important role in the development of physical

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<sup>13</sup> J. Kolatch, *Sports, Politics, and Ideology in China*, New York, Jonathan David Publishers, 1972, p. xii.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

education and sport in China, and he notes how the YMCA organized a series of nationwide athletic meets and established regional athletic associations. In this way, Klatch argues, it was eventually able to exert an influence over China's national sport culture. When the YMCA began its work in China, physical education and sport, as a 'modern' phenomenon, were little known or understood. However, thanks to the YMCA's work during this period, Klatch argues that China was put on the road toward breaking with what he saw as a 'traditional disinterest' in physical education and sport.<sup>15</sup> Klatch shows how the YMCA's physical work had a long-lasting effect on 'Chinese attitudes towards sport and opened a collective mindset to the idea of embracing Western sport'.<sup>16</sup> However, Klatch focuses strongly on the positive aspects of the YMCA's engagement, and never engages with notions of cultural imperialism and potential local resistance to the Western-style modernization processes. For example, while the YMCA did contribute significantly to the generation of interest in Western physical education and sport, the change of mindset had also revived the people's interest in indigenous sports. Subsequently, there had developed a very significant debate between the indigenous educationists and sports experts, who were in favour of the traditional sports as a matter of national identity, and the advocates of Western sports, who always asserted that Western sports were the best because these had a scientific base, and should be used to train and strengthen the nation in mind and body.<sup>17</sup> Klatch's work does not address the way in which these two conflicting discourses did or did not contribute to the development of modern Chinese sports.

In chapter two, Klatch deals with the period 1928–1949, which he refers to as 'The Era of Government Control'. In this chapter, he describes the ways in which the Chinese state controlled physical education and sport through directives, legislation and conferences after the establishment of the Nanking Nationalist Government in 1927–8.<sup>18</sup> In chapter three, Klatch briefly introduces the Far Eastern Championship Games (FECG)

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp.29-30.

<sup>16</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> Yunrui Wu, 'Da gong bao <Jinhou guomin tiyu wenti> [Comments on 'Problems of Our Sports in the Future' on Da Gong Bao]', *Tiyu zhoubao [Sports News Weekly]*, no. 33, 20 August 1932, pp. 2-3. Editorial, 'Tiyu he fen tuyang [Why Do Foreign Sports Have to Be Separated from Local Sport]', *ibid.*, no. 28, 13 August 1932.

<sup>18</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 31.

– the first international athletic competition in the region.<sup>19</sup> This chapter describes Klatch's subjective view of the 'unquestionably' beneficial influence of the YMCA on the inception and development of the FECG in China. Later on, this thesis presents arguments to prove that the YMCA's motive behind the development of the FECG in China was rather to perpetuate Western influence than simply to advance a societal reform agenda.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly to Wu, Klatch also fails to analyse and account for the YMCA's religious disposition and the implicit reasons for the introduction and propagation of physical education and sport activities by the YMCA. Klatch merely focuses on documenting, without developing an insightful critique on, the organization's contribution to the development of physical education and sport in modern China. Moreover, Klatch's discussion seems a mere recounting of chronological developments and events, as it does not engage with any critical debate on the relationship between sports and nationalism, a crucial phenomenon, as we observed earlier, to account for the declining influence of Christian physical education and sport projects in China from 1922 onwards.

Kimberly A. Risedorph, in his 1972 PhD dissertation entitled 'Reformers, Athletes and Students: The YMCA in China 1895–1935', examines the YMCA's overall work in early twentieth-century China from the perspectives of its educational, athletic and social achievements. Risedorph devotes one chapter to a discussion of the YMCA and the initiation and popularization of modern Western physical education and sport in China. Even though his findings are limited in scope, they are still valid. For instance, Risedorph observes that the introduction of modern athletics had a profound impact on the Chinese youth, especially those in urban China, because the youth in the city centres were directly under the influence of the YMCA. The urban youth gradually accepted vigorous sporting activities and training methods. They participated in athletic teams and competitive meets. They also adopted new values, fashions, and started following

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.51.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.70.

sports celebrities who earned their name in Western sports activities.<sup>21</sup>

Risedorph claims that the adoption of certain values and attitudes, such as endurance, vigilance, courage and team spirit, which accompanied modern Western physical education and sport, largely catered to the state's needs at a particular historical moment.<sup>22</sup> For example, after the establishment of the Nanking government of the Chinese Nationalist Party in 1927–8, physical education and sport were used by the government as a means of uniting Chinese people, demonstrating sovereignty of China, and improving international prestige of China.<sup>23</sup> However, Risedorph does not consider the later inclination of the Nanking government to indigenize the YMCA initiatives in view of their effectiveness to promote the nationalist cause because the YMCA activities, irrespective of any latent motive, appeared secularist to all practical purposes and conformed perfectly well to the state's vision of modern 'Chineseness'. The Nanking government sought cooperation of the YMCA and, to facilitate this, made it obligatory for each local organization to register itself with the government. Some of the YMCA directors had also been inducted into government offices to develop affiliations between the government and the YMCA. This also made it possible for the government to have some semblance of control on the administration of the YMCA. This in turn enabled the government to achieve its ultimate target of taking full charge of the organization and projection of sports activities, and regional and national level games competitions which had originally been initiated under the auspices of the YMCA. The Chinese 'adapted sport to their own needs' and 'continued to use it to construct their own future'.<sup>24</sup> It can be argued that state intervention imparted a whole new symbolic significance to the way sports were played and athletic activities evolved in China by inciting a passion for national independence and unity among the Chinese people. This argument is supported by the fact that, although a large number of Chinese people participated in athletic activities organized by the YMCA, most of them did not convert

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<sup>21</sup> K.A. Risedorph, *Reformers, Athletes, and Students: The YMCA in China, 1895–1935*, PhD Thesis, Washington University, 1994, p. 186.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.219.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> G.R. Gems, p. 28.



to Christianity.<sup>25</sup> The explanation of the phenomenon is that although the agendas of the YMCA, and the Nanking government, intended to goad the populace to their intrinsically divergent cultural motivations; that is, the foreign versus the local, a different scenario emerged. The Chinese people, were becoming increasingly pragmatic about the worth of their own cultural heritage, developed a genuine interest in sport and physical activities, along with and a passion for nationalism. They were also gaining self-belief by better learning both the foreign and the local perspectives of their development.<sup>26</sup>

Gael Graham, in her 1994 journal article ‘Sport and Physical Education in American Protestant Missionary Schools in China, 1880–1930’, addresses the issue of how sports were used by missionaries to have a significant impact on the broader Chinese society. Graham asserts that the introduction of physical education and sport in American Protestant missionary schools in China was ‘one indicator of the way in which missionaries had moved beyond simple evangelism to a broader effort to reshape Chinese society’.<sup>27</sup> Graham argues that missionaries promoted physical education and sport for several reasons. First, the school system promoted by the American missionaries was fashioned after the US national school system and curriculum. By imparting the American education curriculum, they could ‘undermine Confucian education’ and ‘somehow lead Chinese students to convert to Christianity’.<sup>28</sup> Second, the perceived physical frailty of Chinese students was also seen as justification for American missionaries to impose on them an ideology of physical fitness. Here, the American missionaries were attempting to hierarchically position the image of a white, middle-class American male as a reflection of the ideal ‘Christian manhood’ for the Chinese youth, and they argued that the way to achieve this was through physical education and sport. Graham argues that the missionaries’ physical education programs did bear fruit and a certain number of students not only absorbed the American cultural

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<sup>25</sup> K.A. Risedorph), pp. 187-8.

<sup>26</sup> Fan Hong and Tan Hua, ‘Sport in China: Conflict between Tradition and Modernity, 1840s to 1930s’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 19, no. 2-3, 2002, p. 207.

<sup>27</sup> Graham Gael, ‘Exercising Control: Sports and Physical Education in American Protestant Mission Schools in China, 1880–1930’, *Signs*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1994, p. 24.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28.

ways in character and conduct, but also underwent an intellectual transformation, relinquishing indigenous dogmas and embracing the physical, spiritual, social, moral and intellectual ideas propagated by the Christian missions. For example, under the influence of missionary teachers, girls from missionary schools expressed their opposition to the traditional customs, such as footbinding, and liberated themselves by participating in various sports activities and competitions, which was unheard of in Confucian society.<sup>29</sup> Third, physical education and sport could help the American missionaries to modify elite Chinese attitudes toward physical activities and labour work.<sup>30</sup> The gentry in China preferred a feeble body to engaging in manual labour or even sports, as they took these activities to be the preserve of the lower classes. Therefore, the participation in physical activities by gentry and upper classes, to some extent, signified their changing view on physical activities and manual labour. Finally, the missionaries felt that through sport, missionaries could embolden Chinese women to inhabit public spaces by ‘creating novel, emancipatory, recreational, and educational opportunities for them’.<sup>31</sup> Graham’s research has therefore provided very useful insights as to how the missionary schools shattered ‘traditional concepts of physicality among the educated and upper classes’ and enabled ‘Chinese students to redefine themselves as muscle and sinew, not merely mind’.<sup>32</sup>

One of the most important works to date is Andrew Morris’s *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China* (2004), which examines the origins of modern physical education and sport in China and explores how sport and physical culture shaped the modern Chinese nation. Morris regards the Chinese YMCA as one part of the ongoing history project of creating a modern Chinese identity, highlighting the wider cultural impact that the YMCA’s work had. He emphasizes the YMCA missionaries’ commitment to the status and identity of the emerging modern Chinese nation state. Morris states that there is little question that the YMCA made

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp.40,43.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.32.

<sup>31</sup> Graham Gael, pp. 23-48.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.45.

‘great and lasting contributions to the development of Chinese sport’.<sup>33</sup> He outlines how the YMCA was the driving force behind the initiation of the National Games and even the earliest Asian games – the FECG,<sup>34</sup> and demonstrates how the Chinese people gradually integrated and adapted the modern sporting ideologies within the core values of Chinese physical education. Modern physical education and sport were used by the Chinese to train, build and perfect the ‘new Chinese man’.<sup>35</sup> Morris’s research makes an important contribution in narrating the history of modern physical education and sport in China, and provides the basis for our understanding of how Christian organizations were very much part of the wide discursive shift that was taking place with regards to how the Western epistemologies of the body were being adopted in China, within which the body itself was increasingly seen as an object of social and individual control, as well as a somatic sign of modernity. In this sense, this thesis builds on Morris’s research by focusing on the process of the development of missionary schools and the YMCA’s physical education and sport work in modern China, why and how the YMCA introduced and propagated modern Western physical education and sport in China, and how the local population and intellectuals eventually responded to this outside influence to initiate the process of indigenization of modern Western physical education and sport for nationalistic purposes.

Fan Hong’s edited volume, *Sport, Nationalism and Orientalism: The Asian Games*, develops the thesis in the prologue that the evolution of the Asian Games was greatly influenced by Christian missionaries, in particular those aligned with the YMCA. Like previous researchers, Hong, in the preface, focuses only briefly on the Christian institutions’ cultural role in China through physical education and sport; however, she does make certain crucial observations that deserve further exploration and which serve as a starting point for this research. For instance, Hong stresses that China was not only invaded in the nineteenth century by the military forces of imperialist Western countries, such as Britain, Germany and France, but was also confronted with a strong dogmatic

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<sup>33</sup> A.D. Morris, *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2004, p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

onslaught by proponents of Christianity at the same time. In line with colonialist discourse, the Christian missionaries attributed essentialist traits to the Chinese people, constructing them as uncivilized, uneducated and non-religious. These missionaries were on a civilizing mission to ‘convert the Chinese to their superior *Weltanschauung*’.<sup>36</sup>

Hong also asserts that, although the missionaries were of different Christian denominations and had differing proselytizing strategies, they were united in the cause of converting the Chinese to Christianity.<sup>37</sup> Hong also identifies the discreet relationship between the work of the YMCA and its ideology of promoting a Christian masculinity through physical education and sport in order to establish a standard Christian image of manliness. This research, however, aspires to build on Hong’s research by exploring the relationship between Christianity, the YMCA and physical education work in modern China.

Other scholars, and in particular Chinese scholars, have been very critical of Western physical education movements. In his PhD thesis ‘Sport, Imperialism and Post-colonialism – A Critical Analysis of Sport in China 1860–1993’, Dong-Jhy Hwang utilizes various theories of imperialism and post-colonialism as his critical lens to read the development of physical education and sport in China. Hwang’s main argument relies on the claim that the missionary school system, and the YMCA in particular, which was run by Christian missionaries, acted as agents of Western cultural imperialism. Under the dynamic patronage of the Christian missions, educational institutions, hospitals and the YMCA itself, like other institutions, were places to propagate the ideas and customs of Western culture for more sinister purposes.<sup>38</sup> According to Hwang, the YMCA and the missionary educational system proved the medium through which sport came to play a major role in ‘the process of Western

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<sup>36</sup> Fan Hong, 'Preface', in F. Hong (ed.), *Sport, Nationalism and Orientalism: The Asian Games*, London & New York, Routledge, 2006, p. xiii.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

<sup>38</sup> Dong-Jhy Hwang, *Sport, Imperialism and Postcolonialism: A Critical Analysis of Sport in China 1860–1993*, PhD Thesis, University of Stirling, 2002, pp. 70-1.

cultural imperialism within various social formations.’<sup>39</sup> Hwang makes an important argument in addressing the links between physical education and sport, and how these enabled Western missionaries to cultivate a commitment among the Chinese not only to Christianity, but also to other attitudes and practices associated with Western (and in particular American) culture(s). Hwang argues that it was mainly for the promotion of Christianity that the YMCA and missionary schools in modern China introduced and propagated Western physical education and sport, which in turn facilitated the spread of Western ‘civilization’. In a sense, sport, Christianity and the Western values embedded in the missionary educational system and YMCA programs formed part of an organic, yet in part orchestrated, advance of a Western cultural sphere. What Hwang fails to discuss, however – and what this present thesis will address – is how Chinese nationalism played a pivotal role in the development of Christian institutions and their physical education programs, and in selecting, adopting and reshaping modern Western physical education and sport for the benefit of Chinese nationalist movements. Therefore, the interaction between Christianity and Chinese nationalism, and ensuing indigenization and modernization of physical education and sport, are also considered in this research, but as a complicated and rarely straightforward process.

### **2.3 The Existing Research on the Sport Program of the Christian Educational Institutions and the YMCA in Modern China in Chinese**

In recent years, the topic of missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, and their work in the area of physical education and sport in modern China, has attracted the interest of many Chinese scholars in China. In particular, the ways in which culture and religion have been seen to intersect in the promotion of modern sports in China has been of particular focus in many recent works. Jin Lang’s *Physical Education and Sport in Modern Shanghai (1840–1937)* (2006), takes Shanghai as an example to examine the evolution of physical education and sport in modern China from 1840 to 1937. Lang’s specific focus was on exploring the relationship between missionary educational

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

institutions and the YMCA, and the introduction and popularization of modern Western physical education and sport in Shanghai from these aspects. His main assertion is that Christianity and Western culture cannot be separated, and that the propagation of Christianity signified the spread of Western culture and civilization in China. For Lang, physical education and sport are seen, first and foremost, as instruments for the missionaries to Christianize China and Westernize Chinese society. Taking Shanghai St John University as an example, Lang discusses the development of physical education in missionary colleges or universities in China. He shows how missionary schools, and missionary tertiary education institutions in particular, played a significant role in the propagation and development of modern Western physical education and sport in China. Moreover, he describes how special education and women's education programs conducted by missionaries focused on the provision of physical education. Finally, Lang briefly explores the history of Shanghai YMCA's physical education work from 1897 to 1922, and concludes that Christianity, as practised by missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, played a significant role in the introduction and spread of modern physical education and sport in China.<sup>40</sup> Lang's meticulous study makes a significant contribution to our understanding of how these cultural influences took root in local contexts.

Similarly, Qing Chen and Yong Zhao in 'Christian Education and Modern Physical Education and Sport in China in 1997' (2001) and 'YMCA's Physical Education and Sport Program and their Influence on the Development of Chinese Modern Sport' (2001) claim that even though missionary education and the YMCA played an important role in the development of physical education and sport in modern China, they point to physical education and sport as a medium and instrument for the propagation of Western culture, religion, norms and ideology among the Chinese people, and especially the youth of China.<sup>41</sup> Developing this cultural imperialism thesis, Qing Chen argues in his

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<sup>40</sup> Jing Lang, *Jindai tiyu zai shanghai (1840–1937) [Physical Education and Sport in Modern Shanghai (1840–1937)]*, Shanghai, Shanghai kexueyuan chubanshe [Shanghai Academy of Social Science Press], 2006, pp. 46-76.

<sup>41</sup> Qing Chen and Yong Zhao, 'Jidujiao qingnianhui zai zhongguo de tiyu huodong jiqi yingxiang [YMCA's Physical Education and Sport Program and their Influence on the Development of Chinese Modern Sport]', *Wuhan tiyu xueyuan xuebao [Journal of Wuhan Institute of Physical Education]*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2001, p. 72; Qing Chen and Yong Zhao, 'Jiaohui jiaoyu yu zhongguo jindai tiyu [Christian Education and Modern Physical Education and Sport in China]', *Wuhan tiyu xueyuan xuebao [Journal of*

2007 article ‘The Introduction and Transformation of Modern Sport in late Qing and early Republic of China’, that Western missionaries hoped that by doing physical exercise and participating in sporting activities, the Chinese youth would be influenced by and gradually accept Christian religion and Western culture.<sup>42</sup> While the work of these researchers provides useful insights into the reciprocal relationship between the Christian enterprise and Christianity’s physical education and sport program in China, their key weakness lies in their insistence on the negative aspects of missionary work, which are quickly turned to an issue of moral argument, rather than of objective academic enquiry.

Conversely, there are also some scholars in China, such as Xiaoyang Zhao<sup>43</sup>, Gang Chen<sup>44</sup>, and Jingzhao Xu and Chuanqi Li<sup>45</sup>, who have focused on the positive aspects of the role of the YMCA and missionary schools in physical education. Again, while their work makes some contribution to the study of sports in China, they fail to recognize the religious and cultural motives behind the missionaries’ commitment to physical education and sport. For example, they espouse the way missionaries cultivated a Western physical culture in China through school curricula by fostering sports talent, training physical education instructors, establishing specialized athletic organizations and promoting physical education and sport for women. Little has been explored by these Chinese scholars regarding the reasons and ideological drivers for the introduction and propagation of modern Western physical education and sport by missionary institutions and the relationship between these Christian institutions’ physical education programs, their religious proclivity, the underlying insistence on Western imperialism, and the significance of the Chinese response during the development of Western sports in modern China.

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*Wuhan Institute of Physical Education*], no. 3, 1997, p. 16.

<sup>42</sup> Qing Chen, *Qingmo minchu xinshi tiyu de chuanru yu shanbian [The Introduction and Transformation of Modern Sport in Late Qing and Early Republic China]*, p. 309.

<sup>43</sup> Xiaoyang Zhao, ‘Qiangjian zhilu: jidujiao qingnianhui dui jindai zhongguo tiyu de lishi gongxian [The Road to Strong: The YMCA and its Contribution on the Development of Physical Education and Sport in Modern China]’, *Nanjing tiyu xueyuan xuebao [Journal of Nanjing Sport Institute]*, no. 2, 2003, pp. 9-12.

<sup>44</sup> Gang Chen, ‘Jiaohui xuexiao yiyu dui zhongguo jindai tiyu fazhan de yingxiang [The Influences of the Missionary Schools on the Development of Sport and Physical Education in Modern China]’, pp. 93-5.

<sup>45</sup> Jingzhao Xu and Chuanqi Li, ‘Jidujiao qingnianhui dui zhongguo tiyu fazhan de lishi gongxian [The YMCA’s Contribution on the Physical Education and Sport in Modern China]’, *Xi’an tiyu xueyuan xuebao [Journal of Xi’an Physical Education University]*, no. 2, 2014, pp. 207-10.

By and large, then, much of existing literature on Chinese sports and physical education history has focused either on making moral judgments on the perceived positive or negative contributions of the Western missionaries on the Chinese nationalist cause, or on simply narrating the historical trajectory of Western sports and physical education in China without reference to cultural imperialism at all. Most of the literature published in the West emphasizes the long-lasting positive influences and contributions of the YMCA and missionary schools in the development of modern physical education and sport in China. However, researchers have paid scant attention to the religious foundations of these Christian institutions and the ways in which the Christian missions intersected with the influx of Western imperialism, and the inherent social, economic and cultural implications associated with their physical education and sport programs. The native Chinese response is a crucial signifier of both the growth or otherwise of Christianity and the transformation of physical education and sport in China. An analysis of the native response to Western sports, manifest in the indigenization of modern Western physical education and sport in China, is a valid way to explore and make sense of the hybrid space of two cultural worlds. The existing literature on the role of Christianity and the transformation of physical education and sport in modern China is therefore limited in scope in this respect.

This thesis builds on the existing research by discussing and comparing in more detail the transformation and modernization of physical education and sport under the influence of the Christian institutions, and under the influence of Chinese nationalism between 1840 and 1937. It traces the process by which the missionaries used physical education and sport programs to exert religious and cultural influence on the Chinese, assessing whether cultural imperialism is an adequate conceptual framework to analyse the process by which this process took place. Additionally, within a macro-historical perspective, this thesis looks into the role of Chinese nationalists and how they utilized the missionary work as a discursive tool to strengthen the nationalist cause by branding it an ‘imperialist strategy’ in the 1920s. The process of Sinification, secularization and



indigenization of missionary work and their physical education work followed, especially after the establishment of the Nanking Nationalist government. It will show how the Chinese utilized modern Western physical education and sport to promote China as a self-justifying cause; for example, physical education and sport were used by the Nationalist government as an instrument to improve the image of the new nation state (such as through the Chinese National Games) and to spread its ideology of national identity (through attendance at international athletic games such as the Olympic Games and the FECG).

Finally, this thesis analyses fluctuations in the influences of the transformation of physical education and sport, namely Christian institutions and nationalism, by studying the development of physical education and sport in four periods: 1840–1908, 1908–1919, 1919–1928 and 1928–1937. Moreover, it elaborates the entire process of the formation of the missionary educational system (from primary to tertiary level), its promotion of physical education, and the initiation and development of various – regional, national and international – athletic training programs and competitions. It also evaluates the implementation of the YMCA’s physical program and the later indigenization and secularization of physical education and sport in China, with a specific focus on reading these shifts through the conceptual paradigm of cultural imperialism as the conceptual framework through which to make sense of this process.

## **2.4 Conceptual Framework**

### **2.4.1 Sport, Christianity and Cultural Imperialism**

This section will introduce the key conceptual framework that will inform the critical reading of the history and legacy of Christian physical education and sport in China. Given that cultural imperialism has often been linked to other forms of ‘hard’ forms of imperialism, and what Johnston refers to ‘the creation and maintenance of unequal

relationships between civilizations [that] favour [...] the more powerful civilization,<sup>46</sup> it is unsurprising that much of Western missionary work has been analysed through this critical lens. The notion of cultural imperialism first emerged in critical scholarship in relation to the influence of the US media in Latin America in the early 1970s.<sup>47</sup> Since then, cultural imperialism has been used as an analytical framework by scholars to explain and critique various sociological phenomena that characterize inequality. It has also been utilized in as diverse disciplines as international relations, anthropology, education, history, literature and sport, and with reference to both historical and contemporary issues in multiple geographical areas.<sup>48</sup>

### *The Definition of Cultural Imperialism*

Perhaps reflecting its use in such a wide range of varying disciplines, cultural imperialism is a complex phenomenon that resists simplistic definitions. For instance, Tomlinson, writing in the context of political sciences, defines the term as ‘the use of political and economic power to exalt and spread the values and habits of a foreign culture at the expense of a native culture’.<sup>49</sup> Tomlinson’s concern here is therefore primarily on the direct influence of one culture on another as a form of political tool to gain influence and cultural legitimacy in a given socio-politico-historical context. Sarmela, who was one of the first scholars to use the term, positions the term specifically within the context of describing the political power of the global North in influencing late developing societies. For Sarmela, then, cultural imperialism represents the ‘economic, technological and cultural hegemony of the industrialized nations’<sup>50</sup>, which determines ‘the direction of both economic and social

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<sup>46</sup> R.J. Johnston, *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishers, 2000, p. 375.

<sup>47</sup> Bernd Hamm and Russell Charles Smandych, *Cultural Imperialism: Essays on the Political Economy of Cultural Domination*, Canada, Broadview Press, 2005, p. 4; Ryan Dunch, 'Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity', *History and Theory*, vol. 41, no. 3, 2002, p. 301.

<sup>48</sup> Ryan Dunch, pp. 301-25; Alan J. Bishop, 'Western Mathematics: The Secret Weapon of Cultural Imperialism', *Race & Class*, vol. 32, no. 2, 1990, pp. 51-65; Lennard J Davis, 'J'accuse!: Cultural Imperialism-Ableist Style', *Social Alternatives*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1999, pp. 36-40; Nicholas Tonti-Filippini, 'Revising Brain Death: Cultural Imperialism?', *The Linacre quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 2, 1998, p. 51; Laura E Cooper and B Lee Cooper, 'The Pendulum of Cultural Imperialism: Popular Music Interchanges between the United States and Britain, 1943-1967', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1993, pp. 61-78; A. Guttman, pp. 15-70.

<sup>49</sup> A. Guttman, pp. 19-28.

<sup>50</sup> Matti Sarmela, *What is Cultural Imperialism?*, in *The 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Transactions of the Finnish Anthropological Society—Cultural Imperialism and Cultural Identity* edited, Helsinki, 1977, pp. 13-6.

progress, defines cultural values, and standardizes the civilization and cultural environment throughout the world.’<sup>51</sup> Sarmela’s definition is therefore strongly negative, and points to a process of erasure of indigenous cultural values and practices which are replaced by more globalized forms of cultural values and practices.

Sarmela’s view is echoed in Ramiro Beltran whose scrutiny of the hegemonic political policies practised by the US for the Latin American colonization in the 1970s can be taken as a case-in-point, as he also articulates his view on the impact of the information war between the industrialized countries and the developing countries. In this context, Beltran defines cultural imperialism as ‘a verifiable process of social influence by which a nation imposes on other countries its set of beliefs, values, knowledge, and behavioural norms as well as its overall style of life’.<sup>52</sup> In the context of this research, this notion of cultural imperialism is useful, because it describes a similar process of social influence of Western countries on modern China, as will be shown later in this thesis.

Downing and Sreberny-Mohammadi define cultural imperialism within a similar frame of unequal power structures that are utilized to support the use of ‘hard’ power with the view of presenting the indigenous culture in an inferior light when compared to the culture of the outside powers:

Imperialism is the conquest and control of one country by a more powerful one. Cultural imperialism signifies the dimensions of the process that go beyond economic exploitation or military force. In the history of colonialism, (i.e. the form of imperialism in which the government of the colony is run directly by foreigners), the educational and media systems of many Third World countries have been set up as replicas of those in Britain, France or the US and carry their values [. . .] Subtly but powerfully, the message has often been insinuated that Western cultures are

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> L.R. Beltran, ‘Communication and Cultural Domination: USA-Latin American Case’, *Media Asia*, vol. 5, no. 4, 1978, p. 178.

superior to the cultures of the Third World.<sup>53</sup>

Downing and Sreberny-Mohammadi's definition of cultural imperialism is significant as it is helpful in pointing to the subtle and gradual processes and forms of cultural and social domination employed through cultural processes. Downing and Sreberny-Mohammadi's findings are applicable to an extent in showing how similar discourses of power were employed in the Chinese context from the 1850s onwards because during the initial phase of modern China's history – as in other colonized Third World countries – the missionary schools and the YMCA were also set up as replicas of their counterparts in the Western countries. While the purpose of setting up these schools to mimic their Western counterparts may not necessarily have simply been to impose Western culture on the Chinese, since the aim of these schools was primarily to evangelize the Chinese, they nevertheless promoted – at least initially – a view that the cultures of their respective Western countries of origin were in many ways superior to that of China. Resonating Downing and Sreberny-Mohammadi's research, Schiller, in his seminal book *Communication and Cultural Domination*, notes that:

The concept of cultural imperialism [. . .] best describes the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the value and structures of the dominating centre of the system.<sup>54</sup>

While Schiller provides a useful definition of cultural imperialism, Mattelart is of the view that cultural imperialism must be seen a generic concept that includes a range of broadly similar phenomena.<sup>55</sup> Because of this, it is unlikely that a single definition (such as Schiller's above) could incorporate all the elements associated with this term. In the specific context of Christianity and sport in modern China, this research therefore

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<sup>53</sup> J. Downing, A. Mohammadi, and A. Sreberny, *Questioning the Media: A Critical Introduction*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 1995, p. 482.

<sup>54</sup> Herbert I Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination*, Armonk, NY, ME Sharpe, 1976, p. 9.

<sup>55</sup> A. Mattelart, *Communication and Class Struggle, Volume One*, New York, International General, 1979, p. 57.

borrowed some aspects from the above definitions of cultural imperialism put forward by Tomlinson, Ramiro Beltran, Sarmela, and Downing and Sreberny-Mohammadi. This research takes the concept of cultural imperialism to describe a process of social and cultural change, wherein a new set of beliefs, values, knowledge, lifestyle and behavioural norms are both imposed on and adopted by a society to transform it and to bring it into the modern world system by privileging one cultural form whilst marginalizing the other. However, and most importantly, through discussing a growing sense of nationalism among the Chinese populace from the 1920s onwards, and how this impacted the cultural interaction between Christian physical education and the local population, this thesis will also show the limits of applying a simplistic victim-victimized narrative to describe the impact of Western physical education programs on the local Chinese culture. The orientation of the Christian institutions had been adapted to the indigenous conditions in China, which presents a significant counter discourse.

### *Cultural Imperialism and its Application in the Study of Christian Missions*

Edward Said's work *Culture and Imperialism* has arguably been one of the most influential works that has drawn critical attention to the cultural project of Christian missions in the context of colonized countries in the modern era. Said argues that culture is often integral in perpetuating imperialism. In his view, the promotion of the culture of the colonizer is never a neutral and benign force, but is implicated in the project of imperialism in the context of colonial recipient cultures. It works hand-in-hand with direct domination through the use of physical force by 'establishing territorial empires and in perpetuating forms of neo-colonialism' through the process of cultural indoctrination.<sup>56</sup> Said identifies five factors that pervade and complement the 'rhetorical process[es] of cultural imperialism': the fundamental distinction drawn between the Western and non-Western worlds; a metaphysical sense of the 'self' (the West) and of the 'other' (the East); ethnographic codification of difference in terms of

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<sup>56</sup> E.W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York, Vintage Books, 1993, pp. 128, 131; Andrew Porter, 'Cultural Imperialism' and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780–1914', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 25, no. 3, 1997, p. 368.

race, language and history; the legitimization of the discourse of domination using the West's global dominance of the non-Western world as justification; and the reshaping of the cultures of the metropolis in order to affect and reflect 'imperial attitudes' that signify both 'authority and great creative potential'.<sup>57</sup> Said's work is therefore broadly concerned with analysing the unequal distinctions between the East and the West in terms of race, language, history and so forth. Said takes cultural imperialism as the West's agenda of dominating and reshaping the culture of the Eastern and the non-Western world. His knowledge about the work of the missionaries has influenced his conception of the 'unified discourse' by which he refers to a drive to bind communities together 'in a settled imperial hierarchy'.<sup>58</sup> Building on Said's work, other scholars, such as Hutchison, argue that the actual historical record of missionary activities in non-Christian countries is an example of the West's cultural imperialism that Said identified in his work.<sup>59</sup>

The linking of missionary activities as an integral part of the 'West's imperialist enterprise' emerged in particular in the 1990s, and was explored in the analyses of scholars such as Comaroff and Comaroff, Stanley, Strobel and Dunch. Comaroff and Comaroff use the model of cultural change to discuss how British missionaries attempted to transform South African cultures in the nineteenth century. They claim that the 'study of Christianity in Africa is more than just an exercise in the analysis of religious change. It is of the historical anthropology of colonialism and consciousness, culture and power'.<sup>60</sup> Their study finds that cultural exchanges between the missionaries and the locals in South Africa focused on transforming the indigenous societies inasmuch as they did on evangelization.<sup>61</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff believe that in South Africa, the missionaries did promote Western culture in terms of lifestyle, medicine, architecture, agriculture, ritual, language or even politics, even if their main

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<sup>57</sup> E.W. Said, pp. 128,131; Andrew Porter, p. 368.

<sup>58</sup> Andrew Porter, p. 368.

<sup>59</sup> W.R. Hutchison, 'A Moral Equivalent for Imperialism: Americans and the Promotion of 'Christian Civilization', 1880-1910', in T. Christensen and W.R. Hutchison (eds), *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era 1880-1920*, Aarhus, Denmark, Aros, 1982, pp. 168-9.

<sup>60</sup> Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 8, 88.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.8, 88.

aim was to win over the natives to Western civilization.<sup>62</sup>

Similarly, Stanley also believes that ‘missionary Christianity destroyed the psychological and cultural defences of the African, and thus played an essential role in the ideological thrust of Western colonial aggression’.<sup>63</sup> Stanley asserts that the missionaries who came to non-Western countries were convinced of their intellectual, moral and spiritual superiority. They took this superiority as a civilizational, rather than a cultural, attribute. Some missionaries were also convinced of the superiority of the white race.<sup>64</sup> According to this view, missionaries were agents of cultural imperialism by virtue of the assumptions they held regarding the racial, cultural and civilizational superiority of the West.

Strobel focuses on the role that European missionary women played in the project of cultural imperialism in Africa and Asia. She stresses that women missionaries and reformers’ good intentions did not compensate for [their] destructive actions’, because the missionary activities focusing on indigenous women were driven by more or less ethnocentric and materialistic concerns.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the education work of these missionaries caused indigenous people, especially those from the upper class, to ‘identify more closely with Western culture and disparage their own’.<sup>66</sup> Strobel holds that missionary education in the colonized countries nurtured an elitist tendency among indigenous elites, thus leading to stratification in indigenous societies. As this change is induced, it can also be considered a form of cultural imperialism. These missionaries, concludes Strobel, ‘actively engaged in the cultural aspects of imperialism through their gender roles as caretakers and “civilizers”’.<sup>67</sup>

Dunch agrees that cultural imperialism has been an influential concept in explaining the

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<sup>62</sup> Andrew Porter, pp. 382-3; Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, 'Postcoloniality and Religiosity in Modern China the Disenchantments of Sovereignty', *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2011, p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Leicester, England, Apollos, 1990, p. 24.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p.157.

<sup>65</sup> Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991, pp. 51, 62.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

spread and impact of modern Christian missionary movements.<sup>68</sup> Dunch argues that '[i]f there were a single group most commonly held to exemplify the operation of cultural imperialism in modern history, it would have to be Christian missionaries'.<sup>69</sup> In his study of the missionary movement in modern history, Dunch identifies cultural imperialism as a phenomenon that reveals itself through the encroachment of the imperialist culture upon the indigenous culture.<sup>70</sup>

It is therefore clear that missionaries and their evangelical activities in many colonized countries were intimately linked to the project of cultural imperialism and that there are many interrelated manifestations between the missionary works in non-Christian countries and cultural imperialism. Previous research also shows that many missionaries travelled to the colonies convinced of their intellectual, moral and spiritual superiority over their non-Western counterparts.<sup>71</sup> Porter makes an important contribution in this respect by outlining how much of this kind of research carried out in the 1990s focused on reading missionary work through the prism of cultural imperialism, which insists on Christians missions as a project to 'bind their people more securely to the Western culture' in the aspects of 'life-style, ritual, linguistic and even political forms'.<sup>72</sup> However, he also highlighted that by doing so, these works overlook the fact that through educating the locals, the missionaries often enabled them to question or subvert some of their indigenous traditional attitudes which may have promoted discriminatory practices. On the other hand, this was often in such ways that led the locals to ridicule some of their indigenous beliefs which, in turn, could occasionally led to the undermining of their self-confidence, eroded their respect for traditional authorities, and even 'stimulated political or social conflict'.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, much of the existing critical literature that engages with the concept of cultural imperialism frames missionary work as an inherently damaging process of the cultural pollution of indigenous cultures.

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<sup>68</sup> Ryan Dunch, p. 301.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p.307.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p.309.

<sup>71</sup> Andrew Porter, pp. 382-3; Brian Stanley, pp. 157-74.

<sup>72</sup> Andrew Porter, pp. 382-3.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 367-8



While such instances of cultural imperialism that damage the local culture are also certainly visible in the context of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chinese missions, the case of Christian missions and physical education in China presents a much more multifaceted picture, where the simplistic victim-colonizer paradigm suggested by existing studies on cultural imperialism and Christian missions becomes harder to see. This is true in particular because of the specific cultural context of China, which itself had more than two thousand years of a developed culture of scholarship and learning. This made the culture more resistant to attempts to influence its core cultural and social values. In the case of China – and as this thesis will show – counter-discourses to Western cultural imperialism turn the concept of cultural imperialism on its head in unexpected ways, as will be discussed in chapter five in particular. Before that, however, this chapter will now turn to discussing how existing literature applies cultural imperialism as an analytical concept in sport studies.

### *Cultural Imperialism Theory and its Application in Sport Studies*

Cultural imperialism has been adopted as an analytical paradigm in research in the areas of sport history and sport sociology. Examples include Mangan's papers, 'In Pursuit of Perspective: The Other Empire of Sport – Cultural Imperialism for Confident Control and Consequent Legacies' and 'Epilogue – Imperial Complexities: In Pursuit of "Provocative" Post-imperial Analyses'. Mangan claims that cultural imperialism, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was a form of soft power to entrench British political hegemony. He claims that sport was also a manifestation of this 'soft power' and an integral part of British and American imperial supremacy.<sup>74</sup> According to Mangan, a study of British colonialism and American imperialism can be used as a basis for understanding 'the progress throughout the world of the spread of modern Western sport'.<sup>75</sup> Sport, even in contemporary times, still resembles the sport of the colonial past in ways that reflect the lasting influence of cultural imperialism.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> J.A. Mangan, 'In Pursuit of Perspective: the Other Empire of Sport–Cultural Imperialism for Confident Control and Consequent Legacies', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 28, no. 17, 2011, p. 2611.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> J.A. Mangan, 'Epilogue–Imperial Complexities: In pursuit of 'Provocative' Post-Imperial Analyses', *The International Journal of*

Mangan stresses that sport, just like commercial, military, naval and administrative organizations, provided the impetus for modernity, and that it functioned as a subtle agent of British and American imperial dissemination. Moreover, the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, when Western sport was introduced in non-Western countries, coincided with an opportune moment, when sport could be used to shape the minds, emotions and bodies of indigenous peoples. In other words, sport was used as a vehicle through which the colonial enterprise could be effectively incorporated and embedded into the lives of colonial subjects.<sup>77</sup> In this context, Mangan argues that ‘the morality of the playing field was a form of political hegemony masquerading as moral education, involving native image reconstruction: indigenes cloned in terms of values, attitudes and action’.<sup>78</sup> While for missionaries, it was foremost Christianity that they desired to promote, sports provided an effective means of engaging with a local population in non-religious and non-threatening ways:

Missionaries took cricket to the Melanesians, football to the Bantu, rowing to the Hindu, and athletics to the Iranians, with a firm purpose. In the disseminating of British sports and games, the social historian should not overlook religious enthusiasts and diffusionists like Patteson, Pilkington, Pennell, Clifford Harris, A.D. Clark, Carey Francis, Chester McNaughton and C.W. Waddington, Cecil Wilson and many others who took both the gospel of Christ and the gospel of games to the most distant corners of the Empire and even beyond.<sup>79</sup>

Mangan’s notion of how the concept of ‘muscular Christianity’, which gained popularity in the US and England in the late eighteenth century, was linked with civilizing the ‘uncivilized’ bodies through Western sports, helps to explain why sports in particular were utilized by Christian missionaries as a tool for evangelism.<sup>80</sup> Like Mangan, Guttmann, applying the concept of cultural imperialism in *Games and Empires:*

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*the History of Sport*, vol. 28, no. 17, 2011, p. 2628.

<sup>77</sup> J.A. Mangan, ‘In Pursuit of Perspective: the Other Empire of Sport–Cultural Imperialism for Confident Control and Consequent Legacies’, p. 2612.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> J.A. Mangan, ‘Epilogue–Imperial Complexities: In pursuit of ‘Provocative’ Post-Imperial Analyses’, p. 2627; J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*, London & Portland, OR, Frank Cass, 1998, p. 174.

<sup>80</sup> J.A. Mangan, ‘Epilogue–Imperial Complexities: In pursuit of ‘Provocative’ Post-Imperial Analyses’, pp. 2626-7.

*Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism*, also asserts that the missionaries desired to bring the ‘heathen to Christ’ through sport.<sup>81</sup> Guttman notes that British missionary educators ‘resorted to cricket or soccer football in their tireless efforts to Christianize the native peoples of Asia and Africa’ and the YMCA was ‘the principal force behind the diffusion of basketball and volleyball’.<sup>82</sup> In addition, Tomlinson suggests that missionaries used education and the ‘playing field’ to carry out a cultural project which was consistent with their imperialist ideology.<sup>83</sup> Relating the findings of Mangan, Guttman and Tomlinson to this research, it would seem clear that missionary-led sport did serve as a medium of cultural imperialism in the better-known colonial contexts, such as the UK-Indian case and US-Philippines case.

However, all these studies have been conducted in contexts where the missionaries were working in countries where imperial powers operated in highly totalizing ways. China, on the other hand, presents a case of Western missionary work where Western influence through economic and, to an extent, military encroachment was never completely successful. This fact has been overlooked in the existing scholarly work on sport in China, which relies on cultural imperialism as its explanatory category of imperial encroachment. It can be argued in this regard that compared to most of the colonized countries of the modern world, China ‘represents many anomalies’.<sup>84</sup> In retrospect, China can be seen as ‘an ancient centralized empire with a long history of incorporating smaller tribes and kingdoms into its own imperial system of centralized bureaucracy and tributary states’.<sup>85</sup> Before Western countries invaded China, the Chinese perceived themselves as citizens of the ‘Middle Kingdom’. They had been fully conscious of their distinct civilization – literature, lifestyle, norms – and customs which, properly codified, developed, and steeped in Confucianism, had been passed on from generation to generation over thousands of years.<sup>86</sup> Another significant factor in this context is that unlike many other countries, such as India and most parts of Africa,

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<sup>81</sup> A. Guttman, p. 177.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*, London, Pinter Publishers, 1991, p. 92.

<sup>84</sup> Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, p. 10.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> J. Fu, *Corporate Disclosure and Corporate Governance in China*, Alphen aan den Rijn, the Netherlands, Kluwer Law International, 2010, p. 35.

which were fully colonized by the Western countries, modern China's imperial or Republican governments were never toppled by Western powers. It also needs to be emphasized that 'the Chinese language was never displaced by a colonial language', which indicates that the colonial culture never truly penetrated the collective unconscious of the people.<sup>87</sup> In this context, any analysis of the history of Western sports and physical education in China must become a nuanced one, and one that takes this internal resistance into account.

The nuanced ways in which Dunch and Porter account for the multiple contexts of colonialism and missionary work in their engagement with the concept of cultural imperialism become particularly important in the context of this research. Dunch maintains that the theory of cultural imperialism oversimplifies the history of the missionary enterprise as it ignores or 'slights the agency of the acted upon and a complex set of interaction to a dichotomy between actor and acted upon'.<sup>88</sup> Dunch considers that it is important to account for the 'local response' which manifested itself through several movements of Chinese nationalism, such as the Anti-Christian Movement and burgeoning nationalism in the 1920s. Porter also notes that the advocates of cultural imperialism 'have perhaps paid insufficient attention to those processes of bargaining and negotiation which underlay all imperial arrangement'.<sup>89</sup> He cites missionary education as an example to stress the importance of native response on the influence of missionary work in non-European countries. Porter argues that the missionaries who ran missionary schools in non-Europeans countries had remained quite unsuccessful in preventing indigenous people from 'exploiting' missionary education for purposes other than its intended 'religious ends'.<sup>90</sup> The influence of missionary schools in those non-European countries was largely and 'fundamentally determined by what colonial peoples wanted to take from them'.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ryan Dunch, p. 304.

<sup>89</sup> Andrew Porter, p. 386; R.E. Robinson, 'Non-European Foundation of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration', in E.R.J. Owen and R.B. Sutcliffe (eds), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, London, Longman, 1972, pp. 117-42.

<sup>90</sup> Andrew Porter, p. 382.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

The logic put forward in Dunch's and Porter's work sounds very plausible because the missionary work in China was greatly influenced, as a matter of fact, by the 'state Enlightenment project' and nationalist movements implemented by the Chinese nationalists.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, they also afford the Chinese more agency than the existing analytical frameworks that insist on presenting the Chinese as mere victims of foreign cultural invasion which they were presumably unable to withstand. Yet, reflecting on how the Chinese responded to Western physical education is important in understanding the emergence of Chinese Christian nationalism, and the phenomena of indigenization and secularization of the Christian institutions in modern China. Moreover, as this thesis will provide an account for the way in which the imperial cultural influences were integrated into the indigenous Chinese nation-building project after the removal of Western missionaries from China in the 1920s, the following section discusses the concept of nationalism and the role it played in the advancement of physical education and sport in China.

### 2.4.2 Sport and Nationalism

#### *The Definition of Nationalism*

The term 'nationalism' was first introduced by the German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder in 1774.<sup>93</sup> As an ideology and discourse, nationalism became prevalent in North America and Western Europe in the latter half of the eighteenth century.<sup>94</sup> The term entered general linguistic usage in Western countries in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>95</sup> Yet the concept of nationalism has proven challenging to define because the way in which nationalism is constructed varies from nation state to nation state. This is because nationalism derives its meaning from the attributes 'by which a community defines itself' and 'by what they perceive as "national"'.<sup>96</sup> The

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<sup>92</sup> Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, p. 17.

<sup>93</sup> Peter Alter, *Nationalism*, London, Edward Arnold, 1994, p. 23.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.16.

<sup>95</sup> B.C. Shafer, *Faces of Nationalism: New Realities and Old Myths*, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974, p. 16.

<sup>96</sup> 'Definition of Nationalism', [http://catarina.udlap.mx/u\\_dl\\_a/tales/documentos/lri/cruz\\_f\\_c/capitulo1.pdf](http://catarina.udlap.mx/u_dl_a/tales/documentos/lri/cruz_f_c/capitulo1.pdf). (accessed: 24 June 2013).

definition of nationalism developed by Gellner and Hobsbawm assert that '[n]ationalism is a political principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent'.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, Kohn defines nationalism as a 'state of mind' in which the individual's supreme loyalty is to his or her nation state.<sup>98</sup> Developing the idea of nationalism as a unifying discourse, Greenfeld notes that nationalism is a 'particular perspective or a style of thought' based on the idea of a unified nation, but one that requires the people to acknowledge such claim of shared similarity as the very concept of nation is posited as 'the source of individual identity within a people', as well as 'the bearer of sovereignty, the central object of loyalty, and the basis of collective solidarity'.<sup>99</sup> As such, and as Smith notes, nationalism represents a system of ideas that typically demands the right of self-determination.<sup>100</sup> This research subscribes broadly to this definition of nationalism as an organizing principle for constructing collective solidarity around a shared cause. Within this context, we will illustrate in this thesis how the Chinese gradually engaged in a nation-building discourse in order to build national identity, and one in which Western physical education and sport played an important part.

While nationalism can easily be deconstructed as a manmade discourse, many scholars have argued for its positive function as well, and specifically in modern times. Kedourie argues that nationalism is 'a response to "the predicament of modern man"—a variety of ideologies which caused widespread alienation and served to divide societies'.<sup>101</sup> For Kedourie, then, nationalism emerges as an organizing principle for self-determination in changing international order, and as such a force for good of the people who subscribe to it.<sup>102</sup> Lemberg agrees with the broad principle that nationalism is 'a system of ideas, values and norms, an image of the world and society',<sup>103</sup> and also emphasizes its positive values in making a large social group 'aware of where it belongs and invests

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<sup>97</sup> E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1983, p. 1; E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Program, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 9.

<sup>98</sup> H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background*, London, Macmillan Publishers, 1944, p. 10.

<sup>99</sup> L. Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> A.D. Smith, *National Identity*, Reno, Nevada, University of Nevada Press, 1991, p. 72. M.J. Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1994, p. 28.

<sup>101</sup> E. Kedourie, *Nationalism*, Oxford, UK, Blackwell, 1993, p. 20.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> E. Lemberg, *Nationalismus*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1964, Vol. 2, p. 16. See also Peter Alter, p. 4

this sense of belonging with a particular value'.<sup>104</sup> These descriptions of nationalism as unifying tools to demarcate a sense of 'Chineseness' can be observed in the context of the modern nation building project in the twentieth century, and in particular the way in which physical education and competitive sport was utilized to encourage a traditionally fractured Chinese populace to subscribe to a unified, nationalist, and centrally led cause. This thesis will discuss how this was achieved through physical activities and sports as a way of realizing individual potential, and, by extension, the potential of the nation as a whole.

As a unifying discourse, culture and sports as a vehicle for promoting a particular view of unified culture has played an important part in the interplay between sports and the politics of Chinese national discourse. Scholars are divided in how they emphasize, on the one hand, the political aspect of nationalism, and on the other, the importance of culture in nationalism. Those who take a more political view, such as Breuille, think of nationalism more as a form of politics. He argues that nationalism is essentially 'about power in the modern world and the central question is how to relate nationalism to the objective of obtaining and using state power'.<sup>105</sup> Further to this point, Breuille writes that the term nationalism is used to 'refer to political movements seeking or exerting state power and justifying such actions with nationalist arguments'.<sup>106</sup> In modern China, the political aspect of nationalism was mainly promoted by the efforts of Chinese nationalists to acquire and promote China's territorial sovereignty, national dignity and standing among the nations of the world.<sup>107</sup> It is imperative to mention that Chinese nationalists, too, were critical in many ways of traditional Chinese culture, which they 'regarded as unbearable burdens of the past, preventing China from modernizing'<sup>108</sup>, and for the success of their reformative agenda they were inclined to Christianity's program of physical education and sport because these activities could be an effective tool to easily apply the 'Western project of modernity' to China.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> John Breuille, *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1982, pp. 1-4.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, p. 19.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

The cultural scholars believe that nationalism is foremost a cultural, rather than inherently political, phenomenon. The basis for this claim is that nationalism works to ‘distinguish a people from other people’.<sup>110</sup> Cultural nationalism is therefore seen as ‘a reaction of people who feels culturally at disadvantage’, which desires to ‘preserve or enhance a people’s national or cultural identity’.<sup>111</sup> Plamenatz explains this position by arguing that nationalism tends to arise ‘when people are aware of cultural diversity and change, share the same idea of progress which moves them to compare their own achievements and capacities with those of others’.<sup>112</sup> The situation was ripe for action by the nationalists, as both the people and the government were on the same page regarding the change being brought by Western physical education and sport.

In this research, nationalism is understood as both an ideology and a movement. Based on the idea of a nation state and its right to self-determination, nationalism locates the source of individual identity within a people, which is seen as the bearer of sovereignty, the central object of loyalty, and the basis of collective solidarity.<sup>113</sup> Nationalist rhetoric was to ‘maintain boundaries of the existing nation state with its territory and population’, to reinforce its national identity, and to ‘justify the use of force to preserve sovereignty against external as well as internal threats’<sup>114</sup>. As for the cultural aspect, this thesis will illustrate how it was employed as a grand social strategy to ‘preserve or enhance a people’s national or cultural identity’, and also to elicit an appropriate reaction from the people who were possibly ridden with inferiority complexes for the time being and had to be motivated because they felt themselves culturally at disadvantage as compared to the people from the West.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Vinsensio MA Dugis, 'Defining Nationalism in the Era of Globalization', *Jurnal Masyarakat Kebudayaan Dan Politik*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1999, p. 54.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> John Plamenatz, 'Two Types of Nationalism', in E. Kamenka (ed.), *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, London, Edward Arnold, 1976, pp. 23-4.

<sup>113</sup> L. Greenfeld, p. 3. M.J. Esman, p. 28.

<sup>114</sup> S. Zhao, *A Nation-state by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2004, p. 20.

<sup>115</sup> Vinsensio MA Dugis, p. 54.



### *Sport and Nationalism*

The relationship between sport and nationalism has received increasing attention from historians, sport sociologists and political scientists. These scholars often use the term ‘sporting nationalism’ or ‘sportive nationalism’ to directly refer to the relationship between sport and nationalism.<sup>116</sup> Sport and nationalism share two crucial traits. Both are arguably ‘two of the most emotive issues’ in the modern world; they inspire intense devotion and occasionally lead to violence.<sup>117</sup> According to Hoberman, sporting nationalism is not a ‘single generic phenomenon’; rather, it is a ‘complicated socio-political response to challenges and events, sportive and non-sportive, which must be understood in terms of the varying national contexts in which it appears’.<sup>118</sup> Hoberman takes the initiatives of the US and Soviet Union as examples. For instance, he cites the Amateur Sports Act passed by Congress in 1978 to promote ‘American success in international sports competitions but [which] offered no accompanying ideological strictures.’<sup>119</sup> Likewise he refers to the rehabilitation of sport in the Soviet Union that began during the 1930s, as this project could be executed successfully only ‘under the aegis of an official ideology’.<sup>120</sup> At that time, ‘the official promotion of competitive sport’ always connected with ‘feverish industrialization and the Stalinist cult of the Stakhanovism super-worker who broke records like an athlete.’<sup>121</sup>

Sport can also be regarded, as Cronin notes, as a form of ‘national popular culture, a forum for the creation, expression or maintenance of sensed ideals of identity, a form of business, and a central point of focus for groups within and outside any given society or business, and a central point of focus for groups within and outside any given society or nation’.<sup>122</sup> For example, the holding of the National Games by the Nationalist

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<sup>116</sup> Zhouxiang Lu and Fan Hong, *Sport and Nationalism in China*, London, Routledge, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>117</sup> John Bale, ‘Sport and National Identity: A Geographical View’, *The British Journal of Sports History*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1986, p. 18.

<sup>118</sup> John Hoberman, ‘Sport and Ideology in the Post-Communist Age’, in L. Allison (ed.), *The Changing Politics of Sport*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 18.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic Games, Soccer and Irish Identity since 1884*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1999, p. 51.

government after the 1920s was a move designed to create a common sense of national unity and national identity among Chinese people. In this sense, sport is ‘linked to the construction and reproduction of the national identities of many people’.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, sport is frequently taken as a vehicle for the expression of nationalist sentiment and is used by existing nation states and/or politicians for a variety of purposes, including nation building, promoting the nation state, consolidating and promoting national identity and sovereignty, giving cultural power to separatist movements, enhancing prestige, securing legitimacy, compensating for other aspects of life within their boundaries, and pursuing international rivalries by peaceful means.<sup>124</sup>

The most pragmatic of all concerns for nations regarding sport is closely related to nationalist narratives in that sports are utilized, as Bairner observes, to ‘develop and maintain a sense of identity, to foster internal unity and to enhance international standing’.<sup>125</sup> At the turn of the twenty-first century, and in a variety of national contexts, a large number of case studies emerged in European countries focusing on national identity, unity, status and esteem deriving from sports.<sup>126</sup> For example, Pope explores how American nationalism has been constructed and expressed through sport.<sup>127</sup> Similarly, Holt draws attention to the fact that the popular nationalism of late nineteenth-century France expressed itself through sport.<sup>128</sup> Sorlin, another scholar of sporting nationalism, investigated skiing and the part it played in establishing a Swedish national consciousness.<sup>129</sup> Likewise, Goksoyr examined ‘the rising national-political consciousness that influenced sport as well as other cultural expressions in Norway from the middle of the nineteenth century’.<sup>130</sup> These studies illustrate how the relationship between nationalism and sport is typically organic and intertwined. Cronin

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<sup>123</sup> A. Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>124</sup> J. Hargreaves, ‘Sex, Gender and the Body in Sport and Leisure: Has been a Civilizing Process’, in E. Dunning and C. Rojek (eds), *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, London, Macmillan Publishers, 1992, pp. 161-82; A. Bairner, pp. xi, 18; Zhouxiang Lu and Fan Hong, p. 1.

<sup>125</sup> A. Bairner, ‘Civic and Ethnic Nationalism in the Celtic Vision of Irish Sport’, in G. Jarvie (ed.), *Sport in the Making of Celtic Cultures*, London, Leicester University Press, 1999, p. 12.

<sup>126</sup> J.A. Mangan, *Tribal Identities: Nationalism, Europe, Sport*, London & Portland, OR, Frank Cass, 1996, pp. 1-6.

<sup>127</sup> Steven W Pope, ‘Negotiating the ‘Folk Highway’ of the Nation: Sport, Public Culture and American Identity, 1870–1940’, *Journal of Social History*, no. 27, 1993, pp. 327-40.

<sup>128</sup> Richard Holt, ‘Contrasting Nationalisms: Sport, Militarism and the Unitary State in Britain and France before 1914’, in J.A. Mangan (ed.), *Tribal Identities: Nationalism, Europe, Sport*, London & Portland, OR, Frank Cass, 1996, pp. 39-54.

<sup>129</sup> Sverker Sorlin, ‘Nature, Skiing and Swedish Nationalism’, in J.A. Mangan (ed.), *ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>130</sup> Matti Goksoyr, ‘Phases and Functions of Nationalism: Norway’s Utilisation of International Sport in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries’, in J.A. Mangan (ed.), *ibid.*, pp. 125-46.

studied the relationship between sport and nationalism in Ireland, drawing attention to gaps in the historiography of Irish sport.<sup>131</sup> Porter and Smith analysed the way sport helped shape national identities, and how national cultures have shaped contemporary sport in the cases of England, Wales, Scotland, South Africa, the Caribbean, America, New Zealand and Australia. For example, Gaelic football soccer was used by the Irish people to feed a sense of Irishness; sport helps to play out modern rivalry between New Zealand and Australia.<sup>132</sup>

In the context of sport and nationalism in China, A.D. Morris's work has been ground-breaking in explaining how new ideas about sport in the early twentieth century helped shaped the modern Chinese nation.<sup>133</sup> He adopts Jusdanis's claim that nationalism is 'an attempt to interpret and participate in modernity',<sup>134</sup> and observes that 'the values of the fit body and the strong nation took hold easily during the Republican period' because the patriotic Chinese were searching for ways that 'could finally make China the equal of the hated-and-envied imperialist powers.'<sup>135</sup> Morris's work is helpful in understanding the role of modern Chinese physical education and sport in shaping the nation.<sup>136</sup>

Xu, following Morris, claims that modern sport in China is a completely invented tradition, and thus its role in nation building, internationalization and nationalism is obvious and important.<sup>137</sup> Xu's work refers to the doctrine of building strong bodies to strengthen the race and save the nation; how the desire to compete served as an impetus to embrace modern Western physical education and sport; and how and why winning gold medals in world sport competitions became a national obsession in China.<sup>138</sup> Xu held that embracing modern Western sport by the Chinese people became a symbolic gesture to 'overcome the "Sick Man of East Asia" label'; to 'show the world that China

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<sup>131</sup> Mike Cronin, p. 214.

<sup>132</sup> A. Smith and D. Porter, *Sport and National Identity in the Post-war World*, London & New York, Routledge, 2004.

<sup>133</sup> A.D. Morris, *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2004.

<sup>134</sup> G. Jusdanis, *The Necessary Nation*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2001, pp. 5-7.

<sup>135</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 4.

<sup>136</sup> G. Jusdanis, pp. 5-7.

<sup>137</sup> G. Xu, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895-2008*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2009, pp. 3-4.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

is equal of other nations’; and to prove ‘China’s rise as a nation and its prestige in the world’.<sup>139</sup> Following Xu, this thesis will also illustrate how, while Western sport in China was initiated by foreigners, it was also eventually pragmatically used and adapted by the Chinese state as a tool in the development of nationalism.

Lu and Hong investigated the relationship between nationalism, the nation state and sport from a macro-historical perspective, covering the period from 1840 to 2013. They explain the role sport played in constructing the modern Chinese nation and in the project of Chinese nationalism.<sup>140</sup> During this time, sport was used as a medium not just for facilitating the eventual transformation of the Chinese feudal empire into a modern nation state in 1911, but also to build the newly established nation state in the Republic of China era (1912–1949).<sup>141</sup> Lu and Hong assert that developments that occurred in the late Qing dynasty and during the Republic of China era were paramount in establishing the reciprocity among sport, nationalism and politics. For example, in the Qing dynasty’s Self-Strengthening Movement (1861–1895), Western physical education and sport were ‘regarded as parts of “advanced Western technology”’ and the government used these as a ‘tool to enhance China’s military power’.<sup>142</sup> Physical education and sport were also used by the Nationalist government to strengthen Chinese physical fitness and develop a spirit of national unity among the people during the Nanking era from 1928 to 1949.<sup>143</sup> Different from Lu and Hong’s work, this research focuses on the native response of the Chinese, as the form of nationalism, on Christianity and its physical education and sport program, and the interaction between Christian institutions and Chinese nationalism on the process of indigenization and modernization of modern Western physical education and sport.

The above sources suggest that nationalism inspired nationalist fervour in sport, simultaneously resisting, selecting and reshaping the cultural products China was

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., pp.59,68,73.

<sup>140</sup> Zhouxiang Lu and Fan Hong, p. 2.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p.61.

receiving as a consumer of 'imperial' culture to become a modern sport-loving nation. Modern physical education and sport in China were the by-products of the state's adoption of sport for the furthering of its nationalist agenda.

### 2.5 Conclusion

The first two sections of this chapter analysed the literature relating to the role of missionary schools and the YMCA in the promotion of physical education and sport in modern China. After reviewing the literature, it is clear that the current research on the role of Christianity and the transformation of physical education and sport in modern China is limited in scope. A thorough enquiry shows that most of the literature concentrates merely either on identifying positive visible influences and contributions of Christianity's physical education program in the development of physical education and sport in China, or on labelling such influences as straightforward cultural imperialism. Therefore, this research will present a more nuanced reading of the history of Chinese physical education through investigating the development of missionary educational institutions and the YMCA's physical education and sport programs and how they, and Chinese nationalism, transformed physical education and sport in modern China between 1840 and 1937. In this chapter, it has been shown that the need to develop an interpretive framework will problematize simplistic notions of Christianity and sports movements as mere expressions of cultural imperialism by showing how the intersection of Chinese nationalism with Western sports in fact thwarted any nascent cultural imperialistic influences through the merging of modern Western sports movements with elements compatible with Chinese-style nationalism. However, and as will be discussed in the following chapters, Christian sports movements and organizations did also leave a lasting influence on nationalistic Chinese sports movements. This, in turn, raises important questions about our current understanding of 'cultural imperialism' and the ways in which the current theorising overlooks the ability of the receiving culture (as in the case of China) to exercise agency to control and indigenize foreign influences. This thesis will take a more dispassionate and objective

stance in reading the history of Chinese physical education, and while the concept of cultural imperialism in the context of Western missionary work and its physical education and sport program will be invoked. This thesis will also show how a deficient theoretical underpinning that is merely a simplistic reading of physical education as a form of cultural imperialism would, in fact, produce a historically flawed figure of a powerless Chinese subject that does not account for the counter-discursive power of Chinese nationalist discourse. In the following chapters, the interplay between foreign and indigenous motivations to engage with modern sport in China will be discussed.

## Chapter 3: Christian Missions and the Emergence of Western Physical Education and Sport in China (1840–1908)

### 3.1 Introduction

During the nineteenth century, Christian missionary work was closely connected with the expansion of Western imperialism all over the world.<sup>1</sup> From 1840 onward, a number of Western countries, such as the UK, the US, France, Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary, began invading China, which resulted in the Opium Wars. China's inability to repel these incursions allowed the foreign powers to broker several treaties with the Qing government.<sup>2</sup> While not always even supported by missionaries, the treaties specifically benefitted the Christian missionaries. Missionaries were given rights to live in the interior land of China, which afforded them the opportunity to pursue their evangelistic mandate. These missionaries were by and large earnest in their desire to bring to China the material and spiritual values of Western civilization, despite at times being faced with the hostility and indifference of ordinary Chinese people. Nevertheless, they were also often condescending toward indigenous beliefs, and their ethnocentrism resulted in them – both intentionally and unintentionally – inculcated a particular set of beliefs, values, knowledge, and behavioural norms on China.

This chapter focuses on the emergence of modern Western physical education and sport through Christian educational institutions and the YMCA in early modern China to foreshadow the discussions in later chapters. The first section describes the changing Chinese perceptions toward Western military sport between 1840 and 1908, and details

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<sup>1</sup> R.R. Cook and D.W. Pao, *After Imperialism: Christian Identity in China and the Global Evangelical Movement*, Cambridge, UK, Lutterworth Press, 2012, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Following the Chinese defeat in the First Opium War (1839–1842), unequal treaties were signed between China and first Britain and then France and the US by virtue of which missionaries were permitted to live in treaty ports such as Tientsin, Peking (Beijing), Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai, and to travel to the interior of China. After similar outcomes in the Second Opium War (1856–1860), Roman Catholic missionaries were permitted by the Qing government to buy land and build churches in China. Later, when the most-favoured-nation clause was introduced to a treaty with one Western country, its privilege was automatically extended to other foreign countries.

the development of physical education and sport in indigenous schools and local sports societies. The second section delineates the motivation for the establishment of the Christian educational institutions and their role in introducing modern Western physical education and sport into China. Finally, the third section examines the role played by the YMCA in the introduction of Western sports into China. Christianity was one of the most important drivers behind the introduction and spread of modern Western physical education and sport in early modern China, which were introduced to the Chinese primarily through Christian educational institutions and the YMCA. The early aims of Christian educational institutions were clearly to support missionaries' evangelical work, and the YMCA targeted Chinese youths in the hope they would convert to Christianity.

### **3.2 The Development of the Chinese-led Western Military Physical Education and Sport**

After its defeats in both Opium Wars, China's political and geographic integrity was threatened by both domestic instability and Western military incursions. Internally, China was ravaged by social upheaval and economic recession, rapid population growth, food shortages, political corruption and bloody insurgencies by ethnic minorities, workers and peasants. This placed increasing pressure on the Qing government and initiated a period of dynastic decline. For example, the Taiping Rebellion of 1850–1864 was one of the most tumultuous events to take place in China in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> During the Rebellion, the Chinese people rose up against the feudal government in an attempt to overthrow the Manchu regime. The Taiping Rebellion gained only a partial and short-lived victory as the rebel forces took control of a large portion of southern China and established the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, with its capital in the city of Nanking. While the rebellion was eventually subdued by the Qing government with the aid of French and British forces, it had damaged the sovereignty of the conservative Qing government.<sup>4</sup> The Taiping Rebellion, however, proved only a

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<sup>3</sup> K. Koschorke et al., *A History of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, 1450–1990: A Documentary Sourcebook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, W.B. Eerdmans, 2007, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> Information Center for Social Sciences of RUC, *Zhongguo jindaishi [A History of Modern China]*, Beijing, Information Center for Social Sciences, Renmin University of China, 2006, p. 55.



prelude to a series of subsequent internal revolts.<sup>5</sup> As a result of this large-scale civil strife, the Qing government's economic, political and military reputation was significantly weakened, and these rebellions had contributed to paving the way for wholesale political and institutional reform in China.

Alongside this internal strife, China was defeated in a series of wars with external forces. These included the two Opium Wars and the First Sino–Japanese War.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, the Chinese regime lost much of its international political standing, in particular after a series of unfavourable treaties were signed between the Chinese regime and the Western countries and Imperial Japan. This situation turned China into both a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society.<sup>7</sup>

In view of both the domestic strife and foreign aggression, the Qing government was forced to take stock and re-evaluate itself and its opponents. Eventually, a series of reforms for political face-saving were introduced. Adopting the ideological slogan, 'emulating the strength of the foreigners' technology in order to overcome them' (*Shi yi zhi changji yi zhi yi*), several Qing officials, scholars and even the emperor himself launched a number of self-actualization initiatives, including the Self-Strengthening Movement (1864–1895) and the Hundred Days' Reform (11 June–21 September 1889). One of the important purposes of these reform movements was to 'learn with a sense of caution' so as not to be overawed by various aspects of the West's military training, technology, education and political systems.<sup>8</sup> These reform movements sought to learn from Western countries' advanced knowledge, science and military technology in order to enable China become a strong and rich country and eventually subdue foreign threats to its sovereignty.

A similar attitude was adopted with the Chinese state's embracing of Western military

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.57.

<sup>6</sup> The First Sino–Japanese War was fought between Qing dynasty China and Meiji Japan from 1 August 1894 to 17 April 1895, primarily over control of Korea. After more than six months of continuous successes by the Japanese army and naval forces, the Qing leadership sued for peace in February 1895 and was forced to sign the humiliating Treaty of Shimonoseki.

<sup>7</sup> M. Dillon, *Dictionary of Chinese History*, London & New York, Routledge, 2013, p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> Shiming Luo, pp. 22, 35.

sport.<sup>9</sup> While these state-led reform movements were met with the same fate as the rebellions, they did leave an impression among the Chinese populace. The real legacy of these reforms was that they led to the overhaul of political culture and the economy, and to an increased emphasis on military training and improving the physical strength of the Chinese population. These reforms also facilitated China's path to Western-style modernity of Chinese physical education and sport.

The leaders of the Self-Strengthening Movement sought to modernize Chinese industry, the military, commerce, agriculture and education by adopting an open-door policy to external actors in China. State-of-the-art factories were constructed, modern schools were established, and young Chinese were sent abroad by the Qing government to study.<sup>10</sup> Together with Western science and technology, Western military physical exercise programs were also adopted by the Qing government, primarily because they emphasized the virtues of physical strength, unity and discipline. The fundamental purpose of the military physical exercises was to transform boys into soldiers.<sup>11</sup> Foreign military officers were invited by Qing officials to train soldiers in the Chinese army. The major content of the military training was based on German and Swedish gymnastics. These had already become popular in Europe and the US by the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> The Qing government established specialized schools to train personnel for the army, police and industry, and modern military physical education was incorporated into China's educational system as a compulsory part of the various curricula by the end of the nineteenth century. For example, at the North Western Naval Academy, the content of the physical education curriculum included fencing, boxing, high jump, long jump, parallel bar, horizontal bar, the gym horse and stick play.<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Military sports in the thesis refer to sports for military training, which were mainly introduced from Germany, Britain and Japan, for example, military gymnastics.

<sup>10</sup> Zhouxiang Lu and Fan Hong, 'From Celestial Empire to Nation State: Sport and the Origins of Chinese Nationalism (1840–1927)', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2010, pp. 479-80; Fuhui Luo, *Zhongguo minzu zhuyi sixiang luncong [Chinese Nationalism]*, Wuhan, Huazhong shifandaxue chubanshe [Huazhong Normal University Press], 1996, p. 179.

<sup>11</sup> Zhouxiang Lu and Fan Hong, 'From Celestial Empire to Nation State: Sport and the Origins of Chinese Nationalism (1840–1927)', pp. 479-80.

<sup>12</sup> National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi [Sport History in Modern China]*, Beijing, Beijing tiyu daxue chubanshe [Beijing Sport University Press], 1989, p. 55; Jiafeng Liu and Tianlu Liu, *Kangri shiqi de jidujiao daxue [Missionary Schools in Sino-Japanese War Period]*, Fujian, Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe [Fujian Education Press], 2003, pp. 323-5.

<sup>13</sup> Enbo Wang, 'Liushisan nian qian de zhongguo tiyu [Physical Education Activities before Sixty-three Years]', in Sports Committee of the P.R.C. (ed.), *Zhongguo tiyushi cankao ziliao [Historical Document on Sport History in China: Volume 3]*, 1985, Vol. 3, p.

modernizing influence of the Self-Strengthening Movement led to the eventual introduction of Western military sports in China and ultimately changed Chinese people's view of the importance of physique and physical strength for national development.<sup>14</sup>

The Self-Strengthening Movement came to a halt after China was defeated by Japan in the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895. On 11 June 1898, another effort at reform – the so-called Hundred Days' Reform – was inaugurated by the Guangxu Emperor (1871–1908). The Hundred Days' Reform was spearheaded by monarchist reformists, including Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Yan Fu and Tan Sitong. These reformists held the view that if China were to successfully defend itself against Western imperialism and keep pace with the development of the Western world, it should engage in institutional reform and make fundamental changes in the operation of the military, education and government administration. They particularly stressed the importance of educational reforms in cultivating the moral, physical and spiritual vitalization of the modern Chinese people.<sup>15</sup> This Reform took Meiji Japan as the model for introduction of Western-style political and social structures.<sup>16</sup>

In terms of transforming the attitude of the Chinese people towards physical education and sport, the Hundred Days' Reform encouraged the Chinese to become familiar with and participate in Western military gymnastics. This was done not only to promote military strength, but also to quite literally strengthen the nation by improving Chinese people's physiques. The implied intention behind the Hundred Days' Reform and its promotion of military physical education and sport was ultimately to save the nation by encouraging physical fitness, stamina, strength and developing the quality of self-reliance among the country's youth.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> R. Jones and J. Riordan, *Sport and Physical Education in China*, London, E & FN Spon, 1999, p. 76.

<sup>15</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 86.

<sup>16</sup> S. Zhao, *A Nation-state by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*, p. 53.

<sup>17</sup> Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China*, pp. 32-3..

Kang Youwei, one of the monarchist reformists, proposed the introduction of physical education in schools to herald the beginning of the Hundred Days' Reform. Kang then wrote a memorandum to the Guangxu Emperor recommending the establishment of a Western-style military training school to replace the traditional Chinese military training institutes.<sup>18</sup> Kang also recommended that physical education (mainly military gymnastics) should be the primary focus in education.<sup>19</sup> One of Kang's students, Liang Qichao committed to promoting Kang's ideology of sport. Liang believed that physical education should form an important part of school curricula for the modern Chinese and that all school children should improve their physical strength by practising gymnastics.<sup>20</sup> Yan Fu, another influential monarchist reformer, held the opinion that increasing the physical strength of the Chinese was one of China's the most pressing tasks.<sup>21</sup> Yan urged a 'change [in] attitudes toward physical fitness'.<sup>22</sup> Strengthening the physique of the Chinese was a priority in strengthening the nation and the Chinese race.

However, the traditionalist Empress Dowager Cixi and her conservative forces at court suppressed the Hundred Days' Reform with the rescission of reform edicts, the execution of the reform's chief advocates and placing the Guangxu Emperor under house arrest.<sup>23</sup> The Hundred Days' Reform movement, even in its demise, had ushered in a new era and facilitated the introduction of subsequent reforms from 1901 to 1911. These were so successful that the Empress Dowager Cixi and her court became convinced of the indispensability of the reform movement, not only to 'save China from Western imperialism' but also to 'restore the prestige and power of the Qing dynasty in China itself'.<sup>24</sup> As a result, a series of reform decrees were issued by the Qing government. In terms of education, the reforms included abolishing the 'eight-part essay'

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<sup>18</sup> Youwei Kang, 'Qing tingzhi gong ma shi wu shi gaishe pinxiao zhe [Memorandum: Requesting a Ban on Traditional Military Training and the Establishment of a Modern Military Academy]', in Y. Kang (ed.), *Wuxu Zougao*, 1898, pp. 8-11.

<sup>19</sup> Youwei Kang, *Da tong shu*, Shanghai, Shanghai guji chubanshe [Shanghai Guji Press], 1985, p. 94. Bozan Jian, *Bairi weixin [Hundred Days of Reform]*, Shanghai, Shanghai renmin chubanshe [Shanghai People's publishing House], 1957, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3]*, pp. 36-7; Shiming Luo, *Aoyun laidao zhongguo [Olympics Came to China]*, Beijing, Qinghua daxue chubanshe [Tsinghua University Press], 2005, p. 26.

<sup>21</sup> Shi Wang, *Yan Fu ji [The Collected Works of Yan Fu]*, Fuzhou, Fuzhou renmin chubanshe [Fuzhou People's Publishing House], 2004, p. 28; Zhouxiang Lu and Fan Hong, 'From Celestial Empire to Nation State: Sport and the Origins of Chinese Nationalism (1840-1927)', p. 483. Hua Tan, *Tiyu shi [The History of Sport]*, Beijing, Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe [Higher Education Press], 2005, p. 160.

<sup>22</sup> Susan Brownell, p. 46.

<sup>23</sup> Zengqing Jiang, *Zhongguo tongshi gangyao [A Outline of the Comprehensive History of China]*, Taipei, Wu-nan Culture Enterprise, 2005, p. 522.

<sup>24</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 96.

(*Ba gu wen*)<sup>25</sup> in the Imperial Civil Examination, adopting Western-style teaching systems in schools, establishing a Ministry of Education, translating Western books and sending students abroad to study.<sup>26</sup>

The first modern school system, the Qinding Regulation for Schooling (QRS), was introduced by the Qing government in 1902. This educational system was an experiment designed to assess the efficacy of a program that emulated the Japanese educational system.<sup>27</sup> The Japanese educational system was modelled after military training principles and drew on German-style gymnastics. This system was thoroughly revised the following year and put into effect as the Zouding Regulation for Schooling (ZRS). The ZRS specified the goals and expectations of the four tiers of local educational institutions, namely primary, middle and secondary schools, and the higher institutions across China.<sup>28</sup> This reorganization of the educational system was followed by the introduction of many ‘Western’ subjects into the curriculum, which now also included a compulsory gymnastics class.<sup>29</sup> The duration of the gymnastics class was three hours a week for primary school, two hours a week for middle, normal and industry schools, and three hours a week for higher institutions, including universities and colleges. The major content of the class was military gymnastics, and standard gymnastics was complementary.<sup>30</sup> The ZRS became the earliest nationwide official national regulation for schooling that was instituted by the Chinese government for local government and private schools. This program, for the first time, signified the role and place of physical education in the local educational system of modern China. Gymnastics, especially military gymnastics, was emphasized by the schools and the government and was used to improve the military force of the Chinese army and the physical strength of Chinese youth.

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<sup>25</sup> Eight-part essay was a style of stereotyped essay writing in the Imperial Civil Examination system during the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

<sup>26</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 96.

<sup>27</sup> Xingzhi Tao, 'Zhongguo jianshe xinxuezhì de lìshǐ [The History of China's New Schooling System]', *Xin jiao yu [New Education]*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1922, p. 240.

<sup>28</sup> T. Hon and R. Culp, *The Politics of Historical Production in Late Qing and Republican China*, Leiden, Brill Publishers, 2007, p. 82.

<sup>29</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 97.

<sup>30</sup> National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo jindai tiyùshǐ [Sport History in Modern China]*, pp. 72-4.

These reforms revolutionized Chinese education and the effects were bolstered by a significant rise in the number of enrolments in schools.<sup>31</sup> However, some of the basic problems, such as the shortage of qualified teachers and a lack of on-going teacher training, remained unaddressed. In fact, only few of the teachers had studied physical education in Japan, or in schools or physical education societies (some of which will be discussed below). Most of the physical education teachers were decommissioned Chinese soldiers rather than professional teachers, and the quality of physical education in Chinese schools was poor.<sup>32</sup> The content of physical education in these local schools was thus restricted to military training.

However, the beginning of the twentieth century proved a fruitful time for the development of physical education. The reason for this was that the revolutionaries who initially had wanted to overthrow the Qing government became strong advocates of the ‘strengthen the body, strengthen the nation, strengthen the race by physical education and sport’ ideology.<sup>33</sup> Sport societies and schools were established by these revolutionaries in China to motivate their followers, and to improve their physical strength and military skills.<sup>34</sup> For example, in 1905, the nationalist Xu Xilin established Datong Shifan School (DSS, Datong Normal School) in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province. This school focused mainly on teaching military gymnastics and artistic gymnastics. In the DSS, there were three military gymnastics classes every day (except on Sundays). Regardless of the weather, students were made to practise calisthenics. In addition, one hour of artistic gymnastics was organized every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This included work on the parallel bar, swing, pommel horse, flying rings, horizontal bar and hoop.<sup>35</sup> Nationalist educational institutions like DSS were established in various parts of China – for instance, the Lishui Sports Society, established in 1906 in Zhejiang province; Taizhou Yaozi Sports School, set up in 1907, also in Zhejiang; the Songkou

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<sup>31</sup> Jingpan Chen, *Zhongguo jindai jiaoyu shi [The History of Chinese Modern Education]*, Beijing, Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe [People's Education Press], 2004, p. 94.

<sup>32</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3]*, p. 68.

<sup>33</sup> Lu Zhouxiang and Fan Hong, 'From Celestial Empire to Nation State: Sport and the Origins of Chinese Nationalism (1840–1927)', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2010, p. 489.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Shiming Luo, *Aoyun laidao zhongguo [Olympics Came to China]*, p. 28.

Sports Society, founded in Canton in 1907; and Chongqing Sports School, set up in Chongqing in 1908. However, the primary purpose of these organizations and institutions was not to cultivate sports talent or to promote physical education in China, but to train revolutionary forces to join in the anti-Qing movement. According to Xu, these schools and societies had the intended effect of improving the physical condition of the students who passed through them. In effect, militarism (*Jun guomin zhuyi*) and the development of a ‘warlike spirit’ (*Shangwu*) among the students were the most typical features of the Chinese physical education system at the time.<sup>36</sup>

These reforms in indigenous education did result in the advancement of physical education, especially military sports, in China to promote the physical strength of the Chinese youth and to improve the military force of Chinese army. Yet, more comprehensive and differently styled physical education and sport initiatives were being undertaken by the Christian missionary educational institutions and the YMCA with a different goal in mind, and these were to run in parallel to what was occurring regarding military physical education in local schools and sports societies.

### 3.3 Missionary Schools and Efforts to Promote Physical Education and Sport

When missionaries began their work in the interior of China, they faced much indifference and resistance from the Chinese. The local people did not welcome direct evangelical work in China, and therefore, missionary schools were established as a means to preach the gospel and to make contact with the Chinese youth. In the early missionary schools, there was no obvious distinction among students at various levels; that is, there was no formal distinction between primary and secondary education.<sup>37</sup> All students, irrespective of their age and instructional background, studied in the same rooms and received the same instruction.<sup>38</sup> However, by the end of the nineteenth

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<sup>36</sup> G. Xu, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895–2008*, p. 20.

<sup>37</sup> Xiaoxia He and Jinghuan Shi, *Jiaohui xuexiao yu zhongguo jiaoyu xiandaihua [Missionary Schools and the Modernization of Education in Modern China]*, Guangzhou, Guangdong jiaoyu chubanshe [Guangdong Education Publishing House], 1996, pp. 104-5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

century, with the development of Christian education in China, a comprehensive missionary school network including primary, secondary and tertiary education had taken root. Missionary schools were not only thought to be a tool to convert the youth, but one which would facilitate Western-style modernization. Modern physical education and sport were introduced through the missionary schools, although at this stage physical education was mainly offered as one of the extracurricular activities rather than being a compulsory subject taught in classes. In the early days, Chinese students with a traditional view on physical activities resisted any requirement for them to take part in Western sports activities and competitions. Moreover, there was lack of professional instructors and facilities for physical education. However, through the perseverance and efforts of missionaries, the rigid viewpoint of students on physical education and sport gradually softened and more and more Chinese public attention was attracted to these Western sports.

### 3.3.1 The Construction of a Missionary School Network

The missionary work conducted in China was, perhaps inevitably, associated with political, economic and/or military pressure from Western countries, and consequently Christianity was by and large associated with Western imperialism in modern China. As explained in the introduction, from 1840, the Qing government, having its ruling and military capabilities considerably diminished by a series of wars with the Western countries, had to sign several unequal treaties with the foreigners. Under the provision and protection of these treaties, the missionaries, irrespective of their nationalities and denominations, by default gained the right to travel and live anywhere in China to carry out their missionary work.<sup>39</sup>

The missionaries had obtained permission from the Qing government to conduct their work since 1842, yet many faced various obstacles constructed by the Chinese people and their adherence to their traditional customs. Confucianism held a great deal of

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<sup>39</sup> R. Woods, *Social Issues in Sport*, Champaign, Illinois, Human Kinetics, 2007, p. 258.



influence in China, and there was strong resistance to this new religion. For example, missionaries from the Congregational Church came to China in 1847 but baptized their first convert only in 1865.<sup>40</sup> John Leighton Stuart, a missionary of Presbyterian Church and later president of Yenching University in Peking (Beijing), stated that ‘[i]t was very well to talk of the importance of direct evangelism, but it was difficult to maintain enthusiasm [among missionaries] for preaching tours which brought few tangible results’.<sup>41</sup> Frequent illnesses and high death rates among the missionaries and their wives and children, the harsh living conditions in China, and the indifference of Chinese people to their preaching made for a difficult experience, forcing the missionaries to devise new strategies for proselytizing. The educational route offered the best prospects, and as a result more attention was paid to providing Christian education and to establishing an increasing number of missionary schools. At the outset, early Christian missionaries had little intention of modernizing Chinese society, and their focus was only on converting the Chinese. John Griffith, a missionary from the London Missionary Society, made a speech at the 1877 China Protestant Missionary Conference: ‘[w]e are here, not to develop the resources of the country, not for the advancement of commerce, not for mere promotion of civilization, but to do battle with the powers of darkness, to save the people from sin, and conquer China for Christ’.<sup>42</sup> In fact, the missionaries hoped to convert the whole Chinese nation to Christianity.<sup>43</sup>

Before 1877, the missionaries were in fact not greatly concerned with education.<sup>44</sup> This is evident from the lack of articles on the subject in *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* (*The Chinese Recorder* hereafter)<sup>45</sup>. The series of reports on the development of missionary work appearing in each issue of *The Chinese Recorder* in 1876–1877 primarily fell into three categories: evangelistic, literary and medical. When

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<sup>40</sup> Ellsworth C Carlson, *The Foochow Missionaries, 1847–1880*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Asia Center, 1974, Vol. 1, p. 64.

<sup>41</sup> John Leighton Stuart, *Fifty Years in China—The Memoirs of John Leighton Stuart, Missionary and Ambassador*, New York, Random House, 1954, p. 28.

<sup>42</sup> *Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, Held at Shanghai, May 10–24, 1877*, Shanghai, Presbyterian Mission Press, 1878, p. 32.

<sup>43</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 10.

<sup>44</sup> Alice Henrietta Gregg, *China and Educational Autonomy: The Changing Role of the Protestant Educational Missionary in China, 1807–1937*, Syracuse, NY, Syracuse University Press, 1946, p. 18.

<sup>45</sup> The *Chinese Recorder* and *Missionary Journal* published in one or another form in Shanghai from 1867 to 1941. The *Journal* was the leading outlet for the English language missionary community in China, with a number of Chinese readers as well.

education was mentioned, it was usually in connection with a missionary's evangelical work.<sup>46</sup> However, with the development of the missionary work in China, more and more missionaries paid attention on educational work and the establishment of missionary schools. In the First General Conference of Protestant Missionaries of China in Shanghai in 1877, there was much attention paid on defending education as an important facet of evangelical work.<sup>47</sup> Several speeches were made to emphasize the legitimate place of education in missionary work. Most missionaries believed that education was 'indispensable in Christianizing and enlightening the heathen Chinese'.<sup>48</sup> For example, Rev. C.W. Mateer, a missionary to China with the American Presbyterian Mission, stressed that education was crucial to 'introduce to China the superior education of the West', to 'prepare men to take the lead in introducing into China the science and arts of Western civilization'.<sup>49</sup> From this time onwards, education held a central place in the missionary agenda alongside evangelism.

However, at the beginning, missionary schools were basic, lacking proper buildings, financial resources and textbooks.<sup>50</sup> Before the issuing of a series of reform decrees by the Qing government and the abolishing of the 'eight-part essay' in Imperial Civil Examination, China's gentry and upper class still favoured the classical Chinese education because they wanted their sons to have careers as government officials.<sup>51</sup> This meant that the missionary schools' educational system was irrelevant for the Chinese elite. For this reason, missionary schools had to draw students from the ranks of the poor.<sup>52</sup> Parents of these poorer students hoped the education in missionary schools could lead their children into government services and raise the social status of their families. Therefore, the missionaries would sometimes employ a Chinese tutor to teach the Chinese classics to attract children, provided the tutor allowed the missionary to speak on Christianity several times a week. Other missionaries gave classes in their

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<sup>46</sup> Alice Henrietta Gregg, p. 18.

<sup>47</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> W.P. Fenn, p. 26.

<sup>49</sup> *Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, Held at Shanghai, May 10-24, 1877*, pp. 176-8.

<sup>50</sup> Graham Gael, p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> A.B. Kipnis, *Governing Educational Desire: Culture, Politics, and Schooling in China*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2011, p. 23..

<sup>52</sup> Graham Gael, p. 26.

own homes, or rented a room in which they could offer Bible studies while a Chinese tutor would teach the traditional curriculum based on the Confucian classics. In order to attract more pupils to the missionary schools, they began offering free food and even lodging, from which gradually developed the earliest missionary boarding schools.<sup>53</sup> These early missionary schools were established to look after the native converts, and to train some of them as evangelists, and their assistants.<sup>54</sup>

By the time the Second General Conference of Protestant Missionaries of China was held in Shanghai in May of 1890,<sup>55</sup> the majority of the missionary representatives in attendance seemed to have accepted education as a legitimate responsibility of the China missions.<sup>56</sup> The missionary schools no longer remained an appendage of the Church; rather, they became the most effective means of propagating the Gospel. The missionary schools democratized religious education in the sense that the missionaries operated schools that would prepare students for a lay life, albeit with a Christian belief system that would be the basis of their spiritual life. Missionaries such as N.J. Plumb were convinced that in India, China and Japan, Christian education was the best method of preaching, and that the classroom was the best chapel.<sup>57</sup> An increasing number of missionaries ‘devoted themselves exclusively to teaching’ rather than direct evangelism.<sup>58</sup>

Additionally, at the Second General Conference, the missionary educators such as C.W. Mateer began focusing on higher education.<sup>59</sup> They believed that in any community the educated are the most influential, simply because they are more persuasive and dominant in public life. The logic was that once young people were brought up in Christian faith, they would serve as Christian ministers, teachers, physicians and so

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<sup>53</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 15.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Tze Ming Ng, *Changing Paradigms of Christian Higher Education in China, 1888–1950*, Lewiston, NY, Edwin Mellen Press, 2002, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> *Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, Held at Shanghai, May 10-24, 1877*, p. xxiii..

<sup>56</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 17.

<sup>57</sup> W.J. Lewis, *Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China Held at Shanghai, May 7-20, 1890*, Shanghai, Presbyterian Mission Press, 1890, p. 447.

<sup>58</sup> P.J. Bailey, *Gender and Education in China: Gender Discourses and Women's Schooling in the Early Twentieth Century*, London & New York, Routledge, 2007, p. 37.

<sup>59</sup> W.J. Lewis, p. 457.

forth, and so bring about enlightenment and the Christianization of China.<sup>60</sup> Many missionaries believed that once the wealthy and the literati adopted Christianity, ‘the great mass of the Chinese population would follow suit’.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, the missionaries increasingly appealed to the sons of upper class families in addition to serving those from poor families. Due to the sweeping reforms happening in China discussed earlier in this chapter and to the efforts of the missionaries, the missionary schools gradually found themselves in a position to attract a wider social constituency; as a result, they were in general able to charge modest tuition fees from the 1880s onward. For example, the Southern Methodist Society founded the Shanghai McTeiyre School in 1892 specifically to recruit students from upper classes.<sup>62</sup> Incorporating the vision of their pioneers, missionary schools such as these were intended to become the training ground for future leaders of the Christian movements in China, as well as to act as agents for eradicating what they saw as ‘superstitious Chinese customs’ and developing an enlightened Christian character among the Chinese followers.<sup>63</sup>

The Second General Conference also provided a foundation for the establishment of a comprehensive Christian education system in China. After this conference, hundreds of Christian educational institutions were established to cater for students from primary through to tertiary level. The curricula of these schools were broadened and teaching terminology was standardized.<sup>64</sup> The Educational Association of China, as the first professional organization of the missionary educators in China, was also established at the conference.<sup>65</sup> It laid a good foundation for the systematic development of physical education in Christian educational institutions in China.

The way in which Christian educational institutions became organized has often been seen as evidence of Western cultural imperialism, and of Christian missions’ disregard

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<sup>60</sup> W.P. Fenn, p. 26.; G.N. Graham, p. 10.

<sup>61</sup> G.N. Graham, p. 10.

<sup>62</sup> P.J. Bailey, p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> W.J. Lewis, p. 460.

<sup>64</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 17.

<sup>65</sup> Peter Tze Ming Ng, p. 4.

of indigenous customs and values.<sup>66</sup> The distinction between Westernizing Chinese civilization and Christianizing Chinese society was indeed a subtle one for the missionaries. For many, Christianity could not be separated from other elements of Western culture. Even if Western civilization cannot not be regarded as a product of Christianity *per se*, Christianity had a significant impact on Western political institutions, science and the cultural sphere.<sup>67</sup> J.G. Lutz argues that this was one of the greatest challenges of the Christian missions, and that if the whole of Chinese culture and civilization could not be Westernized, there was ‘little hope of converting China to Christianity’.<sup>68</sup> In other words, he argues that Christianity and Western culture were too closely intertwined to be separated, and the spread of Western knowledge, culture and values was an effective means of Christianizing China. This intersection of Western values and Christian education is illustrated in Chen Shumei’s account of her experience as a student at a missionary school in Tianjin:

All the lessons were given in English [. . .] It was not long before I could speak a little English. I was dressed and my hair was arranged now in European fashion [. . .] With my English clothes, a hat which was the first I had ever had on my head, the skirts which I now wore instead of trousers [. . .] I learned how to drink tea as the English take it, with sugar and milk; how to eat bread and butter and toast; how to use a knife and fork instead of chopsticks; and how to take exercise.<sup>69</sup>

Missionary schools applied Western enlightenment style discipline to the lives of their students.<sup>70</sup> Missionary schools also provided the intellectual knowledge through which Chinese students could further explore aspects of Western culture. Education as a tool to familiarizing students with Western culture and values was therefore seen as a key to opening the door to the transformation of Chinese society.<sup>71</sup> As the Chinese government was also embracing education more broadly, the missionaries worked

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<sup>66</sup> Andrew Porter, pp. 367-8; Margaret Strobel, pp. 51, 62.

<sup>67</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 21.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility, American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China*, New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1984, p. 231.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China*, p. 61.

diligently to ensure the Christian educational enterprise played an important role in this process; not only in terms of intellectual development, but physical development as well.

### 3.3.2 Missionary Schools and the Introduction of Modern Western Physical Education and Sport

It is not certain as to when Western sports were first introduced into China. However, by the 1860s, modern Western physical education and sport in China had become particularly conspicuous in the big treaty port cities.<sup>72</sup> The missionary schools proved the most effective medium for laying the foundations for the early introduction and acceptance of modern Western physical education and sport in China, even if during the period from 1840 to 1908 most of the missionary schools had no formal physical education classes in their official curriculum, and the umbrella term ‘extracurricular physical activities’ was used to refer to, and organize, sports and physical exercise.<sup>73</sup>

#### *Physical Education in Missionary Primary Schools and Kindergartens*

The earliest missionary schools in China were primary schools. These were of a basic standard and the students in these schools were mainly drawn from poor families.<sup>74</sup> They were taught only basic skills, such as reading, writing and arithmetic as the primary focus of the schools was on enabling the students to read the Bible.<sup>75</sup> These primary schools are regarded as ‘the forerunner of the missionary work’ because they fulfilled the objectives of introducing Christianity to China and preached the Gospel among the Chinese.<sup>76</sup> The schools were located in the treaty ports, such as Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen and Tientsin.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> R. Jones and J. Riordan, pp. 71-4.

<sup>73</sup> National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi [Sport History in Modern China]*, pp. 62-5; Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3]*, pp. 80-1.

<sup>74</sup> Graham Gael, pp. 25-6.

<sup>75</sup> Yisi Lu, 'Jidujiao zai zhongguo zhi qingxing [The Current Status of Christian Education in China]', *Xin jiao yu [New Education]*, vol. 6, no. 5, 1923.

<sup>76</sup> Xianfang Lin, *Fuzhou meiyimei qingnianhui shi [The History of Fuzhou YMCA]*, Fuzhou, Fuzhou YMCA, 1936, p. 19.

<sup>77</sup> Shiliang Gao, *Zhongguo jiaohui xuexiaoshi [The History of the Missionary Schools in Modern China]*, Hunan, Hunan jiaoyu

By the end of the nineteenth century, because of the missionaries' endeavour and a series of Chinese reforms (see section 3.2), several important developments changed the disposition and character of the missionary schools. For instance, the number of students seeking admission to missionary schools increased, the backgrounds of these students became more varied, and the curricula of the missionary schools became more extensive and secular.<sup>78</sup> By 1900, there were around 2,000 missionary schools in China (of which 90 per cent were primary schools).<sup>79</sup> The ensuing expansion of the missionary agenda required a clarity of vision behind these primary schools. Gradually, the focus shifted from mere evangelism to, in the words of the Committee of Reference Counsel, and Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain & Ireland, 'the production of intelligent Christian personalities, for the good not only of the individuals themselves but also of the Christian community and of Chinese society as a whole'.<sup>80</sup>

To this end, improving the health of students, encouraging them to have 'well-developed physiques' and adopting 'sportive habits' became a priority for missionary primary schools. This practice included imparting knowledge of hygiene, proper personal habits and play.<sup>81</sup> However, there was no desire to establish a formal program of physical education in the early Christian primary schools.<sup>82</sup> The missionaries' impression of Chinese students was that they looked 'sickly' and 'effete'.<sup>83</sup> This impression was not completely unfounded as many of these early missionary schools were forced to close because of outbreaks of illness among students.<sup>84</sup> These illnesses included trachoma, malaria, smallpox, plague and tuberculosis. In 1909, the Methodist Carolyn Johnson Memorial School in Longtian,

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chubanshe [Hunan Education Press], 1994, p. 58.

<sup>78</sup> Graham Gael, p. 26.

<sup>79</sup> Shiliang Gao, *Zhongguo jiaohui xuexiaoshi [The History of the Missionary Schools in Modern China]*, p. 59.

<sup>80</sup> Chinese Educational Commission, Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Committee of Reference Counsel, and Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain & Ireland, *Christian Education in China: The Report of the China Educational Commission of 1921-1922*, Shanghai, Shangwu yinshuguan [Commercial Press], 1922, p. 67.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.68-9.

<sup>82</sup> G. Hoh, p. 90.

<sup>83</sup> P.J. Bailey, p. 23.

<sup>84</sup> Women's Board of Mission. (27 November 1884) *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, box 1, Cambridge, Mass: Houghton Library, Harvard University. Cited in Graham Gael, p. 29..

Fuzhou, closed for two weeks due to plague.<sup>85</sup> The missionaries therefore introduced campaigns within their schools to ban spitting, blowing one's nose on one's fingers, and using communal chopsticks. These prohibitions and the introduction of physical education proved good preventative measures for minimizing outbreaks of epidemics in schools.<sup>86</sup> In addition, the missionaries viewed their educational project more expansively and sought to improve not only the physical health of their students, but also their 'moral, intellectual [and] spiritual development as well'.<sup>87</sup> Sport was primarily introduced in order to inculcate a moral and Christian character, so that students could embrace 'truth and honesty' in thought and behaviour.<sup>88</sup>

Physical education and sport also assisted the missionaries in their goal of challenging aspects of traditional Chinese customs that were not only seen to be at odds with the teachings of Christ, but also with emerging Western discourses of the healthy body. They did this by recasting their – especially male – students as 'individuals' who 'embodied the image of maleness within a Christian context'.<sup>89</sup> While in the traditional Chinese context of the time, a slight physique was a trait of a scholar or member of the gentry and a scholar-official, for the missionaries the Chinese scholar represented the embodiment of the so-called 'Sick Man of East Asia', and this assessment 'reconfirmed their superiority to the Chinese'.<sup>90</sup> Chester Fuson, a Congregationalist in China, described his students as 'almost objects of pity since they are so weak-looking'.<sup>91</sup> In doctrinal terms, the missionaries were also driven to improve the physical health of their students because they believed that the body was a 'temple' in which the Spirit of God dwelt. For this reason, many Christians felt obligated to care for, respect and even develop their physical bodies.<sup>92</sup> The late modern Protestant Christian conceptualization of muscular masculinity, which was the ideal in many Protestant denominations in the West around this time, was an ideal the missionaries felt that would benefit the Chinese.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Chinese Educational Commission, Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Committee of Reference Counsel, and Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain & Ireland, pp. 68-9.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Graham Gael, p. 31.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp.29-30.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Koen De Ceuster, p. 57.



For these reasons, the introduction of physical education into the curriculum in missionary schools eventually became inevitable and was conceived to be common sense.

In 1864, Calvin Wilson Matteer was the first person to officially introduce a physical education class into a Christian primary school in Dengzhou, Shandong province.<sup>93</sup> Zhenjiang Girls' School in Jiangsu province, established by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1884, had had physical education on its subject list from the outset, although no academic credits were attached to the subject. The school regulations stated that the morning class in the school would commence at 8.00 a.m. and conclude at 11.30 a.m., while the afternoon classes would run from 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. In between these two sessions, students could use the available sport facilities individually, or they could participate in the sporting activities organized by teachers. Students were also required to take part in gymnastics or physical exercise after 4.00 p.m. every day.<sup>94</sup> Students at this school were also taught about health and hygiene in addition to drawing and gardening. The subjects included in this educational program reflected the trends in Western schools in both America and Britain. Thus, despite their focus being primarily on a spiritual mission of evangelization, the missionaries were also transferring their own culture into Chinese schools in their effort to re-form the Chinese in the image of the modern, civilized Western man.<sup>95</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, the missionary primary school curriculum had developed sufficiently to comprise four distinct elements: the first was Christian education (in particular, Bible study); the second was Chinese learning, such as Chinese literature and history; the third encompassed the (Western) disciplines of geology, history, physics and astronomy; and the fourth consisted of athletics and music.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Huazhuo Wang, 'Woguo jindai xuezhǐ jiānlǐqián tǐyù kēchǎng fāzhǎn gǎikuāng [The Situation of the Physical Education in Schools before the Establishment of Chinese Schooling System]', *Xi'an tǐyù dàoxuē xuēbào [Journal of Xi'an Physical Education University]*, no. 1, 2004, p. 86.

<sup>94</sup> Shiliang Gao, *Zhongguo jiaohui xuexiaoshi [The History of the Missionary Schools in Modern China]*, p. 63; Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tǐyù tǒngshǐ dì sān jǐ [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3]*, p. 80.

<sup>95</sup> C.I. Yoon, *Civilizing Mission for Women: American Methodist Missionary Women and Social Change in Korea, 1885–1940*, PhD Thesis, Drew University, 2008, p. 170.

<sup>96</sup> Xiaoxia He and Jinghuan Shi, p. 110.

According to research carried out by the one of the Protestant churches on the curricula of five American missionary schools in China in 1900, the principal subjects taught included athletics, music, physiology, geology, astronomy, physics, chemistry, history, botany, zoology, world history, arithmetic, English, Chinese and hygiene. Four of these schools had adopted physical education.<sup>97</sup> However, physical education was conducted as an extracurricular activity rather than as a formal part of the curriculum.

Kindergartens were a later addition to Christian education in China. A preschool education system was first introduced in Shanghai by the Society of Jesus at the end of the nineteenth century. Like the primary schools, the early Christian kindergartens were located in the big cities of southern China, including Shanghai, Fujian and Amoy (Xiamen). Again, in the case of kindergartens, the Christian educators emphasized physical fitness and the development of Christian morality. John Allen Young – best known in China by his Chinese name, Lin Yuezhi – was an American Methodist missionary working in China during the late Qing dynasty. During his time in China, Young emphasized the importance of childhood education for educational and missionary work in China.<sup>98</sup> In 1905, he published an article in *The Review of the Times* (*Wan guo gong bao*) entitled *The Foundation of Kindergartens in China is Urgent*. In it, Young expressed his vision for kindergarten education. He believed that the course of an individual's progress is charted from childhood and that early education had long-term effects and a profound influence on a child's life.<sup>99</sup> Most importantly, Young believed that the future of Christianity depended on children gaining an education based on the foundations of the Bible. The quality of that education was dependent on the guidance they got from their teachers and the types of games they played. Young's ideology was persuasive enough for many of the Christian educators to pursue kindergarten education with serious intent.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Youhuan Zhou, *Zhongguo jindai xuezhì shiliao* [Historical Document of the Schooling System in Modern China], Shanghai, Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe [East China Normal University Press], 1989, Vol. 1, pp. 262-6.

<sup>98</sup> Yuezhi Lin, 'Lun zhongguo jixu sheli youzhiyuan [China is in the Urgent Need of Kindergartens]', *Wan guo gong bao* [A Review of the Times], vol. 17, no. 9, 1905.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

Young promoted the idea of organizing outdoor activities and games for children, as he considered these activities best suited to capturing a child's interests. He maintained that kindergarten teachers should attach great importance to using these activities as a teaching method. He claimed that games and outdoor activities could inspire young children more than formal academic subjects and also be a very effective tool for inculcating in them specific values about morality, customs and even spirituality.<sup>101</sup> Most of the missionary kindergartens in China took heed of Young's philosophy of childhood education and began to stress the importance of play. For example, *The Women's Magazine (Funu Zazhi)* reported that the Mu Family Garden Kindergarten in Suzhou was one of the earliest missionary kindergartens to follow Young's advice by introducing physical education into their program.<sup>102</sup> Incorporating physical education at kindergarten level was intended to instill confidence, improve language skills and enhance the children's sense of enjoyment and cooperation.<sup>103</sup>

Yet, like other missionary projects, kindergarten education was inevitably focused on promoting the Gospel and reconstructing China in the Christian image.<sup>104</sup> According to Young, the missionaries saw themselves as the servants of God. They were burdened with the double responsibility of saving China from spiritual darkness and saving the Chinese from eternal condemnation.<sup>105</sup> The most peaceful strategy was to shape the minds of children and nurture future generations of believers.<sup>106</sup> Nevertheless, this strategy to mould the minds of very young children can be taken as an instance of cultural imperialism as defined by Downing and Sreberny-Mohammadi. This is because, in this context, the target audience are children and there is potentially very little room for these children to 'negotiate' between indigenous and Western values.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> The Mu Family Garden kindergarten was set up by Jin Zhensheng who was a missionary at the end of the nineteenth century, which was named by its location on the Mu Family Garden in Suzhou.

<sup>103</sup> Fang Yang, 'Canguan suzhou mujia huayuanji [The Visit to Suzhou Mu Family Garden]', *Funu zazhi [Women's Magazine]*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1917..

<sup>104</sup> Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China*, p. 54.

<sup>105</sup> Yuezhi Lin, 'Lun zhongguo jixu sheli youzhiyuan [China is in the Urgent Need of Kindergartens]'.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> J. Downing, A. Mohammadi, and A. Sreberny, p. 482.

### *Physical Education in Missionary Secondary Schools*

Classes in missionary secondary schools were typically divided into grades according to the age and sex of the students, and the level and type of instruction would be varied accordingly.<sup>108</sup> This transformation first took place in primary schools, and it was only towards the end of the nineteenth century, thirty years after the inception of the missionary school system, that secondary-level missionary schools would be established as a distinct category.

With rise in the number and standard of missionary schools, the secondary-level Christian education curriculum was formed. Missionary secondary schools had a more advanced teaching system and curricula. Students who studied in these missionary schools were divided into different classes and grades according to their individual abilities, and could graduate with certain certifications at different levels.<sup>109</sup> The development of the secondary-level set-up also inspired improvements in the primary schools, with some of them evolving into secondary schools. For example, Beiman Girls' School, which had initially set up a four-year primary educational program in 1895, achieved its first batch of second-level graduates just four years later.<sup>110</sup> Christian secondary education not only supplied a large number of the teachers who developed the lower schools, but also furnished the best and largest portion of the students entering the Christian colleges.<sup>111</sup>

After achieving a degree of organizational integrity, the missionary secondary schools placed emphasis on physical education to help students achieve a 'sound body'. John Leighton Stuart, a Presbyterian missionary, stated that:

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<sup>108</sup> Changsheng Gu, *Chuanjiaoshi yu jindai zhongguo [Missionaries and Modern China]*, Shanghai, Shanghai renmin chubanshe [Shanghai People's Publishing House], 2004, p. 228.

<sup>109</sup> Shiliang Gao, *Zhongguo jiaohui xuexiaoshi [The History of the Missionary Schools in Modern China]*, pp. 66-7.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p.86.

<sup>111</sup> Chinese Educational Commission, Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Committee of Reference Counsel, and Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain & Ireland, p. 80.

I hope the secondary school will have enough finances; will employ good teachers; will have good teaching facilities; will restrict the number of the students; will enable anyone who receives our education to develop in an all-round way, i.e. morally, intellectually, physically and aesthetically, and will pay much more attention to the development of students' personality.<sup>112</sup>

This points to an intriguing situation. On the one hand, physical development, as part of the all-round development of young people, was emphasized in missionary secondary education. On the other hand, we come to understand that because of the scarcity of resources available even by the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century official physical education classes could not be instituted in missionary secondary schools, and sports were carried out only as extracurricular activities. Mostly, it was non-specialist teachers who supervised these activities and games, often at the more rudimentary level. For example, in 1897, an American missionary named Louis taught physics and physical education at Dengzhou Christian Middle School. The following is a description of how the basketball match became an annual sport contest at the school:

Because some sports proved too physical for the Chinese students, Louis used to devise some interesting and less intense athletic games for them. Soon after, another teacher from America joined Louis and introduced basketball to the school. They later hired a blacksmith who made an iron ring as the hoop, and Louis' son's toy leather ball served as the basketball. Louis had to encourage the students when they felt reluctant to play again after losing, and allowed them to play even though they regularly wore gowns, had long nails and long pigtailed. In 1905, Dengzhou Christian School held the first basketball match in Shandong province. The match attracted many local spectators. When the match started, the court was in a great

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<sup>112</sup> John Leighton Stuart, 'Jidujiao zhongxue de gaijin [The Improvement of the Christian Secondary Schools]', in C. Li (ed.), *Diguo zhuyi qinhua jiaoyushi ziliao: jiaohui jiaoyu [Compilation of the Historical Documents of the Education in the Imperialist Aggression against China Period: Christian Education]*, Beijing, Jiaoyu kexue chubanshe [Educational Science Publishing House], 1987, pp. 184-6.

bustle, as all the players crowded together, trying to get to the ball. When the players on court were running, their pig-tails seemed to run after them. Sometimes the situation became so chaotic during the match that it made the referee lose his head.<sup>113</sup>

With Louis's efforts, an increasing number of students in Dengzhou Christian School became enthusiastic about playing basketball games. However, as mentioned above, in some other missionary secondary schools, the missionaries met with an initial indifference and even resistance from Chinese students, as the sports activities organized by missionary teachers were greatly at odds with traditional Chinese physical ideology. Some students thought that participating in sports activities would make them have no dignity, because these activities, as with physical labour, should only be done by the Chinese of a lower social status. They even 'tried to hire coolies to do the exercise for them'.<sup>114</sup> Most of these students felt too ashamed to participate in sports games because they were afraid of losing face if they lost in the games. For example, students from the Chungking Methodist Boys' School thought basketball games 'too much like work', and for this reason it 'took them a good while to get over being afraid of it'.<sup>115</sup> Edward Alsworth Ross, a sociology professor, recorded that 'lissome young men with queues were skipping about the tennis courts, but they wore their hampering gowns and their strokes had the snap of a kitten playing with a ball of yarn'.<sup>116</sup>

It took time for physical education to be recognized as a regular part of school curricula at the secondary level. Initially, there were only a few schools that conducted a compulsory physical education class. For example, Zhejiang Girls' Christian School had a 12-year instructional plan from primary through to secondary education, and physical education was a compulsory class at each grade level.<sup>117</sup> The Anglo-Chinese Secondary

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<sup>113</sup> Waiyang Wei, 'Qingmo minchu de qingnianhui [Chinese YMCA in Late Qing and Early Republic Period]', *Yuguang zazhi* [*Yuguang Magazine*], vol. 6, no. 35, 1977, p. 118.

<sup>114</sup> G.R. Gems, p. 20.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21; G.N. Graham, pp. 101-4.

<sup>116</sup> G.R. Gems, p. 21; Susan Brownell, p. 40.

<sup>117</sup> Chucai Li, *Diguo zhuyi qinhua jiaoyushi ziliao: jiaohui jiaoyu* [*Compilation of the Historical Documents of the Education in the Imperialist Aggression Against China Period: Christian Education*], Beijing, Jiaoyu kexue chubanshe [Educational Science Publishing House], 1987, p. 106.

School began hiring foreign physical education teachers from 1889 onwards to train students in gymnastics, tug-of-war, soccer and tennis, and by 1902 a compulsory physical education class became a part of the school's curriculum.<sup>118</sup> Heling Anglo-Chinese Christian School, established in Fuzhou in 1881, had adopted ball games that were easy to play, gymnastics, and somatology in each consecutive grade of its educational program.<sup>119</sup> These missionary schools, even though small in number, were pioneers for arranging compulsory physical education classes as part of their curriculum.

During this period, the earliest inter-school sport contests were organized in Tientsin, Peking and Shanghai under the aegis of the YMCA. Participation in these events could be regarded as a preliminary move toward the regional interscholastic type of athletic competition.<sup>120</sup> For example, the athletic meet of the Anglo-Chinese School in Tientsin was held on 25 May 1907 on its own athletic field on Bristow Road. While on this occasion only six events were open to students from other schools,<sup>121</sup> the following year this athletic meet opened all of its events to students from other schools.<sup>122</sup> These sport contests and athletic games paved the way for the initiation of regional and national games by missionary schools and the YMCA at the outset of the twentieth century.

#### ***Physical Education in Tertiary Institutions***

By end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, and as a result of the strenuous efforts of the missionaries and churches, some missionary schools developed

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<sup>118</sup> Laibi Xue, *Fujian shifan daxue fushu zhongxue xiaozhi (Han yinghua zhongxue, huanan nvzhong, taoshu nvzhong) (1881–2001)* [*The History of Fujian Normal University Affiliated Middle School (Including the History of Yinghua Middle School, South China Girl's Middle School and Taoshu Girl's Middle School) (1881–2001)*], Fujian, Fujian shifan daxue fushu zhongxue [Fujian Normal University Affiliated Middle School], 2001, pp. 591-2.

<sup>119</sup> Xuexun Chen, *Zhongguo jindai jiaoyushi jiaoxue cankao ziliao [The History of the Chinese Modern Education]*, Beijing, Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe [People's Education Press], 1987, Vol. 3, pp. 211-4.

<sup>120</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 97.

<sup>121</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 6, no. 3, 25 May 1907; Compiling Committee of the Tianjin Chronicles, *Tianjin shi zhi- tiyu zhi [Tianjin Chronicles-Physical Education and Sport Chronicles]*, Tianjin, Tianjin shehui kexueyuan chubanshe [Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences Press], 1994, p. 14.

<sup>122</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 7, no. 12, 23 May 1908.

into colleges and universities.<sup>123</sup> Other higher-level educational institutions had been established, either individually by various Christian societies or through ecumenical collaboration.<sup>124</sup> For instance, a Christian college founded by a group of American missionaries in Canton in 1888 became the Canton Christian College in 1900 and later, in 1927, Lingnan University.<sup>125</sup> Yenching University was established in 1919 as a result of the amalgamation of Huiwen University (founded by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1889) and the Tongzhou Harmony University (founded by the Congregational Church in 1867).<sup>126</sup> The educational aims of these early missionary colleges and universities were to cultivate advanced-level preachers and religious leaders and to provide an opportunity for the Chinese believers' and missionaries' children to further their education.<sup>127</sup> The ultimate purpose of Christian education was, of course, to 'lead their students to the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Master and Saviour'.<sup>128</sup>

From the very beginning, most of the missionary colleges and universities prioritized physical education and sport. Lutz argues in his book *China and the Christian College, 1850–1950* that, in following the practice of liberal arts colleges in the US, most Christian tertiary institutions in China promoted painting, calligraphy, archery, gymnastics, ball games and military drills under the supervision of Western teachers.<sup>129</sup> St John's University, founded by Francis Lister Hawks Pott, serves as the best example in this regard. This university popularized sports among its student body, alongside an American academic curriculum.<sup>130</sup> The university adopted strict regulations to force its students to take part in physical activities.<sup>131</sup> Xu Shanxiang, a St John's student, recalled how each day the students were forced to participate in two physical exercise sessions, one at 7.00 a.m. and the other at 4.00 p.m. All classrooms and dormitories were locked during these times to force students to participate in sports exercise. In

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<sup>123</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 79.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p.80.

<sup>125</sup> C.H. Corbett, *Lingnan University: A Short History Based Primarily on the Records of the University's American Trustees*, New York, Trustees of Lingnan University, 1963, pp. vii, 65.

<sup>126</sup> P. West, *Yenching University and Sino–Western Relations, 1916–1952*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1976, p. 36.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Chinese Educational Commission, Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Committee of Reference Counsel, and Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain & Ireland, p. 99.

<sup>129</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 73.

<sup>130</sup> Jing Lang, p. 59.

<sup>131</sup> Francis List Hawks Pott, *St John's University, 1879–1929*, Shanghai, Keely & Walsh, Limited, 1929, p. 43.



addition, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, students had to participate in military exercises from 4.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.<sup>132</sup> Initially, there was a shortage of sports teachers and facilities and students were made to play simple outdoor games such as hitting shuttle cocks, skipping rope and flying kites.<sup>133</sup> In 1883, a military drill was added to the list of sporting activities. In 1890, St John's hired its first specialized physical education trainer, a Canadian, who organized a track and field meet – one of the earliest athletic meets held in China.<sup>134</sup> The meet, which included short distance running, tug-of-war, high jump and hurdle, was later held twice a year, in spring and in autumn.

The military training at St John's was initially intended only to improve the morale of students. This was a reflection of the trend in American schools at the time. At first, military training was offered only as an element of extracurricular exercise. However, in 1894, after the First Sino–Japanese War broke out, rigorous military training modules modelled on the program operated by the US Army were incorporated into the official teaching curriculum, as physical prowess was increasingly connected with the duty to protect the Chinese state. Students were required to completely obey the commands of their superiors, and offenders were punished and had academic points deducted.<sup>135</sup> St John's also held a military review every year as part of the graduation ceremony. On graduation day, the students were made to wear martial attire, hold guns and march. The students' performance at the graduation ceremony always earned a lot of applause from the guests in the audience. This tradition of military training was eventually adopted by other Christian higher institutions, such as Soochow University, and even by some missionary primary and secondary schools.<sup>136</sup>

As St John's developed, competitive and non-martial sports such as tennis, soccer and

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<sup>132</sup> Shanxiang Xu, *Memories of St John's University*, Shanghai Archive, No.Q243-1-1472, 1935.

<sup>133</sup> Francis List Hawks Pott, p. 5.

<sup>134</sup> Daojie Wang, Mingxing Zhou, and Xiaoyi Zhang, '1890 nian shengyuehan shuyuan yundonghui shikao [A Research on the 1890's Athletic Meet of St John's University]', *Tiyu wenhua daokan [Sports Culture Guide]*, no. 1, 2011, pp. 141-4.

<sup>135</sup> Yuehan Ma, 'Wode tiyu shengya [Sport in My Life]', in M. Lu (ed.), *Tiyu jie de yimian Qizhi: Ma Yuehan Jiaoshou [The Leading Person in Chinese Sports World: Professor Ma Yuehan]*, Beijing, Beijing daxue chubanshe [Beijing University Press], 1999, p. 138.

<sup>136</sup> Shiming Luo, *Bingcheng chuantong, kaituo chuangxin- zhuixun suzhou daxue tiyu xueyuan fazhan de zuji [Interit the Good Tradition, Blazing New Trails-The History of the Institution of Physical Education of Soochow University]*, Beijing, Beijing tiyu daxue chubanshe [Beijing Sport University Press], 2007, p. 59.

basketball were gradually introduced to the curriculum. A number of sports associations and regular intramural sport competitions began to be organized in St John's around the beginning of the twentieth century. Following suit, other missionary colleges, such as Huiwen Academy in Peking and Xiehe Academy in Tongzhou, organized various intramural sporting events, including the first baseball match in China, which took place in 1907.<sup>137</sup> These Western sports and sport competitions attracted more and more public attention from the Chinese and led to their popularization beyond school curricula.

After the International Committee of the YMCA arrived in China in 1895 (a development which is discussed at length in the following section), the missionary colleges also organized interscholastic athletic contests in which some representatives from non-Christian institutions participated as well. For example, at the 1902 Annual Athletic Meet of the Tientsin YMCA, along with representatives mainly from different colleges and universities in Tientsin, there were participants from government and local private schools, even though the number was limited.<sup>138</sup> Likewise, in eastern China, the earliest interscholastic athletic meet was organized on 23 April 1904 through the collaborative effort of four higher educational institutions (St John's University, Shanghai Anglo-Chinese College, Soochow University and Nanyang Public School).<sup>139</sup> Here too, the competitive events mainly included track and field contests, and some ball games.<sup>140</sup>

In summary, it is evident that during the period from 1840 to 1908 Christian education in China moved beyond simple evangelism to a broader effort to influence the development of the modernizing Chinese society. Physical education and sport were used by Christian educational institutions not only to retain their students, but to achieve the objective of creating a 'Christian manhood' among the Chinese and to subvert Chinese customs perceived to be contrary to Christian teaching. The Christian

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<sup>137</sup> International Baseball Federation, <http://www.ibaf.org/en/nation/4cc45886-1953-4dc5-8728-3ff24b788252> (accessed 13 July 2013).

<sup>138</sup> A. Guttmann, *Sports: The First Five Millennia*, Amherst, MA, University of Massachusetts Press, 2007, p. 206; J. Kolatch, p. 9.

<sup>139</sup> Baojun Li, 'Shengyuehan daxue tiyu shilue [The History of Sport in St John's University]', *Shanghai tiyu shihua [Shanghai Sport History]* no. 9, 1984, pp. 11-35.

<sup>140</sup> Shiming Luo, *Bingcheng chuantong, kaituo chuangxin- zhuixun suzhou daxue tiyu xueyuan fazhan de zuji [Interit the Good Tradition, Blazing New Trails-The History of the Institution of Physical Education of Soochow University]*, pp. 4-6.

educational institutions significantly influenced the introduction and spread of modern physical education among the Chinese youth and the promotion of modern Western values and lifestyles by the missionary educationalists in China also played a significant role for the popularization of physical education and sport.<sup>141</sup>

### 3.4 The YMCA and the Rise of Western Physical Education and Sport

The introduction of the YMCA into China was made possible by the upsurge in the popularity of Christianity in China in the late nineteenth century. Although the organization had its start in China in 1885, the first Chinese YMCA was officially inaugurated by the directors from the International Committee of the YMCA in 1895. This section explores how the YMCA, its works in missionary and local schools and cities, and its promotion of modern Western physical education and sport fared at the initial stage of its development during the period from 1840 to 1908.

#### 3.4.1 The Early Work of the YMCA in China

The early YMCAs for the Chinese in China had independent origins, established through the personal endeavours of missionaries. These early YMCAs were attached to educational institutions rather than existing independently. The first YMCA was formed in 1885 at the North China College in Tongzhou, near Peking. Soon after, the Anglo-Chinese College in Fuzhou and, in the late 1890s, at the Presbyterian College at Hangzhou came into being. These YMCAs, too, had been initiated at the behest of missionaries.<sup>142</sup> In the early years, these YMCAs had neither directors nor secretaries to run their affairs, and the only organized activities were prayer meetings and Bible classes.<sup>143</sup> The newly formed YMCAs could readily organize evangelical activities; yet their relatively small numbers, limited finances, shortage of personnel and expertise

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.; Graham Gael, p. 31.

<sup>142</sup> Donald MacGillivray, *A Century of Protestant Missions in China (1807–1907): Being the Centenary Conference Historical Volume*, Shanghai, American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1907, pp. 597-8. K. Page, p. 12.

<sup>143</sup> Shilong Luo, *Tianjin zhonghua jidujiao qingnianhui yu jindai Tianjin wenming [Tientsin YMCA and the Civilization of Tientsin in Modern China]*, Tianjin, Tianjin renmin chubanshe [Tientsin's People Press], 2005, pp. 1-2.

were barriers that initially prevented them from exerting any significant influence on the Chinese.<sup>144</sup> There were no physical education and sport activities forming part of the YMCA program at this time.<sup>145</sup>

Luther D. Wishard's<sup>146</sup> visit in 1890s laid the foundations for the beginning of the YMCA's work in China as an independent YMCA formally linked to the International Committee of the YMCA. Wishard, an employee of the International Committee of the YMCA, was on a world tour between 1888 and 1892, principally visiting Asia.<sup>147</sup> Wishard's tour included the Second General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China in Shanghai in 1890.<sup>148</sup> The conference aroused his enthusiasm for the success of the Christian mission in China to the point where, in his conference address, he offered to initiate the YMCA movement in China.<sup>149</sup> Wishard believed that the YMCA, as an independent and non-denominational Christian organization, could produce a legion of young evangelists who could propagate Christianity among the Chinese youth.<sup>150</sup> The attendees of this conference immediately endorsed his offer. A resolution was passed to make a formal appeal to the International Committee of the YMCA to dispatch professional directors and secretaries to assist in establishing the YMCA in China.<sup>151</sup> Soon after, requests were sent from two of the largest mission centres in Shanghai and Peking to the International Committee of the YMCA. On Wishard's personal recommendation, the requests were granted.<sup>152</sup>

On 5 October 1895, the International Committee of the YMCA sent the first American

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<sup>144</sup> Ruoyu Fu, 'Luhe shuyuan qingnianhui zhi chuangban zhi huiyi [The Recall of the Establishment of the Luhe College YMCA]', in National Committee of the Chinese YMCA (ed.), *The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book of the Chinese YMCA (1885–1935)*, Shanghai, Association Press, 1935, p. 174.

<sup>145</sup> Shilong Luo, *Tianjin zhonghua jidujiao qingnianhui yu jindai Tianjin wenming [Tientsin YMCA and the Civilization of Tientsin in Modern China]*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>146</sup> Luther D. Wishard was one of the first student secretaries and formed campus associations in the US. Under his leadership, there were 345 students associations with more than 22, 000 members by 1891. As a Christian, he thought his YMCA work as 'a kind of evangelism, spreading both Christian and the principles of the YMCA'. As the YMCA movement of North America spread to other countries, Wishard convinced some of those early YMCA missionaries to transplant the student YMCA concept to the lands in which they were working.

<sup>147</sup> S.S. Garrett, *Social Reformers in Urban China: the Chinese Y.M.C.A., 1895–1926*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1970, p. 36.

<sup>148</sup> Charles Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America*, New York, Association Press 1951, p. 117.

<sup>149</sup> S.S. Garrett, p. 41.

<sup>150</sup> W.J. Lewis, p. 141.

<sup>151</sup> D. Willard Lyon, *The First Quarter Century of the YMCA in China, 1895–1920*, Shanghai, Association Press, 1920, p. 5.

<sup>152</sup> Donald MacGillivray, p. 598.

secretary, David Willard Lyon,<sup>153</sup> to Tientsin, China.<sup>154</sup> This was the beginning of the International Committee of the YMCA's involvement in modern China.<sup>155</sup> Lyon was aware that Tientsin was 'the only city in China with a well-organized system of educational institutions for the teaching of Western subjects'.<sup>156</sup> The missionary schools in Tientsin provided education for a large number of students in Tientsin. Ten per cent of these students professed to be Christians, and the majority had previously been exposed to Christianity and Western values through attendance at missionary schools.<sup>157</sup> For this reason, students were primed to accept the philosophy underpinning the YMCA's activities. In addition, students' command of English provided good conditions for the YMCA directors who were only able to speak English to carry on their work. This is why Lyon began his work in Tientsin, the centre of progressive education and culture in China.<sup>158</sup> The Tientsin YMCA was officially established in 1896 with the clear objective of promoting Christianity in China.<sup>159</sup> The Tientsin YMCA stressed the importance of the religious work from the very outset. Bible study classes, Sunday meetings and Bible institute meetings were organized immediately after the establishment of this YMCA.<sup>160</sup>

Later, as a result of appeals from Christian institutions and missionaries in Hankou, Fuzhou, Nanking, Qufu, Ningbo, Canton and Amoy between 1896 and 1906, the International Committee of the YMCA delivered 30 additional secretaries to China.<sup>161</sup> The level of commitment of these secretaries is evident in that by the close of 1906 only one had resigned to enter medical missionary work and another resigned to attend to his sick wife.<sup>162</sup> After a period of training, these secretaries worked in different

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<sup>153</sup> David Willard Lyon was the son of Presbyterian missionaries. He was born in Ningbo, Zhejiang, on 13 May 1870. He graduated from Wooster College with a BA and an MA in 1894. He also studied at McCormic Theological Seminary and was ordained a Presbyterian minister before returning to China in 1895. He founded the first student YMCA in Tientsin in 1895 and later worked in Jinan, Shandong province. He served as executive of the National Committee of the Chinese YMCA from 1901 until his retirement in 1930. Lyon died on 16 March 1949 in Claremont, California.

<sup>154</sup> D. Willard Lyon, *Missionary Research Library Archives: Section Six*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1905; Charles Howard Hopkins, p. 345.

<sup>155</sup> Shilong Luo, *Tianjin zhonghua jidujiao qingnianhui yu jindai Tianjin wenming [Tientsin YMCA and the Civilization of Tientsin in Modern China]*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>156</sup> Charles Howard Hopkins, p. 664.

<sup>157</sup> D. Willard Lyon, 'Report of D. Willard Lyon, Second Quarter 1897', *Records of YMCA International Work in China Annual and Quarterly Reports 1896-1908*, 1897, pp. 1-2.

<sup>158</sup> S.S. Garrett, p. 55.

<sup>159</sup> K. Page, p. 13.

<sup>160</sup> K.A. Risedorff, p. 84.

<sup>161</sup> Donald MacGillivray, p. 599.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

departments of the YMCA across China. During its formative period, the YMCA's work in China was conducted with three contexts: (1) the YMCA's work in Christian schools and colleges (student YMCAs); (2) the YMCA's work in the big cities (city YMCAs); and (3) the YMCA's work with the Chinese literati and students from government schools.<sup>163</sup> Although these three contexts were closely interwoven in their development, they are discussed separately below in order to draw out some subtle differences between them and to show how they catered for different groups of the Chinese.

#### *The YMCA's Work in Missionary Schools and Universities*

As discussed above, before 1895, there were only individual student YMCAs attached to different schools in China.<sup>164</sup> The YMCA only became a nationwide organization after the First National Convention of the Chinese YMCAs in Shanghai in 1910. At the conference, the 'College Young Men's Christian Association of China' was formed.<sup>165</sup> As the College Young Men's Christian Association of China developed, the title 'College YMCA of China' was changed to 'The National Committee of the YMCA of China' at the fourth national convention of the YMCA held in China in 1912, and then again one year later to 'The Young Men's Christian Association of China', Korea and Hong Kong' in accordance with the expanded involvement of the YMCA in the region.<sup>166</sup> By the end of 1906, there were 44 student YMCAs. These Associations were located in six theological schools, 18 missionary colleges, one government polytechnic college and 19 Christian preparatory schools in eight provinces of mainland China, as well as in Manchuria and Korea.<sup>167</sup> Nearly all the Associations contributed to local evangelical work, for instance, by paying charges to hire places of worship, and by regularly supplying workers for missionary work or church activities.

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<sup>163</sup> Students who could studies in government and private schools were mainly from gentry or literati families.

<sup>164</sup> S.S. Garrett, p. 65.

<sup>165</sup> Shilong Luo, *Tianjin zhonghua jidujiao qingnianhui yu jindai Tianjin wenming* [*Tientsin YMCA and the Civilization of Tientsin in Modern China*], p. 2; D. Willard Lyon, 'Zhongguo qinnianhui zaoqi shishi zhi huiyi' [The Memories of the Early YMCA's Work in China], in The National Committee of the YMCA of China (ed.), *Zhonghua jidujiao qingnianhui wushi zhounian jianiance* [*The 50 Years' Anniversary Booklet for the Chinese YMCA*], Shanghai, Association Press, 1935, p. 192.

<sup>166</sup> Donald MacGillivray, p. 77.

<sup>167</sup> Xiuping Chen, *Chenfulu: zhongguo qingyun yu Jidujiao nannv qingnianhui* [*Rise and Fall: the YMCA, YWCA and Chinese Youth Movement*], Shanghai, Tongji daxue chubanshe [Tongji University Press], 1989, p. 4.

#### *The YMCA's Work in the Chinese Cities*

Initially, the YMCA's work was confined only to the port cities, and the first city YMCA in China was established for foreign YMCA members working in Shanghai on 6 January 1889. The city's YMCA's activities were open only to foreigners. Later, with the reform of Chinese society and the development of the YMCA, these activities were extended to include young Chinese men, especially those engaged in business and other professions in port cities. In this respect, it was attempting to cultivate and recruit an elite Chinese middle class. The port city YMCA's work was soon extended to other big cities in China.<sup>168</sup> The Tientsin YMCA was established in 1895,<sup>169</sup> and the Chinese YMCA in Hong Kong in 1901.<sup>170</sup> Their work consisted of religious meetings and Sunday afternoon Bible classes. The membership increased steadily and the full associate membership of these two branches had grown to 236 and 251 respectively by 1906.<sup>171</sup> By 1906, the Shanghai YMCA had a paid-up membership of 355 people and was holding four evangelistic meetings per week.<sup>172</sup> Nevertheless, structural problems still hampered the YMCA's work in the cities. For instance, only the bigger cities had YMCA secretaries and directors who had been trained by the International Committees. The local YMCAs in smaller cities such as Qufu, Qingdao, Yangzhou and Zhangzhou had no experienced directors and lacked resources. Sometimes, YMCAs in small cities had only a single reading room which had to be used for different purposes, including meetings, lectures and classes. The YMCAs in big cities and treaty ports were faced with the challenge of developing local Chinese missionary leadership in an attempt to secure local support.<sup>173</sup> Despite these difficulties, the YMCA spread to several new cities, including Fuzhou, Hangzhou and Nanking.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Robert R. Gailey, 'Report of Robert R. Gailey to the International Committee for Six Months ending June 30, 1901', *Records of YMCA International Work in China Annual and Quarterly Reports 1896-1908*, 1901, pp. 3-7.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> Walter J. Southam, 'Report of Walter J. Southam to the International Committee for the Twelve Months ending Sept. 30, 1902', *ibid.*, 1902.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> Donald MacGillivray, p. 600.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p.604.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

### *The YMCA's Work among the Literati and Local School Students*

The YMCA positioned itself as a kind of adjunct organization to schools and colleges and attempted to recruit students from government and local private schools in China. In 1895, the YMCA chose Tientsin as the most suitable place for recruiting students from these local schools. In Tientsin, student YMCAs were officially established for students of the government educational institutions such as the Imperial Medical College, the Imperial Tientsin University, the Imperial Naval College and the Imperial Military College.<sup>175</sup> With the abolition of the 'eight-part essay', the Qing government launched a new school system in 1903, and in 1905 the old-style process of examination was also discontinued.<sup>176</sup> Students from educated families and local schools began to value and desire modern Western knowledge, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, English and so forth. The move provided a good chance for the YMCA to engage tens of thousands of students from local schools rather than only recruiting those from poor families and missionary schools; various short-term or long-term training schools, or lectures about modern Western knowledge were provided by the YMCA.<sup>177</sup>

For example, Pu-Tung School was a government school opened in Tientsin in 1903 for the sons of the literati and gentry. The YMCA was directly involved in operating and running the school and determining its routine activities. Pu-Tung School had the support and confidence of parents and students<sup>178</sup> and an increasing number of students enrolled. The lectures on scientific and popular subjects (for example, English, geography and mathematics) were especially well attended. On several occasions, heads of government-run educational institutions brought their students to hear these lectures.<sup>179</sup> The YMCA also organized intercollegiate field sports and athletic games between Pu-Tung School and other schools in Tientsin.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p.605.

<sup>176</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 97.

<sup>177</sup> Donald MacGillivray, p. 605.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid

<sup>179</sup> Donald MacGillivray, p. 606.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.



Regardless of whether it was the student YMCAs or the city YMCAs, the YMCA was determined to remove all barriers to their missionary work, and to enlighten and win the Chinese for Christ. In the words of C.H. Robertson, one of the earliest YMCA secretaries in China:

Believing that nothing but Christianity can save China, the aim of the whole work here has been and is to break down the hostility, prejudice and misunderstanding (all so largely founded on ignorance); to bring Chinese literary and official classes into social and friendly contact with Christian men to enlighten them and win them for Christ, and above all and supremely to lead them to the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of mankind.<sup>181</sup>

#### **3.4.2 The YMCA and the Promotion of Modern Western Physical Education and Sport**

Since the establishment of the Tientsin YMCA in 1895, physical work was already being carried out even though an official physical department had not been established and the International Committee of the YMCA had not appointed professional physical directors. As early as 1896, the Tientsin YMCA was also organizing basketball and athletic games,<sup>182</sup> a promising start that indicated the popularity of sports programs initiated in missionary education institutions in China. As a crucial aspect of the YMCA's fourfold program, which was conceived according to the model approved by the International Committee of the YMCA, and which also sought to cultivate the moral, spiritual, social and physical development of men and to construct a 'Christian manhood', physical education had been enshrined and promoted in the YMCA philosophy in China. The YMCA promoted physical education with the same zeal with which it carried out its other activities to improve moral, social and intellectual development of young people. One common denominator was that these activities were

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<sup>181</sup> C.H. Robertson, 'Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1904, C.H. Robertson, Nanking, China', *Young Men's Christian Associations-China, Nanking*, 1904, p. 90.

<sup>182</sup> *Tientsin Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 6, 4 April 1896.

all forms of Christian fellowship.<sup>183</sup>

Physical education and sport proved particularly efficient in achieving this objective as it allowed missionaries to make contact with non-Christian students, provided a sense of community, and promoted sociability and personal development.<sup>184</sup> These aspects of the YMCA's physical education program are evident from the resolutions put forward at the seventh annual conference of the secretaries of the International Committee. The following recommendations were designed to attract non-Christian students and teachers to the YMCA: first, to ensure Christian teachings were made prominent in missionary and even local institutions; second, to promote athletics, especially by making available training fields and equipment, athletic instruction, classes on morality, the organization of teams, the creation of athletic games and intercollegiate sports; and third, to organize social, educational and religious work.<sup>185</sup>

On 6 July 1907, George J. Fisher, the physical director of the International Committee of the YMCA, wrote an article for the magazine *Tientsin Young Men* in which he sought to emphasize the importance of physical exercise, noting that 'play is one of nature's methods of promoting physical growth, of developing social leadership, of cultivating moral and spiritual qualities, of relieving irritability, in fact in keeping us young and elastic. Therefore, let us play and play without a qualm of conscience'.<sup>186</sup> The recommendations mentioned above and Fisher's statement identified the objectives of the YMCA and the role of physical education in the YMCA's work in China. Intrinsicly, the objective of the YMCA's physical education project was to expose young men to 'muscular Christianity' in order to build up their 'Christian manhood' and character and ultimately draw them to the Christian faith.<sup>187</sup> Physical education proved to be one of the most important means for the YMCA in China to attract non-Christian

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<sup>183</sup> A letter from Dr. J.H. Gray to C.K. Wu (22 August 1952). Cited in Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 130.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87.

<sup>185</sup> Report of the Seventh Annual Conference of the Secretaries of the International Committee. Cited in *ibid.*, p.86.

<sup>186</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 9, no. 9, 6 July 1907.

<sup>187</sup> G.R. Gems, p. 10.

students and bring them into the YMCA's fold.<sup>188</sup>

During the period 1840–1908, the YMCA in China focused primarily on Christian educational institutions and on the city YMCAs, as at this stage these existed in small numbers in a few big cities only. The YMCA was still struggling to attract students in local schools in China through teaching gymnastics and athletics.<sup>189</sup> C.H. Robertson, while working in the Tientsin YMCA, had noticed that modern athletics had proven the most efficient means to access China's youth. Robertson had managed to position the YMCA so that it controlled practically all the major athletic contests.<sup>190</sup>

Thus, apart from involvement at the organizational level, YMCA secretaries taught athletics at several schools and universities in the cities. By doing this, they could obtain more chances to make contact with Chinese youths in schools. Some of the local schools even invited YMCA directors to teach gymnastics and athletics. For example, Robertson and Hall taught four hours a week in the University of His-Ku. Other YMCA secretaries taught in the Government Middle School and the First Private Middle School in Tientsin on a weekly basis.<sup>191</sup> Acknowledging the impact of the secretaries' enthusiasm, the President of Imperial Tientsin University remarked in an address: 'The YMCA is splendid for young men [. . .] I would like to see this institution in every town and city in the Empire'.<sup>192</sup> Propelled by the enthusiasm of the YMCA's staff, several new Western sports, including basketball and volleyball, were introduced into China (mainly Tientsin and Shanghai); and those Western sports that were more long-standing, like gymnastics, track and field, soccer and tennis, were steadily gaining in popularity. The following cases show the initial stage of the introduction of modern Western sports by the YMCA in China and how the rapid growth in their popularity strengthened the YMCA's influence over the development of physical education agenda in China.

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<sup>188</sup> H.W. Beecher, *Eyes and Ears*, London, Sampson Low, 1862, p. 195. K.A. Risedorph), p. 195.

<sup>189</sup> Robert R. Gailey, 'Robert R. Gailey, General Secretary, Tientsin, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1908', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Tientsin*, 1908, pp. 1-3.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 7, no. 10, 9 May 1908.

<sup>192</sup> Robert R. Gailey, 'Robert R. Gailey, General Secretary, Tientsin, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1907', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China (Peking and Tientsin)*, 1907, p. 172.

### *Basketball and Volleyball*

Basketball, which was invented at the YMCA International Training School (later Springfield College)<sup>193</sup> in Springfield Massachusetts in 1891,<sup>194</sup> was introduced into China by the Tientsin YMCA at the end of the nineteenth century. The precise year can be traced back to 1896, when the *Tientsin Bulletin*, in two consecutive issues, announced that basketball games were going to be organized by the Tientsin YMCA.<sup>195</sup> At the time, basketball was played outdoors once a week, at 4.00 p.m. on Saturdays.<sup>196</sup> A letter from Mrs Lyon to C.K. Wu provides a description of the informal way in which the game was being played at the time:

The young men all wore loose gowns, held in at the waist by a sash or cord, and all wore queues while running and jumping. This style of dress being hampering, to say the least, each young man, when engaged in a game, tucked his robe up under his belt or sash, and each one wound his queue about his head.<sup>197</sup>

Basketball soon attracted more and more attention from both students and the public.<sup>198</sup> In 1908, it was also introduced in the First Private Middle School, the Pu-Tung School and some government schools in Tientsin.<sup>199</sup> In order to further participation in basketball, the Tientsin YMCA also constructed a basketball court near its settlement building.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> The YMCA International training school (later Springfield College) was founded in 1885, which originally specialized in preparing young men to become General Secretaries of the Association in a two years' program. Five years' later, it became the International Young Men's Christian Association Training School, which specialized in the training of international YMCA secretaries. It added a physical department in 1887 and became a degree-granting institution in 1905.

<sup>194</sup> C.D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2001, p. 34.

<sup>195</sup> *Tientsin Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 6, 4 April 1896.

<sup>196</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 89.

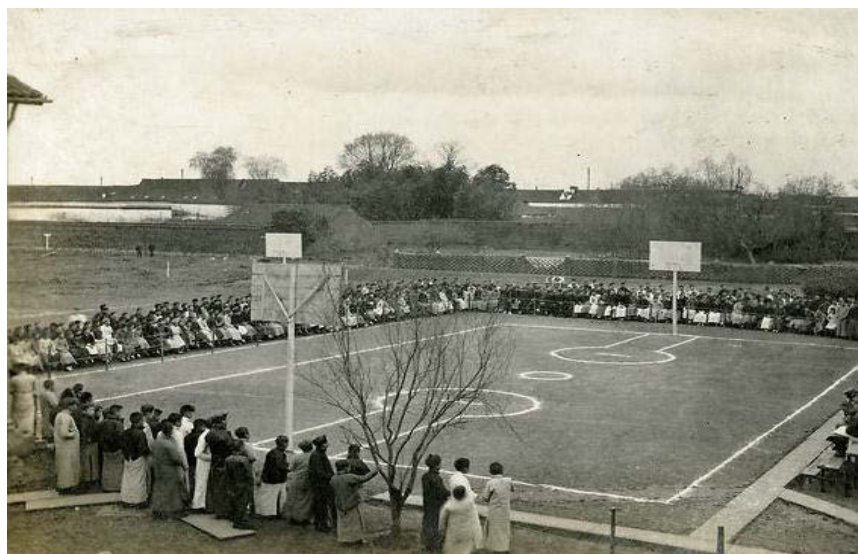
<sup>197</sup> Zhongyuan Wu and Yongwu Que, 'Organizational Structure of China's Physical Culture', in G.K. Hward, Q. Ma, and Z. Wu (eds), *Sport in China*, Champaign, Ill., Human Kietics Books, 1990, pp. 41-57; Judy Polumbaum, 'From Evangelism to Entertainment: The YMCA, the NBA, and the Evolution of Chinese Basketball', *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2002, pp. 278-30.

<sup>198</sup> K.A. Risedorph), p. 207.

<sup>199</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 7, no. 5, 21 March 1908.

<sup>200</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 7, no. 34, 5 December 1908.

**Picture 3.1:** A Public Basketball Game



(Source: The University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, used with permission)

Volleyball, invented at the same place as basketball at the YMCA International Training School (later Springfield College) in 1896, was introduced a little later in China, again with support from the Christian educational institutions and YMCA secretaries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, volleyball was called *Dui Qiu* in China. Prior to 1905, it was only played by students in the missionary schools of Guangzhou and Hong Kong.<sup>201</sup> Later, Xu Minhui and F.E. Wilber, secretaries of the Canton YMCA, travelled to different schools to conduct volleyball training.<sup>202</sup> Volleyball became so popular in Canton that intercollegiate volleyball matches became a regular event for the YMCA there. In addition to basketball and volleyball, the YMCA in China promoted other modern sports, such as gymnastics, soccer and tennis.

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<sup>201</sup> National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi [Sport History in Modern China]*, p. 434.

<sup>202</sup> G. Hoh, p. 187.

### *Gymnastics*

D.W. Lyon, who since his arrival in Tientsin had been keen to encourage Chinese students to participate in sporting activities, introduced gymnastics to the YMCA in China. After the First Sino–Japanese War of 1894–1895, Lyon believed that it would be beneficial to introduce military gymnastics to the Chinese, because military gymnastics suited the ideology of Chinese military officials, who also wanted to toughen Chinese people’s bodies and promote a ‘strenuous life’.<sup>203</sup> Lyon eventually organized and directed a military gymnastic class. The Chinese YMCAs followed in his footsteps and promoted gymnastics in China.<sup>204</sup> The way in which this approach sees the YMCA moving toward supporting the Chinese national interest will be discussed in chapter five.

### *Track and Field*

As early as 1896, the Tientsin YMCA had advertised athletic activities in the Tientsin Bulletin as follows: ‘[t]hose interested in athletics will kindly come to the room at four o’clock this afternoon. It is desired that some intercollegiate games be arranged’.<sup>205</sup> The first annual athletic meet of the Tientsin YMCA was held in 1902.<sup>206</sup> It was held nearly every year until 1908. The Shanghai YMCA also organized an early athletic meet in 1902.<sup>207</sup> Charles W. Harvey, a YMCA secretary, once recalled that ‘[t]he Athletic Field Day for Chinese young men was a new phase of our work and provides a very interesting feature and brought to us some new men’.<sup>208</sup>

Track and field was given a high priority in the context of the development of the YMCA’s physical education program. Track and field was likely to attract favourable

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<sup>203</sup> A Letter from D.W. Lyon to R. Morse, (16 Dec. 1885). Cited in S.S. Garrett, p. 63.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> *Tientsin Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 17, 11 April 1896.

<sup>206</sup> Charles Howard Hopkins, p. 669.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Charles W. Harvey, ‘Report of C.W. Harvey, Tientsin, China, October 13, 1904’, *Young Men’s Christian Associations—China, Tientsin*, 1904, p. 65.

attention from the public by creating the possibility for the prioritization of physical culture among the Chinese intellectual elite.<sup>209</sup> Not only students from the missionary schools but also from some government and private schools began taking part in the athletic meet, and even young men in business joined in.<sup>210</sup> The fifth annual contest held by the Tientsin YMCA on 19 October 1907 presents a good example.<sup>211</sup> The award ceremony for this contest was held five days later and was attended by students and teachers from the leading educational institutions in Tientsin. At this ceremony, the speakers advanced many invaluable suggestions for the development of the athletic life of young students in Tientsin.<sup>212</sup> Although it had been attended by only six schools, the contest was a great success and this ceremony added further charm to the event overall.<sup>213</sup>

### *Soccer*

Soccer was also strongly promoted by the YMCA, and it was again the Tientsin YMCA that took the lead in its promotion. The Tientsin YMCA organized proper training and instruction for the game along the pattern of the American YMCAs, and made it a point during the soccer season to display teamwork to inspire students from the city schools.<sup>214</sup>

The proposed plan was to form individual teams that would be comprised of the best players in the city schools.<sup>215</sup> In fact, the Tientsin YMCA started getting invitations for the soccer teams to matches long before they had been assembled. For example, in 1907, the YMCA received an invitation from the Foreign Boys' Club of Tientsin to organize some friendly soccer matches.<sup>216</sup> Shortly afterwards, a soccer club was formed in Tientsin by the YMCA, aiming to get a team composed of the best players from all the

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<sup>209</sup> D. Willard Lyon, 'Report of D. Willard Lyon', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Peking*, 1906, p. 74.

<sup>210</sup> Charles W. Harvey, p. 68.

<sup>211</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 6, no. 19, 26 October 1907.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 6, no. 21, 16 November 1907.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 7, no. 34, 5 December 1907.

schools in Tientsin to play against some of the competitive teams in the settlements.<sup>217</sup> The interest in soccer in Tientsin schools grew year on year. By 1908, there were already three teams at Pu-Tong School preparing for the 1908 soccer matches.<sup>218</sup> When the season ended, the student players would at once turn to soccer practice to prepare for the next season's matches.<sup>219</sup>

#### *Tennis*

Tennis was another sport strongly advocated by the YMCA in China. The first tennis court was put to use at the Tientsin YMCA office building in 1904, an event which marked the formal inauguration of tennis in China.<sup>220</sup> In Tientsin, the tennis season was arranged from February to July<sup>221</sup> and several tournaments were held during that time.<sup>222</sup>

Western sports therefore attracted increasing attention from both Chinese students and the public, even though they were only limited to the big treaty port cities, as the Tientsin, Shanghai and Guangzhou YMCAs organized various sports games. Students from missionary schools and even some government schools started joining in these games. Physical education and sport were meant to serve as an instrument to 'teach certain norms' and 'behavioural and moral patterns' to the Chinese especially Chinese youths.<sup>223</sup> They served to combat the traditional ideology of emphasized civility that sidelined martial attitudes and practices, manual labour, and physical activities, even though the Chinese participants still kept the traditional way of dressing, such as wore loose gowns, held in at the waist by a sash or cord, and wore queues, which hampered their performance in these games. In addition, the spirit of fair play and teamwork were

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<sup>217</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 6, no. 23, 30 November 1907. *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 6, no. 21, 16 November 1907.

<sup>218</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 7, no. 28, 24 October 1908; *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 7, no. 31, 14 November 1908; *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 7, no. 36, 19 December 1908.

<sup>219</sup> *Tientsin Young Men* 7, no. 28, 24 October 1908; *Tientsin Young Men* 7, no. 31, 14 November 1908; *Tientsin Young Men* 7, no. 36, 19 December 1908.

<sup>220</sup> H. Sun, *The Man Who Brought the Olympics to China: The Story of Zhang Boling*, Beijing, Xinshijie chubanshe [New World Press], 2008, p. 18.

<sup>221</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 7, no. 2, 29 February 1908; *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 7, no. 18, 4 July 1908.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> T. Ladd and J.A. Mathisen, *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Books, 1999, p. 4.



shown in these games.

### 3.5 Conclusion

In the face of domestic strife and foreign aggression, some government officials and scholars initiated the Self-Strengthening Movement and Hundred Days' Reform to salvage the sovereignty of Qing government and the nation as a whole. These reform movements caused the Chinese people to believe that they should learn some positive things from the West, be it in terms of military training, education, politics, economy or culture. The traditional ideology that 'to be a scholar is to be at the top of society' (*Wanban jie xiapin, wei you dushugao*) was gradually replaced by the dictum 'strengthen the nation, strengthen the army, and strengthen the race through physical education and military training' (*Tiyu qiangguo qiangbing qiangzhong*). The need for physical education, especial military gymnastics, was stressed both by the nationalists and the revolutionaries as crucial to cultivating the fighting force of the Chinese people. However, the situation also provided equally productive opportunities to the missionaries who established Christian educational institutions and staunchly Christian organizations, like the YMCA, to spread Christianity and Western/Christian culture.

As Lutz stated, 'missionaries came to China with intention of displacing Chinese beliefs, values, and rituals with Christianity.'<sup>224</sup> Even though missionaries from different denominations and Churches had different motives, they were generally 'committed to protecting or even supporting foreign missions out of the belief that the spread of Christianity was a crucial element for the expansion of Western culture in other countries'.<sup>225</sup> The missionaries in general were convinced of their intellectual, moral and spiritual superiority over China.<sup>226</sup> They not only expected converts to accept the spiritual aspects Christianity, but were convinced that the local people would benefit from adopting Western familial values, medical systems, lifestyles and other cultural

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<sup>224</sup> J.G. Lutz and R.R. Lutz, *Hakka Chinese Confront Protestant Christianity, 1850–1900: With the Autobiographies of Eight Hakka Christians, and Commentary*, Armonk, NY, M. E. Sharpe, 1998, p. 3.

<sup>225</sup> R.R. Cook and D.W. Pao, p. 24

<sup>226</sup> Andrew Porter, pp. 382-3.

practices.<sup>227</sup> For the missionaries, however, the transformation of the Chinese people was first and foremost a spiritual kind, a struggle to ‘battle with powers of darkness, save the people from sin, and [spiritually] conquer China for Christ’.<sup>228</sup> The missionaries’ efforts were so fruitful that not only did they establish very efficient Christian educational institutions and the YMCA but also ‘an effective and reliable native ministry’ which later provided local teachers for the Christian education system and secretaries for the YMCAs. Thus, the missionaries prepared and trained men to take the lead in learning the science and arts of Western civilization along with developing the best means of proselytizing the Chinese people.<sup>229</sup>

Within this context, muscular Christianity promoted a strong mind in a strong body. Missionaries employed sport as ‘a vehicle to attract and train bodies in the service of religion’.<sup>230</sup> Physical education and sport became the most effective tools in facilitating the process of transforming Chinese society because the Chinese populace was most vulnerable in its physicality, both ideologically and factually. This provided a justified position from which the missionaries could inculcate the Christian values of ‘sound body and character’ in the local people. Thus, military physical education and certain Western sports such as tennis, soccer and track and field became the mainstay of the missionary enterprise, along with formal religious education in Christian institutions. In turn, physical education and sport boosted the morale of educational as well as other Christian institutions like the YMCA. The reasons for advocating physical education in the Christian education system can be summarized as follows: first, it would help maintain students’ health and protect them from disease; second, it was in line with the teaching systems used in foreign countries, notably in the US and the UK; third, it would manifest good Christian character in their students; fourth, sport could be used as an instrument to overturn traditional Chinese customs, values and ways of life and remove the native barriers to their missionary work; and fifth, it provided good chance for missionaries to make contact with Chinese youths and to attract them to their cause.

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<sup>227</sup> V. Hansen and K. Curtis, *Voyages in World History, Volume II: Since 1500*, Boston, Cengage Learning, 2013, p. 682.

<sup>228</sup> *Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, Held at Shanghai, May 10-24, 1877*, p. 32.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.176-8.

<sup>230</sup> G.R. Gems, p. 10.

The YMCA's work in the area of sport deserves individual attention, especially during the period from 1895 to 1908, because, even though the YMCA had just been launched, it quickly made major headway in engaging and transforming the sensibility of the Chinese youth, not just in the treaty ports but in other big cities as well. The secretaries of the YMCA were highly motivated individuals who took up the task of carrying out physical education activities in their localities and sometimes single-handedly motivated the local students to learn Western games. It was expected that by doing sports organized by the YMCA 'Christian men could learn masculine virtues and other young men could be introduced to Christian virtues'.<sup>231</sup> And yet the YMCA remained true to its task of evangelism because promoting sport allowed it to effectively engage with the Chinese youth, especially those from the literati and the gentry. Thus, during the period from 1840 to 1908, the physical education work carried out both by the Christian educational institutions and the YMCA laid a strong foundation for the spread and promotion of modern Western physical education and sport in China in the years to come, no matter that their influence was limited to missionary educational institutions and YMCA branches in big cities like Tientsin, Beijing and Shanghai.

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<sup>231</sup> Paul Old James, 'Muscular Christianity', *The Review of Politics*, vol. 70, no. 2, 2008, p. 322.



## **Chapter 4: Christian Missions and the Expansion of Western Physical Education and Sport in China (1908–1919)**

### **4.1 Introduction**

There is a broad consensus among scholars regarding the contribution that physical education and sport made to the cause of the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA in modern China. Chih-Kang Wu perceived physical education to be ‘one of the best methods to become acquainted with non-Christian students, to unite young people, to promote sociability, and to develop the whole personalities of young men’ in China.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter discusses the process by which missionary educational institutions and the YMCA promoted Western physical education and sport in China during the period 1908–1919. Through outlining the rapid development of Western physical education and sport in China, this chapter highlights both how the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA went about developing their programs and promoting them among the local population, and how the indigenous population responded to their efforts. This shows that even if the Christian institutions focused on the promotion of the Christian message and mission, the response from the local population evidences a negotiated process that complicates the simplistic claim that Christian institutions’ activities in China during this period were an example of straightforward imperialism which the local population was unable or defenceless to resist. In order to show the kind of context in which the missionaries conducted and developed physical education and sport program, the chapter begins by outlining indigenous Chinese physical educational background during the period 1908–1919. The second section examines how missionary educational institutions evolved into agents of Christian missions to disseminate

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<sup>1</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, ‘The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China’, p. 87.

Christian religious and cultural agendas through physical education and sport. It focuses on the means which the YMCA successfully employed to expand physical education and sport through providing leadership training, organizing various outdoor and indoor physical and educational activities for the youth and collaborating with missionary and local schools. The third section is concerned with the actual expansion of the YMCA's physical education program and the processes of 'Christianizing the gymnasium'. Following this, the fourth section evaluates the implications of selected Western athletic games becoming part of a drive towards promoting Western sport in China and the missionaries' desire to reshape Chinese society.

### 4.2 Military Physical Education and Sport during the Warlord Era

The Republic of China was constituted on 1 January 1912 in Nanking following the 1911 Revolution.<sup>2</sup> This marked the beginning of the Republic of China Era (1912–1949).<sup>3</sup> Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) was named Interim President of the Republic of China, later co-founding the Nationalist Party and serving as its first leader. However, this political transformation proved to be only a transient state, particularly given the deeply ingrained traditional and feudalistic societal structures China. As Gernet puts it, 'the Revolution of 1911 and the almost unexpected success of the Republicans were merely an interlude in the break-up of political power in China.'<sup>4</sup> Soon after Sun Yat-sen's presidential ascension, China began to slide into political disarray due to incessant warlordism and widespread insurrections.<sup>5</sup>

On 1 April 1912, Sun resigned as the interim president because of pressure from the Beiyang Army. The Beiyang Army had the most significant military forces in the north

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<sup>2</sup> The 1911 Revolution, also known as the Xinhai Revolution, sought to overthrow the Qing dynasty (the last imperial dynasty). In fact, collectively, it refers to a number revolts and uprisings. The turning point was the Wuchang Uprising, which broke out on 10 October 1911 in the city of Wuchang in Hubei province. The Revolution rapidly took every Chinese province by storm – so much so that, by February 1912, the situation led to the Qing emperor's abdication, a symbolic end to the age-old feudal social system in China, and the constitution of the Republic of China.

<sup>3</sup> Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China*, p. 95; Bozan Jian, *Zhongguoshi gangyao [The Outline of Chinese History]*, Beijing, Renmin chubanshe [People's Publishing House], 1995, Vol. 4, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> R. Jones and J. Riordan, p. 79; J. Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> R. Jones and J. Riordan, p. 79; J. Gernet, p. 17.

and central China. Sun was replaced by Yuan Shikai, who had once served as a general in the Qing forces.<sup>6</sup> Yuan was inaugurated in Peking (Beijing), and his administration was instated under the name ‘Beiyang government’ (1912–1927). Decades of political division and warlordism ensued. After the death of Yuan Shikai in 1916, the Beiyang government remained in power as the national government, and was led by Beiyang Army commanders until 1927. However, following Yuan’s death, the Beiyang Army was no longer a united military force, and soon divided into competing factions lead by different Beiyang military commanders. These rival Beiyang commanders fought among themselves, sometimes resorting to military action, as well as battling with non-Beiyang warlords for several years in order to strengthen their own personal political power.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, Sun Yat-sen began a process of reorganizing the Nationalist Party to establish his power base in southern China with the support of several local warlords in Canton. As a result, the period 1912 to 1927 is generally referred to as the Warlord Era as it was quite a tumultuous period for China.<sup>8</sup>

While this power struggle raged on, other kinds of social transformations continued to take place. As discussed in previous chapter, missionary educational institutions and the YMCA in China had been trying to promote Western physical education and sport since 1840s, in addition to many Chinese intellectuals, patriots, and nationalists’ efforts to learn positive things from the West in order to strengthen China’s own military training, education, politics and the economy. Under the influence of the Self-Strengthening Movement, these intellectuals and patriots began to learn from the West in order to build a ‘strong and prosperous nation’.<sup>9</sup> This included sending Chinese students abroad to study. Most studied in Europe and the US. However, some Chinese students also sought to study in Japan after China’s defeat in the Sino–Japanese War of 1895. Japan was ‘the nearest and cheapest place to go for “Western learning”’,<sup>10</sup> and was perceived to be an example of how an Eastern nation had learnt from the West in order to ‘resist foreign

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<sup>6</sup> Bozan Jian, *Zhongguoshi gangyao [The Outline of Chinese History]*, p. 177.

<sup>7</sup> J. Bangsbo, T. Reilly, and A.M. Williams, *Science and Football III*, Hoboken, Taylor & Francis, 2014, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Hwang Tonny and Jarvie Grant, 'Sport, Nationalism and the Early Chinese Republic 1912–1927', *The Sports Historian*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Y. Zheng, *Globalization and State Transformation in China*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China*, p. 82.

aggression and revive national fortunes'.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the Japanese education system attracted the attention of the Qing and later of the Beiyang government, as its expressed aims of 'patriotism and fidelity to the government' had the potential to work very well both for the government and for the country by cultivating patriotism in the elite intellectuals.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the intellectuals saw Japan's success as due to the promotion of modern Western' style education.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, with the encouragement of the both these regimes, a large group of students were sent to Japan to observe the country's educational system, which had adopted aspects of Western educational system and that promised to be a viable model to emulate in order to safeguard China's sovereignty as well.

The Japanese style of sports was particularly of interest to the nationalists because it was seen as able to inspire a military zeal and a warlike spirit among the countrymen. When Chinese intellectuals and educators returned from Japan, they sought to spread the Japanese style of sports among the Chinese people. They took to promoting militarism and a 'warlike spirit' among the masses with a similar enthusiasm to the missionaries as they in turn propagated Western physical education and sport as a tool to evangelize and 'civilize' the very same masses.<sup>14</sup> When educators such as Zhang Jian, Cai Yuanpei, Xu Yibing and Fan Yuanlian were promoting physical education they perceived it as a process akin to nurturing martial and warrior-like valour among the people to safeguard the nation from external threats.<sup>15</sup> These educators believed that a sound, healthy body and firm self-belief among individuals was the *sine qua non* for building up a strong and prosperous nation.<sup>16</sup> This belief was reflected in the aims of individuals such as Fan Yuanlian, Minister of Education of Republic of China, who expressed a desire to 'turn every Chinese man into a soldier through military

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<sup>11</sup> Youwei Kang, 'Renben bianzhen kao [The Search for Japan's Restoration]', in Association of Chinese Historians (ed.), *Zhongguo jindai ziliao congkan [Reference to the Hundred Days' Reform]*, Shanghai, Shenzhou Guoguang chubanshe, 1953, p. 254.

<sup>12</sup> Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China*, p. 81.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> G. Xu, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895–2008*, p. 20.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*; Xincheng Shu, *Zhongguo jindai jiaoyushi ziliao [A History of Education in Modern China: Volume 2]*, Beijing, Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe [Peoples Education Press], 1961, p. 1025.

<sup>16</sup> Yuanpei Cai, *Cai yuanpei quanji [Collected Works of Cai Yuanpei]*, Beijing, Zhonghua shuju [Zhonghua Book Company], 1984, p. 131.



education'.<sup>17</sup>

Consequently, in the 1910s, new educational systems were set up by the Republic of China, such as the 'Renzi Regulation for Schooling' (RRS, 1912) and 'Renzi–Guichou Regulation for Schooling' (RGRS, 1913). These regulations reflected the aspirations of the new generation of Chinese educators. The RGRS clearly positioned the provision of physical education in schools as one of its main objectives. In this context, the content of the physical education class, or 'Gymnastic Class' as it was called in this new school system, included basic-level military and general gymnastics exercises, as well as games.<sup>18</sup> Wang Yaodong, a known sportsman, in his memoir described his middle school life in a government school between 1916 and 1918 as follows:

When I was in the middle school, there was only one physical education teacher who had graduated from a military academy. He knew nothing about the Western sports, such as ball games and athletics. All he could teach us was boring military gymnastics. Even after graduating from the middle school, I still did not know how to play ball games like basketball or volleyball.<sup>19</sup>

It is obvious from Wang's memoir that the focus of local schools' physical education was mainly on military gymnastics, rather than ball games like basketball and volleyball, so as to nurture military and warrior spirit among the people, which were required at the time.

To sum up, owing to complicated and turbulent social circumstances as well as scant opportunities and resources, the situation was not promising for the development of Western sports other than military sports, in local schools at that time. Although Western

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<sup>17</sup> Yuanlian Fan, 'Jinri shijie dazhanzhong woguo jiaoyu [Chinese Education during the First World War]', *Zhonghua jiaoyujie [Zhonghua Educational Review]*, no. 23, 1914.

<sup>18</sup> Xiushu Zhang, 'Qingmo minchude xuexiao tiyu [Physical Education in Schools of the End of Qing Dyansty and the Beginning of Republic of China]', in Editorial Committee of Historical Document of Sport in Sichuan (ed.), *Sichuan tiyu shiliao [Historical Document of Sport in Sichuan]*, Chengdu, Editorial Committee of Historical Document of Sport in Sichuan, 1984, Vol. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Yaodong Wang, 'Zhuyi zhongxue shidai de tiyu huodong [The Memory of Physical Activities in My Middle School Period]', in Editorial Committee of Historical Document in Sports (ed.), *Historical Document of Sport*, Beijing, Renmin tiyu chubanshe [People's Sports Publishing House of China], 1982, Vol. 8.

ball games and athletics were only in a nascent state in China, Chinese sports ideology was gradually changing. The missionary schools and the YMCA became the main initiators of this significant change in society, though local educators and nationalists later followed suit. The following sections develop a detailed overview of how Western physical education and sport were spread and promoted by missionary educational institutions and the YMCA in China during the period from 1908 to 1919.

### 4.3 Missionary Schools and the Expansion of Western Physical Education

#### 4.3.1 Missionary Physical Education Program in Primary and Secondary Schools

As discussed previously in chapter three, Christian primary schools had been established to improve the relationship between foreign missionaries and the Chinese, and to facilitate contact with the Chinese populace for making the task of converting people to Christianity easier.<sup>20</sup> However, when the Christian community grew, the missionary schools also shouldered the responsibility of training and providing well-trained future leaders for the Christian movements in China.<sup>21</sup> In fact, leadership qualities were strongly emphasised in the Christian elementary school curricula. In view of this objective, most of the junior and senior primary schools adopted four-year and three-year education programs, respectively, for their official physical education curricula.<sup>22</sup> For example, the Christian Society in Fujian set the precedent in this regard by issuing a school regulation for its affiliated primary schools in 1915, making physical education compulsory for both the junior and senior primary school students.<sup>23</sup>

The schools, in turn, placed special focus on physical fitness, in addition to requiring faculty members to be of sound Christian character so that their influence on the students was in line with the YMCA's core values. In fact, every educator had to meet

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<sup>20</sup> Chinese Educational Commission, Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Committee of Reference Counsel, and Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain & Ireland, pp. 57-79.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Shiliang Gao, *Zhongguo jiaohui xuexiaoshi [The History of the Missionary Schools in Modern China]*, pp. 63-4.

the criteria of physical fitness to be on the faculty of the missionary schools. The Chinese Educational Commission, Foreign Missions Conference of North America recommended that:

- a. A teacher should have a **sound body, and such physical habits as are desired in** the students. He should also be fond of play so that he may lead his students in recreation.
- b. In his own life he should **embody those fundamental habits** and attitudes which are essential elements in **Christian character**, and he should have that personal power which makes character attractive.  
[. . .]
- e. Since the Christian school exists primarily for the sake of the Christian community the teacher should have a **close relation with the church**.
- f. The teacher should be made to feel that in the Christian school he is serving his country quite as truly as if he were in a publicly-supported school. He should be encouraged to **ally himself with local or provincial teachers' associations**....<sup>24</sup>  
[emphasis added]

In addition to needing to have a good physique and to regularly take part in physical exercise, teachers in missionary schools were also required to have a strong faith and subscribe to Christian values.<sup>25</sup> It was believed that only the educators with good physique and strong faith would help cultivate an educated future generation, so these ideals were greatly emphasized in the Christian enterprise.<sup>26</sup>

As mentioned in chapter three, with the development of missionary education work, the secondary-level Christian education system was established towards the end of the nineteenth century. This system continued to develop between 1908 and 1919.

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<sup>24</sup> Chinese Educational Commission, Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Committee of Reference Counsel, and Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain & Ireland, pp. 57-79.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Qiuping Lu, 'Ruhe wei jiaoyou zhi xiaoxue jiaoshi [How to be a Good Teacher in Missionary Primary School]', *Revue Catholique*, vol. 10, no. 9, 1921.

According to Gao Shiliang's statistics, there were around 200 Christian middle schools run by the Catholic missionaries and similar number of such schools were run by Protestant missionaries in the period between 1918 and 1926.<sup>27</sup> Christian secondary education aimed to cater for the needs of the largest portion of students who were best suited to enter the Christian colleges. It also sought to train future workers, especially teachers and evangelists who would eventually become serving members of Christian institutions and society.<sup>28</sup> The program of promoting the ideals of social betterment, patriotic service and evangelism was very deftly employed to modernize the non-Christian society through propagating Christian values on the one hand, and on the other hand promulgating the modern values of the Western culture, worldview, science, social and even political philosophies.<sup>29</sup>

Christian secondary schools were well placed both to pursue the goal of cultivating Christian leadership and to promote Western-style modernity. A sound and well-developed body of students, as a precondition for a normal and vigorous mental and moral life, would be emphasized by the missionary secondary schools, as would be physical training and school athletics.<sup>30</sup> Physical education in these schools was carried out not only through compulsory classes but also through extracurricular physical activities and competitive sport. Examples of three different schools illustrate how these different types of physical education works were carried on in the missionary schools. For instance, Heling Anglo-Chinese Middle School incorporated compulsory physical education classes in its system, Fuzhou Trinity Middle School adopted physical education as extracurricular activities and in Shanghai Qingxin Academy physical education was managed both in classes and as extracurricular activities.<sup>31</sup>

Heling Anglo-Chinese Middle School was established by an American missionary Robert Samuel Maclay in 1881, and physical education was made a compulsory part of

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<sup>27</sup> Shiliang Gao, *Zhongguo jiaohui xuexiaoshi [The History of the Missionary Schools in Modern China]*, p. 69.

<sup>28</sup> Chinese Educational Commission, Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Committee of Reference Counsel, and Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain & Ireland, p. 80.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.83.

<sup>31</sup> Editorial Committee of Fuzhou Chronicals, 'Jiaohui banxue [Christian-Run Schooling]', in Editorial Committee of Fuzhou Chronicals (ed.), *Fuzhou shizhi [Fuzhou Chronicals]*, Fuzhou, Publishing House of Local Records, 1998, p. 124.

the school curriculum throughout the six years teaching program that the school provided.<sup>32</sup> School life was heavily regulated in Heling, where after 3.00 p.m., all classrooms and dormitories were closed and all students were required to participate in sporting activities on the schoolyard. These included ball games, tennis, mountain climbing, and track and field running.<sup>33</sup> In addition, every class had a sports team, and all teams were required to compete against each other in various intramural sports competition throughout the year.<sup>34</sup>

Fuzhou Trinity Middle School, established in 1907 by the Church of England, is an example of a school where sport and physical activities were not a compulsory part of the curriculum, but were seriously pursued through extracurricular physical activities. From enrolment to graduation, students at Fuzhou 31 Middle School were divided into three groups; namely, the Eagle Team, the Whale Team and the Lion Team. Students in each team could choose one of their favourite sports to practise and specialize in. Athletics contests for the different sports were organized among these three teams throughout the year. The school's level of seriousness in pursuing these sportive activities can be judged from the fact that students' performance in sports was accredited in their academic evaluation.

Shanghai Qingxin Academy established in 1860 by Presbyterian Church exemplifies those institutions which combined the approach of Heling Anglo-Chinese Middle school and Fuzhou 31 Middle School. It adopted a basic level of physical education and sport as a compulsory part of curriculum while maintaining the mandatory status of extracurricular physical activities. In Qingxin, each student was required to take two hours of physical education classes a week. Students were divided into different groups to learn different sports according to their physical qualities. In addition to the physical education classes, students were also required to participate in extracurricular physical activity for two hours once a week. They could choose any sport they liked to

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<sup>32</sup> Shiliang Gao, *Zhongguo jiaohui xuexiaoshi [The History of the Missionary Schools in Modern China]*, pp. 92-3.

<sup>33</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3]*, p. 83.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

participate in, such as basketball, soccer, running, volleyball, and baseball. Professional physical education teachers supervised all of the extracurricular activities, and penalized students for being absent without a valid excuse. To further improve their physical fitness, students took part in 15 minutes of exercise between morning classes.<sup>35</sup>

By means of extracurricular physical activities and compulsory physical education classes, sport and physical fitness were designed to be the foundation for nurturing exemplary missionary school students. A number of sports talents were cultivated whose excellence was on par with one another no matter which school they hailed from and which method of training had been tried on them.

Dong Shouyi, a famous sports expert, told in his autobiography how his life was influenced by physical education in the missionary schools he attended in his childhood. In 1907, he studied at a missionary school named Tongren Junior Middle School in Baoding, Hebei province. One day, while conducting an extracurricular physical activity, a new missionary physical education teacher in the school hung two bamboo baskets on tree trunks propped up at each end of the school playground. He told the students (who were wearing long gowns) that he would introduce them to a new and interesting game called Kuang qiu (basketball). He then held a ball in his hands and threw it forward in a parabolic motion so that it slipped down through one of the baskets at one end of the school yard. All the students in the playground felt thrilled with surprise at the sight of this. From then on, every day after class, the teacher allowed the students coil their pigtailed on their heads and tie their long gowns around their waists, and taught them how to bounce, dribble and pass the ball. Dong Shouyi himself recalls that this was much more interesting than any military drills he had taken part in before and became obsessed with it. He played this game nearly every day.<sup>36</sup> Then, at the beginning of 1910, he transferred to Xiehe Senior Middle School in Tongzhou to further his studies. Xiehe was also a missionary school and one at which much attention was devoted to

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<sup>35</sup> Xiaoxia He and Jinghuan Shi, p. 152.

<sup>36</sup> Zhi Hua, *Suyuan- Dong Shouyi zhuan [Long-cherished Wish-Dong Shouyi]*, Beijing, Beijing tiyu daxue chubanshe [People's Sports Publishing House of China], 1993, p. 7.

music and physical education. Every afternoon, students would participate in various Western sports activities, such as basketball, soccer, track and field running, tennis, and baseball. During his two years in junior middle school, Dong Shouyi grew taller and his skill in basketball grew better. He soon became one of the best basketball players in this school and later led the school team. He represented his school in various basketball competitions.<sup>37</sup> Dong is used here as a typical example to highlight how the missionary schools' influence on Chinese youth came about. Dong later became one of the leading figures on the transformation of physical education and sport in modern China.

Compulsory physical education classes and extracurricular physical activities were aimed at cultivating sport skills and physical fitness habits in students and a range of competitive contests (like intramural and interscholastic contests, and provincial, regional, national, and international games) stirred their enthusiasm for sports. Missionary middle schools fostered competitiveness by holding regular and compulsory inter-school athletic and sports contests each year. For example, Furen University Affiliated Middle School held basketball games in October, soccer games in November, cross-country race in March, volleyball games in April, a spring sports meeting at the beginning of May, and a baseball match in the middle of May. School regulations stated that during the spring sports meet every student in the school had to participate in at least one sport competition.<sup>38</sup> The school also encouraged the students to compete in interscholastic athletic meets, and sometimes even in regional, national and international games. Luhe Middle School gained fame for cultivating athletes who were not only famous in China but who also represented China in international events during the period of 1908 and 1919.<sup>39</sup> Luhe students were therefore known not just for their educational training and ethical outlook, but also for excellence in sports.<sup>40</sup>

Besides the official physical education class, extracurricular physical activities and the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp.8-10.

<sup>38</sup> Shiliang Gao, *Zhongguo jiaohui xuexiaoshi [The History of the Missionary Schools in Modern China]*, pp. 101-2..

<sup>39</sup> Weiping Wang, 'Luhe zhongxue de tiyu huodong [Physical Activities in Luhe Middle School]', in Beijing Sport History and Culture Working Committee (ed.), *Beijing tiyu wenshi [Beijing Sport History and Culture]*, 1984, Vol. 1, pp. 94-5.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

sports competitions, most of the missionary schools also held health instruction classes to familiarize students with basic physiology, practical hygiene, and disease prevention through simple household cures. Knowledge about first aid, home surgery, narcotics, poisons and stimulants was also imparted.<sup>41</sup> Students were also physically examined from time to time by a nurse.<sup>42</sup> This demonstrates how one aspect of physical education in missionary primary and secondary schools took inspiration from the other, which led to the evolution of various activities and sports which, in turn, make possible the realization of the objective of cultivating a healthy body, inculcating ‘Christian manliness’ and promoting the moral, spiritual and physical development of their students.

### 4.3.2 Missionary Physical Education Program in Christian Higher Education

As noted in the previous chapter, there were only a few tertiary-level missionary educational institutions in China at the start of the twentieth century, and the ones that did exist were located in major cities or treaty ports. However, their number increased considerably during the period from 1908 to 1919. Notably, six higher educational areas were demarcated where leading universities of the time were established: Yanching University in North China; St John’s University, the University of Nanking and Soochow University in East China; Yale University in Changsha in Central China; Canton Christian College in South China; West China Union University in West China; and Fujian Christian University in the region that may roughly be referred to as South-Eastern China. The institutes in all these six locations were wholly autonomous from the state. However, in case of the protestant missionary educational institutions the regional categorizations were given patronage either by ‘a single leading institution, or coordination among different institutions, usually secured through an advisory council to ensure organizational unity’ across the Christian tertiary education sector.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Chinese Educational Commission, Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Committee of Reference Counsel, and Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain & Ireland, p. 94.

<sup>42</sup> Mary Margaret Moninger Papers, October 6, 1918, record group 230, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. Cited in Graham Gael, p. 44.

<sup>43</sup> Chinese Educational Commission, Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Committee of Reference Counsel, and Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain & Ireland, p. 99.



Like the primary and secondary missionary schools, the Christian tertiary institutions modelled their curricula and activities upon Western educational models.<sup>44</sup> Above all, these Christian institutions were supervised through headquarters in the founder home countries, and particularly in the UK and the US.<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, the tertiary education program in Christian higher education colleges in general spanned four years, of which the first two years covered general and preparatory studies, while the last two used curricula designed to develop specialized or professional skills among the students.<sup>46</sup> As the sector developed, physical education in Christian colleges and universities became more and more systematic, varied and sophisticated.

Students' all-round development, especially with regards to their physical, mental and intellectual capabilities, was the paramount concern of the overall educational activities in Christian colleges and universities. That is why not only physical education but all kinds of extracurricular physical activities were staunchly advocated and promoted in these institutions. These were seen as the best means of inculcating a Christian manhood among students, cultivating Christian leadership traits in their character and shaping up their bodies. Significant efforts were invested in making the physical activities interesting for the students in order to develop these traits through activities that were not immediately and evidently Christian in nature. The overwhelmingly colourful extracurricular life of the students in Lingnan University of Guangzhou is a case in point. Various sports activities such as basketball, volleyball and tennis were offered extensively on campus.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the spirit of good sportsmanship was made a conventional doctrine, emphasizing the 'Lingnan spirit' which actually alluded to the roots of university's traditions in 'the Spirit of Service' and of 'Brotherhood' as a Christian value. Also central, was 'the Spirit of Freedom and Equality', teaching the students a basic understanding of democracy, together with 'the Spirit of Patriotism and

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p.112.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Zhongxin Wang, *Jidujiao yu jindai zhongguo jiaoyu [Christianity and Education in Modern China]*, Wuhan, Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe [Hubei Education Press], 2000, p. 57.

Sportsmanship'.<sup>48</sup>

In addition, Christian higher institutions specifically catered to both intramural and intercollegiate athletic games. Intramural athletic games helped to increase enthusiasm for physical activities at the institutional level. Students were divided into different teams according to their different Grades and classes and standards were set for them to achieve in order to make them potential candidates for competition in these games. Thus an internal process of scrutiny and framework for achieving excellence was in place in line with the rules and regulations made for these intramural athletic competitions. To oversee and judge the excellence and performance of players, referees were also provided during these games. According to memoirs of Ma Yuehan<sup>49</sup>, whenever intramural athletic games or matches were due to take place all the students, teachers and administrators would prepare for them together. The monitor in every class would make his fellow team members practise for these games.<sup>50</sup> During the matches or athletic meets, all the teachers would take turns as referees and the parents of students were invited to watch the games as well. Such inspiration became the hallmark of these intramural athletic competitions.<sup>51</sup> The way in which these modern athletic competitions promoted the spirit of fair-play and good sportsmanship as established norms, not only by the missionary school students, but also a large number of their parents shows how the traditional view on sports activities was changing.

Meanwhile, the intercollegiate athletic and sports meets were also continuously evolving. At first these meets were held only in Tientsin and Shanghai, but later they spread to other cities as well. The degree to which the universities followed these meets can be judged from the example of the 1913 annual athletic meet in Tientsin, which

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<sup>48</sup> Shiliang Gao, *Zhongguo jiaohui xuexiaoshi [The History of the Missionary Schools in Modern China]*, p. 192.

<sup>49</sup> Ma Yuehan (1883–1966) was a sports expert, who made a great contribution to the development of physical education and sport in modern China. He was born in Xiamen in 1882. He studied medicine at St John's University and graduated in 1911. Then, he went to Springfield College, US to further his studies and obtained a bachelor's degree in physical education in 1920. After his graduation, Ma Yuehan returned to China and worked on the development of physical education and sport enterprise in China. He once taught in Qinghua University and Soochow University.

<sup>50</sup> Yuehan Ma, 'Tantan wode tiyu shengya [Talking about My Sport Experience]', in Tsinghua University Editorial Group of *Festschrift on Ma Yuehan* (ed.), *Ma yuehan jinian wenji [Festschrift on Ma Yuehan]*, Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe [Chinese Literature and History Press], 1998, p. 148.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

alone was attended by 15 colleges and universities in Tientsin attracting some 15,000 spectators.<sup>52</sup> The most famous intercollegiate – or, more appropriately, regional athletic meet – was the Eastern China Intercollegiate Athletic Meet (ECIAM), which was held annually in Shanghai. The idea for the Meet had been initiated in February 1914 by R.D. Smart, a missionary and the Chairman of the Athletic Committee of Soochow University, who visited G.M. Ross, a missionary teacher of Jinling University, to suggest establishing an athletic organization for the leading educational institutions in the eastern China. This was in order to develop the intercollegiate athletic games in eastern China and in turn arouse Chinese public interest in the missionary schools and modern physical education and sport.<sup>53</sup> The Eastern China Intercollegiate Athletic Association (ECIAA) was established after the first ECIAM was held at Soochow University on 15 May 1914.<sup>54</sup> The participants represented six universities; St John's University, Hujiang University (Shanghai Baptist College), Nanyang Public School (Nanyang Gongxue), Jinling University, Zhijiang University (Hangzhou University), and Soochow University.<sup>55</sup>

Every university in the ECIAA took their ECIAM membership seriously, and the success of a team was accorded acknowledgement and congratulations by both the students and the community at large. For example, the Soochow University soccer team were the winners in the 1919 and 1920 seasons. When the team secured its second consecutive victory in 1920, not only did scores of Soochow University students receive their team at the train station but some shopkeepers in the vicinity also hung out university flags and let off firecrackers to celebrate this victory. In addition, a celebration ceremony was held by the university in the evening.<sup>56</sup> Likewise, whenever any team from Nanyang went to compete in the ECIAM, the leaders of the Nanyang

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<sup>52</sup> G. Hoh, p. 96.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.180.

<sup>54</sup> R. D. Smart held a Master's degree from the Mathematics Department of Vanderbilt University in the US. In 1903, he went into China and served as a mathematics professor and physical education teacher at Soochow University. When Smart first started his work, he found that students at the university were undergoing rigid and tedious military gymnastics training. He was determined to change this inhibited way of exercise and to institute a more interesting and effective approach. Actually, when he had studied in America, he was good at sports. He introduced nearly all kinds of Western sports to Soochow University.

<sup>55</sup> Shiming Luo, *Bingcheng chuantong, kaituo chuangxin- zhuixun suzhou daxue tiyu xueyuan fazhan de zuji* [Interit the Good Tradition, Blazing New Trails-The History of the Institution of Physical Education of Soochow University], p. 5; G. Hoh, p. 184.

<sup>56</sup> Shiming Luo, *Bingcheng chuantong, kaituo chuangxin- zhuixun suzhou daxue tiyu xueyuan fazhan de zuji* [Interit the Good Tradition, Blazing New Trails-The History of the Institution of Physical Education of Soochow University], pp. 5-6.

delegation would always organize a motivational meeting for its athletes before they travelled. The president of the university would also address its athletes, urging them to fight for the university, and team's performance. Success was rewarded accordingly through celebration, whereas failure was rationalized and carefully analyzed.<sup>57</sup> It shows that the ECIAM was not only gradually changing students' views on athletic games and competitive meets, but was also promoting consciousness among the Chinese public regarding Western sports activities and the new values and fashions associated with the sports competitions in eastern China. In fact, the reputation and fame of the eastern missionary higher institutions, when publicized, became a very positive influence on the whole of China in terms of spreading modern physical education and sport among the Chinese.

From its inception, the ECIAA had a tremendous influence on the educational institutions in eastern China, especially in terms of promoting the principles of fair play and sportsmanship. It was also indirectly engaged in promoting enthusiasm for athletics in the general Chinese populace.<sup>58</sup> This was evident in the way in which nearly every contest in this Meet soon began to attract lengthy media reports in major newspapers of the time. For example, *Shenbao*, one of China's most widely circulated newspapers at that time regularly reported on the Meet.<sup>59</sup> Given the growing popularity of physical education and sport in China, Southeast China University and Fudan University also joined the ECIAA in the winter of 1920, thus raising the number of its membership from six to eight. Accordingly the ECIAA became the 'Eight Universities' Intercollegiate Athletic Association Meet of Eastern China' (*Huadong badaxue tiyu lianhehui*). It is important to note, however, that despite the growing popularity of sports among general public, all of the the directors of the Association – R.D. Smart from Soochow University, Lai Shili<sup>60</sup> from Nanyang and C.H. McCloy from Southeast China University – were committed missionaries and Christians, and continued to hold

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<sup>57</sup> Zhiling Zhuang, *Elit Sports in Campus*, [http://www.yplib.org.cn/structure/jdsh/xx\\_84154\\_1.htm](http://www.yplib.org.cn/structure/jdsh/xx_84154_1.htm), March 2, 2010, (accessed 24 February 2013).

<sup>58</sup> G. Hoh, p. 184.

<sup>59</sup> *Shenbao*, no. 9, 21 April 1919.

<sup>60</sup> Lai Shili is an American missionary and once worked in Nanyang Public School. The author cannot find his English name. His Chinese name is Lai Shili (莱史礼).

executive leadership roles in the Association with Smart as its chairman.

Christian physical education in the higher education sector evolved rapidly between 1908 and 1919, from localized practices to competitive national intramural games with appeal to audiences beyond the universities. This evolution brought a functional sophistication which led to the popularity of Western sports and Western sports ideology, not only among students in Christian schools but also among those in local schools and among the general public.<sup>61</sup> While the popularization of Western style sports was made popular beyond universities through intermural competitions, it was the YMCA's educational programs in particular that galvanized the development of Western style physical education with a Christian ethos during this period. The following section focuses on the YMCA's physical educational and sport engagement in China from 1908 to 1919.

### **4.4 The YMCA and the Expansion of Western Physical Education and Sport**

The foundational working principle behind the YMCA was to 'study the life problems and educational and religious needs of young men and to improve them in every way possible.'<sup>62</sup> While the YMCA's focus was on promoting and spreading Christianity, the organization was also very much part of the wider shift taking shape in Western epistemologies of the body and how these were being adopted in China, whereby the body itself was seen as an object of social and individual control as well as a somatic sign of modernity.<sup>63</sup> The Physical Department of the YMCA, as a sub-organizational unit, was obliged to fulfill this aim with respect to its own functional specialty, that is, to promote Christian physical education and sport so as to materialize the Christianity-led modernization agenda as smoothly as possible.<sup>64</sup> The difference between the YMCA's activities and that of other organizations was the YMCA's strong focus on nurturing

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<sup>61</sup> G. Hoh, p. 92.

<sup>62</sup> Physical Directors' Society of the Young Men's Christian Associations of North America, *Physical Education in the Young Men's Christian Association of North America*, New York, Association Press, 1914, p. 141.

<sup>63</sup> N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2000; N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners*, New York, Urizen Books, 1978.

<sup>64</sup> Physical Directors' Society of the Young Men's Christian Associations of North America, p. 141.

(Christian) leadership along with engaging students in physical education activities, rather than concentrating purely on spiritual training. The YMCA aimed at training and ‘civilizing’ non-Christian bodies in the process of teaching individuals to acquire mastery over matter through physical training and discipline.<sup>65</sup> This process of disciplining the body was seen not only as a way of ‘civilizing’ indigenous bodies to resemble the Caucasian body in general, but was also perceived to follow St Paul’s principle of self-discipline of the spirit over ‘the power of flesh’ (Romans 8:1-11) through both spiritual and bodily discipline (1 Corinthians 9:24-26).

However, while the aim of the YMCA in China was in part to civilize Chinese bodies its main aim remained squarely on the Chinese mission. To ensure further harmony and coordination regarding the evangelical activities of the YMCA, the physical department worked in close collaboration with the religious department of the YMCA. A special committee was also appointed to watch over and pass recommendations on regular basis and to liaise with the religious department in order to ensure that the promotion of the religious activities would always remain a priority for the YMCA project. In fact, such simultaneous development of religious and physical education had been stressed as early as 1908 by Exner, the first physical director in China. In his 1909 Annual Report, Exner argued that:

The purpose of the YMCA is to further the Kingdom of God among men. What place has physical training in the furtherance of the Kingdom of God? The Christian world no longer looks upon the Kingdom of God as refereeing to disembodied spirits and a future world only. It has reference to men in the flesh here on earth. It is to be a ‘Society of brotherly sons of God’ in which the principles of heaven shall come to rule on earth [...] If this view of the place of the body in life is correct, physical training is not only ‘a good thing’ in which effervescent college students may be permitted to indulge; it takes on dignity and importance worthy of the serious consideration of every agency for the uplift of mankind and

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.150.

the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.<sup>66</sup>

The apostolic principle of acquiring mastery over the ‘desires of the flesh’ through physical education was therefore seen as perfectly in line with preparing the Chinese minds for disciplined Christian life. The sports program also provided ample opportunities for maintaining personal contact with the locals through personal contacts and Bible classes in addition to physical education classes. Although the initial focus of the directors was on individuals rather than on groups, the strategy proved successful in the long run for spreading the YMCA’s ideas about the Christian faith.<sup>67</sup> This focus on leadership, the civilizing of Chinese bodies and on self-discipline through sports and training will be discussed at length in the next section. This discussion will be undertaken specifically in reference to how these programs may be simultaneously interpreted as examples of cultural imperialism *par excellence* and resistance to such imperialism, as their reception and consumption by the local population evidence a negotiated process of utilizing the YMCA’s programs as a route to modernization for a nation at a difficult and tumultuous historical juncture.

### 4.4.1 The Consolidation and Expansion of the YMCA’s Work in China

The period 1908–1919 saw significant expansion and consolidation of the YMCA’s activities in China. Administratively, the Chinese YMCA had to reinforce itself with an extensive administrative system comprising three constituent parts; the National Committee of the YMCA, the student YMCA and the city YMCA. The functions of the National Committee were generally conducted through eight independent departments; Administration, Publication, Lecture, Students, City, Religious, Physical, and Business. The National Committee was directly financed by the International Committee of YMCAs,<sup>68</sup> and all its members were Christian men.<sup>69</sup> Every member of the National

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<sup>66</sup> M.J. Exner, 'Annual Report of the Physical Departemnt from Oct. 1908 to Jan. 1909. Dr. M.J. Exner, Shanghai', *China Annual Reports of Secretaries 1909–1911*, 1909, p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Alfred H. Swan, 'Alfred H. Swan, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1915', *Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1914 to September 30, 1915*, 1915, pp. 430-1.

<sup>68</sup> K. Page, p. 19.

Committee elected through the national convention was to be ‘a man of large influence and power in local or national life’, and included Christian officials, educators, businessmen, pastors and missionaries.<sup>70</sup> For the administration work of its eight departments, the Committee employed both foreign and Chinese secretaries.<sup>71</sup>

The National Committee functioned only as a supervisory agency, however, and the Student Affairs and the Urban Missions branches were managed by local YMCA administrators. Each local YMCA had its own board of directors whose discretion was absolute in the management of the affairs of their respective Association. The members of each board were elected from among the Association’s active members, who were all practicing evangelical Christians. The boards of directors in turn elected their own chairmen, which effectively ensured that the administrative control remained in the hands of the Christian members.<sup>72</sup> However, the board members and officers of the local committees were not just foreigners; there were prominent Chinese Christians among their ranks as well. Kirby Page noted that ‘a large part of the strength of the Association was due to the type of men who had served as board members and officers of the Association’ and the move to include noteworthy Chinese men in executive and advisory positions followed an established missionary principle of involving locals and training influential local people in these capacities in order to expand and strengthen the YMCA’s mission.<sup>73</sup>

The YMCA’s administration was handled by the city YMCAs, the first three of which were founded in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tientsin at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Later on, more city YMCAs were established, both in treaty ports cities and in the interior of China, including in Baoding, Qingdao, Peking, Chengdu, and Kunming and between 1912 and 1921 their number rose from 25 to 40. Furthermore, in order to ensure the religious character of the local

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p.26.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p.16.



YMCAs, the National Committee suggested their reorganization, setting up three preconditions to uphold their religious integrity. Page notes that the following principles were required of each local YMCA:

- (1) Assurance of cooperation must be undertaken from representatives of various religious bodies so as to make the organization truly interdenominational in character;
- (2) At least one full-time secretary must remain attached to each Association along with a sufficient number of motivated workers, and must assure adequate local financial support;
- (3) The chosen cities to establish Association must be visited by a representative of the National Committee to predetermine whether these offered prospects to carry on permanent work in there.<sup>74</sup>

In the meanwhile, the YMCA's activities were enjoying an unprecedented growth. The rapid growth in the YMCA's influence on Chinese youth especially those living in cities during this period is evident in the rising numbers of the student YMCAs and the city YMCAs throughout the country. In relation to student YMCAs there were only five in all China prior to Mott's visit in 1896.<sup>75</sup> However, the number of student YMCAs rose steadily from to 44 in 1906, to 94 in 1911, and later to 145 in 1917.<sup>76</sup> The number of members increased dramatically as well, a trend demonstrated through the following table:

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.42.

<sup>75</sup> Zhao, *Jidujiao qingnianhui zai zhongguo: Bentu he xiandai de tansuo* [The YMCA in China: A Quest to Indigenize and Modernize], p.34. Page, *The Young Men's Christian Associations of China*, p.41.

<sup>76</sup> Zhao, *Jidujiao qingnianhui zai zhongguo: Bentu he xiandai de tansuo* [The YMCA in China: A Quest to Indigenize and Modernize], p.34.

Table 4.1: Student and City YMCA Membership, 1907–1919<sup>77</sup>

Year	Student YMCA	City YMCA	Total Membership
1907	2,767	2,190	4,957
1912	3,515	6,190	9,705
1913	5,520	11,300	15,176
1915	8,488	12,840	21,328
1916	11,420	17,015	28,435
1917	12,250	20,228	32,478
1918	13,989	26,790	40,779
1919	15,555	32,330	47,885

This table illustrates how the number for the total membership increased nearly nine times between 1907 and 1919, from 4,957 to 47,885. Within these twelve years, the membership of city YMCAs increased from 2,190 to 32,330 and that of student YMCAs from 2,767 to 15,555. This dramatic increase in the memberships of both the branches of the YMCA reflects the significant development of the YMCA's work in China.

Having developed a solid organizational structure across its various branches, the YMCA now focused on its physical education program, which was at the core of its educational operations and which focused not only on attending to the spiritual needs of young men, but also on developing their intellectual and physical capabilities. In terms of the latter, this was, aimed at ensuring the body – the 'temple of the Holy Spirit' – could in all respects be perfected.

M.J. Exner, the first physical director of the YMCA, officially founded the Physical

<sup>77</sup> *Five Years Progress*, Shanghai, National Committee of the YMCA of China, 1909, p. 5; *Another Year's Progress*, Shanghai, National Committee of the YMCA of China, 1914, p. 5; Hollis A. Wilbur, 'H.A. Wilbur, Association National General Secretary, Young Men's Christian Association of China, Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1915', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Shanghai*, 1915, p. 21; Fu Ren, 'Shinianlai wuguo qingnianhui zhi zhongda bianhua [The Significant Changes of the Chinese YMCA in the Last Decade]', *Association Progress*, no. 100, February 1927, p. 240.

Department of the National Committee of the YMCA to carry out physical education work when he visited Shanghai on 8 October 1908.<sup>78</sup> By this time, there was a general consensus regarding the potential contributions that physical education could make to the advancement the YMCA's mission.<sup>79</sup> The YMCA's policy regarding physical education in China was also formulated at this time by the physical department of the YMCA. The goals of this new policy were articulated in the *Annual Reports of Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee* in 1910 as follows:

- (1) To secure the **recognition of hygiene and physical training** as an essential factor in all education, and their adoption into the curriculum of every educational institution and into the life of the people.
- (2) To secure the adoption by the missionary bodies of the principle of **saving the whole man-body, mind and soul**, here and now, and their recognition of the inter-relations between these phases of the life of man.
- (3) To secure for each of the great cities of China both **indoor and outdoor facilities for physical culture**, especially an athletic field and playground **under moral Christian auspices**.
- (4) To **train up properly qualified men** to man gymnasiums and athletic fields and to carry on the propaganda for the physical uplift of the Chinese people.
- (5) To prevent the growth of the **athletic and sport clubs** apart from the **intellectual and spiritual** life instead to see that the **threefold man** be developed symmetrically in all his parts.
- (6) To promote the idea of play and amusement apart from monetary gain, gambling and immorality.<sup>80</sup> [emphasis added]

These goals focused, therefore, on the creation of a 'threefold man', who would be spiritually aware, physically healthy and morally focused. As new YMCAs spread

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<sup>78</sup> Xiaoyang Zhao, *Jidujiao qingnianhui zai zhongguo: Bentu he xiandai de tansuo* [*The YMCA in China: A Quest to Indigenize and Modernize*], Beijing, Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe [Social Sciences Academic Press], 2008, p. 192.

<sup>79</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 87.

<sup>80</sup> Hugh A. Moran, 'Report of H.A. Moran, Secretary, Hankow', *Annual Reports of Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1909 to September 30, 1910*, 1910, p. 279.

across China, their physical education program was also extended to include the local YMCAs. The content of their programs also became increasingly professional, and varied. The following sections examine the YMCA's physical education work in China from the perspective of its leadership training in order to illustrate the rapid expansion of these activities, and the various forms they took; namely, physical education including activities inside and outside YMCA gymnasiums and the physical education program for youth.

### **4.4.2 Physical Education Leadership Training**

Exner, during his first year in China in 1908, focussed on leadership through the training of physical directors, the organization of physical education classes and the management of sporting activities and athletic contests through clubs as a means to engage members, and the provision of Bible classes.<sup>81</sup> After a few months experience with the local YMCA in Shanghai (Shanghai YMCA), Exner recognized the importance of establishing a leadership program for new YMCA physical directors in order to meet the demand for trained physical personnel for the both YMCAs and the colleges.<sup>82</sup> As a consequence, a new contingent of foreign physical directors and secretaries arrived in China to serve the YMCA in the 1910s. These foreigners were trained in sports science and it was through the combined efforts of both the locally trained and foreign directors and secretaries that the YMCA's work could be expedited by enhancing the number of short-term physical education training classes. Subsequently, YMCA Schools of Physical Education were established by the YMCA, resulting in the identification of major Chinese sports talents. In addition, Chinese students were sent abroad to study physical education and sport.

#### ***Short-term Physical Education Training in China***

Exner worked tirelessly to promote physical education and sport training in China,

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

because he was convinced of its worth, as he believed it not only added to the YMCA's central mission of proclaiming the gospel, but could also be a means of overcoming the shortage of trained physical education personnel. During the Seventh Annual Conference of the Secretaries of the International Committee of the YMCA in China and Korea in July 1909, Exner stressed that improving the physical vigour and capacity of Chinese youth should be one of the chief objectives of the YMCA in China, and recommended that leadership training schools should be established to facilitate this goal.<sup>83</sup>

As a result, the first short-term physical leadership training program was instituted shortly after the Conference by Exner in Shanghai YMCA. The first class had fourteen students; one was from Korea and the rest were from China. At the end of the session, Exner organized an athletic exhibition in which the class demonstrated their newly-learnt skills in front of an audience of 200 people. The exhibition also marked the opening of Shanghai YMCA gymnasium. Exner was convinced that the success of the event showed the potential for gymnastics and athletics in China.<sup>84</sup> Encouraged by the positive reception, Exner and his colleagues organized a series of short-term physical training classes between 1908 and 1909 in Shanghai. They included a class for physical leadership training, a class for younger members of the YMCA, a class for businessmen, two classes for students in missionary schools, and one class for the training of physical directors.<sup>85</sup>

However, only two years later in 1911, Exner's health had deteriorated to such an extent that he had to return to America. Subsequently, four physical directors from the International Committee of YMCAs came to work in China. They were J.H. Crocker, A.H. Swan, C.A. Siler and C.H. McCloy, all of whom arrived in Shanghai between late September 1911 and late October 1913.<sup>86</sup> Crocker took over as national physical

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<sup>83</sup> *Record of the Seventh Annual Conference of the Secretaries of the International Committee, July 23-29, 1909.*

<sup>84</sup> M.J. Exner, p. 168.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, Secretary, Shanghai. Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1912', *Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1911 to September 30, 1912, 1912*; Alfred H. Swan, 'Alfred H. Swan, Physical Director, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1913', *Annual Reports of the Foreign*

director, whereas Swan continued the training program in the Shanghai YMCA. Siler served as physical director of the Tientsin YMCA, and McCloy served as a physical director in the Shanghai YMCA.<sup>87</sup> However, they collaborated closely in designing and organizing physical training classes for the Chinese.

Swan arranged a physical training class at the Shanghai YMCA in 1914.<sup>88</sup> It was initially attended by five students and two more students joined in 1915. Swan reported that one student was a Cantonese man ‘of excellent promise, having a fine physique and a good head’; the other one was a Shanghai YMCA secretary who had just joined and who was being trained for a leadership role in the Shanghai YMCA.<sup>89</sup> After the training classes, all men were able to independently manage physical education classes.

Apart from the training classes being offered by the Shanghai YMCA, local YMCAs in cities such as Tientsin and Peking organized their own short-term physical leadership training classes. In the fall of 1915, the Tientsin YMCA opened its training school for physical education directors and teachers. Overtly, this training school was meant ‘to introduce the Association type of physical training in the schools of North China’<sup>90</sup>, but covertly it aspired to attract more and more indigenous young men to take up leadership roles in the YMCA’s venture.<sup>91</sup> In the first year, the Tientsin training class had six students, of whom one was a middle school graduate interested in physical training, another a graduate of Tongzhou Union Arts College, while the other four were drill masters or teachers of athletics in public schools in Tientsin.<sup>92</sup> Likewise, the Peking YMCA had also been conducting its training classes for many years. In each session, almost ten secretaries from local YMCAs of the North (Tientsin, and Jinan) came to

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*Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1912 to September 30, 1913, 1913; C.H. McCloy, 'C.H. McCloy, National Physical Secretary of China. Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1914', Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee 1913 to 1914, 1914; Charles A. Siler, 'C.A. Siler, M.D., Physical Director, Peking, China. Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1913', Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1912 to September 30, 1913, 1913.*

<sup>87</sup> Ibid

<sup>88</sup> Alfred H. Swan, 'A.H. Swan, Physical Director, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1914', *Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee 1913 to 1914, 1914*, p. 450.

<sup>89</sup> Alfred H. Swan, 'Alfred H. Swan, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1915', pp. 425-6.

<sup>90</sup> Charles A. Siler, 'Charles, A. Siler, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Tientsin, China. Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1915', *ibid.*, p. 506.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

Peking for training by physical directors who had been invited mainly from the Shanghai YMCA.<sup>93</sup>

### **Picture 4.1: A Boys' Camp in the Mountains in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Volleyball Tournament**



(Source: The University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, used with permission)

Physical education summer schools were also organized by the YMCA to offer training for the existing members of the YMCA. The first summer course was run in 1911 and was intended mainly as supplementary work for people already working as YMCA secretaries and physical directors.<sup>94</sup> In 1913, the Physical Department of National Committee of the YMCA set up a summer school at Mokansha to carry out leadership training. 29 secretaries, some of whom were also current and former college graduates, attended the summer school for two months.<sup>95</sup> Attendance grew fourfold in the following year. Siler and McCloy, who lead these courses, expressed a wish that the students would become enthusiastic future leaders of physical education work in

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<sup>93</sup> H. Milton Wagner, 'Annual Report, 1921, H.M. Wagner, Wuchang', *Records of YMCA International Work in China Annual and Quarterly Reports 1921-1923*, 1921, pp. 2-3.

<sup>94</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, National Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, China. Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1917', *Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1916 to September 30, 1917*, 1917, p. 45.

<sup>95</sup> C.H. McCloy, p. 4.

China.<sup>96</sup> The students performed well beyond expectations and in 1914 several students won prizes for writing inspiring essays on the theme of 'Physical Directorship as a Life-long Work'.<sup>97</sup> McCloy was highly satisfied with the results and believed that a new generation of physical directors would be cultivated through these summer training courses,<sup>98</sup> so the summer school program continued well into the 1920s until it was closed down once the Anti-Christian Movement commenced.

As well as these summer schools, which were specifically designed for physical directors and secretaries, extra physical education classes were also organized for YMCA secretaries during their summer schools.<sup>99</sup> For example, the Sixth National Secretarial Summer School was took place in Kuling, Jiangxi province from 8 July to 7 August 1918.<sup>100</sup> The chief aim of the Secretarial Summer School was to 'strengthen and deepen the personal lives of YMCA secretaries, and to increase their technical skill, thus preparing them for a useful service'.<sup>101</sup> The timetable of the daily program of this summer school would be so adjusted that, between the second and third study periods each morning, there would be a half an hour setting-up exercise that was directed by J.H. Gray, who served as the Physical Director of the National Committee. In addition, most of the afternoon would be devoted to athletic sports, like tennis, volleyball and swimming.<sup>102</sup> In fact, the whole school was deeply engaged in sports since, on three afternoons each week, the whole school would join in playing group athletic games, while on the remaining three afternoons, bike rides and picnics were also arranged, or the men were free to play any game using the school's sports equipment.<sup>103</sup> The short-term physical training programs and summer camps provided the inspiration for the establishment of the YMCA School of Physical Education, as a distinct independent unit exclusively dedicated to promoting the cause of such physical education and sport

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<sup>96</sup> Charles A. Siler, 'C.A. Siler, Physical Director, Tientsin, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1914', *ibid.*, p. 440.

<sup>97</sup> Alfred H. Swan, 'A.H. Swan, Physical Director, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1914', *ibid.*, pp. 450-1.

<sup>98</sup> C.H. McCloy, 'C.H. McCloy, National Physical Secretary of China. Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1914', *ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>99</sup> 'Record of the Sixth National Secretary Summer School, Kuling, Kiangsi Province, 8 July to 7 August 1921, Shanghai', 8 July to 7 August 1921.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*



activities. Prior to 1917 the YMCA offered only short-term physical training programs, sometimes within the YMCA building and sometimes in collaboration with local missionary institutions. After 1917, the YMCA sport related activities were directed towards excellence after launch of the first professional physical education school.

### ***The YMCA School of Physical Education and Training Abroad***

The YMCA School of Physical Education was the first institute of its kind in China to offer professional physical education training in Western sports for Chinese people. According to Siler's 1918 Annual Report (written when he was the National Physical Director of the YMCA), there were particular challenges, especially as short-term courses were also no longer sufficient to address the YMCA's vision for China's physical education that had necessitated the establishment of the YMCA School of Physical Education:

- (1) There were not sufficient numbers of trained and experienced men to take a leadership role in promoting athletics in local Associations;
- (2) Several Associations were building or planning to build but failed to realize the importance of having a man trained to head the physical department, and therefore taking no steps to train such a man;
- (3) Thirdly, the First World War made it practically impossible to get trained and experienced leaders from America.<sup>104</sup>

The suggestion to set up the YMCA School of Physical Education had first been expressed in 1915, when its establishment was called for at the Second Conference of Employed Officers of the YMCA of China in Hangzhou. However, it was not until Siler's report that the YMCA would commit itself to the task of actually establishing the school.<sup>105</sup> The YMCA School of Physical Education was finally set up at the Shanghai

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<sup>104</sup> Charles A. Siler, 'Annual Report of C.A. Siler, National Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China, for the Year Ending September 30, 1918', *China Annual Reports of Secretaries 1909-1911, Report Letters of Secretaries 1900-1928*, 1918.

<sup>105</sup> *Record of the Seventh Annual Conference of the Secretaries of the International Committee, July 23-29, 1909*, Shanghai, Association Press, 1909.

YMCA in 1917.<sup>106</sup> Subsequently, Siler moved all his trained students and directors from the Tientsin YMCA to join the school in Shanghai.<sup>107</sup> The school had a very encouraging start; Jiao Xiangzong, a former student of the YMCA School of Physical Education, notes in his memoirs that all the teachers at the YMCA School of Physical Education were both knowledgeable and well-known people in China. These attributes proved crucial in inspiring students to study Western physical education and sport at the School.<sup>108</sup>

The schools' comprehensive four-year program was devised in such a way the study program would also include a practical work experience. The first two years followed a basic curriculum (See Appendix Three), upon completion of which students would be awarded a *Xiuye degree* and obtain the title of *Tiyu Yuan* (physical education instructor).<sup>109</sup> The subsequent two years followed a more advanced curriculum (See Appendix Three), and upon graduation, students would awarded a *Tiyu degree* and qualified for the title of *Tiyu Shi* (Physical Education Director).<sup>110</sup>

To begin with, 12 students studied in the training school in the first year. Of these, nine came from other YMCA branches and the other three from different educational institutions. The program offered was originally intended only for college graduates, but for a brief time middle school graduates were also accepted.<sup>111</sup> After graduation, most of these students would serve as physical directors in different YMCA branches.<sup>112</sup> However, the training school had to be closed at the end of the spring term of 1919. This was due to lack of financial support from the Western donors recovering from the World War I, and also because Crocker, Swan, Siler and McCloy had all left on furlough without being able to find any replacements.<sup>113</sup> Swan never returned to China, Siler left

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<sup>106</sup> C.H. McCloy, 'C.H. McCloy, Associate National Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1917', *Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1916 to September 30, 1917*, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>107</sup> Charles A. Siler, 'Charles A. Siler, General Secretary, Young Men's Christian Association, Tientsin, China, Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1917', 1917.

<sup>108</sup> Xiangzong Jiao, 'Shanghai quanguo qingnian xiehui tiyu zhuanmen xuexiao' [The YMCA School of Physical Education], in E.C. Lobenstine (ed.), *Zhonghua jidujiao nianjian [The China Mission Year Book]*, Shanghai, Christian Literature Society for China, 1918, pp. 119-21.

<sup>109</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 22; J. Kolatch, p. 22.

<sup>110</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 22.

<sup>111</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 25.

<sup>112</sup> For example, after graduating in 1918, Yang Jiangxi, Dong Shouyi, and Xu Guoxiang served as physical directors of the Hong Kong YMCA, of the Tientsin YMCA, and of the Peking YMCA, respectively.

<sup>113</sup> A letter from C.H. McCloy to C.K. Wu in on June 30, 1952. Cited in Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the

to serve as a missionary elsewhere, and McCloy later became the Dean of the Physical Education Department at the National Southeastern University in Nanking.<sup>114</sup> Owing to these crises of leadership and financial support, the YMCA School of Physical Education in Shanghai never re-opened.

Nevertheless, the closing of the YMCA School of Physical Education did not necessarily mean that its program failed. Since its inception in 1917, with an enrolment of only 12 students, the YMCA School of Physical Education had already been able to increase student numbers to 26 by the time it closed down in 1919. More importantly, by 1920, graduates from the school had taken up service with the YMCAs in Peking, Tientsin, Jinan, Shanghai, Nanchang, Fuzhou, Amoy, Hong Kong and Canton.<sup>115</sup> In addition to short term courses and the short-lived School of Physical Education, the YMCA also sent a number of Chinese sports talents to Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts to study in 1919. Springfield College specialized in the training of international YMCA secretaries, and was therefore central to this training initiative. The students whom the National Committee of the YMCA selected and sent to Springfield included Hao Boyang, Hao Gengsheng, Dong Shouyi, Xu Minhui, Ma Yuehan, Wang Yicheng, and Li Youzhen. All of these students, after they had finished their studies and returned to China, served in leadership positions, working to develop Chinese physical education and sport, both in the YMCA and later under the Nationalist government.

The long-lasting influence of the YMCA's physical education training programs manifested itself through the fact that most of the Chinese sports talents and educators cultivated by the YMCA later became responsible for developing sports facilities, for carrying on the YMCA's various indoor and outdoor physical activities, and for doing teaching work in missionary or local schools throughout China. These Chinese sports experts or educators specifically played a pivotal and leading role in the development of

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Development of Physical Education in China', p. 119.

<sup>114</sup> A letter from C.H. McCloy to C.K. Wu in on June 30, 1952. Cited in *ibid.*, pp.145-8. Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China*, pp. 256-7; A.D. Morris, pp. 84-5.

<sup>115</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 25.

physical education and sport in China as the Nationalist government held sway and even after the establishment of the PRC.

### **4.4.3 Development of Sports Facilities and the YMCA's Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activities**

The field and scope of the Physical Department of the YMCA escalated efforts to spread and improve the provision of sports education in YMCA branches across China. In order to appeal to more men and boys, several working strategies were suggested at the Second Conference of Employed Officers of the YMCA of China in 1915. Some of these strategies, which were designed to determine the development of the physical education work in China, included:

- (1) Gymnasium classes for: Day School, Employed officers, Boy Scouts (members of the YMCA), regular membership, Evening School, and leaders' class.
- (2) Personal cultivation of the membership by letter, visitation and printed matter, regarding their individual needs.
- (3) Making classes attractive by the use of music games.
- (4) Taking care to protect the privileges of members of the Association by using discretion in extending courtesies to non-members.
- (5) Providing for proper light, heat, and ventilation in gymnasiums.
- (6) Special class receptions.
- (7) Circuses and exhibitions.<sup>116</sup>

These strategies for carrying out physical education work suggested at this conference were gradually implemented, particularly in regard to providing adequate facilities to enable further training and expansion. Most of the YMCAs, particularly in big cities, had their own sports field, gymnasium and various facilities which could be used for leadership training, sports clubs, or various sports demonstrations and contests.

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<sup>116</sup> *The Second Conference of Employed Officers of the YMCA of China, November 4-11, 1915, Hangzhou*, Shanghai, Association Press, 1915.

The Shanghai YMCA is an example of a development equipped with all the necessary sports facilities. The construction of its basic sports facilities on Sichuan Road took almost two years from October 1905 to November 1907. From the beginning, even though the space was limited, the sports field and facilities were adequate for basketball, volleyball, handball, gymnastics and other games.<sup>117</sup> By 1913, its basic sports facilities had developed to include a thoroughly painted physical education building with 20 sections of stall bars, a 20-foot-long overhead horizontal ladder and several large bulletin and record boards for the gymnasium. The YMCA also had a starting pistol and a stop watch to manage sports, bamboo fences for the soccer field and to protect the tennis courts, nets behind the goal posts on the athletic field, a tea urn in the locker room, an improved method of laundering towels and washing bathing suits, and so forth.<sup>118</sup> The first indoor swimming pool in China was formally opened also at the Shanghai YMCA on 1 July 1915. It was 60 by 20 feet in dimension, and was entirely tiled. The swimming pool, shower room and changing rooms were built simultaneously. Equipped with facilities for heating both the water and the rooms during the winter months, the Shanghai YMCA was able to provide a swimming training program throughout the winter.<sup>119</sup> The Shanghai YMCA provided programs from first thing in the morning until the closing of the gymnasium at 10.00 p.m. Moreover, the participants were reportedly very regular about the activities they pursued, and were regularly trained by the YMCA's physical directors or secretaries. Between 1916 and 1917, the total number of users of the gymnasium had reached 30,269.<sup>120</sup> The Shanghai YMCA would also organize at least one big indoor athletic meet for men and one or more meets for boys each year. It also arranged games in volleyball and other sports among certain YMCA member clubs and organizations as well as among private and public departments, like commercial houses, the post office and railway workers.<sup>121</sup> The

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<sup>117</sup> Xitao Ling, 'Shanghai qingnianhui tiyu gongzuo de huigu yu jianglai [Retrospect and Prospect of Physical Education Work in the Shanghai YMCA]', *Qinfen tiyu yuebao [Qinfen Sports Monthly]*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1935.

<sup>118</sup> Alfred H. Swan, 'Alfred H. Swan, Physical Director, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1913', pp. 423-34.

<sup>119</sup> Alfred H. Swan, 'Alfred H. Swan, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1915', pp. 422-4.

<sup>120</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 21.

<sup>121</sup> Alfred H. Swan, 'A.H. Swan, Physical Director, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1914', p. 449.

Number of Shanghai YMCA members registered in the physical department had increased from 110 in 1912-13 to 1348 in 1916-17.<sup>122</sup> The Shanghai YMCA became a benchmark for other branches to provide similar facilities in Peking, Tientsin, Fuzhou, Canton, Hankou and Hong Kong. Thus, this process of achieving professionalism in terms of excellence of instructors and the increasing involvement of regular members in sports activities did evolve, even if it took some time.<sup>123</sup>

**Picture 4.2:** A Shanghai YMCA Basketball Team in 1919



(Source: The University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, used with permission)

#### 4.4.4 Collaborations with Missionary and Local Schools

The higher education and short-term leadership training programs, coupled with sufficient facilities formed the basis for promoting the YMCA's aim to expand Western physical education and sport among Chinese youth. To this end, the YMCA produced *The Plan for the Promotion of Physical Education in Schools* to provide recommendations to the Educational Department of the Beiyang government in 1915. It is with this document in particular that the promotion of the YMCA Christian message

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<sup>122</sup> *Report of Statistics, 1 September 1916-31 August 1917, Shanghai Archive 1917*. Cited in J. Kolatch, p. 21.

<sup>123</sup> Yicheng Wang, 'Huiyi jidujiao qingnianhui de tiyu huodong [Memories of Chinese YMCA's Physical Activities]', in Editorial Committee of Historical Document in Sports (ed.), *Tiyu shiliao (Di shi ji) [Historical Document of Sport (10<sup>th</sup> Volume)]*, Beijing, Renmin tiyu chubanshe [People's Sports Publishing House of China], 1984, Vol. 10, p. 70.

to broader secular audiences becomes clear. It raises important questions in regard to the issue of whether the notion of cultural imperialism is sufficient a framework for understanding the YMCA's mission in China.

The Second Conference of Employed Officers of the YMCA of China at Hangzhou (4-11 November 1915), passed the resolution of *The Plan for the Promotion of Physical Education in Schools*, in which the focus was specifically on integrating YMCA's activities with state schools' physical education provision. The main points of the plan included:

- (1) Procuring of trained men from abroad;
- (2) Promoting the organization of an interscholastic athletic committee;
- (3) Cultivating a friendly and helpful relationship with leaders and teachers of athletics in schools;
- (4) Providing lectures and facilities for leaders of physical education in schools;
- (5) Circulating literature on physical education [in schools];
- (6) Promoting 'Athletics for All' at Student Summer Conferences [for non-YMCA schools];
- (7) Formulating a uniform system of nomenclature of physical education and encouraging its use throughout the country.<sup>124</sup>

These objectives were descriptive of the YMCA's broader ambitions for China and the strategies by which these were to be achieved, especially in the period 1908–1919. Accordingly, the physical department of the YMCA cooperated very closely with schools including both the missionary and local schools to support this grand plan. If a school located near one of the YMCA branches made a request for help with the provision of their physical education, the physical directors in the area would always respond very positively to such requests.<sup>125</sup> The practical effect of this was that within

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<sup>124</sup> Zhengjie Cai, *YMCA and the Development of Physical Education and Sport in Modern China (1895–1928)*, Master Thesis, Taipei Normal University, 1992, p. 95.

<sup>125</sup> Grant Jarvie, Dong Jhy Hwang, and Mel Brennan, *Sport, Revolution and the Beijing Olympics*, Oxford, Berg, 2008, p. 33; Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', pp. 141–4.

the local education sector and more broadly among the general public, the YMCA became synonymous with physical education and sport.

However, the success of the YMCA's physical program not only depended on the efforts of the missionaries and physical directors, but also on the changing attitude of the Chinese towards modern physical education and sport and on their readiness to seek help from the YMCA in this regard. It also depended on the willingness of local governors, educators and students to cooperate with the YMCA personnel. In order to illustrate how the YMCA had actually affected the broader Chinese education policy and the native response it elicited will now be discussed by considering the linkages between the YMCA and both the Christian and native educational institutions in the South, East and West of China. This will further link our discussion to the subsequent sections where we also explain how the efforts of the YMCA in promoting physical education and sport also determined the pace and outlook of the project of popularizing Christian religion in China.

### *The Fuzhou and Canton YMCAs in South China*

Fuzhou YMCA was effective in having a direct impact on the public school physical education policy in South China from 1917. The way in which it achieved this was through providing educational courses and conferences for school teachers on physical education pedagogies. In September 1917, the branch organized a conference for higher primary school teachers from the surrounding provinces. Pang and Leake, two renowned physical directors of the Fuzhou YMCA, delivered a keynote speech on the 'Adaptability of Physical Education to Higher Primary Schools' arguing the case for the urgent inclusion of physical education in the general curriculum, and provided some practical advice as to how this was to be achieved at the local level. The conference was very well attended with almost 100 teachers from the entire northern part of Fujian province.<sup>126</sup> Leake continued to teach several physical education classes a week at

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<sup>126</sup> R.A. Leake, 'R.A. Leake, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Foochow, China, Annual Report for the Year



Fuzhou Union Theological Seminary, Fuzhou Union Normal College and Fujian Union College to provide further instruction to teachers who were interested in introducing physical education in their schools. He devoted two and a half days to work in these colleges every week, and the classes were well attended.<sup>127</sup>

The Canton YMCA was even more successful in introducing physical education work in South China. In 1919, the principal of the Canton Higher Normal School came to the Canton YMCA to ask if the Association could help in training 34 students who were prospective candidates to become physical education teachers after they graduated from school. These men were mainly from the large cities of the province of Canton though four students were from the adjoining province of Guangxi. This provided the YMCA an opportunity to work with significant public educational institutes such the Canton Normal School, which had almost 7,000 students at the time. According to the YMCA's leaders at the time, this presented them with the potential to evangelize a number of teachers, who would – if converted to Christianity – have access to no less than 35 million people living in these two provinces. The Association therefore immediately granted the request and provided a foreign instructor to train these 34 students at the school for four hours a week. While the instruction was carried out for free, the School was required to allow the students to join the Association and pay membership fees which then entitled them to use the YMCA building for training. Moreover, the Association had all the authority to carry the training program as it desired. Interestingly, the Normal School was only too happy to comply, and even requested for more hours of training to be provided for the students.<sup>128</sup> In this case, the YMCA's approach to using physical education to evangelize school children was initially met with very little resistance, possibly because Christianity was associated with Western modernity which the YMCA's program was seen to promote.

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Ending September 30, 1917', *Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1916 to September 30, 1917*, 1917, pp. 281-2.

<sup>127</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China. Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1916', *Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1915 to September 30, 1916*, 1916, pp. 42-3; R.A. Leake, pp. 281-2.

<sup>128</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China. Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1916', pp. 42-3.

However, while the signs for the YMCA were promising with one student of this class already a practicing Christian, a student strike at the Normal School to resist what was seen as a 'Western imperialist religious encroachment', cut short all Bible classes. Therefore, while the physical education classes were successful in training many students, only two more students converted to Christianity.<sup>129</sup> This raises some questions about the actual effectiveness of YMCA's activities as a form of cultural and religious imperialism. While the aims of the Association were clearly focused on the perceived need to convert the masses to Christianity, the actual Chinese response evidences a much more complex negotiated process of the selective localization of practices that were seen to be useful for China.

### *Shanghai YMCA in East China*

The Shanghai YMCA was in many ways a pioneer in introducing physical education work in China. At first, 11 local schools sent leaders for instruction one night a week in the Association gymnasium. Later, Fudan College, a government-run educational institute, requested assistance for training its staff to carry out the physical education work independently. The Shanghai YMCA provided secretaries who delivered lectures, gave demonstrations to the students, and had the sports apparatus designed to be used in the school premises. Before drawing on the support of the YMCA and until the Association supplied all equipment necessary to construct a track and field, Fudan College had run only soccer training with less than adequate facilities.<sup>130</sup> Although it is difficult to find any evidence, this altruistic move on Swan's part as YMCA director is a conspicuous case of winning over the support of the locals in a move that ultimately would count in the organization's original agenda of popularizing the Christian religion and Western culture.

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<sup>129</sup> Tracey K. Jones, 'Annual Report Letter of T.K. Jones, Acting Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Canton, China, for the Year Ending September 30, 1919', *Annual Reports and Annual Report Letters of Foreign Secretaries in China 1919: Volume 1*, 1919, p. 2.

<sup>130</sup> Alfred H. Swan, 'A.H. Swan, Physical Director, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1914', p. 451.

### *Tientsin YMCA in North China*

In the autumn of 1915, Crocker and McCloy visited Tientsin at the invitation of Physical Department of the Tientsin YMCA. They gave talks on physical education over a period of ten days and demonstrated sports activities in some schools and the Association building of the city. Their training sessions also included a series of lectures (particularly designed for inspiring teachers in government schools) on the subject of 'The Physical Basis of Education' which aimed at popularizing modern Western physical education and sport in local schools. Their work was so influential that just a few months later the local government required all students in government schools to be trained in at least two kinds of modern, Western-style athletics. As there were no Chinese instructors available, all the schools once again had to turn to the Association for help to train instructors for schools. By the spring of 1916, Tientsin YMCA worked in 11 different schools in the area, training teachers in physical education. The Higher Normal College even commissioned the Association to find them a physical education director from America to lead the development of the curriculum at the School. Moreover, owing to the fact that no sports equipment was sold anywhere in Tientsin, the YMCA in Tientsin not only managed athletics and sports equipment at its own facility, but supplied it to the local schools as well. A supply order for over \$400 (US Dollars) worth of athletic goods which were paid for by the Tientsin government for government schools was thus placed at its disposal.<sup>131</sup> These athletic goods were imported from the America through the Tientsin YMCA.

The YMCA's activities and cooperation with public educational institutions were therefore at the heart of introducing organized physical education to China. Moreover, the leading figures, such as Crocker and McCloy as mentioned above, were involved in promoting the YMCA agenda of physical education in schools. They soon also realized that there was profit to be made out of this new interest in athletics and sports, which

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<sup>131</sup> J.C. Clark, 'J.C. Clark, Boys' Secretary, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1916', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Shanghai*, 1916, p. 487.

could be used to support further development of the YMCAs in China. In addition, supervised by McCloy, the physical department of the YMCA designed a general syllabus for schools and physical education training classes organized by the YMCA. There was also provided a number of textbooks on physical education to assist in this training in these classes there were also provided a number of textbooks on physical education. The most widely-used textbooks at that time were: *A Syllabus of Methods and Pedagogy of Gymnastics and Athletics*, *A Syllabus of Physical Education for the Primary Schools of China*<sup>132</sup>, *Textbook for Training School Courses*, *Gymnastic Nomenclature*, *The Apparatus Work of the Physical Directors' Society*, *Berry and Cornell's Manual of Marching*, *Syllabi on Methods and Pedagogy of Physical Education*, *Anthropometry, Physiology of Exercise*<sup>133</sup>, *Physical Department Handbook*, *Apparatus Work*, *Track and Field Technique*, and *Construction and By-laws of Athletic Governing Bodies*. In addition to these syllabi for the training schools, certain rules and regulations for different sports were also introduced. In this period, rules for volleyball, indoor baseball, tennis, soccer, and track and field were published in both Chinese and English by the YMCA Publication Department.<sup>134</sup> These textbooks were introduced into China were an imitation of Western textbooks of physical education in educational institutions and the physical department of the International Committee of the YMCA. They show how YMCA's physical education program in China was becoming scientific and systematic, and these books were the earliest on the rules of sports in China. Around this time, there was a real push for the 'scientific' Christian understanding of the body in the West where the mind is seen external to the body and within which the body must be controlled and mastered by the mind.<sup>135</sup> YMCA's physical education work in China, even though it was always connected with evangelical work, was thus brought together with a wider project of modernization, as the missionaries now took part in

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<sup>132</sup> C.H. McCloy, 'C.H. McCloy, Associate National Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Nanking, China. Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1916', *Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1915 to September 30, 1916*, 1916, pp. 48-9.

<sup>133</sup> C.H. McCloy, 'C.H. McCloy, Associate National Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1917', p. 65.

<sup>134</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China. Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1916', pp. 42-6.

<sup>135</sup> P.E.S. Freund and M. Fisher, *The Civilized Body: Social Domination, Control, and Health*, Temple University Press, 1982, p. 8; P.E.S. Freund, 'Bringing Society into the Body—Understanding Socialized Human Nature', in A. Blaikie (ed.), *The Body: Sociology, Nature, and the Body*, London, Taylor&Francis, 1988, pp. 133-55.

‘transforming the world’s most populous nation’ to mimic the emerging Western-led global modernity.<sup>136</sup>

### 4.4.5 The Link between Physical Education and Evangelical Work in the YMCA

The YMCA’s physical education work and these textbooks were being developed in order to professionalize and systematic physical and sport education. Besides, once the students had started following a particular routine, they would soon become familiar with Christianity, not just through formal Bible classes but also through informal and discreet references in the lectures by Christian instructors. This is what the missionaries and the organizations working at their behest strove to achieve a situation in which sports were being utilized to express Christian ideals in relation to character.<sup>137</sup> The pioneer physical directors would make it a point to teach Bible to all the trainee directors in the Bible school. Some of these trainee directors, especially the indigenous ones, had to attend the Bible school. These measures were instituted to stress upon them the importance of religion – to the extent that, most of the time the aspiring indigenous directors would make the decision to become Christians. In effect, for the YMCA directors, their project was both a temporal and spiritual pursuit of the welfare of self and of others.<sup>138</sup>

The sensibility of the YMCA physical directors was so imbued with such spirit of work that even though preaching of the faith was not allowed in government schools or other government organizations, they would often manage turn the discussion around to religion when they visited these institutions to teach. McCloy, in his 1918 Annual Report Letter as the Physical Director of the YMCA, admits the discreet preaching practices that the physical directors were encouraged to follow:

We may address schools and other agencies where we are in a way tacitly pledged

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<sup>136</sup> Mark Dyreson, 'Imperial 'Deep Play': Reading Sport and Visions of the Five Empires of the 'New World', 1919–1941', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 28, no. 17, 2011, p. 2429.

<sup>137</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China. Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1916', pp. 42-6.

<sup>138</sup> L.G. Bates, 'Administrative Report, Lewis G. Bates, National Secretary for Physical Education, Y.M.C.A Nanking, China, January 14, 1922', *Records of YMCA International Work in China Annual and Quarterly Reports 1921–1923*, 1922, p. 10.

not to preach. And we may not do so, or we will not again have an opportunity. But we can and do mention that fact that we are Christians, or say somewhere in the speech, 'We of the Christian Association', or, 'We Christians', or something of the kind, and try to associate our message with the Christian Church. And as our message always has something in it of help for China, we try thus to tie up the idea of the salvation of China with the Christian ideal. And in many cases, we know of its bearing fruit, as when we get letters from men who want to study physical education with us in order to be associated with a Christian organization that is working for their land.<sup>139</sup>

According to McCloy, leading and 'helping' Chinese men and boys to accept the Christian ideal was the duty of the physical directors and secretaries of the YMCA. Under their efforts, this missionary work bore some fruit as is evident in the lasting legacy of the Amoy, Shanghai and Nanking YMCAs.

John Bradshaw, the Physical Director and Associate Secretary of the Amoy YMCA mentioned in his 1919 Annual Report how the physical education work carried out by the YMCA attracted not just men and boys but also the whole community and that it was a very effective means of popularizing even the YMCA's religious meetings and classes.<sup>140</sup> Bradshaw's view is supported by the huge success of the Second Amoy Athletic Contest in November 1915:

They [the contest events] were attended by the Governor and his staff, who also met the entire expenses of the Meet. You will remember that we conducted the first athletic games in that city, afterwards, two important schools, which had hitherto been closed to all approaches of Christianity, were thrown open, and our men invited to lecture. Later on Bible classes were started among the students of these

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<sup>139</sup> C.H. McCloy, 'Annual Report Letter of C.H. McCloy, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, China. For the Year Ending September 30, 1918', *China Annual Reports of Secretaries 1909-1911, Report Letters of Secretaries 1900-1928*, 1918, p. 5.

<sup>140</sup> Bradshaw John, 'John Bradshaw, Physical Director and Associate Secretary, Young Men's Christian Association, Amoy, China. Annual Report September 9, 1919', *Annual Reports and Annual Report Letters of Foreign Secretaries in China 1919, Volume 1*, 1919, pp. 2-4.

schools, with an attendance of over forty. Another outcome of the game was the subscription of money sufficient to provide a physical director, with the result that John Bradshaw was called, and has been at work since the first of October.<sup>141</sup>

The contest inspired awe and led many other local educational institutes to emulate and adopt the YMCA's physical as well as religious activities. The YMCA management, for its part, ensured that religious work remained their prime focus, especially after 1918, when changes had to be made to the running of the organization's religious activities as a result of the considerable extension of the YMCA's physical education work.<sup>142</sup> Attendance at the YMCA Bible classes had risen from an average of about five to an average of 71, and from a former high of 12 to over 100 on several occasions. At the same time, 15 YMCA members from among its former students and teachers had taken a firm stand and declared themselves Christians in non-Christian schools and business houses. Bradshaw and his fellow pioneer directors had worked especially hard to convert these men. As a result, the principal of the Amoy Government Middle School, a very influential local man, also became Christian and devoted both his influence and time to promoting the YMCA and its work. In the meantime, Bradshaw remained constantly involved with a student Bible class from which he expected that men who, after converting to Christianity would, in turn, motivate many other fellow Chinese to take part in the Christian cause.<sup>143</sup>

The Shanghai and Nanking YMCAs in eastern China were also among those leading Association branches which had established Christian bases in their localities. To start with, the Shanghai YMCA managed to convince only two students from Changshu, Jiangsu province to attend an introductory meeting on Christianity. However, these two students became enormously inquisitive about Christianity, and started attending church regularly. In time, they found their experience so satisfying that they invited their

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<sup>141</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China. Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1916', p. 44.

<sup>142</sup> John Bradshaw, 'John Bradshaw, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Amoy, China. Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1918', *Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1917 to September 30, 1918*, 1918, pp. 113-4.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

friends to the Association. Later, a large number of physical directors came through the combined physical and spiritual program of the Association in Shanghai.<sup>144</sup>

At the Nanking YMCA, the physical education work had a comparatively satisfactory start according to L.G. Bates (physical director of Nanking YMCA). Bates noticed during the four Bible classes he conducted that the members showed an intelligent interest not only in the spiritual problems of their lives but also in the religious instruction they received in English. Promising outcomes soon became evident when, at a conference on the Physical Directorship, 35 outstanding students from the Southeast University School of Physical Education vowed to earnestly take up evangelical work. This development led to positive result for the YMCA as these men later dispersed all over China. Thus, their education at the Nanking YMCA had inspired in them 'spiritual objectives which would help and influence their work as physical directors' later in life.<sup>145</sup>

In short then, the primary objective of the pioneer physical directors in China was to lay the foundation for instilling Christian character among the Chinese youth, as well as striving to produce healthy and useful citizens.<sup>146</sup> The next section will elaborate upon the role of the Christian institutions in initiating and developing athletic games in China from 1908 to 1919 and the Chinese response to these sports games and competitions.

### **4.5 The Establishment of Sport Competition and Athletic Games**

Already, from the turn of the twentieth century, small-scale, local, interscholastic athletic contests were being organized by missionary educational institutions and the YMCA (see section 3.3.2). From 1908 until 1919 development of these athletic contests became increasingly visible as the number of the missionary educational institutions and YMCAs increased. It was also a proof positive of the growing acceptability of the

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<sup>144</sup> C.H. McCloy, 'Annual Report Letter of C.H. McCloy, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, China. For the Year Ending September 30, 1918', pp. 4-5.

<sup>145</sup> L.G. Bates, p. 1.

<sup>146</sup> Physical Directors' Society of the Young Men's Christian Associations of North America, p. 71.



physical education and sport programs of the Christian institutions among the Chinese populace. In response to this change in attitude of the Chinese people, the physical directors began to focus on promoting these athletic contests, and streamlining contacts and collaborations with local educational institutions and government officials.<sup>147</sup> For example, physical directors from the Shanghai YMCA were invited to assist with provincial athletic meets in Yangzhou and Hangzhou.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, the Physical Department of the Guangzhou YMCA organized the interscholastic athletic meets in the city.<sup>149</sup> In this period, in addition to these local athletic activities holding regional, national and international games, such as the FECCG, were driven by the YMCA in China. However, it is equally important to note that the success of these athletic games in China was actually also dependent on the degree to which the locals judged their 'value and usefulness' according to the existing norms and traditional situation in China. Thus, the games that flourished in China were those that were suited to and also contributed to the development of the local circumstances.<sup>150</sup>

### **4.5.1 Regional and National Athletic Associations Organized by the YMCA**

Local athletic games grew under the regional athletic associations which were developed through the contribution of either a single YMCA, or through cooperation between a few neighbouring YMCA branches. These regional athletic associations together constituted the China National Athletic Union (CNAU), which served as both an advisory and a supervisory body in organizing various athletic contests at the national level. Notably, the CNAU also worked under the purview of the YMCA, as the YMCA directors held a number of key positions in the Union. The developments leading to the initiation of the regional (North, East, Central and South China) and national athletic associations in China and the working out of the mechanisms for collaboration among them by the YMCA will be explored in the following sections.

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<sup>147</sup> R.A. Leake, 'Annual Report of R.A. Leake, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Foochow, China, for the Year Ending September 30, 1918', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Foochow*, 1918, p. 204.

<sup>148</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China. Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1916', p. 42.

<sup>149</sup> Tracey K. Jones, 'Annual Report Letter of T.K. Jones, Acting Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Canton, China, for the Year Ending September 30, 1919', p. 3.

<sup>150</sup> Andrew Porter, p. 386.

### *Regional Athletic Associations*

#### **Northern China**

Since its inception in 1895, the Tientsin YMCA had emphasized the promotion of Western sports competitions. It began holding the Tientsin Annual Athletic Contests (TAAC) for local educational institutions from 1902 onwards. Gradually, the contests became popular in the region, especially after the sixth TAAC in 1909, and prominent schools from outside Tientsin were also allowed to take part in the contest. For example, North China Union College sent a team for the first time in 1909.<sup>151</sup> The next year Peking University (Huiwen Academy) and North China Union College were represented in this contest, and a team was also sent from the Tangshan Engineering College of Hebei province.<sup>152</sup> Later, around seven regional schools joined the Contest. The growing popularity of these contests, in particular the abiding influence these were exerting on the public consciousness in terms of making them more receptive to Western ideas about sporty and muscular bodies convinced the YMCA leaders of the need to establish an athletic association for North China to organize and manage regional athletic games in this area as well.<sup>153</sup>

Therefore, a proposal to establish the Peking Athletic Association (PAA) was suggested in 1910 by the General Director of the Peking YMCA A.H. Hoagland before the holding of the First National Games (see section 4.5.2). According to the proposal, the PAA was to assist the Peking YMCA in selecting athletes to compete in the First National Games. Additionally, it would also provide central organization and management for intercollegiate athletic contests in Peking.<sup>154</sup> After a few years' preparation, the PAA was finally established in early 1913,<sup>155</sup> and Hoagland served as the first general

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<sup>151</sup> G. Hoh, p. 164.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> R.M. Hersey, 'Report of R.M. Hersey, General Secretary, Tientsin', *Annual Reports of Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1910 to September 30, 1911*, 1911, p. 214.

<sup>154</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', pp. 123-7; J. Kolatch, p. 16.

<sup>155</sup> G. Hoh, p. 165.

secretary of the PAA.<sup>156</sup>

On 24 May 1913, the PAA invited all educational institutions in northern China to take part in the First North China Athletic Meet (NCAM), which was to be held at the Temple of Heaven in Peking.<sup>157</sup> One of the important aims of this competition was to train and select regional athletes who could potentially compete in the National Games. However, this regional event itself required appropriate management and an administration to run its affairs, so measures were taken in this regard. Arthur Shoemaker from Tsinghua College, Wang Zhengting from Tientsin Nankai College and A.N. Hoagland from Peking YMCA in northern China proposed that a committee meeting should be held before the meet to draft a constitution for a North China Athletic Association (NCAA).<sup>158</sup> This committee, chaired by Arthur Shoemaker, adopted the constitution according to which the First NCAM would be run.<sup>159</sup> Establishing an independent supervisory body was a difficult task in a limited time frame, so out of expediency the PAA was authorized to act as the executive committee of the NCAA for one year.<sup>160</sup> The situation changed once the NCAA became officially organized and finally assumed its constitution in May 1914.<sup>161</sup> The NCAA grew steadily, and six NCAMs were held in a number of cities across North China such as Tientsin, Peking, Paoting and Taiyuan between 1908 and 1919.<sup>162</sup>

### Eastern China

The NCAA was the earliest regional athletic association, and enjoyed much popularity. The East China Athletic Association (ECAA), which had been established on 2 January 1914<sup>163</sup> to resemble the NCAA, did not enjoy the popularity and overwhelming success of the latter, though it still played almost an equally crucial role in the dissemination of Western physical education and sport in East China. The ECAA was founded when

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Raymond S. Hall, 'Report of R.S. Hall, Associate Secretary, Tientsin', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Tientsin*, 1911, p. 222.

<sup>157</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 124.

<sup>158</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 16.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> G. Hoh, p. 165.

<sup>161</sup> Compiling Committee of the Tianjin Chronicles, p. 348.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> G. Hoh, pp. 162-201.

representatives from various athletic organizations, Christian and governmental educational institutions in East China and the Shanghai YMCA were attending a conference in Shanghai.<sup>164</sup> The ECAA later successfully selected and sent an East China delegation to participate in the Second National Games of 1914 in Peking. However, the ECAA was disbanded in 1915 because of internal frictions among the executive members.<sup>165</sup> In eastern China, the ECAA was not the only organization working for the promotion of sports and athletic contests. The Intercollegiate Athletic Federation was another noteworthy body established by R.D. Smart on 15 May 1914, which had also been significantly contributing to the ECAA all along for the promotion of sports in East China. Its role became all the more crucial after the dissolution of the ECAA.<sup>166</sup>

### Central China

Owing to the YMCA's attention being focussed on port and metropolitan cities like Shanghai and Peking in the earlier years of setting foot in China, regional organizations in Central China (as in the provinces of Anhui, Jiangsu, and Hubei) had a belated start. As a result of the late arrival of the physical directors to the region, the YMCA did not begin its physical education work in Central China until 1916.<sup>167</sup> Prior to this, the athletic competitions in this area had been organized by the leading missionary educational institutions for instance, Boone University of Wuchang and Yale College of Changsha, which held an annual Intercollegiate Soccer Contest.<sup>168</sup> Since the time that it had been established by the Wuchang YMCA in 1917 the Central China Athletic Association (CCAA) had also been contributing, for all practical purposes, towards the development of the athletic contests and sports due to their growing popularity among the masses. This mirrors what had happened in the cases of the NCAA and ECAA. However, owing to the shortage of training and management staff, and lack of educational institutions in the region, the CCAA had to be dissolved. This consequently slowed down the development of physical education and sport activities in the region,

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<sup>164</sup> Alfred H. Swan, 'A.H. Swan, Physical Director, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1914', pp. 451-2.

<sup>165</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 16.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> G. Hoh, p. 172.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

though the local YMCAs kept organizing various athletic competitions of their own.<sup>169</sup>

### **Southern China**

Unlike the North, East and Central China regions, South China (comprising Canton, Fujian and Guangxi provinces and Hong Kong) was never able to develop an extensive official regional athletic organization. Rather several formal athletic associations strove independently to achieve the YMCA's regional sports objective to manage their local sports events in the South. For instance, the South China Athletic Association of Hong Kong, established in 1908 was one of the earliest athletic associations known in China, and made worthwhile contributions in this regard.<sup>170</sup>

The Canton Athletic Association (CAA), which held its first formal athletic meet in 1909 in Canton, was another pioneer physical education organization in the southern territories.<sup>171</sup> The CAA introduced and worked to spread Western sports such as basketball and volleyball in this area. However, the Canton YMCA, which orchestrated the establishment of the CAA, sought to maintain a leading position in relation to the promotion of sports contests. For instance, it was the Canton YMCA secretaries who introduced soccer, basketball, and volleyball to the region in 1910. In fact, the first basketball team in Canton was also formed by YMCA secretary Xu Minhui and it was the Canton YMCA that established the volleyball league for middle schools in South China in 1913.<sup>172</sup> After 1916, the Canton YMCA even organized the Canton Athletic League for competitions at several age levels, as well as starting the Canton tennis and volleyball leagues for girls.<sup>173</sup> With the efforts of these physical directors, modern sports and physical activities were becoming more popular, especially with the Chinese young people. In fact, the overwhelming enthusiasm of the Chinese youth in South China for the modern sports and physical activities in Northern, Eastern or Central

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<sup>169</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 16. Even the First Central China Athletic Meet (CCAM) in 1923 was held under the aegis of the local YMCAs. The Central China Athletic Association (CCAA) was not established until 1924, at the Second CCAM.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Francis E. Wilber, 'F.E. Wilber, Association Secretary, Young Men's Christian Association, Canton, China. Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1915', *Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee October 1, 1914 to September 30, 1915*, 1915, pp. 160-2.

<sup>173</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 16.

China encouraged the individual YMCA physical directors to carry out their programs despite the great geographical area and lack of coordination among the YMCAs which meant that there was no establishment of a regional body on the pattern of the NCAA, ECAA, and CCAA.

### *The China National Athletic Union (CNAU)*

With the spread of sports activities and athletic games throughout China, virtually all the major administrative areas – that is, North, East, Central and South China – were conducting local physical education work very successfully through their respective regional athletic associations.<sup>174</sup> However, a national athletic federation was needed to assume overall control, especially owing to next level activities pertaining to the National Games (see section 4.5.2) and China's participation in the FECG (see section 4.5.3). On the occasion of the Fourth FECG in Manila in May 1919, the proposal was extended for the establishment of such a federation, which would be responsible for the selecting and training Chinese athletes from a considerable number of the provinces to represent China. Indeed, by this time, the positive impact of the working of various regional organizations and the YMCAs in each area was already yielding number of potential athletes who were able to participate in both national and international level sports contests. A committee was appointed immediately to draw up and present a constitution and by-laws, which were passed on 30 September 1919.<sup>175</sup> The federation's name was the CNAU, and it presumably modelled the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) of the North American YMCA. Although the CNAU was established in 1921, the first two National Games had been organized under the dynamic leadership of such YMCA directors like J.H. Crocker and C.H. McCloy.

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<sup>174</sup> H. Sun, p. 85.

<sup>175</sup> R.A. Leake, 'Third Annual Report of R.A. Leake, Physical Director, Foochow, China, to Foreign Department of the International Committee for the Year Ending Sept. 30, 1919', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Foochow*, 1919, pp. 4-5.

### 4.5.2 The First Two National Games

By the first decades of the twentieth century, Western sports had gained a significant foothold in China under the auspices of the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA. However, given the enormous expanse of the country, one could say that those promoting physical education and sport had still only ‘scratched the surface in China’, both in terms of the enormous number of people residing in China, and that their influence was restricted mainly to urban areas.<sup>176</sup> In order to expand the influence of the Western sports and athletic games, the Physical Director of the Shanghai YMCA, Exner and his colleagues decided to hold a nationwide athletic meet. Exner clearly outlined the objectives behind the athletic meet in his 1911 article entitled ‘Physical Training in China’. For Exner, the athletic meet was aimed at drawing nationwide interest in and attention to physical training; his aim was essentially to use national sports events to gain visibility. The second aim was to highlight the need for shared sports ethics and help set uniform standards for athletic events throughout China. This would not just ensure equality in terms of the educational standards in each region but also inspire sportsmen to prepare themselves for the required level of practice, irrespective of the disadvantages they faced locally, because that would ultimately sustain them in national and international contests. He believed that the meet would offer the YMCA a golden opportunity to approach many of the government educational institutions through the promotion of large scale competitive events. The ultimate aim was to facilitate more contact between the indigenous people and the foreign Christians, thus removing prejudice against Christianity. As regards the traditional Chinese perspectives on physicality, which played down the virtues of physical prowess, the meet was seen as a practical opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of embracing the bodily ideals of the West that emphasised healthy, muscular bodies.<sup>177</sup> Thus, the expectations were high from the two national game contests held between 1908 and 1919.

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<sup>176</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 11.

<sup>177</sup> M.J. Exner, ‘Report of M.J. Exner, Physical Director, Shanghai’, *Reports of Foreign Secretaries 1910–1911*, 1911, p. 199.

### *The First China National Athletic Meet/the First National Games*

It was planned that the First China National Athletic Meet (also known as the First National Games) be held during the Nanyang Industry Exposition in Nanking in the spring of 1910. The intention was to procure maximum publicity for the athletic meet by harnessing the influence of the Exposition. However, the request that the meet take place concurrently with the Exposition was initially turned down by the managers of the latter. Following the refusal, the YMCA proceeded to organize a very successful athletics show at a Chinese theatre in Nanking. This alerted the Exposition managers to the potential financial benefits of the athletic meet, and persuaded them to invite Exner to attend their preparatory conference during which they proposed to review their decision.<sup>178</sup> After an agreement was reached with the organizers of the Exposition, the National Committee of the YMCA of China offered to bear the bulk of the financial burden of roughly \$2,500 for different activities and prizes for winners.<sup>179</sup>

Having fulfilled all the requirements well before the First National Athletic Meet was held in Nanking in 1910, Exner also established the First National Athletic Alliance of Regional Students Team (NAARST, *Quanguo xuexiao qufendui diyici tiyu tongmenghui*), a national athletic committee charged with supervising the Meet.<sup>180</sup> This committee had 16 members, eight Chinese and eight foreigners. The committee was also required to arrange preliminary games in the five identified sections of the country, that is, North China, Wuhan, Wuning, Shanghai and South China, which all sent representative delegations to these preliminary games.<sup>181</sup>

Holding of the preliminary games was later seen as a means of drawing ‘large entries and great crowds of spectators’ and to be ‘great benefit in attracting local interest in

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 12; M.J. Exner, 'Report of M.J. Exner, Physical Director, Shanghai', p. 199.

<sup>180</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 12.

<sup>181</sup> Hugh A. Moran, pp. 122-3; Compiling Committee of the Tianjin Chronicles, p. 321.



Wester style sports'.<sup>182</sup> The games also were helpful for the players as the athletes competing in different events were able to comparatively assess, through results, their own and their opponents' abilities (vis-à-vis winning times, strategies, and so forth).<sup>183</sup> The First NAARST thus became a benchmark for the subsequent meets.<sup>184</sup> Each region of the aforementioned sections of China developed its own committee which worked hard to ensure regional participation in the preliminary contests. These regional committees also had the final say in the selection of the regional teams to participate in the National Games, and raised all required funds to partake in the national competitions.<sup>185</sup>

The First National Athletic Meet, which was now being generally referred as 'the First National Games in China', was held in Nanking from 17 to 22 October 1910 in collaboration with the Nanyang Industry Exposition.<sup>186</sup> One hundred and forty athletes representing the five regions participated in the Games. There were 20 athletes from the north China (from cities such as Peking, Tientsin and Tungchou), 21 from Wuhan, 31 from Wuning (including Suzhou and Nanking), 40 from Shanghai and 28 from South China (including Canton and Hong Kong).<sup>187</sup> The Games mainly included track and field, soccer, tennis and basketball, and the athletic contests comprised six events:

- (1) A national track and field meet for teams representing the five sections.
- (2) A middle school national track and field meet for the five sections.
- (3) An intercollegiate track and field meet.
- (4) A national tennis tournament.
- (5) A national soccer tournament.
- (6) A national basketball tournament.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Hugh A. Moran, pp. 122-3.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> M.J. Exner, 'Report of M.J. Exner, Physical Director, Shanghai', p. 199.

<sup>185</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 12.

<sup>186</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3]*, p. 144.

<sup>187</sup> Jianhui Zhang and Bingshu Zhong, '1910-1948 quanyunhui zhidu de lishi kaocha [A Research on the Modern National Games System (1910-1948)]', *Tiyu xuekan [Journal of Physical Education]*, vol. 17, no. 8, 2010, p. 18.

<sup>188</sup> G. Hoh, p. 96; M.J. Exner, 'Report of M.J. Exner, Physical Director, Shanghai', p. 199.

The participants were divided into three different levels: senior sectional (open to all), intercollegiate, and middle school/junior group (for those aged 15 to 20).<sup>189</sup> However, the age-specific compartmentalization was not strictly regulated at the Meet and athletes participating in one category could compete in the others – particularly in the sense that those from the junior or senior group could compete in the intercollegiate group.<sup>190</sup> The participants in the intercollegiate group mostly came from the following six schools; St John's University, Nanyang Public School, Tientsin YMCA Board School, Wuchang Wenhua University, Tientsin Industry College, and Xiehe Academy.<sup>191</sup> Moreover, most of the athletes were students from missionary educational institutions or YMCA schools. Shanghai was winner of the Senior Group, North China was the winner of the Junior Group, and in the Intercollegiate Group, St John's University held the first place, Nanyang Public School second, and Tientsin YMCA Board School third.<sup>192</sup> (See Appendix One) Given the limited knowledge of Western sports among locals, all the major officials and referees for the 1910 games were foreigners and the official language of the Games was English.<sup>193</sup> Moreover, despite only six institutions having sent participants to the First National Games, the idea of the national games proved successful in time.

### *The Second National Games*

The Second National Games were held at the Temple of Heaven in Peking from 21 to 22 May 1914. In contrast to the First National Games, these games were originally called the First National United Athletic Meet (*Diyici quanguo lianhe yundong dahui*) but were widely referred to as the Second National Games.<sup>194</sup> This event was organized under the auspices of the PAA, which had close ties to the Peking YMCA. Therefore, like the First National Games, the second national athletic meet was also chiefly under

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<sup>189</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 20.

<sup>190</sup> 'Quanguo yundong dahui tekan (1935) [Special Issue on the National Games (1935)]', in Chengdu tiyu xueyuan tiyushi yanjiusuo [Chengdu Sport University Sport History Research Institution] (ed.), *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi cankao ziliao* [Historical Document on Sport History in Modern China], Sichuan, Sichuan jiaoyu chubanshe [Sichuan Education Publishing House], 1986, p. 470.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> G. Xu, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895–2008*, p. 26.

<sup>194</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 19.

the supervision of the YMCA. Hoagland, Secretary of the Peking YMCA and general secretary of the NCAA, served as the general director of the committee constituted to coordinate these Games.<sup>195</sup> Once again, preliminary meets were held in each section to select the section's representatives and to promote the Games.<sup>196</sup> Some 298 athletes participated in the Second Games, representing four sections, East, West, North and South.<sup>197</sup> Compared with the First National Games, this Meet was much simpler, as there were no defined categories, that is, junior, senior or intercollegiate divisions.<sup>198</sup> Additionally in comparison with the First National Games, the Second National Games was not confined to the missionary educational institutions and the YMCAs; rather, entry into all events was open to the entire sports talent of China, irrespective of any age-related specificities or institutional affiliations.<sup>199</sup> In addition to organizing track and field, soccer, basketball and tennis contests like in the First National Games, two new events volleyball and baseball were added to the program.<sup>200</sup> A greater refinement in the way in which the events were conducted was also obvious. In addition, decathlon and pentathlon were added in the track and field competitions.<sup>201</sup> Most of the referees in the games were still foreigners and the rules for the competitive events were written in English. Even though only small number of Chinese joined in the referee team, it was the beginning of indigenization of the event.

The Second National Meet was spectacular by Chinese standards. The stadium was packed to capacity with a crowd of nearly 15,000 spectators, both foreigners and Chinese, watching the first day's competition. The second day's events were accompanied by music from an official Presidential Palace Marching Band and an air show was put on by the Nanyuan Aviation School. The planes scattered coloured confetti and leaflets on the crowd in the Temple of Heaven grounds.<sup>202</sup> To add colour to

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<sup>195</sup> G. Hoh, p. 95.

<sup>196</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 13.

<sup>197</sup> Mingxin Tang, *Woguo canjia aoyun cangsangshi [Chinese Olympic Journey in Modern China]*, Taipei, Zhonghua Taipei aolin pike weiyuanhui [Taipei International Olympic Committee], 1999, p. 72.

<sup>198</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 129.

<sup>199</sup> Mingxin Tang, p. 72.

<sup>200</sup> Jianhui Zhang and Bingshu Zhong, '1910–1948 quanyunhui zhidu de lishi kaocha [A Research on the Modern National Games System (1910–1948)]', p. 18.

<sup>201</sup> Mingxin Tang, p. 73; Zhengjie Cai, 'YMCA and the Development of Physical Education and Sport in Modern China (1895–1928)', p. 96.

<sup>202</sup> Mingxin Tang, p. 73; Zhengjie Cai, 'YMCA and the Development of Physical Education and Sport in Modern China (1895–

the event, an American sports delegation had also been invited by the YMCA to give a volleyball exhibition. This all demonstrated a great deal of commitment on YMCA's part to popularizing Western sports.

### 4.5.3 The First Three Far Eastern Championship Games

Once the YMCA's work in the countries of the Far East had developed enough, the YMCA directors began to pay attention to sports contests in view of their proven effectiveness for popularizing sports and norms of physicality. For the Far Eastern countries, they therefore decided to hold the FECG in order to allow competitors from different countries to compete against each other. The initiatives in this regard were undertaken on a grand scale, and subsequently FECGs were held on three occasions in the period from 1908 to 1919.<sup>203</sup>

#### *The First FECG*

C.H. Robertson (Secretary of the YMCA of China) and Elwood S. Brown (Secretary of the YMCA of Manila, Philippines) were the YMCA directors who came up with the idea of the FECG.<sup>204</sup> They were not only experts in teaching physical education, but held to the firm view that athletics and sports were the best means of transforming men in a Christian mould, imbuing in them all with the appropriate moral, social and physical characteristics. In other words, the meets were meant to serve as an instrument to 'teach certain norms and behavioural patterns to them'.<sup>205</sup>

Robertson and Brown happened to meet each other while they were on holiday in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1910, where they discussed the possibility of holding the Olympic

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1928'), p. 96.

<sup>203</sup> Gang Zhi, 'Yuandong yundonghui zhi qiyuan jiqi fazhan [The Origins and Development of the Far Eastern Championship Games]', *Dongfang za zhi [Eastern Miscellany]*, vol. 30, no. 20, 1934.

<sup>204</sup> Zhengjie Cai, 'YMCA and the Development of Physical Education and Sport in Modern China (1895–1928)', p. 92.

<sup>205</sup> Stefan Hübner, 'Muscular Christianity and the 'Western Civilizing Mission': Elwood S. Brown, the YMCA, and the Idea of the Far Eastern Championship Games', *Diplomatic History*, 2013, pp. 2, 4.

Games in the Far East.<sup>206</sup> These games were not only aimed at promoting modern Western sports activities, and spreading enthusiasm for Olympics in the Far Eastern countries, but also at introducing the Western standards of morality, edification, masculinity and the nation state system to the Asiatic peoples.<sup>207</sup> When Brown returned to Manila, he started promoting the idea of organizing a Far Eastern Olympic Games in the Philippines by inviting the athletic associations from Singapore, Hong Kong, China and other Asian countries to the Philippines to participate in the sports competitions during the Philippine Carnival.<sup>208</sup> Later on, taking his plans a step further, Brown went to China and Japan to promote his ideas for Far East Athletic Contests and a Far Eastern Olympic Association, which was actually constituted afterwards under the name of the Far Eastern Athletic Association (FEAA).<sup>209</sup> As a result of his travels, the FEAA was formed with China Wu Tingfang as its President and Crocker as Treasure, while Brown himself served as Secretary. There were only three participant countries in this championship; China, Japan and the Philippines.<sup>210</sup>

In 1913, the FEAA was officially launched with a proper constitution. For the time being, the FEAA was to 'supplement the work of the International Olympic Committee'.<sup>211</sup> However, its real aim was the organization of the FECG (original name was the Far Eastern Olympic Games).<sup>212</sup> The stated objectives of the FECG closely resembled those of the sports events in China, being to 'stimulate the local athletic spirit, develop individual and community athletics, establish the standards of competition recognized by the amateur athletic world at large, to improve the athletic average within this territory and to promote international good will'.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> A letter from Roberson to C.K.Wu on August 27, 1952. Cited in Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 130; Zhengjie Cai, 'YMCA and the Development of Physical Education and Sport in Modern China (1895-1928)', p. 92.

<sup>207</sup> A.D. Morris, pp. 22-3; H. Sun, p. 106.

<sup>208</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 130. Manila Carnival is an annual event that was held from 1908 to 1935 to showcase the natural resources, products, and culture of the Philippines to the rest of the world. Several events were held during the carnival, which includes an agro-trade fair, musical shows, and athletic competitions, among many others.

<sup>209</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 97. G. Hoh, p. 97; M. Dyreson, *Making the American Team: Sport, Culture, and the Olympic Experience*, Champaign, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 1998, p. 176.

<sup>210</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 53.

<sup>211</sup> G. Hoh, p. 96.

<sup>212</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 53.

<sup>213</sup> G. Hoh, p. 96.

The First FECG (1–9 February 1913) was a great success, so much so that over 150,000 people had paid for tickets to attend the Games over all seven days.<sup>214</sup> Thirty-six Chinese athletes<sup>215</sup> represented China under the team leadership of Crocker and Swan, and competed in all events except baseball. There were almost 80 athletes from the Philippines, and twenty<sup>216</sup> from Japan, who only took part in baseball and some track and field events.<sup>217</sup> The spectators were also treated to a great deal of pageantry during the Games, and were impressed and cheered by the elaborate Olympic-style opening athletic parade and various event ceremonies.<sup>218</sup> At the opening ceremony of the Games, the large stadium was crowded when the athletes entered to a stirring march played by the Constabulary Band which had been organized by the government of the Philippines. The Chinese delegations were first to come into the stadium, with 42 athletes in two rows with the leading two men carrying large flags of the Republic of China. The leaders of the delegation were Arthur Shoemaker of Tsinghua College, Swan of the Shanghai YMCA and F.R. Wilber of the Canton YMCA.<sup>219</sup> Then the Japanese and Filipino delegations entered in succession. Despite the focus on the athletes, the Games had distinct colonial overtones. When all the athletes had assembled, the Manila-based attorney William Tutherly gave a welcome speech in English and in the name of the government of the US and the government and people of the Philippine Islands, in which he stated:

I stand before you, the athletes from the Republic of China, from our sister nation. The Empire of Japan, and from the Philippine Islands, extends to you all a hearty welcome. I hope that all the contests will be carried on in the spirit of fair play, which in after years may govern your conduct in business and other vocations of grown-ups.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>215</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 23; 'Dongya yundonghui diyici dahui ji [Record of the First Far East Championship Games]', *Zhenxiang huabao* [Illustrated Magazine], no. 17, 1 March 1913, p. 1.

<sup>216</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 23; G. Hoh, p. 108.

<sup>217</sup> Elwood S. Brown, 'Far East Olympic Games', *Physical Training*, vol. 10, April 1913, pp. 173-4; G. Hoh, p. 108.

<sup>218</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 132.

<sup>219</sup> Elwood S. Brown, pp. 173-4.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

After nine days of competition, the Philippines won the games overall and China obtained second place. China's best performances in these Games were in the decathlon (first and second places), 120-yard high hurdles (first and second), running broad jump (first), and running high jump (first).<sup>221</sup> Japan was placed third. (See Appendix Two) Brown later happily reported that 'the Americanized Filipinos trounced their Asiatic rivals'.<sup>222</sup> From Brown's words, it is clear that these YMCA directors had a sense of pride, which made them think and show off that the colonized Filipinos had been able to perform better because they had invested themselves fully in Western style education, and by virtue of this they had been able to excel over their Asiatic rivals.<sup>223</sup> The way in which physical size and prowess were increasingly presented as signs of modernity, success and national strength represent some of the more problematic aspects of the YMCA's work in the Far East, particularly in the way in which they began to point to robust Caucasian masculine physical build as the norm for the modern man. This troubling tendency to categorize races as 'weak' and 'strong' was perhaps not intentional, but was nonetheless effective in instilling a sense of physical inferiority in the local population, and – as will be shown later in this thesis – creating a need to excel in international competitive sport.

The FECG was the first international games the Chinese ever participated in. For the YMCA directors and missionaries, one of the values which were advocated strongly was athletic spirit and patriotism among participants.<sup>224</sup> For the Chinese learning from the Western influence, participation in the FECG was a means for the Chinese to prove their international prestige, the status of the nation state and to express their patriotism. The significance of these international games was that they aroused more attention from the Chinese and played a pivotal role in the process of rising Chinese nationalism,

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<sup>221</sup> *The Far Eastern Championship Games*, in North China Herald, edited, 22 February 1913, Vol. 106, p. 540..

<sup>222</sup> M. Dyreson, *Making the American Team: Sport, Culture, and the Olympic Experience*, p. 176..

<sup>223</sup> When Elwood Brown died in the US in 1924, his achievements as a pioneer in athletics and sports in the Philippines were summarized as follows: 'The Filipinos are of a race that is by nature small of stature and frail of physique. Brown determined to make an effort at improving the racial physique through systematic healthful exercise. He introduced group athletics and games, the more popular American sports and gymnastics, then created public interest in athletics by organizing the Far Eastern Games and the Philippines Amateur Athletic Federation (PAAF). It was not until Brown initiated and fostered these activities that the young people of the Islands took a general interest in sport and athletics, and the results have been decidedly beneficial.'

<sup>224</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China. Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1916', p. 43.

Consequently, in the Chinese participation in the FECG ‘were closely linked nationalism and national identity’.<sup>225</sup> As Fan Hong notes, during the Games, Chinese athletes experienced ‘the pride of representing their nation under the national flag, before thousands of spectators’.<sup>226</sup>

The First FECG also bolstered the YMCA physical directors’ morale, inspiring them to work ever harder to promote Western-style notions of sportsmanship and fitness among the Chinese. From 1914 to 1915, Crocker made the FECG and sports-related topics the subject of his speeches, which he delivered on many occasions in Xiangmen, Canton, Hong Kong, Baoding, Tientsin and Hangzhou to the Chinese, especially Chinese youth, in the interests of spreading modern Western physical education and sport.<sup>227</sup> This is how the foundations were laid to establish the need for continuing the FECGs and the Second FECG in 1915 became such a sensation that it drew huge participation of athletes from different regions of China.

### ***The Second FECG***

The Second FECG was held in Shanghai’s Hongkou Stadium from 15 to 22 May 1915. With regards to the upholding of sport rules, this can be taken as the first international athletic meet to conform to Western standards ever held in China.<sup>228</sup> J.H. Croker, the General Director of the YMCA, took the major role in organizing the Second Games, and was centrally involved in electing and training the Chinese delegation, and coordinating overall administration.<sup>229</sup> However, having experienced the success of the first Games, the Chinese themselves were keen to take more leading roles involved in the running of the Second FECG.<sup>230</sup> The organizing committee included such important names as Wu Tingfang (former Chinese Minister to the US), Tang Shaoyi (the Premier of the Republic of China), Zhong Wenyaoyao (the Director of the Shanghai Nanking

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<sup>225</sup> Fan Hong, *Sport, Nationalism and Orientalism: The Asian Games*, Hoboken, Taylor & Francis, 2013, p. xvii.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> Mingxin Tang, p. 128.

<sup>228</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3]*, p. 317; Mingxin Tang, p. 125; H. Sun, p. 109.

<sup>229</sup> Mingxin Tang, p. 125.

<sup>230</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 55.



Railroad), C.C. Nieh (an influential mill-owner from Shanghai and a member of the YMCA committee), and Zhang Boling (President of the Nankai College).<sup>231</sup> Moreover, despite the fact that such a mega event was being arranged for the first time in China, government officials personally made donations for prizes.

Even the Chinese government officials and political leaders like the President Yuan Shikai and Vice President Li Yuanhong of the Beiyang government were getting enthusiastic about the proposal to organize the Second FECCG and publicly supported the event. Within the span of only a few months the YMCA's physical education work had won recognition. That is why when, before holding the Second FECCG, a YMCA official asked some Chinese government ministers whether the government was supportive of the organization arranging the event. They obtained the following answer as reported in the *Manila Times*:

It is not a question for us to decide. You are doing so much for the young men of China and it is our duty to help you. We want our men to have strong bodies, and your work will do more to make this possible than any plan that we could think of or carry out.<sup>232</sup>

Moreover, Crocker's request to Peking for financial help was also readily responded to by the President Yuan Shikai who donated \$2,000 to support the organization of the Games, and additionally offered \$500 to cover the travelling costs of the Chinese baseball team back to China from America where they were on a training tour.<sup>233</sup> Yuan also presented Crocker with a 'Chinese decorated archway trophy' to be given away to the winners of the championship.<sup>234</sup> The Vice President Li Yuanhong contributed \$1000 for the Games and additional funds were also collected from other government officials. The leftover expenses were to be covered by the ticket sales.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Alfred H. Swan, 'Alfred H. Swan, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1915', pp. 426-7.

<sup>232</sup> 'P.I. Victors in First Orient Olympics', *Manila Times*, no. 9, 10 February 1913. Cited in J. Kolatch, p. 55.

<sup>233</sup> Mingxin Tang, p. 125; J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, National Physical Director, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1914', *Annual Reports of the Foreign Secretaries of the International Committee 1913 to 1914*, 1914, p. 73.

<sup>234</sup> Mingxin Tang, p. 125.

<sup>235</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 56.

This all reflected both the changing Chinese perspective on Western physical education and sport,<sup>236</sup> and a desire to define the shape of the sports for the Chinese themselves. This is where a subtle intertwining and silent exchange between the ideals of civilizing mission of the West (especially in terms of teaching to locals the spirit of patriotism as it was deployed in the West), and those of nationalist discourse began to take place. For the YMCA, on the other hand, the very fact that they had been tasked by the government to organize the games was taken an official seal of approval for their activities, and evidence of the effectiveness (and social value) of their work. Accordingly, they expressed the organization's appreciation and gratitude for having been chosen to carry out this task by the government. The YMCA was quick to present a certificate to Yuan Shikai in appreciation of his donation, which read as follows:

To his Excellency Yuan Shih Kai Chief Patron of the Far East Olympic Games, who by his hearty and generous interest and co-operation has done so much for athletics in China we respectfully dedicate this little book, which has been compiled in commemoration of China's victorious team, and with the hope that they may soon take their place among the first ranks of the world's great athletes.

The North China Athletic Association

President-General L. CHANG

Vice-President Y. T. TSUR

Secretary- A.N. Hoagland<sup>237</sup>

All the preparations for the FECG were carried out by the YMCAs, and the physical directors and secretaries from various local YMCAs met in Shanghai under Crocker's leadership. Crocker noted in the 1916 Annual Report that the Games were effective in instilling a new national athletic spirit in the Chinese participants. In his view, this was because it was the first time men from North, South, East, and West stood together and

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<sup>236</sup> G. Hoh, p. 110.

<sup>237</sup> Mingxin Tang, p. 127.

cheered for China partaking in and celebrating the success of entire China.<sup>238</sup> For E.S. Brown the 'enthusiastic rooting and cheering' on the part of the Chinese spectators during the events and the frantic rush into the grounds to greet the Chinese players (especially when a goal was scored to level the soccer match with the Filipino team), symbolized a moment of exultation in the national spirit.<sup>239</sup> Similarly, Swan noted after the Games in 1915 that he was extremely satisfied with the long-lasting impacts of the FECG because a large number of educational institutions stood against the odds to ensure its participation in the Games.<sup>240</sup> Once these nationalist attributes could be developed among the Chinese into a unified national identity this would further draw them towards the Western program of sports and physical education, which could in turn bring more development among the locals. We discuss this as a central concept in the next two chapters, explaining also that the Chinese would further promote this idea in their own way once the process of indigenization was initiated.

The marked increase in general interest among Chinese officials regarding physical education and sport is a case-in-point. The YMCA's work was appealing to such an extent that Chinese officials, including the Premier Tang Shaoyi, became members of the Physical Education Committee of the Shanghai YMCA in 1915.<sup>241</sup>

Shortly after the Games, the Governor of Jiangsu Province became so convinced of the effectiveness of physical education in attracting the local people to join in physical education activities and in turn strengthening their physique in few years that he issued a telegram to every prefecture in the province, ordering the magistrates to open up public playgrounds within three months. The orders were complied with, although there was much confusion as to where the teachers of physical education could be found at such short notice.<sup>242</sup> The governor's actions are indicative of how effective the Games were in changing general attitudes toward competitive sport and how competitive sport

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<sup>238</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, Shanghai, China. Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1916', p. 43..

<sup>239</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 24; 'Dongya yundonghui diyici dahui ji [Record of the First Far East Championship Games]', pp. 1-2.

<sup>240</sup> Alfred H. Swan, 'Alfred H. Swan, Physical Director, Young Men's Christian, Shanghai, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1915', pp. 426-7.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, p.425.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

were increasingly linked to national pride. Moreover, the YMCA was again called upon to provide physical education teachers and instructors to teach as well as manage the sports grounds and facilities, showing what a central role they played in facilitating this change. This was an unprecedented opportunity for the YMCA to launch physical education in the Jiangsu Province on a large scale. The Shanghai YMCA was requested by the executive of the Jiangsu Educational Association to take over the management of a short term training program for sports grounds instructors and assist in providing adequate training for selected men who could then go back to their district as leaders.<sup>243</sup>

A.H. Swan, in his capacity as a physical director of the Shanghai YMCA, was in favour of the YMCA taking the entire responsibility for the training program.<sup>244</sup> Finally, the training class was organized in Shanghai in 1914 with much anticipation, and it lasted for four months. Sixty prefectures of Jiangsu province sent 131 representatives who would serve as sports ground directors.<sup>245</sup> Crocker, Swan, McColy, Wang Zhengting (general director of the National Committee of the YMCA)<sup>246</sup> and other professional sport experts of the YMCA were the first to volunteer for this training program.<sup>247</sup>

This Second FECCG held in Shanghai was incredibly significant in the way in which it influenced the Chinese view on Western sports and athletic games. Owing to the great popularity it gained among the Chinese political leadership and among the general public, the FECCG was consequently scheduled to take place biennially, and the three participant countries – China, the Philippines and Japan - took regular turns to host the ten consecutive FECCGs until the dissolution of the Games after the Tenth Games.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., pp.426-7.

<sup>245</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 162.

<sup>246</sup> Wang Zhengting (1882–1961) was born in Ningbo, Zhengjia province in 1882. After graduating from Anglo-Chinese College in Tientsin in 1895, he furthered his study at the Beiyang University, Tientsin. After his graduation, he taught in various schools in Tientsin. By 1905, he went to study in Japan. Meanwhile, he was working as a secretary of the Chinese YMCA in Tokyo. Then, he went to further his study in the University of Michigan in 1907 and in the Yale from 1908 to 1911. After that, he returned to China and worked as the general director of the National Committee of the YMCA of China between 1913 and 1916. He was the first Chinese member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). He once was foreign minister of the national government from 1928 to 1931.

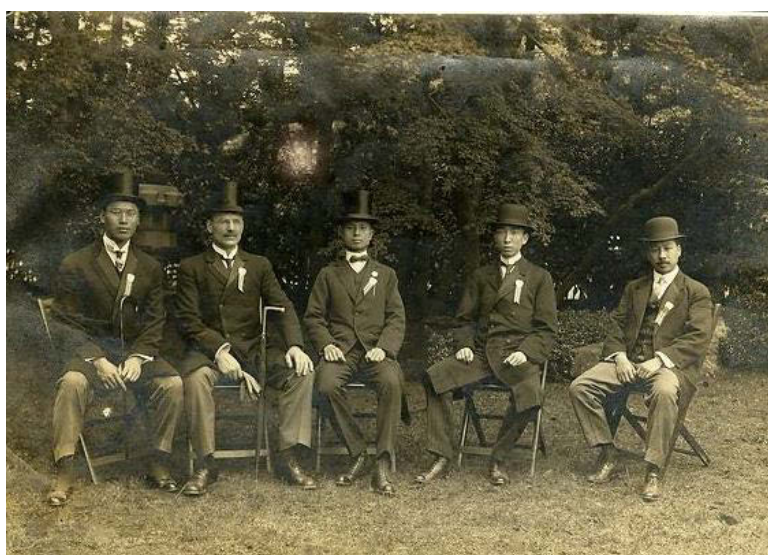
<sup>247</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, National Physical Director, China, Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1914', p. 76.

<sup>248</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 58; Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3]*, pp. 307-8.

*The Third FECCG*

The Third FECCG was held on 8-12 May 1917 in Tokyo, Japan. Brown from the Philippines YMCA, and Jigoro Kano who was a member of both the Japanese YMCA and of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), were the principal organizers of the Games. Brown, in his 1917 Annual Report, highlighted the importance of the FECCG in promoting stronger international engagement between the participant countries.

**Picture 4.3:** Committee for China Team to the Third Far Eastern Championship Games:  
Tokyo, Japan, 8-12 May 1917



(Source: the University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, used with permission)

In the meanwhile, Crocker and his colleagues visited different regions of China several months before April 1917, in order to identify and select promising athletes to participate in the Third FECCG.<sup>249</sup> To achieve this, preliminary ‘warm-up’ contests were held by the YMCA in Tientsin, Peking and Shanghai. These events were used to choose the best regional athletes to represent China and in April 1917 the General Secretary of

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<sup>249</sup> J.H. Crocker, 'J.H. Crocker, National Physical Director, Young Men's Christian Association, China. Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30, 1917', pp. 46-8.

the Tientsin YMCA, G.H. Gray, led the Chinese delegation of around 200 athletes to Tokyo to participate in the Games.<sup>250</sup> Japan won the overall Games with 120 points, with the Philippines as the runners-up on 80 points. China's overall score of 49 points and third place demonstrated that the standard of physical education and sport in China was not quite en par with that of Japan and the Philippines. This became a great source of national discussion as the political relations with Japan began to deteriorate.<sup>251</sup> However, the FECGs were central to the national recognition of the importance that international athletic competitions had in terms of China's international image as a sovereign state. Participation in the FECGs was significant to the new modern nation state of China because it provided the country with an opportunity to project an image of modernity on the international stage and to obtain international recognition.<sup>252</sup>

### 4.5.4 The Olympic Games

China's participation in the Olympic Games can also be credited initially to the YMCA. On 24 October 1907, Zhang Boling<sup>253</sup>, one of earliest Chinese secretaries of the Tientsin YMCA and the President of the Nankai College, delivered an address about the history of the Olympic Games which dated back to Ancient Athenian times during the ceremony for presentation of prizes and awards of the Fifth TAAC organized by the Tientsin YMCA.<sup>254</sup> Zhang Boling was very much fascinated and enthused to hear about the Olympic Games because these could bring China international recognition, particularly as the society was already going through change by embracing Western sports and education. His aspirations were reflected in his speech in which he mentioned that the Ancient Olympic Games existed since antiquity and attempted to briefly recount the early history and situation of the Western world and the imperatives

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<sup>250</sup> Shuren Cheng, 'Furi yu disanci yuandong yundonghui ji [Record of the Third Far Eastern Championship Games in Japan]', *Dongfang za zhi [Eastern Miscellany]*, vol. 14, no. 10, 1917, p. 157.

<sup>251</sup> Jiansheng Jing, 'Ji disanci yuandong yundonghui [Record of the Third Far Eastern Championship Games]', *ibid.*, no. 7, p. 47.

<sup>252</sup> G. Xu, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895–2008*, p. 28.

<sup>253</sup> Zhang Boling (1876–1951) was born in Tientsin in April 1876. He studied in Beiyang Naval Academy in Tientsin between 1891 and 1894. Beiyang Naval Academy was one of the local schools at that time offered modern Western education. After his graduation, he established Nankai Middle School and spared no efforts to develop education work in China. He invited YMCA directors to teaching in Nankai Middle School. By this chance, he became good friends with the YMCA director Robert Gailey. Under Gailey's influence, Zhang Boling was baptized and became a Protestant in 1908. The same year, Zhang Boling joined in the Tientsin YMCA and consequently worked for the YMCA in China from 1918 to 1937.

<sup>254</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 104; G. Xu, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895–2008*, p. 25.

for the revival of Olympic Games after so many centuries in the west.<sup>255</sup> He wished that China would soon compete in the Olympic Games and show the world its strength and prosperity.<sup>256</sup> For this purpose, he noted that ‘skilled instruction’ was required. Consequently, a qualified instructor, who had also been an Olympian, was invited from America to China.<sup>257</sup> The act of appointing an erstwhile Olympian as the Head Coach of the would-be Chinese Olympic team illustrated the importance that the government now placed on international sports competitions.

The interest in the Olympics was such that in May 1908, *The Tientsin Young Men* published an article titled ‘Athletic Events’. The author of the article suggested that Chinese athletes should prepare diligently to ensure their participation in the Games being held in Athens. He also hoped that sometime in the future China might also offer to host one of the Olympic events that were conventionally held in Athens.<sup>258</sup> The campaign for making a case for the Olympic Games became also an integral part of the YMCA’s timely agenda. The physical directors were so keen on achieving this goal that the continued lobbying of the Chinese was carried on even during the prize distribution ceremony of the Sixth TAAC by Tientsin YMCA on 22 October 1908. This time, at the beginning of the ceremony, pictures of the 1908 London Olympic Games were shown upon the screen using a projector. The screening of pictures was followed by Robertson’s speech which delineated the feasibility of sending a team to the Olympics.<sup>259</sup> Robertson followed this speech with an exclusive lecture on the subject for the Chinese youth at the Settlement Branch of Tientsin YMCA in October 1908.<sup>260</sup> Three crucial questions framed the agenda of this lecture:

- (1) When will China be able to send a winning athlete to Olympic contests?
- (2) When will China be able to send a winning team to Olympic contests?
- (3) When will China be able to invite the entire world to come to Peking for an

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<sup>255</sup> Anon. (October 26, 1907) *Tientsin Young Men* 6(19).

<sup>256</sup> H. Sun, p. 50.

<sup>257</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 6, no. 19, 26 October 1907.

<sup>258</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 7, no. 12, 23 May 1908.

<sup>259</sup> *Tientsin Young Men*, vol. 6, no. 28, 24 October 1908.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

international Olympic contest, alternating with those at Athens?<sup>261</sup>

However, despite their efforts, it took nearly a decade before China was able to participate in the Olympics because no strong team or athlete could be prepared to qualify until 1928. During the years when no athletes were successful in making it to the Olympics, the YMCA continued the task of training teams and individual athletes. Eventually, in 1922, the CNAU was organized to oversee and analyze the organization's own progress in this regard and to develop the level of proficiency of different athletes and players. The CNAU was recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as the Chinese Olympic Committee. Wang Zhengting became the first Chinese member of the IOC, and one of the only two Asian members on this Olympic Committee.<sup>262</sup> Thus, the YMCA and its YMCA directors had been successful in introducing the Olympic Games to the Chinese. However, once the Chinese became proficient in different sports and could participate in the Olympic Games, their keenness for Olympics became a real passion, or even an obsession. Now the hopes also became high that one day China would have chance to participate in the Olympic Games and even become a winner, or a least a host for the Games. The reason for Chinese enthusiasm regarding the Olympic Games were possibly deeply psychological, as being an international mega event, it would help the people articulate Chinese nationalism and hence assert their identity as a distinct people of a sovereign state .<sup>263</sup>

### 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has described how the missionary education institutions, the YMCA and individual missionary activities that also utilized Western physical education to engage with the local population, were able to organize their efforts to have a significant impact on local, regional and national physical education in China.

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> G. Xu, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895–2008*, p. 31.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., p.28.



Before the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA began promoting their physical education programs in China, there was no physical education and organized sport activities to speak of in China. The missionary educational institutions introduced a basic level reform in classroom curricula and teaching methodology as well as conducting regular sports, athletic, and extracurricular activities. Infrastructure was developed with complete sports facilities, and professional physical education teachers. The seasonal intramural and interscholastic athletic contests were also a constant feature of the physical education program of the missionary educational institutions. The YMCA's activities were also driven by the strong commitment by its individual directors in China, such as Exner and McCloy, who were not only able to put in place local structures, but national ones as well to promote the development of physical education and sport in China. The outcome was the huge success of the YMCA initiatives such as the leadership training, the athletic games, indoor and outdoor activities, and physical education in schools. Meanwhile, they spared no effort in holding the local, regional, national competitions and the FECG. The YMCA's role in this regard was always well received by the emerging Chinese sports talent as well as the government officers. The YMCA also remained successful in establishing an ongoing partnership with the missionary tertiary institutions, particularly as both of these organizations were serving various aspects of the same religious agenda. Institutional as well as infrastructural help would come from abroad as and when required, and the YMCA effectively dominated in all matters related to Western physical education and sport in China.

While the YMCA's focus was on developing sports education, their key overt mission was to promote Christianity. In the context of this research, the key question remains whether this all represented a form of cultural imperialism which, as Stefan Hubner asserts, 'justified Western rule as necessary for bringing local population up to Western standards'.<sup>264</sup> While physical education and sport had the effect of reducing the social tensions that existed between the Chinese local population and the Christian

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<sup>264</sup> Stefan Hübner, p. 2.

missions,<sup>265</sup> many indigenous actors were also receptive to and appreciative of the intellectual and spiritual transformation that they underwent.<sup>266</sup> During this period, the YMCA activities also produced great athletes, educators, and very staunch followers of Christianity, such as Dong Shouyi, Wang Zhengting and Hao Gengsheng. Therefore, it is clear that the YMCA's activities had a significant impact, not only on individuals, but also on the very framework of how Chinese physical education and sport were organized on local and national levels and on the introduction of a very West-centric idea of physical modernity into China. This change in ideal somatic 'Chineseness' that was promoted through the public education system could easily be construed as an evidence of cultural imperialism of the most crude kind. However, while one could argue that the missionaries' endeavours to promote physical education and sport through education enabled these values to become well entrenched in Chinese society, the same cannot be said about the extent to which Christianity displaced existing Chinese values and beliefs. Nonetheless, bringing China – a deeply traditional society with class ethics and hierarchy based upon particular notions of body and intellect – around to the ideas of physicality and active participation into sports was no less than effecting a revolution.

Thus the corporeal and somatic symbols of Western style modernity did take hold through missionary educational institutions and the YMCA's activities in China. However, this was an intricately negotiated process and not at all a simple case of straightforward outside influence being passively appropriated by the local actors. All this leads us to conclude that the success of the Christian institutions' physical program not only depended on the efforts of the missionaries and physical directors, but also greatly on the changing attitude of the Chinese towards modern physical education and sport and on their readiness to seek help from the missionaries and physical directors in this regard. The willingness of the local governors, educators and students to cooperate with YMCA personnel to enact a positive transformation in Chinese society was crucially significant in its own right because it evidences a significant degree of agency on the part of the local population.

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>266</sup> Andrew Porter, pp. 382-3.

## Chapter 5: Rising Nationalism and the Diminishing Role of the Christian Institutions in Chinese National Physical Education and Sport (1919–1928)

### 5.1 Introduction

As the cultural and sporting activities of the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA were in full swing towards the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, modern nationalism was also developing in China. The Chinese Nationalist Movement was driven by a desire to attain ‘national unity, national sovereignty, cultural independency and equality with the West’.<sup>1</sup> At its initial stages, the nationalist movement in China was overwhelmingly intellectual in nature, and was conspicuously anti-Western, anti-imperialist and anti-Christian in orientation.<sup>2</sup> A number of Chinese intellectuals, such as Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu and Cai Yuanpei, initiated a series of anti-imperialist and anti-Christian movements.<sup>3</sup> The key anti-imperialist movements of this era were the Anti-Christian Movement. The Anti-Christian Movement, in essence, was inspired by the anti-imperialist sentiments in society, and it had its own peculiar phases during the years from 1922 to 1927 which will be discussed at length in this chapter.<sup>4</sup>

Sport and nationalism share certain crucial traits. Both are arguably ‘two of the most emotive issues’ in the modern world; and they inspire intense devotion but occasionally may also lead to violence.<sup>5</sup> As for their concomitant and corresponding development, modern sport and nationalism are closely connected with each other. Joseph A. Maguire

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<sup>1</sup> K. Yip, *Religion, Nationalism, and Chinese Students: The Anti-Christian Movement of 1922–1927*, Bellingham, Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 1980, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.208.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> John Bale, p. 18.

propounds in his book *Sport World: A Sociological Perspective* that sport is intrinsically a conservative activity which is often employed to consolidate the official version of 'nationalism, patriotism or even racism'.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, sport has some inherent potential that makes it a possible instrument of instilling among the people a sense of 'national unity and integration'.<sup>7</sup> Historically, it is also a proven fact that sport has contributed to unique political struggles, some of which have been closely connected to nationalist politics and popular nationalist struggles.<sup>8</sup> In effect, sport is often involved in the process of nationalism as a natural reaction to dependency and uneven development. Sport also helps to 'reinforce national consciousness'.<sup>9</sup> In light of Maguire's observations, it can be seen in Chinese context that nationalists have often tended to promote sport and physical education in schools as a means of building a strong sense of national identity and pride, through fostering internal unity and by enhancing China's international standing.<sup>10</sup> For instance, when the Christian institutions sought to utilize physical education and sport to spread the Christian message, the nationalists not only sought to undermine the activities of the foreigners and to use physical education to foster a strong sense of modern national identity.

This chapter examines how the rising influence of Chinese nationalism led to the appropriation, or more appropriately to the indigenization of Christian physical education and sport programs during the period 1919–1928. The process by which the nationalists gradually took over physical education programs from the Christian missionaries and the YMCA has been examined in order to illustrate how this indigenization process took place through a complex negotiation between the Western and Chinese values. The first section of this chapter discusses the rise of Chinese nationalism during this period and outlines the key developments of individual movements. The remaining four sections examine how a shift was observed as the social impact of the Christian institutions was being manipulated to nationalist ends and the Chinese were gradually taking hold of physical education and sport work.

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<sup>6</sup> J.A. Maguire et al., *Sport Worlds: A Sociological Perspective*, Champaign, Illinois, Human Kinetics, 2002, p. 153.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> A. Bairner, 'Civic and Ethnic Nationalism in the Celtic Vision of Irish Sport', p. 12.

### 5.2 Nationalism and the Rise of the Anti-Christian Movement

#### 5.2.1 The New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement

The New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement of the 1910s and 1920s can be seen as the harbingers of the later anti-imperialist and nationalist movements in the 1920s in China. After the dissolution of the feudal social system and the failure of the Chinese Republic founded in 1912, the New Culture Movement was established in an effort to counter disillusionment with traditional Chinese culture, and is often referred to as the ‘Chinese Renaissance’ by some of its leaders (such as Hu Shi, the then serving President of Peking University).<sup>11</sup> The agitation was mainly led by Chinese intellectuals, such as Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, Hu Shi, Lu Xu and Li Dazhao who, revolting against traditional Chinese feudal culture, were critical of its perceived superstitious folk ethics. They were also highly critical of Confucianism, as a cornerstone of the traditional Chinese culture, which was envisioned as ‘the very cause of China’s problem’.<sup>12</sup> They argued that ‘without a change in Chinese culture, there could be no talk about the salvation of China, and any reform, political or economic, would be useless’.<sup>13</sup> In their pursuit of the modernization agenda of China, these intellectuals drew on Western ideas of liberalism, pragmatism and modern nationalism, and promoted the creation of a new Chinese culture based on essentially Western democracy, science and modern ethics.<sup>14</sup> The movement’s main aim was to create ‘a new collective consciousness’, and to stimulate ‘intellectual awakening’ particularly among the upper class young men and women.<sup>15</sup> The New Cultural Movement led to the outburst of a nationalistic sentiment among the Chinese, especially among Chinese intellectuals and students. This nationalistic sentiment mainly became the driving force behind the May Fourth Movement and the Anti-Christian Movement which happened in

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<sup>11</sup> Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1991, p. 159.

<sup>12</sup> X. Lu, W. Jia, and D.R. Heisey, *Chinese Communication Studies: Contexts and Comparisons*, Westport, CT, Ablex Publishing, 2002, p. 67.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> D.H. Bays, *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 292.

<sup>15</sup> Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China*, p. 120.

the following years.

The May Fourth Movement, which erupted on 4 May 1919, marks the starting point of the nationalist movement in China as a form of protest against the imperialists. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1919, around 3,000 students from more than 13 universities in Peking protested against the decision recorded in the Treaty of Versailles<sup>16</sup> regarding the transfer of rights over to Shandong.<sup>17</sup> Previously, the Germans held the rights over Shandong, and after victory in WWI as a member of the allied forces, China was expected to be given these rights. However, when the matter was raised in the Treaty of Versailles, the rights over Shandong were given to Japan, instead of the Beiyang government. Chinese students in Peking were outraged by this decision. Students from other parts of the country responded to the call from students in Peking to demonstrate and protest marches and a boycott of Japanese goods ensued in quick succession. Under the pressure of the Movement, the Chinese delegation refused to sign in the Treaty of Versailles.

The May Fourth Movement was an intellectual movement. It gradually became political in nature, and assumed anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist objectives.<sup>18</sup> This nationalist fervour among the people was quite spontaneous. Even the Beiyang government, which had clearly been snubbed by the Westerners in the Treaty of Versailles, could have signed it if not for the fear of this overwhelming wave of nationalism which was potentially feared to become the driving force behind the Movement, which it eventually did. As the anti-imperialist demands made by the Movement were successfully adopted by the Beiyang government, the movement ‘opened a new chapter in Chinese history’ almost as if students had ‘assumed responsibility as the guardians of Chinese nationalism’ at a time when the nationalistic consciousness was being

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<sup>16</sup> As one of the peace treaties, the Treaty of Versailles was signed between Germany and the Allied powers on 28 June 1919 at the end of the World War I in the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Article 156 of the Treaty of Versailles transferred German concessions in Shandong to Japan rather than returning sovereign authority to China. This Treaty aroused Chinese outrage, which led to strikes, demonstrations and boycotts of Japanese goods and took the form of an uprising which is known as the May Fourth Movement. Under the pressure of the May Fourth Movement, the Chinese delegation in the Paris Peace Conference refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles.

<sup>17</sup> Shandong was a part of a German leased territory in modern China, which existed from 1898 to 1914.

<sup>18</sup> Tatsuro Yamamoto and Sunmiko Yamamoto, 'The Anti-Christian Movement in China, 1922–1927', *The Far East Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1953, pp. 133-47.

developed by turning this protest into a unified movement nationwide, though in urban but crucially representative centres. The movement is a symbolically important milestone for Chinese nation's path to self-assertion and self-actualization.<sup>19</sup>

The May Fourth Movement can be said to have represented an addition of a political dimension to the New Culture Movement, and signified a struggle for Chinese sovereignty.<sup>20</sup> Homi Bhabha asserts that nationalism can take a form of paranoiac projection “outwards” through creating a sense of an external threat which can allow a nation to create a sense of unified identity where one has not existed before through creating a sense of an external threat. This has been a very common strategy in postcolonial nations in particular as part of the nation-building process.<sup>21</sup> As part of this process of creating a paranoiac projection outwards creating a sense of national unity against an external threat, some of the movement's leaders began targeting foreign religions, Christianity in particular. Christianity was branded a ‘useless’ religion. Christianity was attacked as ‘an irrational set of superstitions and an impediment to science, evolutionism and social progress’.<sup>22</sup> A few of these leaders even went so far as to call it ‘crass superstition’ as opposed to science.<sup>23</sup> For example, Chen Duxiu, in his 1920 article *Christianity and the Chinese People* argued that one should oppose traditional religion in order to develop science. As for Christianity, even though he claimed to appreciate the personality and teachings of Jesus, he severely criticized certain ‘irrational elements of Christian doctrine, missionaries’ activities and defects of the church’.<sup>24</sup> Zhu Zhixin, a member of the Nationalist Party and Secretary of the Ministry of Construction, published an article titled ‘*What is Jesus?*’ in the *Republican Daily News (Minguo Ribao)* in 1919, in which he criticized the Christian churches and forwarded that ‘the attitude of Western imperialists and missionaries toward the

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<sup>19</sup> H. Hu, *American Goddess at the Rape of Nanking: The Courage of Minnie Vautrin*, Carbondale, Illinois, Southern Illinois University Press, 2000, p. 33.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> H.K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London & New York, Routledge, 1994, p. 149.

<sup>22</sup> Z. Xinping, C. Zhen, and C. Mason, *Christianity*, Leiden, Brill Publisher, 2013, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> W.H. Kiang, *The Ideological Background of the Chinese Student Movement*, New York, King's Crown Press, 1948, p. 58; Ph. de Vargas, 'The Religious Problems in the Chinese Renaissance', *International Review of Missions*, vol. 15, no. 57, 1926, pp. 3-20.

<sup>24</sup> Duxiu Chen, *Duxiu wencun [A Collection of Chen Duxiu's Works]*, Shanghai, Shanghai Yadong Library, 1922, pp. 659-62; Duxiu Chen, 'Jijujiao yu zhongguoren [Christianity and the Chinese People]', *Xin qingnian [New Youth]*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1920, pp. 17-22.

non-Christian people from Asian countries was a kind of hypocrisy'.<sup>25</sup> This represented an emerging consciousness among the growing Chinese nationalist movement within which Christian missions were increasingly conceived as a form of cultural imperialism similar to other forms of 'hard' colonialism. Within this context, the emerging grand narrative of the nation is being conceptualized as an anti-foreign one.

### 5.2.2 The Anti-Christian Movement

The May Fourth Movement of 1919 heightened a sense of nationalism that had emerged among the educated Chinese, casting an unfavourable light upon Christianity and the Christian organizations, including the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA.<sup>26</sup> As the public sentiment turned distinctly anti-foreign in the wake of the dispute over who had the right to govern the Shandong province, all foreign activities were increasingly viewed with growing suspicion. If every new nation needs to create a grand narrative that unifies the nation under a shared cause,<sup>27</sup> for a country like China this was particularly important because of the racial and cultural pluralism and great geographical spread which made it difficult to identify a singular shared cultural identity. This external threat came to be focused on the activities of missionaries or the Western educators. No matter how significant or beneficial their contribution to the nation was *per se*, the move was made to foreclose the possibility of any foreign influence.<sup>28</sup> The hitherto pent-up public sentiments of dissatisfaction with China's inability to withstand foreign encroachment developed into an organized Anti-Christian Movement, which continued to develop a unifying narrative for China in the modern era. The Anti-Christian Movement did not therefore simply highlight the conflicts and crises that arose from East-West contacts in national or local level in terms of cultural, economic and political engagement, but functioned first and foremost to provide the nation with a narrative of resistance that promised a sense of agency to its people. The movement can

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<sup>25</sup> Zhixin Zhu, *Zhu Zhixin wencun [A Collection of Zhu Zhixin's Works]*, Shanghai, Shanghai minzhi chubanshe [Shanghai Minzhi Publishing House], 1927, pp. 391-408.

<sup>26</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 210.

<sup>27</sup> H.K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, Hoboken, Taylor & Francis, 2013, pp. 1-7.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*



therefore be seen not only as a reaction against an imposed foreign culture, but as a significant event to assert the sense of Chinese national identity. This emerging nationalistic discourse had a significant impact on the fate of the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA in China.<sup>29</sup>

### *The Anti-Christian Movements and the Missionary Schools*

#### **First phase**

The Anti-Christian Movement began in the spring of 1922 in response to M.T. Stauffer's edited book titled *Christian Occupation of China: A General Survey of the Numerical Strength and Geographical Illustration of the Christian Force in China*. This book presented a general survey of the numerical strength and geographical distribution of the Christians in China. The main purpose of this survey was to document 'the speedier and more effective evangelization of China'.<sup>30</sup> The book highlighted the Western missionaries' desire to 'conquer and convert China' by their evangelical work. The book framed the missionary work in China in terms of a military conquest by zealous Western missionaries so effectively that the book sparked a fresh outbreak of anti-Christian agitation happened in 1920s in China.

The event that served to organize the Anti-Christian Movement came in response to the decision to hold the 11<sup>th</sup> World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) conference in Tsinghua College (Qinghua College) in Peking on 4 April 1922.<sup>31</sup> Founded by the American missionary John R. Mott, the first ten world conferences had been held in America and Europe. The WSCF's goal was, according to the organization's promotional material, 'the evangelisation of the world in this generation', and

to call members of the academic community to faith in God, to discipleship within

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<sup>29</sup> Tatsuro Yamamoto and Sunmiko Yamamoto, pp. 133-47.

<sup>30</sup> M. Stauffer, *The Christian Occupation of China: A General Survey of the Numerical Strength and Geographical Distribution of the Christian Forces in China*, Shanghai, China Continuation Committee, 1922, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> "Chongbai jidujiaozhe songyang jidujiao zhi gongneng" [The Merit of the Christianity in Believer's Mind], *Minguo ribao* [*Minguo Daily News*], no. 6, 6 April 1922, p. 27.

the life and mission of the Church, to help them strive for peace and justice in and among nations and to help them to be servants and messengers of God's kingdom in the entire world.<sup>32</sup>

In order to attract wide attention to this conference among the Chinese people, and especially the youth, they published numerous articles about the Chinese Church, modern education, and Christian education in newspapers such as *The Chinese Repository* and *The Chinese Recorder* in China.<sup>33</sup>

While the aim of the conference organizers was a spiritual one, their rhetoric that painted the mission in China in militaristic terms was taken as evidence of the movement's desire to physically 'conquer' China among some Chinese students and scholars. A small number of students from Shanghai and Peking founded the Anti-Christian Students' Federation (ACSF) a month before the conference to protest against it. On 9 April 1922, the students issued a manifesto in the name of their organization to oppose the WSCF.<sup>34</sup> In their manifesto, the WSCF was represented as 'just another way to exploit and fool the Chinese people', and the conference would be a 'congress of robbers who profane the Chinese youth, who deceive the Chinese, and steal money from the Chinese'.<sup>35</sup> They also sent telegrams to other universities and student organizations, calling on them to oppose the conference. They emphasized Christianity as a tool of Western imperialism and colonial capitalism and a means of oppressing the weaker nations, and asserted that the Christian churches and YMCA were 'the capitalist instruments used for the exploitation of the proletarian class'.<sup>36</sup> As the agitation gathered pace, on 21 March 1922, further telegrams were sent from Peking to students and student organizations around China, once again urging them to oppose the conference. The move attracted supporters from all social and political quarters, ranging

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<sup>32</sup> Charles Howard Hopkins, pp. 630-5. K.A. Risedorph), p. 253. R.H.S. Boyd, *The Witness of the Student Christian Movement: 'Church Ahead of the Church'*, London, SPCK, 2007, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 219.

<sup>34</sup> Zhiping Lin, *Jidujiao yu zhongguo jindaihua lunji [Christianity and Chinese Modernization]*, Taipei, Taiwan Commercial Press, 1973, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Qinshi Zhang, *Guonei jishinianlai jidujiao sichao [The Tide of Religious Thought in China during the Last Decade]*, Beijing, Yanjing Wenhua School, 1927, pp. 187-90.

<sup>36</sup> Yijing Zhang, *Pipan feijidujiao yanlun huikan quanbian [The Transactions of the Criticism of the Comments on Anti-Christianity]*, Shanghai, Shanghai Meihua Baptist Press, 1927, p. 293.

from anarchists and communists to members of the left-wing Nationalist Party.<sup>37</sup>

The WSCF conference went ahead at Tsinghua University in April 1922 despite the opposition. On the opening day, the Peking ACSF sent a letter to Tsinghua students, protesting the use of the facilities of a government university to aid the spread of religion.<sup>38</sup> This appeal resonated with a significant number of students from various educational centres not only in Peking and Shanghai but also in other parts of China such as Canton and Shandong.<sup>39</sup> This nation-wide nationalism movement in its first phase was mainly limited only to prodding the people for anti-imperialist and anti-Christian agitations, which paved the way for the second phase of the Anti-Christian Movement when the actual struggle for control over Chinese education took place and the government became responsive to the peoples' demands for Chinese educational leadership.

### Second phase

Just when this particular instance of anti-Christian agitation began to subside, a new round of protests started.<sup>40</sup> As the anti-Western discourse intensified, the anti-Christian movement turned their focus on Christian education, which was widely criticized as an instrument of Western cultural imperialism. Missionary educational institutions now came to be regarded as 'a subtle form of cultural invasion, which eroded the purity and sustainability of Chinese culture by requiring students to study foreign languages, the Bible, and attend religious assemblies'.<sup>41</sup> The Movement demanded restoring Chinese control over education and for the government to take over the running of the missionary educational institutions.<sup>42</sup> This second phase of the movement is also referred to as the 'Restoring Educational Rights Movement' (*Shouhui jiaoyu zhuquan yundong*).

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<sup>37</sup> Qinshi Zhang, *Guonei jishinianlai jidujiao sichao [The Tide of Religious Thought in China during the Last Decade]*, pp. 193-6; Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 222.

<sup>38</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 222.

<sup>39</sup> *North China Herald*, 15 April 1922; *Huabei zhengbao [North China Standard of Peking]*, 2 April 1922.

<sup>40</sup> Tatsuro Yamamoto and Sunmiko Yamamoto, pp. 133-47.

<sup>41</sup> M. Wilkinson, *Global Pentecostal Movements: Migration, Mission, and Public Religion*, Leiden, Brill Publisher, 2012, p. 122.

<sup>42</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 237.

The response of Chinese students and intellectuals to this call for indigenizing existing educational institutions was so intense that they spread to some of the Christian colleges and universities. Students from these schools and universities protested against these foreign authorities, who had been restricting or preventing them from participating in patriotic demonstrations and parades.<sup>43</sup> These students cared little even if they were criticized or expelled from schools. The incidents of open defiance specifically took place during the spring of 1924 when the Nationalist Party and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) agreed to collaborate to fight against the Japanese invasion.<sup>44</sup> This marks the start of shared form of nationalism which unified parties with divergent core political beliefs and ethics. At its first national congress in January 1924, the Nationalist Party had identified ending the unequal treaties with Western countries and restoring China's sovereign rights as its principal objectives. Following this, nationalist students, the communists, and the left-wing members of the Nationalist Party brought about the second phase of the Anti-Christian Movement.<sup>45</sup>

On 22 April 1924, Chinese journals in Canton published a manifesto written by students of Holy Trinity College which demanded the restoration of China's educational rights.<sup>46</sup> By the summer of 1924, the ACSF was active in publishing newspaper articles and pamphlets, as well as organizing demonstrations and parades to protest against the Western administration of the missionary educational institutions, and the refusal of school or university authorities to register the educational institutions with the Beiyang government. The ACSF also demanded 'the elimination of required religious courses and required attendance at church service' and 'freedom of organization, press, and assembly for students'.<sup>47</sup> The movement spread rapidly, and local branches of this federation were also set up in provinces such as Anhui, Zhejiang, Hunan, Hubei, Sichuan, Jiangxi, Shandong, Shanxi and Shan'xi, as well as in Tokyo, Japan.<sup>48</sup> In

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<sup>43</sup> Y.L. Lee, 'The Anti-Christian Movement in Canton', *The Chinese Recorder*, vol. 56, no. 4, April 1925, p. 223.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> C. Li, S. Teng, and J. Ingalls, *The Political History of China, 1840–1928*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1967, pp. 450-8.

<sup>46</sup> Xiaochun Yang, 'Jidujiao zhi xuanchuanyu shouhui jiaoyuquan yundong [Protestant Propaganda and the Restore Educational Rights Movement]', *Zhonghua Jiaoyujie [The Chinese Education]*, vol. 14, no. 8, 1925, p. 227.

<sup>47</sup> Qinshi Zhang, *Guonei jishinianlai jidujiao sichao [The Tide of Religious Thought in China during the Last Decade]*, pp. 476-86. Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 240.

<sup>48</sup> *Shenbao*, no. 11, 26 December 1924. *Shenbao* (Shanghai News in English) was an influential newspaper published from 30 April

demonstrations, the participants chanted slogans such as ‘Christianity is a tool of imperialism’, ‘Christianity fools the feeble-minded young students’ and ‘A clean sweep of all Christian influences in China’.<sup>49</sup> Due to the powerful influence of the Movement in this second phase, many students in missionary educational institutions also followed the tide of anti-Western and anti-imperialist nationalism by holding protest meetings, organizing public demonstrations and so forth. Many students even left the missionary schools they were attending.<sup>50</sup> At Yali School in Hunan, for example, approximately one third of those enrolled left in the wake of an anti-Christian strike by the students.<sup>51</sup>

### Third phase

The Anti-Christian or Restoring Educational Rights Movement was highly effective in creating a unified nationalistic discourse that equated anti-foreign sentiment with nationalism, particularly in the aftermath of the May Thirtieth Movement of 1925 and the Northern Expedition of 1926–1928. The May Thirtieth Movement, also known as the May Thirtieth Tragedy, occurred as part of a wider labour and anti-imperialist movement in Shanghai in 1925. The incident began when the British municipal police opened fire and killed 13 demonstrators and wounded many more Chinese during a protest in Shanghai’s International Settlement on 30 May 1925. Following this incident, a series of nationwide anti-foreign demonstrations erupted all over China as the news of the killing spread. This was the largest anti-imperialist, anti-foreign demonstration China had experienced, and lasted for nearly three months.

The May Thirtieth Movement had a significant impact in the operations of the Christian institutions in the China.<sup>52</sup> In the aftermath of the Incident, the Anti-Christian Movement grew markedly stronger, especially in Canton, Fujian, Hu’nan and Shanghai, fuelling public rage against the missionary colleges and universities. Hordes of students from these institutions joined in the anti-Christian protests, despite the fact that many

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1872 to 27 May 1949 in Shanghai China. *Shenbao* was one of the earliest Chinese newspapers in modern China, and was widely read.

<sup>49</sup> L.D. Kessler, *The Jiangyin Mission Station: An American Missionary Community in China, 1895–1951*, Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 1996, p. 79.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 243.

<sup>52</sup> Lewis Hodous, ‘The Anti-Christian Movement in China’, *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1930, p. 494.

faced expulsion for participating because the school authorities had already notified prohibition in this regard.<sup>53</sup> Although a lot of students were made to withdraw their support for the movement by the Christian management, most students preferred to leave and accept admission to indigenous private or government schools.<sup>54</sup> Many students from St John's University in Shanghai, for example, were admitted to the National Southeastern University which was a government-run institution. In fact, many new schools were expediently established for these students from missionary schools or colleges. Kuanghua University in Shanghai, for example, was founded in September 1925 to accommodate former St John's students, as well as others from some mission institutions in Shanghai. In Hubei province, it was reported that over 2,000 students had left missionary educational institutions.<sup>55</sup> From June 1925 to May 1926, student unrest was reported in at least 88 missionary institutions.<sup>56</sup>

Many students of missionary educational institutions both former as well as current ones made concerted efforts to take over educational administration from the foreign missionaries' hands and give rights to the Chinese leaders.<sup>57</sup> The Seventh National Conference of the Students' Union in June 1925 proposed that every province should have a special committee for claiming the educational rights of Chinese educational institutions.<sup>58</sup> These committees aimed to support Chinese faculty members in missionary educational institutions in taking over administration duties from the hands of the foreigners.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, these committees aimed to 'petition the government to issue regulations for the compulsory registration of missionary schools' to protect the educational rights of the nation.<sup>60</sup> It illustrates that the Restore Educational Rights Movement was a catalyst to speed up efforts towards indigenizing the missionary

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<sup>53</sup> Shiliang Gao, *Zhongguo jiaohui xuexiaoshi [The History of the Missionary Schools in Modern China]*, p. 241.

<sup>54</sup> Edward Wallace, 'Report on Christian Education in China', in R. Frank (ed.), *China Christian Year Book 1926*, Shanghai, Christian Literature Society, 1926, pp. 227-8; K. Yip, p. 55. H.F. Ward, 'China's Anti-Christian Movement', *The Christian Century*, no. 43, 1926, p. 612.

<sup>55</sup> K. Yip, p. 55.

<sup>56</sup> 'Educational News of the Country', *Zhonghua jiaoyujie [Zhonghua Educational Review]*, no. 5, December 1925.

<sup>57</sup> *The Chinese Recorder*, vol. 58, no. 2, January 1927; G. Peterson, R. Hayhoe, and Y. Lu, *Education, Culture, and Identity in Twentieth-century China*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, University of Michigan Press, 2001, p. 148.

<sup>58</sup> Qinshi Zhang, *Guonei jishinianlai jidujiao sichao [The Tide of Religious Thought in China during the Last Decade]*, pp. 395-400.

<sup>59</sup> N.Z. Zia, 'The Anti-Christian Movement in China', in China Continuation Committee, National Christian Council of China, and Christian Literature Society for China (eds), *The China Mission Year Book*, Shanghai, Guangxuehui [Christian Literature Society for China], 1925, pp. 51-55.

<sup>60</sup> K. Yip, p. 56.

educational institutions.

The nationalist campaigns of the anti-Christian or anti-imperialist movements led to the issuance of government regulations for missionary educational institutions. Christian education was guided towards secularization as the Chinese government asserted control over the Christian educational institutions.<sup>61</sup> On 16 November 1925, the Ministry of Education of the Beiyang government promulgated a series of stringent regulations, according to which institutions constituted through foreign funding were compelled to seek prior permission from the educational authorities of the government. It was also stipulated that the presidents and principals of foreign-funded institutions must be Chinese, and where an institution had a board of governors, over 50 per cent of the board members had to be Chinese. Moreover, missionary educational institutions could not have the propagation of religion as their main aim. Private missionary schools were required to ‘register with government, develop Chinese leadership, transfer administrative rights to Chinese responsibility, and offer religious education on a voluntary basis only’.<sup>62</sup> Finally, all institutions were required to transform their curricula to meet the standards set by the Ministry of Education, which led to a wider standardisation of the Chinese public education.<sup>63</sup> This process of introducing checks was accelerated in the period 1926–1928. In November 1926, a new regulation was issued by the Nationalist government whereby the missionary educational institutions were placed under the supervision and guidance of the government’s educational administrators. As a result, the Chinese gradually acquired top administrative positions and gained a majority in the teaching ranks in schools that had previously been run by foreign missionaries.<sup>64</sup>

The Northern Expedition (1926–1928), led militarily by the Nationalist government in order to overthrow the warlord-backed Beiyang government and unify China, not only

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<sup>61</sup> J.A. Carpenter, P.L. Glanzer, and N.S. Lantinga, *Christian Higher Education: A Global Reconnaissance*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, W.B. Eerdmans, 2014, p. 72.

<sup>62</sup> G. Peterson, R. Hayhoe, and Y. Lu, p. 148.

<sup>63</sup> Edward Wallace, pp. 227-8.

<sup>64</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 270.

ended the Warlord Era but also provided some of the political stakeholders with common, anti-foreign and anti-Christian cause. The left-wing Nationalist Party and the CCP were particularly antagonistic towards Christianity, and regarded it as the vanguard of imperialism.<sup>65</sup> Supporters of the Nationalist Party and the CCP attacked and occupied Christian churches and mission properties during their marches and protests, especially in the North of China in the latter half of 1926. Meanwhile, in central China the attacks were becoming increasingly violent. A large number of missionaries were killed in March 1927 in Nanking.<sup>66</sup> By the summer of 1927, many churches, local YMCAs and missionary educational institutions and hospitals had been forced to close all over China. Scores of missionaries, especially the Protestants, had to withdraw from the interior, even from regions not yet occupied by the Nationalist forces. During the course of this year, over 3,000 foreign missionaries left China.<sup>67</sup>

### *The Anti-Christian Movements and the YMCA*

The YMCA had been targeted since the first phase of the Anti-Christian Movement and was denounced as an ‘agent of American imperialism’ that worked to produce ‘hounds for imperialism’.<sup>68</sup> In March 1922, the ‘Declaration of the Anti-Christian Students’ Federation’ was published in a number of newspapers. It stated that:

The capitalists of all nations [. . .] are taking steps, one following the other, to rush into China to carry out their plans of economic exploitation. And the present-day Christianity and the Christian Church are the vanguard of the exploitation [. . .] Those nations who have established the YMCA in China have as their object nothing more than to rear up good and efficient bloodhounds of the capitalists [. . .] How can we not rise and oppose them when we see with our own eyes these bloodhounds of the capitalists holding a conference to discuss how to decide our

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<sup>65</sup> K. Yip, p. 67.

<sup>66</sup> F.J. Rawlinson, *The China Christian Year Book (1928)*, Edited by D. MacGillivray, Shanghai, Christian Literature Society, 1928, p. 9.

<sup>67</sup> Shanghai Archive: No.U120-0-51-81.

<sup>68</sup> J. Xing, *Baptized in the Fire of Revolution: The American Social Gospel and the YMCA in China, 1919–1937*, Bethlehem, PA, Lehigh University Press, 1996, p. 66.



fate?<sup>69</sup>

In July 1922, the seventh annual convention of the Anti-Christian Students Federation adopted a number of resolutions concerning what they perceived as the YMCA's 'acutely negative influence on the Chinese youth':

The YMCA and other Christian organizations and their officers are the hawks and hounds of the imperialists [. . .] In the work of the YMCA and of the churches they utilize the names of prominent men and work together with officials and wealthy people [. . .] Their aim in doing so is to poison the spirit and deceive the minds of the Chinese youth [. . .] YMCAs constantly use athletics and popular education to do evangelistic work so as to smother the political thoughts of the youth. They are a detriment to the patriotic movement. Student Unions everywhere should expose them continuously [. . .] Student Unions everywhere should appoint special delegates who will try to induce Christians to leave the church and will publish the names of the Christian when they have made such a decision.<sup>70</sup>

Anti-Christian attacks were directed toward all Christian institutions in China, including the churches, local YMCAs, mission hospitals and schools. In many cities, the revolutions were completely overtaken by violence.<sup>71</sup> Agitations against the YMCAs turned particularly riotous in cities like Wuhan, Changsha and Suzhou.<sup>72</sup> The membership of the YMCA dropped and financial contributions to it also diminished considerably, leading to forced closure of many YMCA clubs attached to government schools. In 1925, the China Association's financial receipts had fallen to 15 per cent below those for 1922. By mid-1926, the city YMCAs faced serious financial as well as membership crises; for instance, membership was down 13 per cent on the preceding year.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> S.S. Garrett, p. 174.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.175.

<sup>71</sup> Tatsuro Yamamoto and Sunmiko Yamamoto, p. 134.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p.146.

<sup>73</sup> Eugene E. Barnett, 'Letter to Accompany Statistical Reports of the City Associations of China for 1925, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1926', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Shanghai*, 1926, pp. 1-12.

In Wuhan, Changsha and Suzhou, the left wing of the Nationalist Party were against the YMCA by supporting the activities, such as carrying out such a violent Anti-Christian campaign that it virtually destroyed the YMCA in these cities. In Wuhan, the YMCA clubs closed down and the YMCA headquarters was plastered with placards styling the YMCA as 'the vanguard of imperialism'. The mayor of the city had to not only step down from his headship of the YMCA's board of governors but - due to party pressure - had to also finance a hate campaign against the YMCA. In Changsha, Nationalist Party members had been directed not to join the YMCA, and YMCA members were issued warnings not to attend YMCA meetings.<sup>74</sup> In Suzhou, the backlash was accompanied by an absolute boycott of the YMCA's religious activities. For example, attendance at Bible study and discussion groups in government schools dropped from ten in 1925 and five in 1926 to nil in 1927. Similarly, religious meetings experienced a sharp decline in attendance, which was as low as 38 in 1925. The YMCA night schools, facing the same fate, lost almost 50 per cent of their enrolments from 1925 onwards.<sup>75</sup>

### **5.3 The Decline of the Physical Education Programs of Missionary Schools and the YMCA**

As the Anti-Christian Movement and the Restoring Educational Rights Movement depleted both the infrastructure and the influence of missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, their physical education programs also gradually declined. This decline in physical activities was most clearly reflected in the case of the interscholastic athletics contests organized by the YMCA. These competitions had to face increasing competition from the elite nationalists as well as other patriotic organizations. Moreover, teams from missionary educational institutions or the YMCA were eventually excluded from the interscholastic athletic contests organized by nationalist sport organizations and indigenous schools, which effectively undermined the organization of competitive

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<sup>74</sup> S.S. Garrett, p. 180.

<sup>75</sup> W.W. Brockman, 'Annual Report 1927, W.W. Brockman, Soochow, China', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Soochow*, 1927.

events. The ECIAA was particularly ostracized by the elite nationalists.

As discussed in Chapter Four, by 1920 the number of ECIAAs had increased from six to eight. This athletic association had organized a range of sport competitions that were held between the eight participating universities during different seasons each year. By 1925, the ECIAA had introduced a complete code of regulations for the numerous events. The participating institutions used to take turns to hold both home and away sports meets, and a whole system regarding player and referee registration, ticket sales, competition rules, athletic forms, requisite qualifications for the athletes, and game procedures had emerged over the years.<sup>76</sup> However, all this work came undone due to the boycotting of their events, and the ECIAA was disbanded in 1926, as teachers and students from the missionary schools abandoned their schools to establish new institutions. For example, students from St John's University set up Guanghua University and students at Hujiang University set up Chizhi University. In order to carry out sport and physical activities and organize athletic contests, students from these new institutions established domestic sports organizations to offer an alternative to compete with the ECIAA, making the ECIAA almost defunct in the long run. Apart from resistance from students and teachers, other internal reasons also expedited the disintegration of the ECIAA.<sup>77</sup> Before the 1925 meet, Nanyang Public School proposed that St John's University's membership of the ECIAA be revoked because it had imposed inhibitions on the patriotic activities of their students in order to contain resistance from the Anti-Christian Movement. However, after discussion and voting on the issue, the ECIAA committee turned down the proposal. The Nanyang team then angrily withdrew from the meet in protest. In the meantime, St John's University had already been unable to participate in any athletic contests held by the ECIAA after 1925 because of its unstable campus environment. The denouement caused the splitting of the ECIAA in 1926. In 1928, missionary colleges like Hujiang, Jinling, Suzhou and St John's University united to revive the athletic organization under the name of the 'Big Four Conference' and organized three official intercollegiate athletic meets from its

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<sup>76</sup> Shiming Luo, *Aoyun laidao zhongguo [Olympics Came to China]*, p. 58.

<sup>77</sup> Zhenya Wang and Daoping Wang, *Jiuzhongguo tiyu jianwen [Sports Stories in Modern China]*, p. 29.

establishment in 1928 to disintegration in 1936.<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, the indigenous public and private colleges organized their own sports association, the Jiangnan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (*Jiangnan badaxue tiyu lianhehui*), to act as a counterweight to the ‘Big Four Conference’.<sup>79</sup> The Jiangnan Intercollegiate Athletic Association only lasted for ten years, from 1926 to 1936, but it held eleven successful intercollegiate competitions during this period.<sup>80</sup>

Similar developments regarding physical education and sport in missionary educational institutions and the YMCA could also be observed in other parts of China. For instance, in April 1925, entry into the Sichuan Provincial Athletic Meet was refused to athletes from the missionary educational institutions, which were thus obliged to organize athletic games of their own.<sup>81</sup> According to Zhang Junjun’s article *The Hunan Church in the Anti-Christian Movement*, the missionary educational institutions had been prohibited in 1926 from participating in the Hunan Provincial Spring Athletic Meet.<sup>82</sup> This is how the missionary educational institutions went from occupying a leading position in the realm of physical education and sport to fading into near obscurity. Contrary to this, the Chinese nationalists by now had effectively absorbed the basic principles of modern Western physical education and sport that focused on the creation of patriotic, disciplined and strong Chinese bodies.

### 5.4 Claiming Sports Rights in Competitive Sport

Given the rising spirit of nationalism that emerged from the 1920s onwards, the elite Chinese people began to consider the question of claiming their sovereign sports rights from the foreigners. This transition in thinking became evident when questions were

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<sup>78</sup> Alumni Association of Jinling University, *Jinling daxue shi [The History of Jinling University]*, Nanjing, Nanjing University Press, 2002, p. 461.

<sup>79</sup> Juefei Zhang, ‘Chengli jiangnan daxue lianhehui de qiyin [The Reasons for the Establishment of Jiangnan University]’, *Shanghai tiyu shihua [Shanghai Sport History]*, no. 1, 1982, p. 17.

<sup>80</sup> Yixiong Xu, *Zhongguo jindai tiyu sixiang [Physical Education Thoughts in Modern China]*, Taipei, Taiwan, Chi Ying Co. Ltd, 1996, p. 17.

<sup>81</sup> Qijun He and Xiaofeng Hu, *Sport History in Modern China*, Beijing, Beijing tiyu daxue chubanshe [Beijing Sport University Press], 1989, p. 156.

<sup>82</sup> Junjun Zhang, ‘Baofengjiyu hou de hunan jiaohui [Christianity in Hunan after the Anti-Christian Movement]’, in D. MacGillivray (ed.), *The China Christian Year Book*, Shanghai, Guangxuehui [Christian Literature Society for China], 1927, pp. 1-5.

raised about curtailing foreign leadership in the Chinese FECG preparation and administration committee. Proposals were advanced for the indigenization of national and regional games and the establishment of the China National Amateur Athletic Federation (CNAAF; *Zhonghua quanguo tiyu xiejinhui*).

### 5.4.1 Nationalism and the Far Eastern Championship Games

#### *The Fourth and Fifth FECGs*

Before discussing the gradually diminishing role of the YMCA and its foreign physical directors in the FECG, it is important to note the contributions that they made in developing international games – even during the period of turmoil in the 1920s. The Fourth FECG was held in Manila, Philippines, in May 1919, and three nations – the Philippines, Japan and China – participated in the Games.<sup>83</sup> The entire Chinese delegation, comprising of almost one hundred athletes and coaches, had been selected solely by the CNAU, which had mainly YMCA directors on its managerial staff. This represented the largest ever delegation by China in any transnational competition, which was even more significant because it was assembled in spite of the turbulent political and financial conditions in China at the time. The Chinese athletes gathered in Manila well ahead of the opening of the games and showed great spirit on the field, securing second position overall for China by winning the soccer tournament.<sup>84</sup>

This victory was crucial in popularizing Western athletic sports in China. This can be exemplified in the case of Fujian province. After the success, the Governor of Fujian province enthusiastically endorsed and supported the FECG, and even made a donation of \$500 (in Chinese silver dollars) to finance the participation of the provincial team. In fact, it was the first time that any local government official had financed and endorsed the team, which in turn made history by debuting in international-level games. It was

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<sup>83</sup> Jusi Zou, 'Disici yuandong yundonghui jishi [The Fourth Far Eastern Championship Games]', *Dong fang za zhi [Eastern Miscellany]*, vol. 16, no. 10, 1919, p. 60.

<sup>84</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3]*, pp. 130-1.

also the first time that the local provincial government had officially recognized the games as a national event.<sup>85</sup>

In 1921, China hosted the Fifth FECG for athletes from China, the Philippines and Japan in Hongkou Park, Shanghai, from 30 May to 4 June.<sup>86</sup> For the first time in the history of the Games, teams comprising more than 100 athletes were submitted from each of the three countries, with each country represented in all events. The enthusiasm for the Fifth FECG was so overwhelming that Chinese newspapers had to update the coverage regularly.<sup>87</sup> Chinese students and boy scouts added a special charm to the occasion by volunteering for ushering and also paraded on the opening day.<sup>88</sup> In addition, on 1 June 1921, around 1,000 Chinese girls from Shanghai schools put on a show of physical activities in the stadium, mainly drilling, calisthenics, marching and 30 group games that were easily adaptable for general use.<sup>89</sup> All the events were filmed so as to be shown in other cities later on by the YMCA. For the YMCA, this was an important strategy to transform Chinese peoples' views on women's participation in athletics.<sup>90</sup> The first day, despite rain, was spectacular as the stadium stands were bulging with a crowd of around 20,000 spectators. The next day was clear, and the Games attracted an audience of about 35,000.<sup>91</sup> The athletes were equally enthusiastic as 14 new national records were achieved and two existing records met at the Games.<sup>92</sup> The Games were also a financial success. They made a net profit of \$14,000 (in Chinese silver dollars), \$10,000 of which was allocated towards the building of a national stadium, on J.H. Gray's suggestion. The remaining \$4,000 was turned over to the treasury of the CNAU.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> R.A. Leake, 'Third Annual Report of R.A. Leake, Physical Director, Foochow, China, to Foreign Department of the International Committee for the Year Ending Sept. 30, 1919', p. 6.

<sup>86</sup> Xiong You, 'Diwuci yuandong yundonghui jishi [Record of the Fifth Far Eastern Championship Games]', *Dong fang za zhi [Eastern Miscellany]*, vol. 18, no. 11, 1921, p. 23.

<sup>87</sup> J.H. Gray, 'Annual Administration Report of Dr. J.H. Gray, National Committee Physical Director of China, for the Year 1921', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Shanghai*, 1921, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> 'Yuandong yundonghui jishi [The Fifth Far Eastern Championship Games]', *Shaonian zazhi [The Journal of Youth]*, vol. 11, no. 7, 1921, pp. 1-2.

<sup>89</sup> 'Chinese Girls to be in Far Eastern Games', *Millard's Review of the Far East*, vol. 16, no. 13, 28 May 1921, p. 695; Gang Zhi, p. 64.

<sup>90</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 163.

<sup>91</sup> J.H. Gray, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> J.H. Gray, 'Quarterly Report of Dr. J.H. Gray, National Physical Director for Y.M.C.A. China, for the period, April, June, 1921', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Shanghai*, 1921, pp. 1-3.

<sup>93</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 163.

The Fifth Games had surpassed all the previous FECGs in every respect, in terms of number of participating athletes, the interest shown by the competing countries, spectator attendance or the amount of money involved.<sup>94</sup> The Games appeared to have overcome current disputes in international politics, and the spirit of sportsmanship reflected the professed principles that the FEAA stood for. Thus, everything contributed to mark the development of Western physical education and sport in China over the entire span of the five FECGs.<sup>95</sup> Gray, in his 1921 Annual Administration Report for the YMCA, commended the ‘spirit of sportsmanship, friendship and goodwill’ he had witnessed during the Games.<sup>96</sup> The Games had provided equal opportunities for improvement to the physical directors in addition to greatly brightening the prospects for physical education and sport in China.<sup>97</sup> As expected, this optimism about the future of the Games, and the YMCA’s role in them, did prevail during the course of a few more productive and promising years, until the 1920s when the growing nationalism and anti-Christian sentiment began sway the public sentiment.

### *The Sixth FECG*

By the time of the Sixth FECG in 1923, the political situation in China had already changed considerably since the early 1920s. As noted earlier on, the Anti-Christian Movement had sparked widespread public anger against Christianity and Christian institutions. It is telling that the YMCA and its foreign physical directors were immediately blamed for the below-par performance of the Chinese delegation at the Sixth FECG, resulting in outpouring of outrage against the YMCA and its foreign physical directors, and led to calls for the foreigners to hand over the sports administration to the Chinese.

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<sup>94</sup> Xiong You, p. 14.

<sup>95</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 9; J.H. Gray, 'Annual Administration Report of Dr. J.H. Gray, National Committee Physical Director of China, for the Year 1921', p. 4.

<sup>96</sup> J.H. Gray, 'Quarterly Report of Dr. J.H. Gray, National Physical Director for Y.M.C.A. China, for the period, April, June, 1921', pp. 1-3; 'Appendix: Rules of the Far Eastern Championship Games', *Xuesheng zazhi [The Students Magazine]*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1921, p. 1.

<sup>97</sup> J.H. Gray, 'Quarterly Report of Dr. J.H. Gray, National Physical Director for Y.M.C.A. China, for the period, April, June, 1921', pp. 1-3; 'Appendix: Rules of the Far Eastern Championship Games', p. 1.

The Sixth FECG was held in Osaka, Japan, from 21 to 26 May 1923. Of the 431 athletes participating in these Games, 113 were from China, 141 from the Philippines, and 177 from Japan.<sup>98</sup> About 250,000 spectators turned up over the course of the six-day program.<sup>99</sup> Following the established custom, the selection of the Chinese athletes for the Sixth FECG was again entrusted to the CNAU. However, one crucial change had taken place in the board of the CNAU as McCloy had resigned as General Director of the CNAU in November 1922, and was succeeded by the equally energetic J.H. Gray. Very thorough preparations and selection procedures were followed to select the candidates, as in previous years, but things were more challenging for the YMCA this time.<sup>100</sup>

Athletes were selected from Hong Kong, Canton, Shanghai, Peking, Tientsin and other cities after being scrutinized through various local athletic meets or contests such as intercollegiate, municipal, provincial and regional athletic games.<sup>101</sup> In fact, the YMCA, still playing a vital role, ensured that the whole preparation work and organization of the Chinese delegation for the Sixth FECG would conform to the standards achieved in the previous FECGs. However, the political turmoil in the country had had a negative impact on the performance of the players as the Chinese athletes had not have enough training in the unstable social environment, and of the entire delegation, only the Chinese soccer team won a title. Even though this was the fifth FECG title in a row for the Chinese soccer team, this victory was not enough for the Chinese delegation to save face after its weak overall performance. For the Chinese public, the worst aspect of their perceived failure at the Sixth FECG was the solid performances delivered by their competitors: the Japanese delegation won three titles, in tennis, track and field and swimming, while the Philippines secured titles in basketball, baseball and volleyball.<sup>102</sup>

The performance of Chinese delegation in the Sixth FECG embarrassed the Chinese

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<sup>98</sup> Mingxin Tang, pp. 157-60; Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3]*, pp. 336-9.

<sup>99</sup> G. Hoh, p. 121.

<sup>100</sup> Shiquan Gu, "Zhonghua yeyu yundong lianhehui' chengli qianhou [Before and After the Establishment of China National Amateur Athletic Federation]", *The Journal of Sport History and Culture*, no. 2, 1991, p. 39.

<sup>101</sup> Wenzhong Wu, *Zhongguo jinbainian tiyushi [Sport History in a Century]*, Taipei, Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan [Taiwan Commercial Press], 1967, p. 168.

<sup>102</sup> Mingxin Tang, pp. 157-60; Weizhi Huang, 'Diliuci yuandong yundonghui jishi [Record of the Sixth Far Eastern Championship Games]', *Dongfang za zhi [Eastern Miscellany]*, vol. 20, no. 10, 1923, p. 56.



government and patriotic Chinese who were pursuing their nationalist agenda.

When the news about the FECG reached China, everyone, especially the nationalists, considered it a national humiliation and responsibility for the failure was soon attributed to the CNAU and its foreign leaders, leading to immediate resignations from the CNAU's General Director and Vice Director.<sup>103</sup> Gray in particular had to bear the brunt of the Chinese people's dissatisfaction. Initially, he was blamed for selecting the wrong candidates to represent China, but soon his foreignness was used to malign his role as a non-Chinese who had deliberately done wrong to damage China's image in an international event. Many of his acts as General Director, such as leading the Chinese delegation in the FECG and delivering a speech in English at the closing ceremony of the Games, were also severely criticized by the Chinese. In particular, it was argued that it might be appropriate for the Philippines to have an American delegation leader as it was a colony of the United States/Spain, but for China, as an independent country, being represented by a foreigner was a humiliation.<sup>104</sup>

China's poor results at the Games also aroused great dissatisfaction among the overseas Chinese in Japan and several appeals were made by them to the Chinese delegation to reflect upon the reasons for what was perceived as a terrible failure and a national humiliation. Consequently, Chinese sports communities and patriotic sportsmen organized a series of intensive discussions to identify the causes for Chinese failure at the Sixth FECG in China. One key suggestion put forward was that the Chinese should themselves take charge of affairs, especially when it came to the management of international and national sporting events. Therefore, a proposal for the establishment of an indigenous sports organization to establish Chinese sovereign sports rights, and taking the leadership roles from the foreigners, was also discussed by the Chinese delegation. Moreover, a meeting was arranged at the request of Chinese sports experts in the office of the *Shanghai Times* on 6 June 1923. Here, many renowned athletes,

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<sup>103</sup> Shiquan Gu, 'Zhonghua yeyu yundong lianhehui' chengli qianhou [Before and After the Establishment of China National Amateur Athletic Federation]', p. 39.

<sup>104</sup> Tianbai Zhang, 'Zhonghua quanguo tiyu xiejinhui chengli shimo [The Establishment of China Amateur Athletic Federation]', *Tiyu wenshi [The Journal of Sport History and Culture]*, no. 6, 1990, p. 30.

sports experts and devout advocates of the Chinese sports enterprise identified several contributory factors for the FECG failure that needed be addressed immediately. These included having ‘no Chinese sport administrative community or organization’, a ‘lack of support from the government’, the ‘ignorance of society’, ‘not enough practice and preparation’, and so forth.<sup>105</sup> The gist of the discussion, however, was to seek out ways for the successful transfer of their sovereign sports rights to the Chinese people. This reflects the way in which the nationalistic discourse gradually seeped as a notion into the logic of competitive sport, aiming to frame these essentially as an anti-foreign undertaking.

### 5.4.2 National Identity Discourses and the Third National Games and the Regional Games

One year after the Sixth FECG, when the Third National Games were held in Wuchang, Hubei province, in 1924, the absence of foreign directors in organizing committees was already noticeable.<sup>106</sup> Although the National Games were again organized under the patronage of the CNAU, the role of foreign directors of the YMCA had been curtailed to a significant degree, and in this sense the Third National Games proved to be a turning point in the process of indigenizing physical education and sport in China. For example, the authorities published in the *Shenbao* newspaper<sup>107</sup> a list of the people who would serve as secretaries and judges at the Games. Of the 70 people listed, only six were foreigners and they were given minor roles in the Games.<sup>108</sup> This meant that China had not only obtained control over the organization of the National Games but was also on the road to claiming sovereignty over the administration of athletic activities.<sup>109</sup> It is important to note in this contest that the very process of ‘indigenizing the games’ itself assumed a discursive dimension for creating a nationalistic discourse that could in turn be utilized for its anti-foreign value to claim power and unify the people in China.

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<sup>105</sup> Mingxin Tang, p. 76.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> *Shenbao* (*Shanghai News* in English) was an influential newspaper published from 30 April 1872 to 27 May 1949 in Shanghai China. *Shenbao* was one of the earliest Chinese newspapers in modern China, and was widely read.

<sup>108</sup> *Shenbao* (*Shanghai News* in English) was an influential newspaper published from 30 April 1872 to 27 May 1949 in Shanghai China. *Shenbao* was one of the earliest Chinese newspapers in modern China, and was widely read.

<sup>109</sup> H. Sun, p. 99.

The behind-the-scenes groundwork for the Third National Games was still mainly carried out by the YMCA secretaries. The CNAU was responsible for organizing the events, dealing with the registration of prospective contestants, and for providing judges for the Games. Because of the China Athletic Association's (CAA, see section 5.4.3) threat to boycott the Games, Gray handed the administration of the national games over to the Chinese, assuming his limited role only as a 'technical adviser' during the planning process.<sup>110</sup> However, there had been many challenges before the process of transition could be completed, as the local YMCAs and motivated foreigners like Gray still had a lot to do to promote the acceptability of athletic games in the still largely traditional society of China. In fact, the demand for leadership regarding physical education and sport by the Chinese had been made without any real work in this regard because there was, as of yet, no one else to shoulder responsibility independently for the organization of the Third National Games. Rather apprehensively, Gray had to start preparations for the Third National Games in early 1924 despite being well aware of the anti-foreign sentiment. In order to persuade the local government, the YMCA and other related organizations had to work together and share in the preparations. After much deliberation between the YMCA directors and the government officials, the Wuchang National Games Preparation Committee was established. Along with Gray, the other four Preparation Committee members were again mainly YMCA personnel, though they were Chinese rather than foreign directors of the YMCA: Hao Gengsheng<sup>111</sup> and Song Ruhai were physical directors at the Hankou and Wuchang YMCAs respectively, Chen Shi was the President of Wuchang National College, and Huang Zhirui was a primary school headmaster. Chen Shi and Huang Zhirui worked on general administration, while Song Ruhai was charged with social liaison and Hao Gengsheng was responsible for competition management.<sup>112</sup> This committee was entrusted with responsibility for building the stadium as well as for the reception and accommodation of guests and the

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<sup>110</sup> Jianlin Liao, 'Shehui bianqian yu jindai tiy de fazhan-Dui jiu zhongguo disan jie quanyunhui de lishi kaocha [A Research on the Third National Games in Modern China]', *Qiusuo*, no. 4, 2004, p. 234.

<sup>111</sup> Hao Gengsheng (1899–1976) was a famous sports expert in modern China. He studied at the physical education department of Springfield College between 1920 and 1923. After returning to China, he served as a sports educator in Zhonghua University, Soochow University, Qinghua University, Beijing Normal University, Northeastern University and so forth.

<sup>112</sup> G. Hoh, *Hao Gengsheng huiyilu [The Memories of Hao Gengsheng]* Xinbei, Taiwan, Zhuanji wenxue chubanshe [Zhuanji Wenxue Press], 1969, p. 69.

audience. The first bulletin, printed in both Chinese and English, was issued about four months before the Games.

The Third National Games Preparation Committee faced three major obstacles to accomplishing its work. First, they had to gain support from the local government. As mentioned previously, the Games took place during the Warlord Era (1916–1928). Xiao Yaonan, who was both the Chief Military Governor of Hubei province and a warlord, was a difficult man to get along with, yet his support was crucial. Xiao, in fact, led a life of debauchery and suffered from pulmonary disease. He was also addicted to opium, and always slept during the day and worked at night. Therefore, Hao Gengsheng, J.H. Gray and other Committee members had to get up around midnight in order to hold discussions with Xiao about issues such as providing money for the construction of the arena and swimming pool.<sup>113</sup> Despite these difficulties, the Committee members were successful in obtaining the support from the local government for the Third National Games.

Second, the Committee had to reckon with the resistance of the local people, who tried to prevent the Committee from building the new sports facilities and stadium as they thought that these would bring them bad luck. In his memoirs, Hao Gengsheng recalls that, at that time, ‘Wuhan peoples’ minds had not yet been opened to the wider world’.<sup>114</sup> Not only did they doubt that the Games and sports in general would be good for improving the health of their fellow human beings, but they were also opposed and impeded the work for the Games under one or another pretext.<sup>115</sup> The stark opposition both by the government and the local people was even more notable when deciding on where to build the main stadium for the athletic events and the field for the ball games. After much discussion on the matter, the local government offered the organizers the

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<sup>113</sup> Min Yao, *Physical Salvation: Research on National Games of China during National Government*, Master Thesis, Huazhong Normal University [Central China Normal University], 2011, p. 27; J.H. Gray, 'Report Letter of Dr. J.H. Gray, Physical Director of the National Committee of Y.M.C.A, Shanghai, China, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1924', *Young Men's Christian Associations—China, Shanghai, 1924*, p. 1.

<sup>114</sup> Min Yao), p. 27; J.H. Gray, 'Report Letter of Dr. J.H. Gray, Physical Director of the National Committee of Y.M.C.A, Shanghai, China, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1924', p. 1.

<sup>115</sup> Min Yao), p. 27; J.H. Gray, 'Report Letter of Dr. J.H. Gray, Physical Director of the National Committee of Y.M.C.A, Shanghai, China, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1924', p. 1.

Wuhan horse-training grounds, a rather derelict site with only a few rundown houses around it, as the site for the main arena. As for the field for ball games, the chosen field included a memorial archway, which was a traditional type of gateway which was culturally very sacred.<sup>116</sup> The locals believed that the memorial archway brought good luck (*fengshui*) to the whole city and that if it was destroyed, disasters such as pestilence, war and other calamities would be visited upon the land. When the locals heard that the memorial archway was to be destroyed in order to construct ball courts, they strongly opposed it. The people wrote threatening letters to members of the Wuchang National Games Preparation Committee in an attempt to stop construction of the new courts.<sup>117</sup> Finally, under the efforts of the Committee members, the field was built on the site of the memorial archway regardless of the opposition.

Third, there was strong opposition to the planned women's swimming events in the Games. The local people, especially the older generation, thought that participation in such an event would bring great shame on the women swimmers and to their families, and have a detrimental effect on public morals. They still held the traditional view that women should 'bind their feet and stay indoors'.<sup>118</sup> Again, the Committee stood firm by their plan and the event went ahead.

Despite such difficulties, the members of the Committee were able to complete the required preparations including the stadium and the demolishing of the sacred gate. Their hard work paid off and the Third National Games went ahead as planned from 22 to 24 May 1924. In total, five delegations participated in the Games: East China (Jiangsu and Zhejiang), South China (Canton, Fujian, Guangxi), West China (Gansu, Shanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou), Central China (Hubei, Hunan, Anhui, Jiangxi) and North China (Zhili, Henan, Shandong, Shanxi and from some north-eastern provinces). There were also some athletes from Hong Kong and Southeast China.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Min Yao), p. 27; J.H. Gray, 'Report Letter of Dr. J.H. Gray, Physical Director of the National Committee of Y.M.C.A, Shanghai, China, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1924', p. 1.

<sup>117</sup> Min Yao), p. 27; Jianlin Liao, p. 234.

<sup>118</sup> Min Yao), p. 27; Jianlin Liao, p. 234.

<sup>119</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji* [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3], p. 311.

The total number of athletes taking part in the Games was around 340.

The organization of the Third National Games was a lot more standardized than it had been in previous years. It was remarked that there had already been over 30 preliminaries for the major events that were organized by the Preparation Committee before the finalists arrived at the Games. It was because there was a great deal of competition to get into the games and that the level of athletes was higher than in previous years.<sup>120</sup> A special pamphlet titled *Hand Book of the Third National Championships of China* was edited by the physical department of the Hankou YMCA, and this was the first occasion that a handbook had been produced for the National Games.<sup>121</sup> The Peacock Moving Picture Company of Shanghai filmed the Games for national distribution by the YMCA.<sup>122</sup> Thus, the sporting experience was extended to other parts of China via the local YMCAs, giving a large number of young YMCA members the opportunity to become familiar with the event and Western-style sports.

These games featured many ‘firsts’ in Chinese competitive sport. It was the first time that a number of events were also held for women, such as swimming, basketball, volleyball and softball. This was symbolically very important, even if the level of athletic performance was not perhaps internationally competitive, because this represented recognition that women’s competitive sport was becoming important. Swimming competitions featured for the first time in the National Games, as did Chinese martial arts. Referred to as ‘national calisthenics’ and team gymnastics in these Games, the martial arts events consisted of 107 performers, all scored on the basis of standard orderliness, spirit, strength, posture and dress.<sup>123</sup> The unit of measurement for the track and field events was changed from yards to metres, an adjustment that still abides in Chinese sports.<sup>124</sup> Another achievement of these Games was that a basketball team had been sent by the Manila Chinese YMCA in the Philippines, which marked the

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<sup>120</sup> Jianlin Liao, p. 234.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 141; Zhenya Wang and Daoping Wang, *Jiuzhongguo tiyu jianwen [Sports Stories in Modern China]*, p. 147.

<sup>123</sup> H. Sun, p. 99; Mingxin Tang, p. 81.

<sup>124</sup> H. Sun, p. 99; Mingxin Tang, p. 81.

first time that overseas Chinese athletes had taken part in the national athletic meet.

The results of the three-day competition were spectacular by 1920s standards.<sup>125</sup> From every aspect, the Third National Games appeared to be a great success, a fact which Hao Gengsheng, writing in his memoirs, described as a ‘miracle’.<sup>126</sup> As noted above, this success would have been impossible if not for the behind-the-scenes and enthusiastic involvement of the YMCA directors, and especially local Chinese physical directors. For the Chinese people, the Third National Games reflected the process of transformation regarding the changing Chinese view on Western sport and how it was becoming acceptable and localized. Moreover, most national narratives of modern Chinese physical education and sport describe the Games as the ‘outcome of the post-May Fourth trend of taking back physical education and sport from the hands of the Westerners’.<sup>127</sup> During the Games, most of the organizing work was done by the Chinese themselves, only few foreigners were responsible for refereeing work. For this reason it hailed as the beginning of the nationalist era in Chinese sport.<sup>128</sup> To all appearances, the will of the Chinese people to assert their right to manage their own sporting events had just been vindicated, even if the YMCA continued to support this nationalist undertaking behind the scene.

Even while national sporting activities were undergoing the profound transformation described above, regional games, such as the NCAM, the South China Athletic Meet (SCAM) and the Central China Athletic Meet (CCAM), continued to be held regularly during the period 1919–1928. Like the National Games, these meets also gradually came to be organized by the Chinese themselves rather than by foreigners because of the strong will of the Chinese to manage their physical education and sport by themselves, and because there were more Chinese who were familiar with the rules and able to organize these games. In addition, the rules for these regional games gradually

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<sup>125</sup> H. Sun, p. 99.

<sup>126</sup> G. Hoh, *Hao Gengsheng huiyilu [The Memories of Hao Gengsheng]* p. 69.

<sup>127</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 148; National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi [Sport History in Modern China]*, p. 148.

<sup>128</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 79; National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi [Sport History in Modern China]*, p. 148.

became more standardized and the events much more diversified.

For example, in the case of the six NCAMs (Seventh–Twelfth NCAMs) held during this period, the transition in terms of the indigenization of the games, the construction of sport facilities and the rules for administrating the events was most conspicuous.<sup>129</sup> The NCAM was gradually localized, including everything from the sport facilities and rules to its organization and administration. First, almost all new sports facilities for the NCAM were constructed by the Chinese themselves, and from the Tenth NCAM onwards, the preparation and organization of sport-related meetings, including the arrangements for refereeing and instructional work, were taken on by the Chinese. In a meeting for the Tenth NCAM in May 1923 in Tientsin, Zhang Boling, the chairman of the CNAAF and General Director of the Tientsin YMCA, decreed that, in view of the inevitability of change, all the affairs, including arrangements for the game officials and referees, would be run by the Chinese themselves. Mandarin and not English was to be the official language of the games, and the rules and regulations for all the events in the Meet were to be made by the Chinese. In addition, Zhang Boling and his colleagues revised the regulations previously introduced by foreign YMCA secretaries.<sup>130</sup> These developments gave Chinese people confidence that they could hold games by themselves, thus paving the way for later assertions regarding the managing of sports rights.

Again, with regards to the SCAM and the CCAM, the YMCA and its foreign directors gradually relinquished control over the organization and administration of these sporting events. Although the initiatives for these regional games had been mainly taken on by the foreign YMCA directors in order to retain a certain measure of influence in sporting activities in China, their actual role was curtailed to the maximum as the Chinese quickly grew self-reliant in the organization of these events.

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<sup>129</sup> National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi [Sport History in Modern China]*, pp. 149-50.

<sup>130</sup> Yujun Lu and Liang Bo, 'Minguo shiqi de zhonghua quanguo tiyu xiejinhui [The China National Athletic Union in the Republic of China]', *Lishi Dangan [Historical Archives]*, no. 4, 2001, pp. 105-6.



### 5.4.3 Creating Narratives of the Nation: the Case of the China National Amateur Athletic Federation

As feelings of modern-style nationalism spread in China through a series of nationwide nationalist movements, the CNAU sport organization established by the YMCA's foreign physical directors was replaced by the Chinese-run CNAAF on July 1924. In July 1923, an organization named the Chinese Athletic Association (CAA) was also established in Shanghai to rival the YMCA-dominated CNAU.<sup>131</sup> Having an assorted membership of individuals from the mainstream physical education community (Wang Zhuanfei and Tang Hao), the Shanghai martial arts community (Lu Weichang, Chen Gongzhe, Ma Zizhen and Wu Zhiqing), and even from CNAU Organization Committee (Hao Boyang), the CAA quickly flourished and gathered support from sports experts from other areas of China.<sup>132</sup>

As mentioned earlier on in section 5.4.1, the fiasco-like outcome of the Sixth FECG in 1923 had already compelled the Chinese sports experts to think about ways to recover their national pride which was seen to have been damaged due to the perceived incompetence of the foreign leadership of the national team. The proceedings of the meeting by a number of sports experts on 6 June 1923 at the *Shanghai Times* offices have also been discussed above. Some of these experts had put the entire onus for the failure of Chinese delegation on the YMCA and its foreign leadership. Subsequently, to address the lack of a nationwide professional administrative body for sport, on 7 July, the China National Amateur Association Federation Preparation Committee (CNAAFPC) was established.<sup>133</sup>

As noted in section 5.4.2, J.H. Gray had put a great deal of work into preparing for the

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<sup>131</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 78; Tianbai Zhang, 'Zhonghua quanguo tiyu xiejinhui chengli shimo [The Establishment of China Amateur Athletic Federation]', pp. 30-3.

<sup>132</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 77.

<sup>133</sup> Tianbai Zhang, 'Zhonghua quanguo tiyu xiejinhui chengli shimo [The Establishment of China Amateur Athletic Federation]', pp. 30-3.

Third National Games. However, questions were raised before the games whether Gray should be allowed to steer the games because he was a foreigner, and because he had been blamed for China's failure at the Sixth FECG. Many sports associations, such as Wuhan commercial corps and Hong Kong South China Tiyu Association, turned against him, arguing that the National Games should not be led by foreigners. Their opposition was extended even to the CNAU, which was run by the YMCA in China. This nationalistically motivated disapproval of foreign influence in Chinese sport had already led some sports committees to withdraw from participation in the Third National Games.<sup>134</sup> In mid-April 1924, the Hong Kong South China Tiyu Association queried the legality of the CNAU in an article in *Shenbao*, which served also as a pretext for their withdrawal from the Third National Games.<sup>135</sup> Similarly, the Nan Hua Sport Union had also persuaded other sports organizations to pull out of the Games,<sup>136</sup> and many teams from Canton boycotted the Third National Games.<sup>137</sup> Apprehending the urgency with which the misgivings of the local sports organizations needed to be quelled, the CNAU issued a statement on the preparations for the Third National Games in a number of well-known magazines, stressing that the Games transcended politics and religion. The CNAU attempted to clarify that the aim of the National Games was to boost China's standing in sports on the world stage. The statement also maintained that Gray was only one among the staff on the Preparation Committee, and that members of this committee came from many different organizations, such as the YMCA and the indigenous Pure Martial Athletic Association.<sup>138</sup> In order to further subdue public rage, the CNAU even recruited six known national figures (including political giants like Yan Xishan and Wang Jingwei, as well as famed educators like Huang Yanpei and Chen Shi) to serve as honorary members on its committee.<sup>139</sup> Ultimately, none of these measures proved adequate to dampen the disapproval of the Games's organizing committee.

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<sup>134</sup> *Shenbao*, no. 8, 20 April 1924.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 78; Tianbai Zhang, 'Zhonghua quanguo tiyu xiejinhui chengli shimo [The Establishment of China Amateur Athletic Federation]', pp. 32-33.

<sup>138</sup> Tianbai Zhang, 'Zhonghua quanguo tiyu xiejinhui chengli shimo [The Establishment of China Amateur Athletic Federation]', p. 32.

<sup>139</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 78; Tianbai Zhang, 'Zhonghua quanguo tiyu xiejinhui chengli shimo [The Establishment of China Amateur Athletic Federation]', p. 32.

It is telling, however, that many Chinese also put forward reasons as to why the National Games should be supported. Jiang Xiangqing, a physical education instructor at St John's and the editor of *Shenbao*, identified some of these reasons in a series of articles imploring the Chinese people to participate in the Third Games. Jiang was firmly against the boycott that some athletes and sport organizations had instituted against the Third National Games. He claimed that the Wuchang Games would provide a great opportunity for Chinese athletes to remain in practice, as they were to take part in the Seventh FECG in Manila the following spring. Jiang also tried to convey to the people the unreasonableness of putting the entire responsibility for the failure of the Sixth FECG on Gray's shoulders. In addition, Jiang appealed to sports unions around China to unite for the sake of sport and also urged the CNAU to relinquish its responsibilities regarding the Third National Games to the Wuchang National Games Preparation Committee.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, he suggested that, after the National Games, all the Chinese sports leaders, experts and organizations should work together to discuss the establishment of a new national sport federation to take charge of the administration of sport in China.<sup>141</sup> In this way, he was proposing an orderly and organized handover of CNAU's responsibilities into local hands.

Jiang Xiangqing's well-presented proposals were eagerly welcomed by the CAA, which also encouraged athletes to take part in the Third Games. The CAA declared that the aim of the National Games was to improve the health of the Chinese people and international athletic standing of China. The CAA also tried to convey the impression that the CNAU was just one of the sports unions which had initiated the National Games and that Gray was just one of many managers.<sup>142</sup> At this crucial juncture, Gray's own disclaimer proved an important one:

It is a critical moment for the development of sport in China. Therefore, all the sportsmen no matter Chinese or foreigner should unite together and work hard for

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<sup>140</sup> Wenzhong Wu, *Zhongguo jinbainian tiyushi [Sport History in a Century]*, p. 41.

<sup>141</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 78; Zhongxin Wang, *Jidujiao yu jindai zhongguo jiaoyu [Christianity and Education in Modern China]*, p. 141.

<sup>142</sup> Tianbai Zhang, 'Zhonghua quanguo tiyu xiejinhui chengli shimo [The Establishment of China Amateur Athletic Federation]', pp. 30-3.

this enterprise. I would like to emphasize that China's business has to be done by Chinese themselves; foreigners like me just work as a consultant and provide help for you.<sup>143</sup>

As a corollary, the Third National Games were held in Wuchang on 22 May 1924. During the Games, the representatives of the sports federations of five regions unanimously proposed the establishment of a national athletic organization in China and nominated Zhang Boling and Wang Zhengting to take charge of this enterprise.<sup>144</sup> However, the proposal could not be implemented, mainly because of the lack of preparedness to lead such an enterprise. However, the annual conference of the Chinese Educational Reform Society (CERS)<sup>145</sup> in Nanking on 4 July 1924 provided the opportunity to discuss and resolve the matter of establishing of the CNAAF.<sup>146</sup> The establishment of the CNAAF was decided by 66 delegates from more than ten provinces, including those from Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Zhili, Shandong and Henan, which was significant because it represented the first Chinese-led and nationwide initiative to localize modern education in China. Zhang Boling was appointed as the interim chairman of the CNAAF, Shen Siliang as interim secretary, and Zhang Boling, Guo Bingwen, Chen Shi, Lu Weichang, Nie Yuntai, Hao Boyang, She Siliang, Wang Kegang, Wu Ouchu as the nine principal members of its board of directors.<sup>147</sup> This development was remarkable in the sense that the CNAAF had no relationship with the Christian institutions and all of its members were Chinese.<sup>148</sup> For the nationalists this was significant because it was seen as a truly nationalistic and independent undertaking, free of foreign influence.

The first board meeting was held on the evening of 5 August 1924 and the CNAAF was

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> H. Sun, p. 86.

<sup>145</sup> The CERS was a nationwide, non-governmental educational organization. Most of its members were famous scholars and educators who had been developing a new perspective on education since the May Fourth Movement. Thus, the CERS aimed to investigate the state of Chinese education, to promote research in education, and to develop education in China. Thanks to its good relationship with government, the CERS exerted considerable influence on education at the time.

<sup>146</sup> S.Y. Loch, 'Western Sports in China Popularized during Last 20 Years: Sports Gospel First Planted by Missionaries', *The China Press*, 29 August 1931.

<sup>147</sup> Fan Hong, (ed.) *Sport, Nationalism and Orientalism: The Asian Games edn vols*, London & New York, Routledge, 2006, pp. xxiv, 129 p.

<sup>148</sup> Yujun Lu and Liang Bo, 'Minguo shiqi de zhonghua quanguo tiyu xiejinhui [The China National Athletic Union in the Republic of China]', p. 106.

officially founded with a proper constitution and was registered by the interior ministry of the Chinese government.<sup>149</sup> The CNAAF had its headquarters in Shanghai, but for the time being, owing to the lack of funds and support from the government, the federation had to borrow rooms temporarily at the *Shenbao* offices to conduct its operations.<sup>150</sup> In 1925, when the Seventh FECG was held, the CNAAF was given a room at St John's University in which to carry out its work.<sup>151</sup> The foundation of the CNAAF exerted a positive impact for promoting sports competitions in different areas and in the country as a whole as a *Chinese* undertaking, strengthening the ties with international athletic organizations and helping athletes to participate in international sporting activities such as the FECG and the Olympic Games.<sup>152</sup>

In a way, while with the establishment of the CNAAF, the running of national sports had been transferred from the hands of foreigners to the hands of the Chinese, the YMCA still continued to exert its influence. Sports experts like Zhang Boling, Wang Zhengting, Hao Gengsheng, Dong Shouyi and other Chinese YMCA secretaries ran the daily affairs of the Federation, taking full charge of preparations for national and international competitions. The task of selecting the athletes and the chief referees for athletic competitions was entirely at their discretion.<sup>153</sup> Therefore, while it can be argued that the establishment of the CNAAF reflected the growing sense of national unity and the emergence of a national consciousness among the Chinese people,<sup>154</sup> the influence of the YMCA's activities were too embedded in the form and running of the Chinese sport scene to be eradicated by simply removing its foreign leaders from positions of power.

### 5.5 Integrating Western Sports and Traditional Chinese Martial Arts

Between 1919 and 1928, with the changing international and national social

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<sup>149</sup> *Guomin tiyu jikan [National Sports Quarterly]*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1924, p. 177.

<sup>150</sup> China National Amateur Athletic Federation, *China National Amateur Athletic Federation Yearbook 1927*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>151</sup> Youyu Ma, 'Zhongguo quanguo tiyu xiejinhui jianshi [The Brief History of the China National Amateur Athletic Federation]', *Tiyu shiliao (Di yi ji) [Historical Document of Sport (1st Volume)]*, Beijing, Renmin tiyu chubanshe [People's Sports Publishing House of China], 1980, p. 10.

<sup>152</sup> H. Sun, p. 86.

<sup>153</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 161; H. Sun, p. 86.

<sup>154</sup> Tianbai Zhang, 'Zhonghua quanguo tiyu xiejinhui chengli shimo [The Establishment of China Amateur Athletic Federation]', p. 30.

environments, and under the influence of missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, military gymnastics were gradually removed from the main content of the physical education curriculum, which was extended to include a variety of Western sports, such as ball games, gymnastics and track and field. Meanwhile, because of the Anti-Christian Movement and rising nationalist sentiment, traditional Chinese sports, and especially martial arts, were promoted by patriotic educators and sports experts to act as a counterweight to the growing popularity of Western sports. Even though the position of martial arts in physical education was not as strong as that of Western sports, its increased adoption in school physical education curricula signified that a nationalist consciousness had emerged in the sport community.

### 5.5.1 The Changing Disposition and Role of Western Sports in Local Schools

As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, military sports had come to be widely adopted in government and private schools by the end of the nineteenth century. However, some sports experts and local schools had become sceptical of the usefulness these military sports, especially after the 1911 Revolution. As a result, Western sports such as athletics and basketball started to gain greater currency in these schools. Before 1923, in most government and private schools, the official physical education class consisted largely of military gymnastics, while Western sports, such as ball games, were popular only as extracurricular activities. This phenomenon was called the ‘Dual-track Physical Education System’ (DPES; *Shuanggui tiyu*).<sup>155</sup>

First, the DPES signified the ongoing legacy of the missionary educational institutions and of the YMCA which had initially popularized Western physical education and sport in many indigenous schools. Specifically, after the 1911 Revolution, the number of missionary educational institutions had increased dramatically throughout China. Regardless of whether these missionary educational institutions carried out physical education through extracurricular physical classes or as part of their official curricula,

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<sup>155</sup> National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi [Sport History in Modern China]*, p. 113.

the penchant for sports activities had been inculcated in the minds of the Chinese students. Simultaneously, the YMCA's physical education work was being expanded to many government schools which signified a process of embedding sports in the national curriculum. Furthermore, the missionary educational institutions' and YMCA's successful organization of the Second FECG in Shanghai, the first two National Games, and various other regional and interscholastic games acted as a catalyst for a change with regard to the popular trend towards militarism in physical education in Chinese schools. Therefore, even though militarism remained a core concept in physical education in the local school system, the influence of the foreign-run schools and the YMCA was extended beyond their immediate local contexts.

Militarism, in fact, had had a long tradition in China, and its effectiveness in terms of physical education and sport was questioned only after Germany – the country from which the concept had originated – was defeated in the First World War. With the end of the War, some Chinese people expressed a belief that there would be peace in the world and that militarism and military training would no longer be needed. Others viewed militarism as an aggressive tool of imperialism and decided that for that reason it should not be advocated anymore. Even some educators criticized having military sports in schools. Xu Yibing, a physical education teacher, argued that military sports should be abolished in schools because military parade activities – such as standing at ease, falling in, marching with weapons, and saluting – were boring for the majority of students.<sup>156</sup>

As interest in militarism declined, opinion was shifting towards supporting the popularization of Western physical education and sport in China. In particular, American pragmatism, introduced into China at the end of the 1920s, prompted reflection in this regard among some Chinese educationalists and intellectuals. John Dewey, an American educational reformer, claimed in his speech at Nanking University in 1919 that the development of mass physical education was the most urgent

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<sup>156</sup> Hwang Tommy and Jarvie Grant, p. 5; Yixiong Xu, *Zhongguo jindai tiyu sixiang [Physical Education Thoughts in Modern China]*, p. 103.

requirement for every country at that time. He stressed that it was more important to help improve personal and mass hygiene and to spread knowledge of physical education in society than to focus on military education and military training. He believed that military sports should be carried out in military schools only.<sup>157</sup> Between 1919 and 1921, under the invitation of some of his Chinese former students at Columbia University, Dewey visited 11 provinces in China on a lecturing tour.<sup>158</sup> His philosophy of pragmatism was widely adopted by the Chinese educators and sports experts (such as Hu Shi, Tao Xingzhi and Wu Yunrui)<sup>159</sup> and was regarded as one of the most influential Western intellectual imports in modern China.

Therefore, in the period from 1919 to 1928, Chinese educators and other concerned people began to re-consider militaristic methods previously employed in physical education in favour of Dewey's approach. In the context of modernizing China, there was also much broader recognition of the potential value of Western physical education and sport for cultivating 'a spirit of cooperation, equality and national unity' among the Chinese youth.<sup>160</sup> The Nationalists in particular began to realize that physical education and sport could have an important role to play in supporting their political goals on a national level. Therefore, Western sports such as baseball, basketball and calisthenics were gradually introduced in the indigenous educational institutions, especially since these sports had proved very attractive to young people.<sup>161</sup> However, despite being of 'Western' origin, the games themselves were utilized to educate the young people about new and desired modern Chinese characteristics of cooperation, equality and national unity. A large number of schools added ball games and track and field to their official physical education classes, but cut down on military gymnastic training. Nanking

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<sup>157</sup> Hwang Tonmy and Jarvie Grant, p. 6.

<sup>158</sup> Mei Wu Hoyt, 'John Dewey's Legacy to China and the Problems in Chinese Society', *TCI (Transnational Curriculum Inquiry)*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>159</sup> Hu Shi (1891–1962) was a Chinese diplomat, philosopher, essayist and educator in modern China. Between 1910 and 1912, he studied agriculture at Cornell University, US. In 1912, he changed his major to philosophy and literature. After his graduation, Hu Shi furthered his studies at Columbia University, studying philosophy. Hu Shi was greatly influenced by the pragmatic theory of education from his supervisor John Dewey at Columbia University. Tao Xingzhi (1891–1946) was a famous educator and reformer in modern China. He once studied at Teachers College, Columbia University. Wu Yunrui (1892–1976) was a famous sports expert in modern China. He obtained a bachelor degree in medicine at the University of Chicago and a Master's degree in education at Columbia University. As with Hu Shi, both Tao Xingzhi and Wu Yunrui were influenced by John Dewey and his pragmatic theory of education.

<sup>160</sup> Linghou Xu, 'Guomin yi zhong tiyu shuo [The Significance of Physical Education and Sport for the Chinese]', *Tiyu zhoubao [Sports News Weekly]*, no. 1, 1924, p. 1.

<sup>161</sup> Zhouxiang Lu, 'Sport, Nationalism and the Building of the Modern Chinese Nation State (1912–49)', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 28, no. 7, 2011, p. 1031.



Higher Normal University, for example, publically declared their decision to cut down the time allocated to military gymnastics in their physical education classes in 1920 because the boring military sports were not good for the development of students' physiques and spirit.<sup>162</sup> In these schools, ball games, track and field and other Western sports accounted for the majority of the activities in physical education classes. However, because there was no uniform physical education teaching system and no official regulations from the Ministry of Education, many schools still continued to incorporate military gymnastics and military training. However, the general trend was that military gymnastics were gradually being replaced by Western sports. Accordingly, sports gradually became, as Lu notes, 'a physically experienced link between citizens, ordaining a dual responsibility for the people – of keeping healthy and fit in body and mind and of working to seek unity with their fellow Chinese'.<sup>163</sup>

Eventually, on 1 November 1922, the Ministry of Education of the Beiyang government issued the 'Decree of the Reformation of the Regulation for Schooling'.<sup>164</sup> The year 1922 in the Chinese lunar calendar was called the Renxu year; therefore, the new school system was named Renxu Regulation for Schooling. Drawing heavily on American educational ideas, this new system represented a complete transformation of Chinese education. It emulated the American '6-3-3' educational system, which involved six years of primary school, three years of junior middle school and three years of senior middle school. In terms of physical education, the system emphasized that education should meet the need for social evolution and should concentrate on developing individualism in pupils, and that it should pay attention to the overall development of students' bodies and minds.<sup>165</sup> Thus, this new decree marked the start of the transformation of Chinese education in line with the American model. It is telling that while Christian institutions' influence was on the wane, within 50 years of establishing their operations in China, their efforts were now effectively being taken over by the

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<sup>162</sup> Editorial Committee of Historical Document in Sports, *Historical Document of Sport*, Beijing, Renmin tiyu chubanshe [People's Sports Publishing House of China], 1982, p. 27.

<sup>163</sup> Zhouxiang Lu, 'Sport, Nationalism and the Building of the Modern Chinese Nation State (1912–49)', p. 1031.

<sup>164</sup> Fan Hong and Tan Hua, 'Sport in China: Conflict between Tradition and Modernity, 1840s to 1930s', *ibid.* vol. 19, no. 2-3, 2002, p. 199.

<sup>165</sup> National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi [Sport History in Modern China]*, pp. 117-9.

Chinese government and activists in China as a tool to build national unity and a sense of shared national identity and pride.

Later on, in 1923, a new curriculum for physical education and sport was prescribed and published in the *Educational Journal (Jiaoyu zazhi)*. This new curriculum was another important milestone in Chinese sports history because they effectively embedded Western sports education into the official Chinese education curricula.<sup>166</sup> Military gymnastics were curtailed from the content of the physical education curriculum, which was now extended to include various Western sports, including ball games, gymnastics and track and field.<sup>167</sup> Under the new curriculum, physical education in schools became much more scientific and the DPES gradually disappeared.<sup>168</sup>

### **5.5.2 Nationalism and the Incorporation of Chinese Martial Arts in National Physical Education Curricula**

Between 1919 and 1928, which was a period characterized by a growing nationalistic spirit, some educators and those involved in physical education grew more inclined to incorporate traditional sports, especially martial arts, in general school curricula. Promoting military education had been a priority in physical education during the early years of the Republic of China. Given the violent circumstances of the times, the teaching of military gymnastics had been suggested to form the core part of physical education in schools in order to create militaristic awareness among the people.<sup>169</sup>

However, after 1919, as mentioned in the previous section (see section 5.5.1), support for military sports suffered a setback owing to the defeat of Germany in the First World War, which was taken by many in China to evidence the perceived failure of the German state to cultivate strong and powerful citizens. This gave some of the

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<sup>166</sup> Fan Hong and Tan Hua, 'Sport in China: Conflict between Tradition and Modernity, 1840s to 1930s', p. 199.

<sup>167</sup> National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi [Sport History in Modern China]*, pp. 117-9.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Hwang Tonmy and Jarvie Grant, p. 12; *Shenbao*, 5 April 1915.

nationalists, such as martial artist Wu Zhiqing, an impetus to look to the past for traditional Chinese martial arts (which had some common characteristics with military gymnastics) as an alternative to Western military exercise.<sup>170</sup> This led to traditional Chinese sports, especially martial arts, being actively advocated by a large number of nationalist sports experts. Even though martial arts would not gain instant popularity in the same way as the Western sports had, Chinese martial arts were ‘modernized’ to fit within the emerging discourse about education and sports in China. This ‘repackaging’ of martial arts was aimed specifically at attracting the Chinese people and government officials as a way to maintain traditional Chinese traditions which were perceived to be under threat of being ‘Westernized’. For this reason, in the 1919 National Educational Conference, some educators proposed that martial arts be reintroduced to schools. Following this, Wu Zhiqing, an influential physical educator, suggested in 1922 that martial arts should be adopted as a compulsory component of physical education classes in the national curriculum, and that special martial arts textbooks be compiled and professional martial arts teachers be trained as a matter of urgency.<sup>171</sup> Even without the proposed formalization of the curricula, martial arts training had already become an integral part of the school curricula in a large number of schools in China by 1924. According to a national survey of 40 schools conducted by the Peking Sports Society in 1924, 37.5 per cent of schools incorporated martial arts in their curricula, 35 per cent practised it after school and only 27.5 per cent had no martial arts education at all.<sup>172</sup>

The enthusiastic academic campaign to publicize martial arts took place in 1924, advocating the teaching of martial arts in primary and middle schools. It was emphasized that, as a quintessential part of Chinese culture, martial arts ought to be promoted; it was not just a means of reviving traditional Chinese sport, but also a good way to improve Chinese people’s health and to strengthen them as a nation. In 1924, Luo Tingguang published an article entitled *Nationalism and the Curricula in Primary Schools*, criticizing the domination of Western sports in physical education in Chinese

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<sup>170</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di san ji* [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 3], p. 211.

<sup>171</sup> Zhiqing Wu, ‘Minguo shiqi de tiyu [Physical Education in Republic of China]’, *Xin jiao yu* [New Education], vol. 5, no. 3, 1922, p. 525.

<sup>172</sup> Fan Hong and Tan Hua, ‘Sport in China: Conflict between Tradition and Modernity, 1840s to 1930s’, p. 203.

schools. Luo maintained that in overstressing the importance of Western sports, schools were guilty of ignoring the fact that martial arts were a symbol of traditional Chinese sports and culture. He advocated adopting the martial arts into primary education at the very least in order to cultivate a spirit of ‘Chineseness’.<sup>173</sup> Soon after, at the Third Annual Conference of the CERS in 1924, Shanxi National Normal Schools proposed that ‘from the third grade on, martial arts should be added to the physical education course in primary schools’. The proposal was instantly ratified and later successfully implemented.<sup>174</sup> This represents a significant development in the process of indigenizing the physical education curriculum in China, in that the martial arts came to symbolize the national body of the modern Chinese, which was free from foreign influence.

As the way was being paved for the incorporation of martial arts in school curricula, more and more viable suggestions and options were forwarded to the Beiyang government. Wang Geng, a key martial arts advocate, in his article *Nationalism and Reformation of Physical Education in Schools* (1924), cited the examples of the five-animal exercises, Chinese boxing, the art of attack and defence and tug-of-war, which were an integral part of Chinese traditional culture and by virtue deserved being taught as part of the martial arts training in schools.<sup>175</sup> Owing to this growing awareness of the importance of martial arts in Chinese culture, after receiving permission from the Beiyang government, Zhang Zhijiang, Cai Yuanpei and the other experts worked together to establish the first official national martial arts organization, The Central Martial Arts Academy (CMAA; *Zhongyang guoshuguan*) in March 1927. Zhang Zhijiang was the director of the Academy, which received a monthly government subsidy of 3,000 Yuan. Its expressed goal was to improve Chinese people’s physical fitness through martial arts and other traditional sports.<sup>176</sup> Four major duties were set out as the main agenda of the CMAA: (1) to research Chinese martial arts and other

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<sup>173</sup> Tingguang Luo, ‘Guojia zhuyi yu zhongguo xiaoxue kecheng wenti [Nationalism and the Primary Curriculum in Modern China]’, *Zhonghua Jiaoyujie* [The Chinese Education], vol. 15, no. 2, 1924, pp. 31-2.

<sup>174</sup> *Zhonghua jiaoyujie* [The Chinese Education], 28 June 1924.

<sup>175</sup> Geng Wang, ‘Guojia zhuyi yu xuexiao tiyu de gaizao [Nationalism and the Reformation of Physical Education in Schools]’, *Zhonghua jiaoyu jie* [The Chinese Education], vol. 15 no. 1, 1924, pp. 9-10.

<sup>176</sup> The Central Martial Arts Academy, *Zhang Zhijiang guoshu yanlunji* [Zhang Zhijiang Ana], Nanjing, Dalu yinshu guan [Dalu Publishing House], 1931, pp. 1-4.

traditional sports; (2) to spread and teach Chinese martial arts; (3) to compile and publish books about martial arts; and (4) to manage and administer martial arts affairs all around China.<sup>177</sup> The CMAA, after its establishment, supervised many local Martial Arts Academies, which promoted martial arts at provincial, municipal, county and even village level.

Between 1919 and 1928, the martial arts were eventually incorporated into school curricula. Even though the position of martial arts in physical education never became quite as strong as that of Western sports, their influence in Chinese society was growing. Tellingly, the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA also began paying attention to martial arts, and in some missionary educational institutions martial arts even started to figure in physical education classes. Some local YMCAs invited martial arts teachers to deliver classes in the YMCA buildings. For example, Fuzhou YMCA organized a martial arts club and employed a martial arts teacher to instruct students on wrestling, taiji boxing and arhat boxing.<sup>178</sup> Despite this, Christian institutions had begun to lose popularity and were, so to speak, already in terminal wane.

### **5.6 Scaling Modernization: Research on Physical Education and Sport**

The CERS, which had been established in December 1921, led research efforts into scientific research regarding physical education and sport which had long informed the intellectual drive for the modernization of physical education and sport in modern China.<sup>179</sup> The first annual conference of the CERS was held in Jinan, Shandong province, from 3-8 July 1922. Nineteen different areas of education were discussed at the conference. Fifteen representatives from the sports communities attended to discuss how best to promote the various aspects of physical education and sport in China. Of those in attendance, nearly half had or had once had a relationship with the YMCA – for

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., pp.1-2.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> 'Zhonghua jiaoyu gaijinshe diyijie nianhui jilu [Record of the First Annual Conference of the Chinese Educational Reform Society]', *Xin jiao yu [New Education]*, vol. 5, no. 3 1922, p. 531.

example, C.H. McCloy<sup>180</sup>, Dong Shouyi, Lu Song'en, Zhang Jiwu, Ma Yuehan and Wu Yunrui.<sup>181</sup> McCloy had resigned from his position with the YMCA in 1919 and worked as an influential educator in China. He was elected as the chairman of the group meeting.<sup>182</sup>

At this conference, McCloy suggested founding a national sports research organization that would be affiliated with the CERS. In McCloy's opinion, physical education and sport in China lagged behind those in the Western countries. One of the reasons for this was that there was no way for physical experts and educators from different parts of China to communicate with each other about new sport ideas and theories, new teaching methods and new research in physical education. Such disadvantages, McCloy claimed, had resulted in an unbalanced development of physical education and sport in different regions of China and had handicapped the experts in maintaining a uniform standard of research in this regard. He therefore believed that it was urgent that a national research society for physical education and sport be established. As it was the duty of the CERS to promote the development of physical education and sport in China, it seemed to the CERS a sound idea to establish a special sports research organization that was affiliated with the CERS to conduct the nationwide physical education research.<sup>183</sup>

This led to the founding of the National Research Society of Physical Education (NRSRE) in 1922. The NRSRE was intended to play a vital role in streamlining the transformation and modernization of physical education and sport in modern China, according to the aspirations of its main founders, McCloy, Wu Yunrui, Ma Yuehan and other Chinese sports experts. The main responsibilities of the NRSPE were to investigate and collect statistics on different physical education programs from different locales around China, to encourage sport experts to translate and compile physical education training books for Chinese readers, and to encourage the foundation of sports

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Wenzhong Wu, *Zhongguo jinbainian tiyushi [Sport History in a Century]*, pp. 72-81.

magazines and journals.<sup>184</sup>

A year later, the NRSPE had achieved a significant number of goals, listed in the ‘Summary of “The First Year’s Work of the National Research Society of Physical Education”’, and listed by McCloy in the June 1923 edition of *Physical Education Quarterly*:

(1) The establishment of standards for physical education and exercise. The following projects have already been completed:

- a. Sports groupings.
- b. Sports scoring.
- c. Sport standards.
- d. Physical education syllabi for middle schools and high schools.

(2) The establishment of the standards and methods for physical education examination. The following projects are near completion:

- a. Grading standards for physical education teachers.
- b. Publication of sports books and journals.
- c. Physical education teaching materials (which will be published after the entire prepared document is translated into Chinese).<sup>185</sup>

Moreover, at the second annual conference of the CERS in Tsinghua in August 1923, McCloy, Wu Yunrui, Ma Yuehan and some other Chinese sports experts advised the government to pay greater attention to the idea of physical education in schools. After a series of discussions at this conference, 11 proposals on physical education were put forward by the sports experts who attended this conference for consideration by the Ministry of Education and local education departments, namely:

(1) To encourage local sports associations and sports experts to work on promoting

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<sup>184</sup> C.H. McCloy, 'Zhongguo tiyu yanjiuhui [The National Research Society of Physical Education]', *Guomin tiyu jikan [National Sports Quarterly]* vol. 1, no. 3, 1922, pp. 1-6.

<sup>185</sup> C.H. McCloy, 'Quanguo tiyu yanjiuhui diyinian chengji baogao [Report of the First Year's Achievement of the National Research Society of Physical Education]', *Guomin tiyu jikan [National Sports Quarterly]*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1923, pp. 1-5.

mass sports.

(2) To adopt McCloy's *Physical Education Teaching Materials and Standards* in physical education in schools.

(3) To appoint professional sport experts or government officials to administrate and instruct local sports organizations.

(4) To select and send delegates to observe the Olympic Games due to be held in Paris, France, in 1924.

(5) To send four women and four men each year to America or European countries to study physical education. It will be of huge benefit to the development of physical education after they return to China to work in schools or sports associations.

(6) To provide financial support to private physical education schools that complies with government regulations in carrying out their work.

(7) To incorporate Zhu Qiming's *Physical Education Teaching Strategies and Methods for Normal Schools* into normal education.<sup>186</sup>

Consequently, these proposals were gradually implemented in the process of the development of physical education and sport in modern China. For example, McCloy's *Physical Education Teaching Materials and Standards* was published in *Physical Education Quarterly* and later adopted by many schools and educational institutions around China. Moreover, the Ministry of Education officially appointed Hao Gengsheng as the School Inspector for Physical Education in 1933 to oversee and guide local physical education in schools.<sup>187</sup> Moreover, in order to further encourage the adoption of modern Western physical education and sport in China, McCloy and other sports experts who had once been trained by the YMCA or who had studied abroad started publishing research papers on physical education in journals and magazines. They translated and compiled a series of books about modern physical education and sport, including *Basketball*, *Volleyball*, *Tennis*, *Soccer*, *Physical Education in China* and

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<sup>186</sup> 'Zhonghua jiaoyu gaijinshe dierjie nianhui jilu [The Record of the Second Annual Conference of the Chinese Educational Reform Society]', *Xin jiao yu* [New Education], vol. 7, no. 2-3, 1923, pp. 277-84.

<sup>187</sup> Wenzhong Wu, *Zhongguo jinbainian tiyushi* [Sport History in a Century], p. 152.



*Group Physical Education Games*, among others.<sup>188</sup>

In the meantime, the government also became supportive of the idea of developing a training program for dedicated professional physical education teachers. During the period 1919–1928, more than ten educational institutions obtained permission from the government to set up a physical education department.<sup>189</sup> These institutions included the Zhongshan Physical Education Institute (1923), Peking Women's Higher Normal University (1924) and Southwest Physical Education Institute (1925).<sup>190</sup> While the YMCA and missionary education institutions were no longer doing the actual work, their students were carrying on the work. The sports teachers and experts once trained by missionary educational institutions and the YMCA now played an important role in physical education. They were employed by schools, universities and some sport organizations to teach physical education. For example, a four-year program was launched by the physical education department of Southeast University in 1923. It developed into the physical education department in 1929. Many sports experts and talented sportsmen who were cultivated by the YMCA or once studied at missionary educational institutions, such as Zhang Xinfu, Zhang Huilan, Wang Yicheng, and Hao Gengsheng, worked at the physical education department of this university.<sup>191</sup>

Again, the timeline of these developments reflected the gradual transference not only of the responsibility for the cultivation of interest in physical education among the Chinese from C.H. McCloy to native representatives but also the taking up of research initiatives by Chinese sports experts themselves. In fact, these moves to part ways from or break connections with the Christian institutions and foreign educators were symbolic of the process of educator self-actualization being undergone by the Chinese people at the time,

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., pp.299-311.

<sup>189</sup> Shiming Luo, *Aoyun laidao zhongguo [Olympics Came to China]*, p. 166.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Biao Xu, 'Nanjing gaodeng shifan yiji yihoude dongnan daxue, zhongyang daxue tiyuxike jianshi [The Brief History of the Physical Education Department of Nanjing Higher Normal School, the Later Southeast University, National Central University]', *Historical Document of Sport*, Beijing, Renmin tiyu chubanshe [People's Sports Publishing House of China], 1981, Vol. 3, pp. 2-5; Shiming Luo, *Aoyun laidao zhongguo [Olympics Came to China]*, p. 166; Huilan Zhang, 'Wo he jinling nvzi daxue tiyuxi [Ginling College and My Life]', *Tiyu wenhua daokan [Sports Culture Guide]*, vol. 1, no. 5, 1983, pp. 36-7; Weiping Wang, 'Tsinghua tiyushi [Sport History of Tsinghua University]', *Historical Document of Sport*, Beijing, Renmin tiyu chubanshe [People's Sports Publishing House of China], 1981, Vol. 5 pp. 25-8; Yanrui Yuan, 'Dongbei daxue tiyu zhuanxiuke gaikuang [Physical Education Department of Dongbei University]', *Tiyu shiliao [Historical Document of Sport]*, no. 3, 1981, p. 35.

and these marked the real trend of transformation of sport in terms of both practice and research in physical education. Once the tempo for change had been set, more and more students qualified as physical education teachers and experts over the following years, and Chinese society was well on its way to reaping the fruits of transformation.

### 5.7 Conclusion

After the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement, nationalism continued to spread among the Chinese people, especially among the intellectuals. These two movements paved the way for the Anti-Christian Movement of the 1920s by creating a unifying narrative of paranoiac projection outward of a foreign threat that could only be overcome through a process of Sinification. During this period (1919–1928), in the context of widespread nationalist sentiment, Christianity came to be regarded as a tool of Western cultural and political imperialism and was denigrated accordingly. Within the short span of the five years from 1922 to 1927, three waves of the Anti-Christian Movement had erupted, occasioning a tragic denouement of the years-long efforts of the Christian missionaries and the YMCA's foreign directors in China.<sup>192</sup> As a result, by the end of 1927, many churches had been forced to close or were seized by the Northern Expedition Army. Many foreign missionaries and their converts were killed, and numerous foreign missionaries and YMCA secretaries were sent back to their own countries.<sup>193</sup> At the same time, the trend towards the indigenization of the Christian organizations was growing across the general population, as can be seen from the increasing number of Chinese Christians who took up leadership roles in organizations like the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA. They wished to demonstrate the compatibility of Christianity and Chinese nationalism by redefining Christianity in terms of China's own religious culture.<sup>194</sup>

Sport provided 'important insights into varieties of imperialism, the cultural politics of

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<sup>192</sup> K. Yip, p. 84.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

the anti-imperialist struggle and postcolonial legacies'.<sup>195</sup> The role of the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA in physical education and sport declined between 1919 and 1928 and Western sport in China underwent a process of indigenization in terms of its leadership. First, as a result of the Anti-Christian Movement, many missionary educational institutions and YMCAs had closed, and many others could not carry on their activities and educational work as effectively as they had done previously. Some of their Chinese sport talents left the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA to study or work in Chinese schools or indigenous sports communities. In addition, as a result of the nationwide boycott of the missionary educational institutions, teams from missionary educational institutions and universities were banned from taking part in some interscholastic athletic contests, and new interscholastic athletic contests were organized to rival the Christian ones. Second, alongside the declining role accorded to the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, indigenous sports and in particular martial arts began to receive greater attention from the Chinese people – to the extent that, for some nationalists, martial arts were seen to serve as a counterweight to Western sports, even if this did not happen in practice. Third, the failures of the Chinese team at Sixth FECG resulted in a series of discussions and reflections on the issue of sport sovereignty. The absence of an indigenous community or organization to manage Chinese sport and a lack of support from the government were concluded to be the main reasons for this. Therefore, it was decided to replace the CNAU, set up by the YMCA, with the CNAAF, which was made responsible for the organization of athletic games, especially international games such as the FECG. One noteworthy aspect of this development was that all the members of the new CNAAF were Chinese. Even though a large number of the leaders in the sports communities had once been trained by or had worked for the YMCA, the leadership of Chinese competitive sport and physical education changed to Chinese hands. The Chinese nationalists used Western physical education and sport to wake up a national sentiment of 'China under threat'. They also used competitive sport to foster nationalistic spirit and patriotism. This said, Western sports ideology had already been

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<sup>195</sup> Alan Bairner, 'Sport, Nationalism and Globalization: Relevance, Impact, Consequences', *Hitotsubashi Journal of Arts and Sciences*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2008, p. 44.

accepted by many Chinese, which raises some important questions about our existing understanding of the presumed Western cultural imperialism project in the context of Chinese physical education and competitive sport in the 1920s. In particular, as the process was modernizing Chinese physical education through research on physical education and sport was led by McCloy but with the view of passing the task to the Chinese, it is difficult to make simplistic claims about straightforward foreign cultural imperialism in this context.

## Chapter 6: Nationalism and the Indigenization and Modernization of Physical Education and Sport in China (1928–1937)

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the development of nationalism in China, which simultaneously resulted in the indigenization of the Christian institutions and their physical education and sport programs and in the modernization of sport in China from 1928 to 1937. In particular, the aim of this chapter is to show how initially Christian venture of physical education was adapted to nationalist purposes, and how this very process problematizes the notion of one-way cultural imperialism where the foreign influences are practically becoming localized almost beyond recognition. After the establishment of the Nanking Nationalist government in 1927, Chiang Kai-shek<sup>1</sup> was elected as the President by the Nationalist Party's central executive committee in 1928. The Nationalist Party began to place increased emphasis on creating a coherent discourse of unified Chinese nationalism in all matters related to asserting state sovereignty. In this context, physical education and sport provided a valid and opportune means of strengthening state authority because of the way in which sport can be utilized to 'consolidate national identity and promote nationalism'<sup>2</sup> as a popular form of 'national expression and of maintaining the ideals of national identity'.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, while the Nationalist government insisted on the presence of Western missionaries as an expression of cultural imperialism, they simultaneously utilized modern Western physical education and sport to develop and maintain a sense of national identity, to foster internal unity and to promote the country's international image as a modern state to be reckoned with.

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<sup>1</sup> Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975) stood at the right-wing of the Nationalist Party. In the late 1920s, the right wing of the Nationalist Party adopted a strong anti-communist line, while the left-wing of the Nationalist Party supported cooperation with the Chinese Communist Party.

<sup>2</sup> Zhouxiang Lu and Fan Hong, *Sport and Nationalism in China*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Mike Cronin, p. 51.

As the previous chapter has shown, Christian institutions in China were already on the wane and no longer in a position to lead the development of Chinese physical education and sport. This chapter examines how the Chinese nationalism led to the further indigenization and modernization of Western physical education and sport during the period 1928–1937. As the Chinese had adopted this Western physical education and sport and ‘gave them new meanings’,<sup>4</sup> the adequacy of the concept of cultural imperialism as a prism to read Chinese sports history will be discussed. The first section of this chapter deliberates upon the processes of the Sinification and secularization of the Christian institutions, namely the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, and their physical education and sport work in China. The second section discusses the Nationalist government’s focus on nationalism and physical education and sport, which resulted in government support for physical education and sport. The important aspect to the process of indigenization and modernization through physical education and sport between 1928 and 1937 for this research was that, to start with, it was a state-patronized process. The final section of the chapter illustrates how Chinese nationalism gradually emerged as an independent driving force behind the modernization and development of athletic games in this period.

### **6.2 The Indigenization of the Christian Institutions and their Physical Education and Sport Programs**

As discussed in Chapter 5, the Anti-Christian Movement had reached its climax during the 1927 Northern Expedition, when numerous churches were attacked and many foreign missionaries killed. As a result, a large proportion of these foreign missionaries had returned to their own countries. The Nationalist Party, under the leadership of General Chiang Kai-shek, established its regime in Nanking on 18 April 1927. The following year, Nationalist forces marched north to Peking to overthrow the warlord-backed Beiyang government. Following its victory, the Nanking government was recognized as the legitimate national government and gained control over most of

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<sup>4</sup> G. Xu, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895–2008*, p. 43.

the Chinese provinces.<sup>5</sup> Despite the previously aggressive stance toward foreign presence in China, the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA were able to revive their work to some extent due to the liberal outlook of Nationalist government towards Christianity. However, due to the strong influence of Chinese nationalism and an altogether changed social environment, these institutions, as well as their physical education and sport work, were increasingly becoming Sinified.

### 6.2.1 The Nationalist Government's Policy towards the Christian Institutions

The Nationalist government adopted a soft policy towards Christianity since its establishment in 1927. In fact, the government was conscious of not provoking the Western powers by directly meddling with the affairs of the religious organizations, especially at a stage when it was trying to establish its internal and international authority. Instead, the Nationalist government aimed to appease the Western nations, and considered that the Christian missionaries or institutions could act as mediators, bringing China closer to some key Western nations, especially the US. For this reason, the government moved to curb anti-Western student activism.<sup>6</sup> Chiang ordered the National Revolutionary Army to ban anti-Christian banners and rhetoric, and to try to ensure the safety of the missionaries and their churches and property.<sup>7</sup> It was also publically decreed that Chinese citizens should protect foreign missionary educational institutions and churches. As a consequence, the publication of anti-Christian propaganda and the promotion of violent activities against the Christian churches and missionaries had decreased significantly by the end of the 1927.<sup>8</sup>

The Nationalist government's positive stance towards Christianity did not exist for political reasons alone. Certain key members of the Nationalist government had a personal relationship with the Christians in China, especially with the protestant

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<sup>5</sup> Alice Henrietta Gregg, p. 143.

<sup>6</sup> J. Bangsbo, T. Reilly, and M. Hughes, *Science and Football III: Proceedings of the Third World Congress of Science and Football, Cardiff, Wales, 9-13 April, 1995*, London, E & FN Spon, 1997, p. 218.

<sup>7</sup> C.L. Hamrin and S. Bieler, *Salt and Light, Volume 3: More Lives of Faith That Shaped Modern China*, Eugene, Oregon, Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

denominations. For instance, in 1883, Sun Yat-sen, the first president of the Republic of China and co-founder of the Nationalist Party, received baptism and became a Congregationalist in Hong Kong. Chiang Kai-shek married Song Meiling, a Methodist, in December 1927 and converted to Christianity on 23 October 1930. Of the representatives attending the First National Congress of the Nationalist Party, one in every ten was a Christian.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the Nationalist Party, being anti-communist and pro-Western in outlook, found several allies, both foreign and converted Chinese in the Christian institutions to help them strengthen their relations with Western countries, especially with the US. Chiang himself was delighted with the support he received from the Christians and he said that 'we can get wholehearted help from the missionaries and churches at anytime and anywhere when we need it'.<sup>10</sup> This also raised the expectations of the Chinese missionaries, who thought that Chiang not only represented the best hope for China but also for the whole Christian enterprise in the country.<sup>11</sup>

The Nationalist government had a grand plan for building a 'new China' through the construction of roads, bridges, railways and airports, by boosting industrial development, and by effecting educational revival.<sup>12</sup> It thus founded a number of new movements, such as the Rural Reconstruction Movement (which aimed at changing the Chinese countryside by strengthening the economy, culture and political structure of rural areas) and the New Life Movement (which sought a major moralistic overhaul in China in order to inspire a 'new ethicality' among citizens).<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Chiang Kai-shek was actively involved in attempting to align the goals and objectives of both the foreign missionaries and the Chinese Christian, and repeatedly appealed to Chinese Christians and foreign missionaries to cooperate with the Nationalist Party in its Rural Reconstruction Movement and New Life Movement from 1934 onwards.<sup>14</sup> Chiang was keen to secure the backing of Christian institutions such as the YMCA, because he

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<sup>9</sup> O.K. Ling, *The Changing Role of the British Protestant Missionaries in China, 1945–1952*, New Jersey, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999, p. 179.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.41; 'Some Current Issues: China's Present Attitude to Christianity', *The Chinese Recorder*, vol. 65, no. 11, November 1934, p. 674.

<sup>11</sup> Alice Henrietta Gregg, p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.143.

<sup>13</sup> Arif Dirlik, 'The Ideological Foundation of the New Life Movement: A Study in Counterrevolution', *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. XXXIV, no. 34, 1975, p. 945.

<sup>14</sup> 'Some Current Issues: China's Present Attitude to Christianity', p. 674.



recognized the potential social transformational power that they had demonstrated previously. He stressed that the aims of the New Life Movement were similar to those of the YMCA, for example, in emphasizing individual improvement and character building. Moreover, he wanted to make use of the institutional weight of the YMCA, as well as the personal influence of its personnel, who could easily convince the young academics of the future to support the government and its initiatives.<sup>15</sup> That is why many of the nominated leaders of both these Movements, such as James Yen of Yale, the pioneer of the Rural Reconstruction Movement, and Paul Yen, the first General Secretary of the New Life Movement, were Christians.

At the same time, the Chinese Christians were themselves willing to endorse the Rural Reconstruction and New Life movements because they believed that they could contribute to both of these movements in the fields of public health, education and social service.<sup>16</sup> By the spring of 1937, there was much cooperation between the major Christian groups and the Nationalist government,<sup>17</sup> a good example of which was the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the China Christian Council on 6 May 1937 in Shanghai. During the Annual Meeting, talking about the New Life Movement, Song Meiling (the wife of Chiang Kai-shek) stated in her speech that

‘[t]he new life of the Republic of China should start with a view to reshaping the whole country. To a great extent, this work is also the duty of the Christians in China. Therefore, the Nationalist government and Christians have much in common. Both of them should endeavour to achieve the goals of the New Life Movement’.<sup>18</sup>

The Christian representatives responded positively to Song’s speech, acknowledging that ‘the vital element to building a new country is to revive the spirit and character of the people, which is exactly the priority of both the New Life Movement and the

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<sup>15</sup> 'The Present Situation: Missionaries and New Life Movement', *The Chinese Recorder*, vol. 66, no. 1, January 1935, p. 61.

<sup>16</sup> O.K. Ling, *The Changing Role of the British Protestant Missionaries in China, 1945–1952*, pp. 44-5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.44.

<sup>18</sup> Sihan Wang, '1934–1937 nianjian de xinshenghuo yundong yu jidujiao [New Life Movement (1934–1937) and Christianity]', *The Journal of Chinese Social and Economic History*, no. 4, 2007, p. 71.

Christian movement in China'.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, local churches and Christian organizations in different parts of China worked hard to popularize the Rural Reconstruction Movement and New Life Movement on behalf of the Nationalist government. In return, cooperation with the Nationalist government proved also beneficial for the Christian organizations in China, especially the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, which were able to revive their activities during the period from 1928 to 1937.

### **6.2.2 The Indigenization of the Missionary Schools and their Physical Education and Sport Programs**

#### *Indigenization of the Missionary Schools*

As early as November 1926, the Nationalist government had issued a set of regulations for private and missionary educational institutions, stating that these institutions should immediately seek registration with the government.<sup>20</sup> The aim of these regulations was to gain control over their activities and to have the power to block any undesirable/anti-government ones. Yet, before the Nanking Nationalist government took over power militarily and reunified China, and received the international reorganization in 1928, a number of the institutions had not yet registered with the government. This was because of the unstable social and political environment due to the Nationalist government's military campaign against the Beiyang government, and the Nationalist government continued to hold administrative control of these institutions in the hands of foreign missionaries or churches.

Consequently, the Nationalist government passed a policy of claiming Chinese educational rights in order to pressurize the missionary educational institutions, in particular colleges and universities. Five missionary educational institutions – St John's University in Shanghai and the Yali, Huping, Lutheran and Central China universities –

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<sup>19</sup> 'Missionaries and New life Movement', *The Chinese Recorder*, vol. 66, no. 1, January 1935, p. 61.'

<sup>20</sup> K. Yip, p. 74.

were even closed temporarily in 1928 as they had not registered with the government.<sup>21</sup> This move prompted all the other Christian colleges and universities to prepare for registration. By 1933, almost all the Christian higher educational institutions had registered with the Nationalist government and integrated their education more closely to the state schools system. Moreover, most of the administrative positions in these educational institutions were held by Chinese personnel.<sup>22</sup>

As for the Christian middle and elementary schools, most gradually underwent a process of reorganization and transfer of control between 1928 and 1937. Despite their initial reluctance, by 1936, 90 per cent of Christian middle schools had registered with the government. It was reported that: 'Most of the middle and primary schools have completed their reorganization for registration and a number of them are ready to register'.<sup>23</sup> Following registration, the Christian schools were almost completely an indigenized or Chinese outlook.<sup>24</sup> In order to supervise and manage the missionary educational institutions, the University Council of the Nationalist Party<sup>25</sup> issued a series of decrees stipulating the downgrading of all the schools set up by foreigners and missionaries to the status of private schools, and that all private schools had to acquiesce to being supervised and administered by the Ministry of Education and the local educational department. It was also ordained that the presidents of these private schools must be Chinese, whereas the foreigners or missionaries, if it was necessary to employ them, could only serve as school consultants. In effect then, while Christian missions and educational institutions were being tolerated and protected by the government, their operations were taken over by local Chinese educators.

It is important also to stress that a simultaneous drive to secularize these missionary educational institutions was also under way. From an internal perspective, there had

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<sup>21</sup> Alice Henrietta Gregg, p. 160.

<sup>22</sup> 'Quanguo gongsili daxue, dili xueyuan, zhuanke xuexiao yilanbiao [Table of the List of Universities and Colleges in Modern China]', in *The Second Historical Archives of Chinese Museum* (ed.), *Zhonghua mingyoshi dang'an ziliao huibian [Compilation of Archive Document of the Republic Of China]*, Nanjing, Jiangsu renmin chubanshe [Jiangsu People's Press], January 1936, Vol. 5, pp. 306-16.

<sup>23</sup> Alice Henrietta Gregg, p. 160.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> The University Council was created in 1927 at the urging of Cai Yuanpei, who was named its President, to take over the administration of university districts from the Ministry of Education.

been a strong movement fostered by the government to standardize all educational institutions, from primary level through to colleges and universities. Any schools or colleges failing to meet the stipulated requirements of the government had to close. Government regulations restricting the preaching of religion and the teaching of religious courses in schools and colleges were specifically intended to curb the Christian religious content within the education sector.<sup>26</sup> In fact, religious teaching in primary schools was by and large prohibited from 1928. This was a fundamental problem for most missionary educational institutions where religious studies and chapel attendance formed the core of their educational brief as it effectively required abandonment of their main mission in China. During the period 1928–1937, the Nanking government demanded that educational goals be given priority, stating that evangelical goals would have to find a place within the context of an educational program supervised by the government.<sup>27</sup> While religious education was therefore tolerated to an extent, the institutions were required to undergo frequent inspections and to submit reports to the government to maintain accountability regarding all these points. Most of the missionary educational institutions followed the rules laid down by the government, and as a result the Christian institutions became no different than in the government educational institutions.<sup>28</sup>

Externally, the worldwide economic depression and ensuing financial crisis had also brought the Christian educational institutions of China into a difficult position and led to an acceleration of the process of their Sinification. The decrease in financial assistance from abroad made it necessary for these schools to raise their tuition fees, thus preventing the children of comparatively poor Christian families from enrolling in these schools. As a result, many of the students in Christian schools at that time were the children of wealthy, non-Christian families. This led to a steady increase in the number of non-Christian students in Christian schools and a corresponding decrease in the number of Christian students.<sup>29</sup> Not only was the number of non-Christian students in

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<sup>26</sup> *The China Christian Year Book*, Edited by D. MacGillivray, Shanghai, Christian Literature Society, 1936, p. 250.

<sup>27</sup> Lutz Jessie Gregory, p. 270.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *The China Christian Year Book*, p. 251.

Christian schools on the increase, but the number of non-Christian teachers was also increasing in these educational institutions. Missionary educational institutions were becoming indigenous and secular, and were gradually adapting to nationalist purposes.

### *Physical Education and Sport in Missionary Schools*

Amidst the wholesale secularization and indigenization of the Christian institutions between 1928 and 1937, physical education still stood out as the crowning achievement of the Christian institutions for sports talents' cultivation, carrying out physical education activities, training physical education teachers and so forth. Physical education, as one of their most well-rounded programs, continued to be advocated by Christian educational institutions at all levels, from primary to tertiary. However, under the supervision of the Nationalist government, most of these Christian institutions had to follow the curricula issued by the Physical Education Committee of the Ministry of Education.

Soochow University No.1 Middle School and some higher educational institutions such as Ginling, Suzhou, St John's and Yenching University provide good examples of how the Christian institutions had to modify their educational and physical education programs. The No. 1 Middle School, established in 1901, responded to the new school system issued by the Ministry of Education and revised its curriculum in 1932. The new teaching program aimed to equip Chinese youths to 'contribute to the development of society and the country' in line with the Ministry of Education's regulations.<sup>30</sup> The school adopted the new '3-3' American school system, namely, three years of junior middle school and three years of senior middle school. All the subjects and curricula were taken up in line with the proposals for the new school system issued by the Nationalist government.<sup>31</sup> The school did try to maintain optional Bible classes, which were allowed only after government inspection. Apart from the traditional Bible classes,

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<sup>30</sup> The First Middle School of the Soochow University, *Regulations of the First Middle School of the Soochow University*, edited. No. 126-01-017-001. vols, Suzhou Archive, 1932.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

most classes – for instance, mathematics, history, Chinese and physical education – were similar to those in local middle schools.<sup>32</sup> The missionary educational institutions' missions had to be consistent with the nationalist party and state educational goal when they registered with the Ministry of Education. If not, they had to be closed.<sup>33</sup>

As for the stipulated aim of the physical education class in No.1 Middle School, it was modified in line with the new government regulations, and now sought to improve students' health and strength and to cultivate confidence and a positive outlook on life, rather than Christian character traits, among the students.<sup>34</sup> Students were required to have three hours of physical education each week, of which one hour was allocated to teaching physical education theory, while the remaining two hours were specifically for learning and practising physical education. In addition, every student was required to earn relatively good academic credits from the physical education class each term.<sup>35</sup> Extracurricular physical activities, intramural sport and interscholastic athletics continued as had been the tradition in this school. Likewise, the majority of the other missionary educational institutions were continuing to organize their physical education classes and extracurricular physical activities, and to organize or actively participate in athletic games. The YMCA originally set out their physical education program to promote good Christian character and to attract non-Christians to take part in their other activities. However, it can be highlighted here that state intervention imparted a whole new symbolic significance to the way sports were played and to how athletic activities evolved in Chinese education.

In the case of the Christian higher education institutions, three main types of physical education programs were conducted in the period of 1928–1937. The first type was where the institutions offered physical education as an academic discipline, as was the case in Ginling, Suzhou, St John's and Yenching universities. As for the second category,

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> D. Bays and E. Widmer, *China's Christian Colleges: Cross-Cultural Connections, 1900-1950*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 203.

<sup>34</sup> The First Middle School of the Soochow University.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

separate Athletic Committees, which were ran by the universities, were responsible for looking after the physical education activities in institutions, as for example, in Lingnan University and West China University. Finally, in the third type, specialist physical education tutors in institutions such as Fujian, Hangzhou, Shanghai, Nanking, and Cheeloo University individually supervised the athletic activities.<sup>36</sup> In this case the committees for physical education were organized independently of the colleges, which meant that the specialists were reporting directly to the president of the university.<sup>37</sup>

Generally speaking, physical education classes were a prerequisite to graduating with a degree in the Christian educational institutions. However, the duration and time plans for these classes differed between institutions. For example, at Lingnan, a physical education class was arranged for freshmen only, while at Cheeloo, Hangzhou, Nanking, Suzhou and St John's, it was compulsory for both freshmen and sophomores. Maintaining different criteria again, Yenching University made the physical education class mandatory for three years for women, and two years for men. At Ginling (*Jinling*), Central China (*Huazhong*), South China (*Huanan*) and West China Union (*Huaxi xiehe*) universities, physical education classes were mandatory for all during the entire four years.<sup>38</sup> Given the emphasis placed on physical education in some of these institutions, athletic work was also recognized in terms of academic credits and grades, so much so that sportsmen were even forgiven absenteeism in other subjects, as was the case in Central China, Ginling, Suzhou, St John's and Yenching.<sup>39</sup>

In this period, intramural and intercollegiate athletics and other athletic contests, especially in basketball, volleyball, tennis, and field events, outside school hours were still very popular in most of the missionary colleges and universities.<sup>40</sup> Physical education and sport were used by the Christian higher education institutions mainly as a means of popularizing and establishing the reputation of the university throughout

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<sup>36</sup> K.A. Wee, pp. 23-4.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.43.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Shujie Chen, *The Rise and Fall of Fu Ren University-Peking-Catholic Higher Education in China*, New York, Routledge Falmer, 2004, p. 125.

China rather than evangelical objectives. This fact was also emphasized by Father Murphy, the second rector at Fu Ren University, who once acknowledged that sports ‘are as much an element in making the school famous as we find in America.’<sup>41</sup> In this sense, competitive sport in universities had become a tool of domestic and international profile building above other considerations.

In conclusion, from 1928 to 1937, most of the missionary schools and universities had registered with the Nationalist government, and Chinese personnel had assumed the majority of the administrative positions in these institutions. Consequently, missionary educational programs were also being widely secularized and indigenized. However, they had also become an integral part of the Chinese educational system<sup>42</sup>, which can be seen to represent a fully realized localization of Western education system to Chinese context even if the Christian message was by and large lost in the process. Moreover, physical education and sport in these missionary educational institutions were still organized with the high standards maintained previously. In fact, the stress on physical education and sport, especially on elite sports, had become more nuanced after the institutions committed themselves to the objective of promoting ‘healthy activities’ among students, gradually forging their earlier evangelical motives with the focus on boosting the institutional reputation across China.

### **6.2.3 The Indigenization of the YMCA and its Physical Education and Sport Programs**

#### ***The Indigenization of the YMCA***

As discussed in Chapter 5, the Anti-Christian Movement and its aftermath caused a significant decline in the activities and influence of the YMCA in the late 1920s. Especially after the outbreak of the May Thirtieth Movement in 1925, Christian

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.62.

<sup>42</sup> G. Peterson, R. Hayhoe, and Y. Lu, p. 138.



organizations, especially the YMCA and its activities, suffered significant setbacks.<sup>43</sup> Such were the challenges that, by the end of 1927, when the Anti-Christian Movement was called to a halt, the membership of the YMCA in China had fallen to just 19,767, a reduction of 63 per cent on the 1922 figure. The YMCA's income had also dropped, from 976,041 Yuan in 1922 to 527,121 Yuan in 1927.<sup>44</sup> The negative impact of the Great Depression of 1928–29 added to the adversity the YMCA was facing at the time, as financial support from the West was no longer forthcoming. As a result, and similarly to other educational sectors where Christian missionaries had been active, most of the YMCA directors and secretaries were Chinese. In addition, due to the growing influence of Chinese nationalism and faced with the question of continuation, the Chinese secretaries and directors of the YMCA actively advocated the indigenization of the YMCA in China so that its erstwhile positive contributions could be utilized instead of wasting them.

However, for this to happen, several political favours from Nationalist government officials were required, and for this reason most of the Chinese YMCA directors worked hard to cultivate and to maintain close links with these officials. For example, Yu Rizhang, serving as the General Director of the Chinese YMCA from 1916 to 1936, had close connections with the Nationalist government leadership, as he had been the matchmaker for Chiang Kai-shek and his wife, Song Meiling.<sup>45</sup> Yu Rizhang's aim was to 'combine his religious ideas with his desire to build a strong China'.<sup>46</sup> His slogan, 'Character, the Salvation of China' (*Renge jiuguo*), became YMCA's main slogan in China in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>47</sup> Yu held that the only way for the YMCA to survive and grow in China was through thorough Sinification and by strongly pushing for the YMCA to adapt to the new demands asked of it.<sup>48</sup> However, he also asserted that the

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<sup>43</sup> Rizhang Yu, 'Zhongguo jidujiao yundong de xuyao [The Needs of the Christian Movement in China]', *Ru Rizhang boshi yanlunji [Dr. Yu Rizhang]*, Shanghai, Association Press, March 1927, p. 92.

<sup>44</sup> Wen Zhong, 'Jinhou zhi feijidujiao yundong [Anti-Christian Movement in the Future]', *Zhongguo qingnian [China Youth]*, no. 7, September 1925, pp. 91-2.

<sup>45</sup> *Shenbao*, no. 4, 2 December 1927.

<sup>46</sup> C.X.G. Wei and X. Liu, *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective: Historical and Recent Cases*, Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 2001.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46.

<sup>48</sup> Rizhang Yu, 'Zhongguo jidujiao yundong de xuyao [The Needs of the Christian Movement in China]', p. 85.

YMCA had benefitted China as a whole, and that China needed the YMCA.<sup>49</sup> Yan Yangchu, the director of the Mass Education Movement of the YMCA in the 1920s, likewise stressed that ‘China is a big country and the government cannot deal with all the things around this land by itself’.<sup>50</sup> For this reason he also perceived the collaboration as mutually beneficial and urged both the YMCA and the Nationalist government to cooperate with each other.<sup>51</sup> For these Chinese YMCA directors, they combined national duty of nation-building with the mission of the YMCA.<sup>52</sup>

Besides, the Chinese YMCA cooperated with the Nationalist government in responding to national or local disasters in order to make themselves relevant to a broader program of national building. For instance, the YMCA started offering relief services in times of crisis and hardship. During the spring of 1932, the Shanghai YMCA used its buildings as a shelter for refugees, many of whom had lost everything during Japan’s war on China between 1931 and 1932. The Shanghai staff earned great praise for devoting all their energy to relief work for civilians.<sup>53</sup> The crisis management, both in cases of an international war and national adversity, proved that the Chinese YMCA excelled in handling emergencies. Relief initiatives not just emphasized the YMCA’s contribution to front-line services, but allowed the YMCAs, quite discretely, to promote the importance of its legacy through lectures, dramas and discussion groups.<sup>54</sup>

Another contribution of the local YMCAs in the context of establishing a public profile was the undertaking of work related to the Rural Reconstruction and New Life movements. By 1933 the Nanking, Hangzhou, Hong Kong, Suzhou, Wuhu and Tientsin YMCAs had already undertaken work to implement this rural redevelopment program in practice.<sup>55</sup> In this respect, the YMCA was directly collaborating with the government leadership. Since 1934, President Chiang had stressed that the government should

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<sup>49</sup> Naide Bao, 'Jidujiao lingxiu Yu Rizhang boshi [A Leader of Christian—Dr. Yu Rizhang]', *Tonggong*, no. 151, April 1936, p. 13.

<sup>50</sup> Yangchu Yan, 'Yan Yangchu yanjianglu [Speeches of Dr. Yan Yangchu]', in Y. Shao (ed.), *20 shiji zhongguo jidujiao wenti [Christianity in 20<sup>th</sup> Century's China]*, Xinbei, Taiwan Zhengzhong Press, 1980, p. 514.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> C.X.G. Wei and X. Liu, *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective: Historical and Recent Cases*, p. 38.

<sup>53</sup> Ralph M. Hogan, 'Annual Administrative Report, June 1, 1933, Submitted by Ralph M.Hogan, Secretary for Training Work, National Committee of The Y.M.C.A.s of China', *Records of YMCA International Work in China Annual and Quarterly Reports 1923–1933*, 1933, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

‘make use of the personnel of the YMCA and those groups that had some influence among students and academic faculties’ to further its nationalist objectives.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, he saw ‘the close resemblance of the aims of the New Life Movement to those of the YMCA with its similar emphasis on individual improvement and character building’<sup>57</sup>, and the YMCA leadership responded by encouraging its members, both foreign and local Christians, to ‘cooperate in whatever way possible to extend help for the New Life Movement’.<sup>58</sup>

The YMCA in China shifted their primary aim to contribute to the significant development of the country, and subsequently was still able to continue its regular work. The social objectives were restated by the YMCA Director Yu Rizhang as follows:

The YMCA’s recognition of the essential unity of man’s nature and the importance of its all-round development, and hence the introduction of the fourfold program, has tremendous appeal to Chinese mind. The YMCA program arrived at the correct psychological movement, with its aims of developing the all the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social lines of China’s youth.<sup>59</sup>

Consequently, the YMCA’s ‘fourfold program’ in this period (from 1928 to 1937) is presented in percentage in Figure 6.1 below.

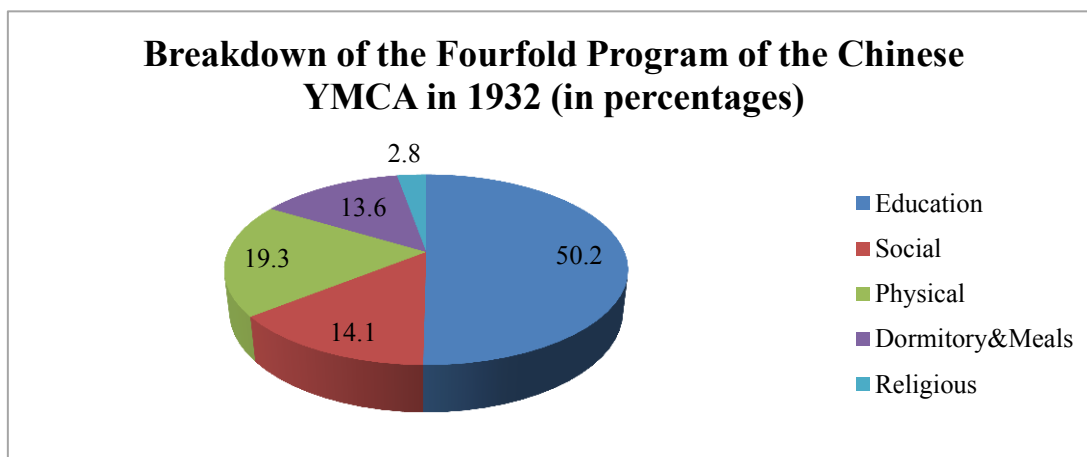
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<sup>56</sup> Alice Henrietta Gregg, p. 43. Alice Henrietta Gregg, p. 43.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Jun Xing, *Geming zhihuo de xili: meiguo shehui fuyin yu zhongguo jidujiao qingnianhui (1919–1937)* [Baptized in the Fire of Revolution: The American Social Gospel and the YMCA in China, 1919–1937], Shanghai, Shanghai guji chubanshe [Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House], 2006, p. 158.

<sup>59</sup> Rizhang Yu, *Indigenization of the Y.M.C.A. in China*, Shanghai, The National Committee, Y.M.C.A.'s of China, 1926, p. 7.

**Figure 6.1:** Breakdown of the Fourfold Program of Chinese YMCA in 1932<sup>60</sup>

The chart shows that as of 1932, the YMCA's contribution in educational work was its main area of focus at 50.2 per cent. The physical education work, as the second most significant area of output, accounted for 19.3 per cent, whereas social work at 14.1 per cent, is roughly similar to the physical education work. The chart also shows that due to the Anti-Christian Movement, rising nationalism and some other related factors discussed earlier, the proportion allocated to the YMCA's religious work had dramatically decreased, as now it accounted for only 2.8 per cent of its total work, a drastic decline on the figure for first two decades of the century.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Physical Education and Sport and the YMCA***

Although it had experienced a sharp decline in its religious work between 1928 and 1937, the YMCA's physical education work, by comparison, remained a priority on the agenda of its fourfold program and its development continued unabated. The YMCA attempted to broaden the outreach of its offered activities to include non-members. For example, local YMCAs arranged for young people and adults to use their gymnasias, regardless of whether they were members or not, charging only a nominal hourly fee. This initiative opened up the physical space of the gymnasias available to large numbers

<sup>60</sup> *Year Book and Roster of the Young Men's Christ Association (1933)*, Shanghai, Association Press, 1933, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

of schools and community teams. The same policy was implemented for swimming, billiards, basketball, tennis and other sports. Those who were interested in sports could choose to join the sports clubs or classes of their preference. The YMCAs divided sports participants into different teams or classes according to ability, sex, age, physical condition and interests. They also provided special sports instructors, most of whom were Chinese volunteers.<sup>62</sup>

**Picture 6.1:** A Boys' Gymnasium Class in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century



(Source: University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, used with permission)

The Tientsin YMCA's physical education work in 1933 serves as an example of this approach (See Appendix Six). Participants were placed into separate classes according to their aims and interests. Classes were conducted for Christian ministers, physical directors and corpulent members, as well as in apparatus gymnastics, martial arts, calisthenics, jump ball and other sports. Specialist instructors in various sports were also hired to further facilitate the people's participation, providing guidance and supervision during practice.

With regard to regional sports competitions, around this time, both the local and

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<sup>62</sup> George G. Helde, 'Annual Report 1932, George G. Helde, Changsha', *Records of YMCA International Work in China Annual and Quarterly Reports 1924-1933*, 1932, p. 3.

regional YMCAs collaborated with the government to organize meets on a regular basis and by training teams for a variety of events. Newton Hayes's 1931 report sheds light upon the scale of physical education work at the Tientsin YMCA in the same year:

The physical [education] work has been going with a splendid swing during the past winter. We have had 107 basketball teams in our YMCA Indoor League. The teams involved in the league have played all their match games on the floor of our gymnasium. There have been three championship series; one for men, one for boys and one for girls. Three days each week the basketball court has been reserved for these match games, from one o'clock in the afternoon to nine at night. Never has interest in basketball been so high in this city.<sup>63</sup>

The YMCA's physical education work therefore reflected a strong working relationship between the YMCA and the Nationalist government, as well as highlighting the YMCA's significant contribution to the areas of public health, education and social services. For example, when the Fuzhou YMCA organized the first tennis competition for public sector workers on 21 August 1933, the event became very popular that the participants came from the Stamp Office, the Liquor Tax Bureau, Inspectorate, Longxiang Commercial Centre, Central Bank, Radio Telegram Station and other work places.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, the participants in the swimming class at the Fuzhou YMCA in 1933 mainly represented the 87<sup>th</sup> division of the National Revolutionary Army, the fourth corps of the military police and officials from Ministry of Education (See Appendix Five).

The YMCA also utilized physical education and sport to launch charity enterprises from time to time. For instance, the Tientsin YMCA organized a charity event, the 'Basketball Competition Games', to relieve the suffering of the victims in the northeast, which had been invaded by the Japanese. In 1933, the Jingjin Basketball Team of the

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<sup>63</sup> L. Newton Hayes, 'Annual Administrative Report for the Year 1930, Submitted by Newton Hayes, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1931', *ibid.*, 1930, pp. 3-4.

<sup>64</sup> *Fuzhou qingnianhui baogao tekan [Special Issue on the Work of Foochow YMCA]*, edited by Foochow YMCA, Shanghai Archive, 1933.

Tientsin YMCA came together with three famous basketball teams in Tientsin and organized a basketball event to raise funds to help homeless refugees. From 23 January to 3 February 1933, three matches were organized and 295.50 Yuan was raised from ticket sales. It was not a huge sum of money, but the gesture was symbolically significant. The money was transferred to the war zone by the Refugee Relief Committee in Tientsin, and the social contribution of the event was significant in the sense that around 900 spectators had turned up to watch the matches.<sup>65</sup>

Retrospectively, the physical education component of the YMCA's fourfold program between 1928 and 1937, though very important, was less important than its earlier contribution in this regard as the YMCA had lost its leadership role in relation to sports activities in China. Serious difficulties for the YMCA had started arising, not only because of the withdrawal of almost all of the fraternal secretaries who had been trained in physical education work, but also because the Chinese physical directors had enlisted for other YMCA positions or were being recruited by local non-religious sport organizations.<sup>66</sup> Even many motivated Chinese leaders, such as Dong Shouyi, were among those who resigned from the YMCA and took up work in other local schools and sports communities or in government organizations. YMCA was therefore quickly losing its power to influence the development of Chinese physical education and competitive sport, as summed up in Lenning Sweet's report in which he notes that 'it might be pointed out that there is at present not a single physical director left among the Foreign Secretaries in China and the leading Chinese Secretaries in authority are scarce on the ground'.<sup>67</sup> As a large number of Chinese physical secretaries had left the Chinese YMCA, their duties were subsequently taken on by voluntary leaders who often had less invested interest in ensuring the YMCA's influence with the government. According to the report of the National Community of the YMCA, this was particularly true of the YMCA's physical education work in China:

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Roger D. Arnold, 'Administrative Report of Roger D. Arnold for the Year 1930, Yunnanfu, China, April 8, 1931', *Records of YMCA International Work in China Annual and Quarterly Reports 1924-1933*, 1930, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> Lennig Sweet, 'Lenning Sweet, National Committee of The Y.M.C.A.'s, Shanghai, China. Supplement to Annual Administrative Report for 1934.', *Records of YMCA International Work in China Annual and Quarterly Reports 1934-1949.*, 1934, p. 2.

Mr. Tung Shou Yi has been doing splendid work along three lines, body building and games inside the building, health education for members and the public, and outdoor sports and recreation. A large volume of league competitions and tournaments has been organised and conducted under his direction. He has been much in demand as a committee member and official at inter-city, sectional and national athletic meets where his influence and aid has been typical of the Association's service at its best. It is greatly to be regretted that he resigned less than a year ago [...] Tung's leaving to take up physical education in Peking, I consider to be a great loss to the Association movement [...] He is one of the best qualified leaders of athletics and physical education in the country. I feel that our National movement ought to have a representative such as Tung to enable the Association to make its distinctive contribution on a national scale in the realm of sports and recreation while appeal so strongly to young men and boys.<sup>68</sup>

Ultimately, it is important to point out that the above-mentioned outcomes were simply the apparent causes of the decline in the influence of the YMCA in China; the real foundering of the YMCA was inherently linked, in the main, with rising nationalist sentiment and with the Nationalist government's thoroughly nationalist agenda.

### **6.3 The Nationalist Agenda and Physical Education and Sport**

After its establishment in Nanking in 1927, the Nationalist government planned to use physical education and sport as a tool to popularize its ideology of developing a new way of life among the Chinese people through civic education and a return to traditional morals, and to inculcate in them the notions of Chinese nationalism and a national consciousness. The Nationalist government regarded physical education and sport as a significant site of nation-building. Physical education and sport played an important part in promoting a spirit of national unity in the country. Thus, as a result of governmental

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<sup>68</sup> Raymond S. Hall, 'Administrative Report for 1930, Y.M.C.A., Nanking, March 23, 1931', *Records of YMCA International Work in China Annual and Quarterly Reports 1924-1933*, 1930, pp. 4-5.



patronage, modern Western physical education and sport were being increasingly indigenized and popularized among the Chinese people. In addition, indigenous sports, especially martial arts, were also being revived and were thriving alongside modern Western physical education and sport, paving the way for modernization.

### 6.3.1 The Nationalist Government's Policy on Physical Education and Sport Programs

The Nanking Nationalist government's National Physical Education and Sport Committee was established in late 1927. This committee, as the first national governmental body for sports, was intended to supervise physical education and sport throughout China.<sup>69</sup> It was composed of well-known Chinese athletes and specialists in physical education and sport. The establishment of this Committee represented the first attempt to bring physical education and sport under direct governmental charge - even if the Committee was dissolved after only one year because of the ineffectiveness of its work.<sup>70</sup> The Nationalist government had nonetheless established official control over sport and made physical education an established part of academic education, and stressed the importance of the health and physical fitness of the Chinese people, especially the younger generation, considering it the most vital element for strengthening the new Chinese nation. In May 1928, the University Council convened the First National Conference of Education (*Diyijie quanguo jiaoyu huiyi*) in Nanking, where 15 resolutions on education were issued. The third resolution in particular stressed that sports-related departments should 'pay attention to national physical fitness and exercise'.<sup>71</sup> In October 1928, the Nationalist government reiterated the importance of physical education by making an announcement that physical education was a precondition for strengthening the whole nation and for developing Chinese society, and that cultivating students to be of sound body and spirit must be one of the most important educational aims for the Nationalist government.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Fan Hong and Tan Hua, 'Sport in China: Conflict between Tradition and Modernity, 1840s to 1930s', p. 201.

<sup>70</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 34; Wenzhong Wu, *Zhongguo jinbainian tiyushi [Sport History in a Century]*, pp. 334-49.

<sup>71</sup> Wenzhong Wu, *Zhongguo jinbainian tiyushi [Sport History in a Century]*, p. 109.

<sup>72</sup> 'Manifesto of the National Government', *Guomin zhengfu gongbao [The Official Gazette of the Nationalist Government]*, no. 4,

Persisting with its policy, in April 1929 the Nationalist government established the National Sports Law, which positioned physical education and sport as a viable means of developing a national spirit of unity to help China emerge as an independent modern state. The National Sports Law's 13 articles consisted only of about 600 words, yet it was tantamount to the first nationwide sport law in all of Chinese history (See Appendix Seven). Its scope was very extensive, ranging from physical education in schools to mass sport, from sports participants' rights to their responsibilities, and from the work of the centrally institutionalized sport administration to that of local institutions.<sup>73</sup> All of the 13 articles of the 1929 law therefore reflected the government's aspirations and expectations in relation to physical education and sport.

Given the urgency for compliance and the evident importance of the call that the government tried to underpin through the 1929 sport law, many provincial and municipal educational administrative bodies soon established committees of sports professionals for physical education and sport.<sup>74</sup> Later, in August 1932, at the First Physical Education and Sport Conference held by the Ministry of Education in Nanking, the Plan for National Physical Education and Sport was issued, which clearly defined the political and nationalist objectives of physical education and sport in China. According to the key five objectives, physical education and sport were to offer an opportunity to all citizens to improve themselves; to train people's bodies to help them adapt to a changing environment; to cultivate a sense of collectivism among the people in order to fight against foreign aggression and interference; to cultivate a spirit of hard-work, industriousness, and national esteem; and, to nurture a penchant for sports participation.<sup>75</sup> The relationship between sport and national survival was one of the themes highlighted at this conference. It was widely accepted by the participants of this conference that the rise and fall of every nation in the world quite literally depended on

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1928, p. 4.

<sup>73</sup> 'National Sports Act (No. 262 of the Governmental Instructions)', *Guomin zhengfu gongbao [The Official Gazette of the Nationalist Government]*, no. 143, 16 April 1929, pp. 77-9.

<sup>74</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 37.

<sup>75</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di si ji [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 4]*, Zhongguo tiyu tongshi [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport], Edited by L. Cui, Beijing, Renmin tiyu chubanshe [People's Sports Publishing House of China], 2008, Vol. 4, p. 55.

the physical strength of its citizens.<sup>76</sup>

Moreover, the first official Nationalist government administrative body for physical education and sport – the National Sport Committee of the Ministry of Education (NSC) – was constituted in October 1932, and the establishment of provincial and local physical education committees followed soon afterwards.<sup>77</sup> As a matter of fact, by 1935, the NSC had itself become established enough to oversee the formation of 23 physical education and sport committees in a number of provinces, municipalities and districts.<sup>78</sup>

In fact, the national administrative system for sport began to perform the same functions that had previously been carried out by the YMCA secretaries.<sup>79</sup> The speed at which this transfer of control occurred can be explained by its close links with YMCA: of the 18 members of the NSC, several had either once worked with the YMCA or had received their physical education training in schools under YMCA patronage.<sup>80</sup> Yet, Wu notes that as an independent but governmental agency, the NSC's work and objectives were differently orientated, namely:

- (1) To make plans for the construction and usage of national sport facilities.
- (2) To supervise and instruct the national sport research and administration department.
- (3) To supervise the implementation of physical education programs by various administrative organs.
- (4) To examine and verify the result of physical education examinations in the various schools and the reports and working schemes of the various sport institutions.
- (5) To approve the budget for the national physical education work.
- (6) To plan and arrange these items for hand-over to the Minister of Education of

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<sup>76</sup> G. Xu, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895–2008*, p. 64; Renyi Huang, *Woguo tiyu zhengce zhiding guocheng zhi yanjiu* [The Process of Making Sport Policy in Our Country], Master, National Taiwan Normal University, 1992, pp. 21-2.

<sup>77</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di si ji* [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 4], p. 42.

<sup>78</sup> *China Year Book (1935–1936)*, Tianjin and Shanghai, Tianjin Press, 1936, pp. 541-3.

<sup>79</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 175.

<sup>80</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di si ji* [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 4], p. 42.

the government.<sup>81</sup>

The promulgation of the 1929 National Sports Law, the establishment of National Sport Committee and the arrangement of the 1932 Physical Education and Sport Conference in Nanking were all intended to strengthen a later campaign under the New Life Movement of February 1934. The aim of the New Life Movement was to create a new mode of life for Chinese citizens based on aspects of traditional morality, as well as new social values and civic responsibility loosely based on Methodist Christian values. In effect, the New Life Movement reemphasized an earlier governmental policy of exalting the importance of strong minds and bodies among citizens for strengthening Chinese nationalism.<sup>82</sup> On 2 March 1935, the Nationalist government issued an open letter entitled 'the Promotion of Physical Education and Sport' to the nation, which sought general approval for its plan to implement a mass physical exercise program. Chiang Kai-shek argued that:

We must have a mass physical exercise campaign. From now on, all students and teachers in primary and middle schools, and all staff in party offices, social services and the army must participate in physical activity . . . The principals of schools, the heads of government offices and army officers must supervise and discipline their pupils and staff and report to their superiors.<sup>83</sup>

Following this directive from Chiang, not only was the Physical Education and Sport Department founded by the New Life Promotion Committee in 1935, but several Provincial Physical Education and Sport Councils were also subsequently founded to promote the regional mass sports campaign by training physical education instructors and organizing a variety of physical activities for the Chinese people.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Editorial Review Board of China Education Yearbook, *Diyici zhongguo jiaoyu nianjian yuangao (di sanshisan ce)* [*The First China Education Yearbook (33<sup>rd</sup> Volume)*], Nanking, Commercial Press, 1934, pp. 901-2.

<sup>82</sup> Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China*, p. 242.

<sup>83</sup> Kai-shek Chiang, 'Tichang tiyu tongdian [The Promotion of Sport and Physical Exercise]', *Qinfen tiyu yuebao* [*Qinfen Sports Monthly*], vol. 2, no. 7, 1934, pp. 1-2.

<sup>84</sup> National Sports Commission, The Committee of Sport History and Culture, and Chinese Sport History Association, *Zhongguo jindai tiyushi* [*Sport History in Modern China*], p. 247.

### 6.3.2 The Nationalist Government's Push to Advocate Physical Education in Local Schools

Physical education proved a key part of the National Sports Law of April 1929, despite the Law emphasizing a myriad of aspects related to campaign for socialization, administration and institutionalization of physical education and sport.<sup>85</sup> Article 6 of the Law stipulated that, as part of government policy, ‘schools at the upper middle school level and above must all establish physical education as a compulsory subject and must, at the same time, comply with the previously announced military physical educational program’.<sup>86</sup> Later, the government also published specific instructions, requiring ‘each school grade and social group to “uniformly prioritize the students” physical education’.<sup>87</sup> Middle school and university physical education specialists were required to ‘receive military training’ so that they could promote the nationalist objectives of physical education. They were then expected to inculcate in others the virtues of ‘physical strength, a healthier spirit, and disciplined habits’.<sup>88</sup> Such focus on physical education led to the establishment of the NSC in October 1932 (see section 6.3.1). The NSC’s achievements included the planning of the national curricula for physical education. The national curricula necessitated 150 minutes of physical education per week for primary schools, further suggesting activities like games, outings, traditional sports, hill climbing, calisthenics, ball games and other modern sports. All students were also required to participate in after-school sports and exercise programs. As for middle schools, students there were required to take two to three hours of physical education per week plus ten minutes morning exercise and thirty minutes of after-school exercise or recreation daily. The program included gymnastics, ball games and track and field.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, the 1936 guidelines by the Ministry of Education made it incumbent on tertiary-level students to take part in physical education classes

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<sup>85</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 35.

<sup>86</sup> 'National Sports Act (No. 262 of the Governmental Instructions)', pp. 77-9.

<sup>87</sup> J. Kolatch, p. 38.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> *China Year Book (1935–1936)*, pp. 541-53.

for two hours every week, two extracurricular physical activities per week and 15 minutes of morning exercise each day.<sup>90</sup>

With the active support and advocacy of the Nationalist government, physical education policy in schools and colleges was successfully implemented. Like the missionary educational institutions, in a large number of these non-religious state-run institutions, physical education was compulsory for each grade. Students were divided into different classes and groups according to their sex, age or interests, and they could opt for any sporting activity of their liking as per the extracurricular program. The seriousness of the governmental drive behind the physical educational program can also be gauged from the fact that at National Central University, students had to get one credit for physical education each semester in order to graduate after four years. Given such tough demands, first-rate teaching and sport facilities were maintained, especially in colleges and universities.

### 6.3.3 Nationalism and the Modernization of Martial Arts

Concomitant of other sport education, martial arts also continued to develop, transform and undergo a process of modernization in this period. The rise of sports nationalism had already engendered a heated debate between those favouring the traditional sports and those who promoted Western sports in China. The former group perceived martial arts as an expression of Chinese heritage and physical education, whereas the latter argued that if China wished to be taken seriously internationally, it must further participate in Western sports.

This debate had come about as a consequence of several developments. The first was the nationalist and patriotic response from the Chinese people provoked by the 18

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<sup>90</sup> Wenzhong Wu, *Zhongguo jinbainian tiyushi [Sport History in a Century]*, pp. 330-7. Lequan Cui, *Physical Education and Sport in Modern China*, Beijing, Zhong Hua Book Company, 1998, pp. 88-9.

September Incident<sup>91</sup> of 1931. The Japanese invasion had affirmed some sports experts that martial arts would be the best fighting and defensive resource in the event of aggression against the country because martial arts could strengthen the physique of soldiers and Chinese military force. Moreover, the poor performance of the Chinese delegations in the FECGs and in other international games caused some of the Chinese sports experts and some of the key people involved in the physical education to be sceptical of the prospects of Chinese success in Western sports. This led them to believe that the nation might be better off with the promotion and use of traditional Chinese sports. For example, only one Chinese athlete, Liu Changchun, was eligible to participate in the 1932 Olympic Games, and even then he was eliminated in the 100 and 200-meter heats. This utterly disappointing result angered some of the Chinese sports experts and caused resentment towards modern Western physical education and sport. It was because they held the opinion that Western sports were for Westerners and therefore they had an advantage over the Chinese, whereas the martial arts were more suited to the Chinese.<sup>92</sup> Finally, as outlined in Chapter 5, martial arts had already been undergoing rapid revival after 1922 under the influence of various nationalist movements, and the lack of success in international competitions served only to add to this.

The question was therefore between how to balance this with the modern Western physical education and sport. On 7 July 1932, a national daily newspaper *Da Gong Bao* published an article entitled *Problems of Our Physical Education and Sport in the Future* stating its support of the development of physical education and sport in China. This article provoked a debate on whether Western or Chinese sports should be prioritized over one another. Laying out the case for traditional Chinese sports, it stated:

Popular sports from Western countries have been invented for people's recreation.

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<sup>91</sup> The Mukden Incident, also known as the Manchurian Incident or the September 18 Incident. On 18 September 1931, the Japanese Army blew up a section of the Liutiaohua Railway near Mukden (Shenyang), which the Japanese owned and operated. They then claimed that the Chinese Army had set the explosion. They used this ruse to justify the invasion of China. They took over a number of important cities, such as Changchun, and then Manchuria, where it set up a puppet regime. The Mukden Incident was a pretext for the Japanese army to begin its invasion of China.

<sup>92</sup> Fan Hong and Tan Hua, 'Sport in China: Conflict between Tradition and Modernity, 1840s to 1930s', p. 204.

They are for rich countries, not for China. We have been learning Western sports for many years, and see what results have we obtained? Nothing! Except that we have produced thousands of Chinese students who wear foreign clothes, speak foreign languages and play foreign games [. . .] therefore, we do not need to, we should not, and we must not learn from Western sports. Let us do what the Chinese must do, and dig out sporting activities from our rich cultural heritage.<sup>93</sup>

Zhang Zhijiang, Director of the CMAA, vehemently seconded the call issued in *Da Gong Bao*, declaring on 11 August that ‘the article had revealed the truth of physical education and sport in China’.<sup>94</sup> Zhang himself underscored the importance of developing traditional Chinese sports, especially martial arts, for not only fitness but to develop Chinese men into strong soldiers who would protect China from foreign threats:

Priority should be given to Chinese martial arts because these not only help strengthen an individual body, but also the national military. The martial arts derive their working principles from human physiology, and are thus very easy to promote and popularize, as they can be played by [people of] all ages at any time [and] in any place.<sup>95</sup>

However, *Da Gong Bao* and Zhang’s ideas were opposed by many sportsmen, especially by those who had received education abroad or in missionary educational institutions and the YMCA. These sportsmen advocated adopting a liberal stance to all sport, including the Western athletic tradition. For instance, on 13 August 1932, *Sport Weekly* (based in Tientsin) published an anonymous article titled *Why Do Foreign Sports Have to Be Separated from Local Sport*. It was argued that the idea of ‘getting rid of Western sports to promote Chinese sports’ was borne of an insufficient understanding of Western sports, and that Western sports should not be abandoned because of notional

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<sup>93</sup> Editorial, ‘Jinhou guomin zhi tiyu wenti [National Sports in the Future]’, *Da Gong Bao*, August 1932.

<sup>94</sup> Zhijiang Zhang, ‘Gei Da gong bao de yifengxin [A Letter to Da gong bao]’, *ibid.*, 11 August 1932.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*



prejudices.<sup>96</sup> The author further pointed out that Western sports had three apparent advantages. First, they were funny and easy to learn. Second, sports such as soccer and American soccer were exciting, which would potentially encourage the Chinese to learn and practice. Third, and most importantly, Western sports tend to emphasize teamwork, which the author argued was imperative for overcoming the weaknesses arising out of the individualistic play tendencies in traditional Chinese sports.<sup>97</sup> The article thus concluded that the Chinese should keep promoting Western sports in China as well as developing the indigenous sports.

Shortly afterwards, Wu Yunrui published another article titled *Comments on 'Problems of Our Physical Education and Sport in the Future'* in *Da Gong Bao*. Wu's comments took issue in particular with the suggestion put forward in the article *Problems of Our Physical Education and Sport in the Future* that participation in Western sports causes injuries. Wu argued that such assertions were based on no solid evidence and that the cases cited were all isolated incidents. Speaking generally, Wu also stressed the significance of recreation, noting that 'long-term work is never the best way to achieve high levels of efficiency, and that recreation is a good way to boost workers' bodies and minds'.<sup>98</sup> Wu opined that Western sports, being scientific in approach, were good for people's health. Conversely, he argued that most of the positive effects of traditional Chinese sports were much harder to quantify, whereas Western sports were conducive of teaching people how to best integrate into society.<sup>99</sup>

In another critical response to *Problems of Our Physical Education and Sport in the Future*, on 27 August, Professor Xie Shiyan of the National Sport Academy published an article in *Sport Weekly* titled *Comments on Da Gong Bao's Article of the 7<sup>th</sup> August*.<sup>100</sup> Xie argued that the article in *Da Gong Bao* had overvalued the function of traditional sports in youths' education and in teaching discipline. Instead, Xie contended

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<sup>96</sup> Editorial, 'Tiyu he fen tuyang [Why Do Foreign Sports Have to Be Separated from Local Sport]', pp. 2-3.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Yunrui Wu, 'Da gong bao <Jinhou guomin tiyu wenti> [Comments on 'Problems of Our Sports in the Future' on Da Gong Bao]', *ibid.*, no. 33, 20 August 1932, pp. 2-3.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Siyan Xie, 'Ping dagongbao qiri shelun [Comments on Da Gong Bao's Article of the 7<sup>th</sup> August]', *ibid.*, no. 30, 27 August 1932, pp. 1-3.

that there was much more to sports, especially in recreational terms, than merely enforcing military regimen.<sup>101</sup> Xie critiqued the way in which Chinese martial arts were typically supervised by ‘uneducated persons’ and that the *Da Gong Bao* article was therefore misleading in its claim to the prospects of personal development through Chinese martial arts.<sup>102</sup> Xie was not entirely against martial arts, however, and suggested that research was required ‘to confirm the function of Chinese martial arts through modern physiology and anatomy’<sup>103</sup>:

There are no national boundaries in culture, let alone in physical education. If the ideas and practices of physical education, no matter foreign or native, are good for people, we should adopt them [. . .] As for the martial arts, we have yet to examine them scientifically. Martial arts surely contain feudal elements which should be reformed with reference to modern physiology, psychology, education and scientific sport methods.<sup>104</sup>

Bi Bo’s article *Chinese Local Sports: Discussion with Da Gong Bao Journalists and Wu Yunrui*, published in *Tientsin Monthly* in 1932, also maintained that Chinese martial arts should be made ‘more scientific’ through investing in teacher resources, handbooks and pedagogy. Bi nevertheless acknowledged that this would be difficult to materialize because of their rich contents, plenty of sects and had no common standard.<sup>105</sup>

This debate coincided with the opening of the National Conference of Physical Education and Sport in Nanking on 16 August 1932, and the discussion of the relative merits and perceived weaknesses of Chinese and Western physical education and sport became the major focus at the conference.<sup>106</sup> This resulted in a draft proposal for sports education development titled the ‘Implementation Plan of Physical Education and Sport among Chinese Citizens’. The plan defined martial arts as a ‘traditional’ and specifically

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Bo Bi, ‘Lun guoshu yu minzu tiyu [A Discuss on Martial Arts and Chinese Traditional Sports]’, *Tianjin yuekan [Tianjin Monthly]*, August 1932, pp. 6-7.

<sup>106</sup> ‘Guomin tiyu dahui xuanyan [Declaration for the National Games]’, *Chenbao*, 22 August 1932.

Chinese mode of physical activity, designed to promote self-defence and building physical strength. However, the plan advocated the co-existence of Western sports and local sports, downplaying any sort of physiological differences between the foreigners and the Chinese people. The proposal concluded that all kinds of sports should be encouraged as they all led to the ‘improvement of the human body’. The plan also discouraged attaching any kind of nationalist value to a particular sport, including Chinese martial arts. However, the plan did draw comparisons between Chinese martial arts and Japanese judo, which was being practised in many Western countries at that time. This was intended to emphasize the idea that Chinese martial arts had no less potential for wider popularization outside China, and that for this reason Chinese sportsmen should continue developing martial arts.’<sup>107</sup>

Nevertheless, the debate on parity between Western and traditional Chinese sports continued until 1937. Several influential people and sport experts, such as Wang Shijie (the Minister of Education), Jiang Weiqiao (General Secretary of the Ministry of Education), Shao Rugan (the editor of *Qinfen Sports Monthly*), and Professors Yuan Dunli, Fan Wanbang, Wang Jianwu, Cheng Dengke, Dong Shouyi and Ma Liang, were vocal in promoting their views on the subject.<sup>108</sup> However, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident<sup>109</sup> in 1937 brought an abrupt end to this debate because of the unstable social and political environment in China. Yet, its intellectual legacy survived because of the effectiveness of both the Western and traditional sports in the matter of strengthening the bodies of the Chinese citizens and improving their martial arts skills in order to save the nation which had been amply stressed during the Japanese invasion.<sup>110</sup>

Despite these arguments, the promotion and modernization of traditional Chinese sports did not hinder the further expansion of Western sports in China. Significantly, however, it can be argued that the development of Western sports spurred the development and

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<sup>107</sup> ‘Guomin tiyu shishi fang’an [The Implementation Plan of Physical Education and Sport among Chinese Citizens]’, in Editorial Review Board of China Education Yearbook (ed.), *Diyi ci zhongguo jiaoyu nianjian [The First China Education Yearbook]*, Nanking, Commercial Press, 1933, pp. 897-910.

<sup>108</sup> Fan Hong and Tan Hua, ‘Sport in China: Conflict between Tradition and Modernity, 1840s to 1930s’, p. 207.

<sup>109</sup> The Marco Polo Bridge Incident, also known as the Lugouqiao Incident, was a battle between the National Revolutionary Army and the Imperial Japanese army. The Incident is often seen as marking the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945).

<sup>110</sup> Fan Hong and Tan Hua, ‘Sport in China: Conflict between Tradition and Modernity, 1840s to 1930s’, p. 207.

modernization of traditional Chinese sports. In addition, the role of martial arts in sport in Chinese training systems became increasingly pronounced at all performance levels and many began to devote time and enthusiasm to participation in martial arts. For example, by the end of 1933, around 24 provincial level Martial Arts Academies (MAAs) had been founded, while some 300 academies were operating at a local level. The MAAs mainly initiated and organized a variety of martial arts training courses, also providing teachers for schools and arranging martial arts competitions and demonstrations. One outstanding contest in this period was the Hangzhou Martial Arts Tournament, which was held from 16 to 28 November 1929 and in which 400 athletes representing 19 provinces had participated.<sup>111</sup> Western sports exerted a positive influence on the development of indigenous sports in modern China.

### 6.4 The Nationalist Agenda in Competitive Sport and Athletic Games

As discussed earlier, the government had started to enforce the central administration of sport through the implementation of the National Sports Law April 1929. The government supported the implementation of this law by appointing central as well as local government officials to take charge of organizing various athletics contests. Moreover, the government also used athletics games, as Alan Bairner notes, to ‘develop and maintain a sense of identity, to foster internal unity and to enhance the international standing and image’ of China.<sup>112</sup>

#### 6.4.1 The Fourth and Fifth National Games

Bairner has argued that national sports ‘are simply part of a panoply of elements that serve to legitimize the nation state’.<sup>113</sup> This national agenda is also evident in the organization of the Three National Games (the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth), which were held between 1928 and 1937. The Nationalist government became increasingly involved

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<sup>111</sup> Keping Fan, ‘Jiushi guoli nanjing zhongyang guoshuguan xiezhen [The Development of the Martial Arts Academies in China]’, *Zhonghua wushu [Chinese Martial Arts]*, no. 4, 2005, pp. 31-3.

<sup>112</sup> A. Bairner, ‘Civic and Ethnic Nationalism in the Celtic Vision of Irish Sport’, p. 12.

<sup>113</sup> Alan Bairner, ‘Sport, Nationalism and Globalization: Relevance, Impact, Consequences’, p. 49.

in the sports world and took over responsibility for the preparation, organization and administration of the National Games from the CANNF, China's main sport organization during this period. Their main objectives for the National Games were to strengthen the Chinese people and nation, improve their physical fitness, and to unite them in the fight against Japanese imperialism.<sup>114</sup> The Fourth National Games, held in April 1930 in Hangzhou, were the first national games conducted under the aegis of the Nationalist government since the establishment of the Republic of China.

Because it had been decided at the Ninth FECG in Tokyo in 1930 that the FECG would be held every four years, the CANNF decided to hold the National Games every two years in order to select and train athletes for the FECGs. Accordingly, the CANNF decided to hold the Fourth National Games in Canton in 1926 in preparation for the 1927 FECG in Shanghai.<sup>115</sup> However, the Fourth Games was postponed until 1930 because of the social and political instability in China during this period. The venue was also moved to Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, after the central government received a proposal from the Zhejiang government to hold the Fourth National Games in Hangzhou alongside the Zhejiang Provincial Exhibition at the West Lake.<sup>116</sup> The central government granted the request. The Zhejiang provincial government then constituted the Preparation Committee for the Fourth National Games to undertake the preparation work, and to arrange the necessary finances.<sup>117</sup> The Zhejiang government invited Nationalist government officials from the central government to serve on different cadres of the committee so that they could also join in the preparations. For example, Chiang Kai-shek became the honorary president of the Preparation Committee. Other government officials served in a variety of capacities: Dai Fujian was the president of the Preparation Committee, He Yingqin and Zhu Renjie were vice-presidents, and Zhu Jiahua was the director.<sup>118</sup> Joseph A. Maguire argues that

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<sup>114</sup> A. Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, p. 3.

<sup>115</sup> 'Quanguo yundong dahui jinri kaimu [The Opening of the Fourth National Games]', *Guowen zhoubao [Guowen Weekly]*, vol. 7, no. 13, 1930, pp. 4-5.

<sup>116</sup> 'Disici quanguo yundong dahui (Shang ji) [The Fourth National Games (Volume 1)]', *Guowen zhoubao [Guowen Weekly]*, vol. 7, no. 14, 1930, pp. 2-3.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> 'Disici quanguo yundong dahui (Xia ji) [The Fourth National Games (Volume 2)]', *Guowen zhoubao [Guowen Weekly]*, vol. 7, no. 15, 1930, pp. 17-8.

sport has some inherent potential that makes it a possible instrument of instilling among the people a sense of 'national unity and integration'.<sup>119</sup> The Nationalists government tended to promote physical education and sport as a means of building a strong sense of national identity and pride through fostering internal unity.<sup>120</sup> Thanks to government patronage and national support, the Fourth National Games attracted around 1,630 athletes from 22 municipalities, provinces and work units.<sup>121</sup> The outcome of government officials serving in the organizing committee was that from the Fourth National Games onwards, the responsibility for organizing both the provincial and national games was given to the Nationalist governments. This is how the Nationalist government made its way into the sports world.<sup>122</sup>

The National Games served the Nationalist government's agenda of uniting the entire nation by strengthening the people's political will and national consciousness, and provided what Grant Jarvie sees as 'a uniquely effective medium for inculcating national feelings'.<sup>123</sup> Chiang Kai-shek's three speeches during the Games also reflected this aim. Chiang stressed that a healthy and confident Chinese population was a precondition for the success of the national revolution and of China itself, and that it was necessary to change China's international image as 'a country of the physically weak', especially if China's international standing and prestige were to be raised.<sup>124</sup> In his third speech at the welcome meeting of the Fourth Games in the auditorium of the West Lake on 1 April, Chiang stressed the importance of the all-round development of all Chinese people, including women:

One of the best ways for the Chinese people to help China improve its international social status is to support 'the Three Principles of the People', which may be elaborated as the physical, moral and intellectual development of the people.

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<sup>119</sup> J.A. Maguire et al., p. 153.

<sup>120</sup> A. Bairner, 'Civic and Ethnic Nationalism in the Celtic Vision of Irish Sport', p. 12.

<sup>121</sup> 'Disici quanguo yundong dahui (Shang ji) [The Fourth National Games (Volume 1)]', pp. 1-3.

<sup>122</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 102.

<sup>123</sup> G. Jarvie, 'Sport, Nationalism, and Cultural Identity', in L. Allison (ed.), *The Changing Politics of Sport*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 74.

<sup>124</sup> *Shenbao*, no. 11, 2 April 1930; 'Guonei jiaoyu dashi jishu [Record and Narrate Big Events of Education in China]', *Zhonghua jiaoyujie [The Chinese Education]*, vol. 18, no. 5, 1930, pp. 10-1.

Therefore, we should pay attention to physical exercise [ . . . ] Nowadays, I am very happy to see so many great female athletes participating in the Games, which is good for the development of the Chinese nation. So, women, I hope you will take good care of your bodies for the health of the next generation, and the Chinese nation.<sup>125</sup>

Zhu Jiahua, the Commissioner of the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Civil Affairs and General Director of the Games, also linked sports success to national pride and duty. In a speech during the Games he argued that a good performance by the athletes in the Games would prove that the epithet terming China the ‘Sick Man of East Asia’ had become an out-dated joke, and that the effort put into sport was therefore a worthwhile achievement not just for the individuals concerned, but for the nation as a whole:

In a narrow sense, the goal of sports is to develop an individual’s physical fitness only, but in their broader scope, sports help integrate people to form a healthy society. In fact, it can be said that sports aim to develop the fitness of the entire society. We hope that the athletes in this meet will dismantle the archaic dogma about human physique and physical activities. That is why the guiding principles of this meet have been to develop citizens’ physical fitness and to arouse a Chinese nationalist spirit in them [ . . . ] Cultivating tens and tens of millions of citizens with healthy and flawless physiques, we can have a healthy and flawless state and culture.<sup>126</sup>

In addition, almost 32 nationalist slogans were circulated as part of the publicity campaign for the Games, many of which essentially expressed the idea that ‘without healthy citizens we will never create a strong nation and race’, and emphasized the importance of mass level popularity of a healthy physical culture for China.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> ‘Guonei jiaoyu dashi jishu [Record and Narrate Big Events of Education in China]’, pp. 10-1.

<sup>126</sup> Jiahua Zhu, ‘Qunguo yundong dahui zhi yiyi [The Significance of the National Games]’, in Propaganda Department of the National Games (ed.), *Qunguo yundong dahui yaolan [Review on the National Games]*, 1930, pp. 5-6; A.D. Morris, p. 103.

<sup>127</sup> A.D. Morris, p. 103.

In fact, anticipating the huge success of the Fourth National Games just a few days after the games, Chiang appointed He Yingqin, Wang Zhengting, Song Ziwen and other government officials to establish a National Games Planning Committee to prepare for the next National Games, which were due to be held in 1931.<sup>128</sup> However, the Fifth Games had to be delayed because of the 18 September Incident at Mukden, terrible flooding occurred in more than 17 provinces and the full-scale Japanese invasion of north-eastern China in 1931.<sup>129</sup> During the 1932 National Physical Education and Sport Conference, it was decided to reschedule the games to take place on 10 October 1933 in Nanking.<sup>130</sup>

Despite the delays, the games were a success, with 33 teams and more than 2,000 athletes taking part and 300,000 spectators attending the Games over a period of ten days. The athletes represented 25 provinces, six municipalities, and the Filipino and Indonesian Chinese communities.<sup>131</sup> As for the different events at the Fifth Games, there were eight male events (track and field, pentathlon, swimming, soccer, basketball, volleyball, tennis and baseball) and six events for women (track and field, basketball, volleyball, tennis, baseball and swimming). Martial arts had appeared for the first time at the National Games and several martial arts demonstrations were given by Chu Minyi, a martial arts maestro.<sup>132</sup> Yet what took the central stage were less the sports and more the national politics of nation-building.<sup>133</sup> Most significantly, for the Nationalists, the Fifth National Games were an opportunity to incite Chinese people's nationalist sentiments and unite them against the Japanese invasion through combining Chinese nationalism and anti-Japanese propaganda. At the opening ceremony, when all the delegations had marched into the centre of the stadium, an athlete from the northeast read out a public letter lamenting the loss of Chinese territory in the North East of China:

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<sup>128</sup> Shiming Luo, *Zhongguo tiyu tongshi di si ji* [General History of Chinese Physical Education and Sport: Volume 4], p. 131.

<sup>129</sup> Xinfu Zhang, 'Diwujie quanguo yundong dahui choubei ji kaimu zhi jingguo [The Preparation and Organization of the Fifth National Games]', *Shishi yuebao* [Current News Monthly], vol. 9, no. 5, 1933, pp. 328-9.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.332-6.

<sup>131</sup> Yi Zhong, 'Diwuci quanguo yundong dahui jishi [An On-the-spot Report of the Fifth National Games]', *Zhongyang shishi zhoubao* [Current News Monthly], vol. 2, no. 42, 1933, p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> Minyi Chu, 'Quanyunhui zhong zhi guoshu bisai [Martial Arts Competition in the National Games]', vol. 9, no. 5, 1933, pp. 337-9.

<sup>133</sup> A. Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, p. xi.



It is painful to be an athlete from north-eastern China, which was invaded by the Japanese imperialists [...] Today, I am here not to tell you what a miserable situation north-eastern China is in [...] I have the confidence to say that north-eastern China will not be conquered. The Chinese people will not yield to the Japanese conquerors. I solemnly swear that we are going to fight for the biggest championship that recovers all the territories of the northeast.<sup>134</sup>

After hearing his speech, a large proportion of the audience was reported to have burst into tears.<sup>135</sup> The speech was significant because it presented the first instance where competitive athletics were combined with anti-Japanese sentiment, aimed at inciting patriotic fervour in spectators. Following the speech, the spectators chanted anti-Japanese slogans, such as ‘Overthrow Japanese Imperialism! Recover our land! Recover our lost territories!’, followed by the singing of a nationalist anthem composed for the National Games. During the anthem, in a carefully orchestrated display of nationalism, three planes circled low over the stadium, dropping leaflets inscribed with slogans such as ‘strengthen the people and strengthen the nation’, ‘maintain the spirit of the warrior’ and ‘revive our Chinese nation’.<sup>136</sup> The effect of this display of unity was electrifying for those present, as expressed in the words of one observer:

Our nation’s territory has been shattered, but at the National Games we could see that China is still whole and is still ours. With representatives from the occupied northeast, from Xinjiang in the northwest and Yunnan in the far Southwest, China is still whole, and the *minzu* [nation-race] is still united!<sup>137</sup>

The National Games became an arena in which the Nationalist government was to create a sense of unified national identity. The focus was on projecting that unity was

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>135</sup> ‘Quanguo yundong dahui gaikuang [Overview on the National Games]’, *Qiaowu yuebao* [*Qiaowu Monthly*], no. 1, 1933, p. 88.

<sup>136</sup> Mingxin Tang, pp. 245-6.

<sup>137</sup> Xinfu Zhang, ‘Diwujie quanguo yundong dahui choubei ji kaimu zhi jingguo [The Preparation and Organization of the Fifth National Games]’, pp. 332-6.

deriving from an anti-imperialist and patriotic sentiment.<sup>138</sup> As the Fifth Games were covered by over 300 journalists and 100 photographers from 134 newspapers and news agencies, as well as by several film companies, the anti-imperialist and patriotic sentiment were spread to other parts of China.<sup>139</sup>

### 6.4.2 The Legacy of the Far Eastern Championship Games

While the National Games developed into nothing short of a celebration of national unity in China, three international FECCGs (the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth) were held between 1928 and 1937. The FECCGs had become a platform for China to enhance international prestige, to secure legitimacy and to fight against the Japanese invasion of Chinese sovereign territory.<sup>140</sup> Japan used the FECCGs as a platform for proving its imperialism sovereignty in Manchukuo.

The Eighth FECCG was held as scheduled in late August and early September 1927 in Shanghai. This was the third time that Shanghai had hosted the Games, but this was the First FECCG that had been organized by the Chinese themselves as the CNAAF was responsible for organizing the Games. Moreover, in order to demonstrate the government's commitment to the Games, Chiang Kai-shek served as the Honorary President of the Games.<sup>141</sup> This time the Chinese participation was strong with 164 Chinese athletes participating in the Games. The Chinese were also more successful than in previous games, winning three titles in soccer, volleyball and tennis.<sup>142</sup> After the Eighth FECCG, the Games were held at less regular intervals with the Ninth and Tenth Games having been held after an interval of three and four years, respectively.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> A. Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, p. 17.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xi. The Sixth National Games were held from 10 to 20 October 1935 at the Shanghai Jiangwan Stadium. Thirty-eight delegations and nearly 2,700 athletes participated in these National Games. Again, martial arts were one of the distinctive features of the Games, which included events in boxing, apparatus martial arts (single and double), wrestling (lightweight, middleweight and heavyweight), archery (long distance and short distance), shuttlecock and Celi.

<sup>140</sup> Dingchang Zhou, 'Yuandong yundonghui zhongfei changhui jingguo [Record of the Regular Meeting between China and Philippine in the Far Eastern Championship Games]', *Qinfen tiyu yuebao [Qinfen Sports Monthly]*, vol. 1, no. 8, 1934, pp. 13-5.

<sup>141</sup> Siyan Xie, 'Canguan dibajie yuandong yundonghui ji [The Eighth Far East Championship Games]', *Dong fang za zhi [Eastern Miscellany]*, vol. 24, no. 17, 1927, p. 29.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>143</sup> Gang Zhi, 'Yuandong yundonghui zhi qiyuan jiqi fazhan [The Origins and Development of the Far Eastern Championship Games]', *ibid.* vol. 30, no. 20, 1934, pp. 59-60. In 1930, the Ninth FECCG was held in Tokyo, Japan and the Nationalist government sent 164 athletes to participate in the Games. Four years later, the Tenth FECCG was held in Manila, Philippines, in May 1934. The Chinese team only won the football championship, securing second position in both volleyball and basketball

The FECCG was eventually discontinued because of Sino–Japanese political disagreement. The Japanese occupied north-eastern China from the 18 September Incident in 1931. The following year, the Japanese created the Manchukuo puppet regime with Puyi, the last emperor of the Qing dynasty, as its nominal regent. To bolster their claim to establish Manchukuo as an independent political entity, Japan demanded that Manchukuo should be permitted to participate as an independent state in the Tenth FECCG. The Chinese government and the CNAAF objected, and threatened to boycott the Games if Manchukuo sent athletes. On 12 May 1934, the Tenth FECCG opened in Manila without representatives from Manchukuo, but with 400 athletes from China, the Philippines, Japan and India.<sup>144</sup>

Even during the games, the Japanese attempted to include Manchukuo in the Tenth FECCG, but to no avail. On 21 May 1934, the Japanese invited their Filipino counterparts to a meeting at which a resolution was adopted decreeing that the FEAA would be disbanded and a new organization, the Amateur Athletic Association of the Orient (AAAO), would be created. Manchukuo was entitled to have membership to the AAAO. It was also agreed that the first athletic meet under the AAAO would be held in Japan in 1938 and the second in the Philippines in 1940.<sup>145</sup> The AAAO invited the Chinese to join on the condition the latter would accept the inclusion of Manchukuo as an independent entity in the Games. The Chinese government refused this invitation, which effectively meant the end of the FECCG.<sup>146</sup>

These events illustrate that even though the original intention behind the FECCG was to encourage the adoption of Western sport norms and values in Asian countries, the FECCG had provided the Chinese athletes with many opportunities to set their athletic talent

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while ranking third in athletics, baseball and swimming. Most of the leaders, directors and coaches among the Chinese delegation had earlier been members of or had undergone training with the YMCA. The General Representative and Management leader, Wang Zhengting, representatives Shen Siliang and Hao Gengsheng, general director Shen Siliang, the adviser Tuo Ping (of the Shanghai Foreign YMCA) and the assistant coach Shu Hong were a few members of the delegation.

<sup>144</sup> Dingchang Zhou, 'Yuandong yundonghui zhongfei changhui jingguo [Record of the Regular Meeting between China and Philippine in the Far Eastern Championship Games]', pp. 13-5.

<sup>145</sup> Siliang Shen, 'Canjia dishijie yuandong yundonghui baogao [Report of the Tenth Far Eastern Championship Games]', *Tiyu jikan [National Sports Quarterly]*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1934, pp. 25-7.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28.

against the best of East Asia on ten different occasions between 1913 and 1934. These games proved a landmark in the sense that they presented China with opportunities to compete at the international level, contributing to the speeding up of the process of modernization in Chinese physical education and sport. Therefore, in this period, the FECGs were used by the Nationalist government for nation-building, promoting the nation state, constructing and consolidating a discourse of unified national identity and sovereignty, enhancing international prestige, and securing legitimacy.<sup>147</sup>

### 6.4.3 China's Olympic Journey

The Chinese participated in three Olympic Games between 1928 and 1937, even though they managed only to send one observer to the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics, one athlete and one representative to the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics, and 56 athletes and coaches, referees and sports scholars to the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The Olympic Games were important for the Nationalist government nevertheless, as they were regarded by the Chinese as 'coinciding with their broader plans for national renewal'.<sup>148</sup>

#### *The 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games*

The 1928 Olympic Games were held in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in July 1928. Even though the Chinese Olympic Committee had been a member of the IOC for six years, the Nationalist government and the CNAAF did not plan to send a Chinese delegation to participate in the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics. This was mainly because of the political and economic instability in the country at the time and the unsatisfactory results at the Eighth FECG held in 1927. Instead, the Nationalist government felt content to send only one representative, Song Ruhai (the director of the CNAAF and a YMCA secretary), as a famous Chinese sports expert who was studying in Springfield College, to serve as an observer at the Games. Song sent 14 reports about the Olympics

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<sup>147</sup> J. Hargreaves, pp. 161-82; A. Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, pp. xi, 1, 18; Zhouxiang Lu and Fan Hong, *Sport and Nationalism in China*, p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> G. Xu, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895-2008*, p. 24.

back to China from Amsterdam. These reports were published in *Shenbao*, during his three-month stay, and aroused great interest in the Games and received considerable attention in China.<sup>149</sup> On 2 August, Song also attended the ‘Far East Countries’ Conference’ organized by the IOC, which was attended by eight delegates from China, Japan, the Philippines and India. At the end of the conference, the Chinese were offered an invitation to participate in the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.<sup>150</sup>

Two years later, Song published a book titled *Records of the Olympic Games (Wo neng bi ya – Shijie aoyunhui conglu, 1934)*, the first ever book about the Olympic Games in China. In the book, Song referred to the Olympic Games in Chinese as *Wo Neng Bi Ya*, which literally means ‘We Can Do It’. This phrase carried great symbolic significance, implying that the Chinese were capable of participating in Olympics and of competing at international level.<sup>151</sup> The book introduces the history of the Olympic Games, describes the organization of the IOC and the Olympic Games, elaborates upon the athletics rules, illustrates a record of results from all the previous Olympics, as well as reflections on Song’s experiences of the 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games.<sup>152</sup> Song’s book played an important role in encouraging the Chinese government to invest in sending participants to subsequent Olympics.

### *The 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Games*

The September 18 Incident in 1931, and the ensuing fiscal crisis which resulted from the war effort forced China to consider withdrawing from participation in the 1932 Olympic Games. In the end, China sent only one representative, Shen Siliang, to attend the opening ceremony and observe the Games. However, just four days after Shen’s appointment as observer, the Japanese announced that Chinese sprinters Liu Changchun and Yu Xiwei would represent Manchukuo at the Olympics without getting permission

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<sup>149</sup> Linfang Jiao, *Titan boxingjuan: Wuhuanqi xia datuwei [The Boom of Chinese Sport: The Breakthrough in the Olympic Games]*, Shanxi, Beiyue wenyi chubanshe [Beiyue wenyi Publishing House], 1993, p. 3.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>151</sup> Ruhai Song, *‘Wo neng bi ya’ conglu [Records of the Olympic Games]*, Shanghai, The Commercial Press, 1930.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

from Liu and Yu. This declaration provoked outrage among the Chinese sports community.<sup>153</sup> Liu and Yu declared that they would not represent Manchukuo because they thought that as Chinese citizens they should represent China to compete in the Olympics. It shows that the Olympics were a platform for the Chinese to express their nationalism: sense of nation and national belonging. It became imperative for China to send these athletes to the Olympics because now it had become a question of national dignity. Zhang Boling, Wang Zhengting and Hao Gengsheng worked together to raise funds for Liu and Yu so that the athletes could represent the Republic of China in Los Angeles.<sup>154</sup>

Liu was eventually able to travel to Los Angeles to represent China, but Yu could not attend due to transportation problems and Japanese interference. Song Junfu<sup>155</sup> accompanied Liu as his coach, and Shen Siliang travelled with them to Los Angeles to attend the First World International Recreation Congress, which was also being held during the Olympics.<sup>156</sup> Shen also attended The First World International Recreation Congress which was held from 23 to 27 July 1932, just before the Olympic Games. Representatives from 29 countries took part in the Congress. The discussions centred on a range of issues related to physical education and sport, including sport for civilians, workers and family sport. Many famous physical education and sport instructors and experts from different countries around the world attended this Congress. During the Congress, Shen Siliang gave a presentation on 'The Situation of Physical Education and Sport in China' in which he stressed that akin to a newborn baby, physical education and sport were in a nascent stage in China. However, Shen also apprised the participants of work of the Nationalist government to raise the level of physical education and sport, stating that very serious efforts were under way to remedy the situation.

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<sup>153</sup> 'Wo xuanshou chuxi shijiehui [Chinese in the Stage of the Olympic Games]', *Tiyu zhoubao [Sports News Weekly]*, vol. 20, no. 1, 18 June 1932, p. 19.

<sup>154</sup> Ci Jing, 'Jinbu feiyue zhi shijie yundong dahui [The Tenth Olympic Games]', *Guowen zhoubao [Guowen Weekly]*, vol. 9, no. 33, 1932, pp. 1-8.

<sup>155</sup> Song Junfu (1897–1977) was a famous sports expert in modern China. He studied in a missionary school – Huilan Middle School, and between 1918 and 1922, he studied physical education in Springfield College, US. Later he taught physical education at Hujiang University, Northeast University, Shandong University, and Sichuan University.

<sup>156</sup> Shiliu Hu, 'Dishijie Shijie yundong dahuiji [Record of the Tenth Olympic Games]', *Shenbao Yuekan [Shenbao Monthly]*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1932, pp. 121-2.

Liu, on the other hand, thus became the first Chinese athlete to compete in the Olympics, and for the Chinese, his participation came to symbolize China's fight against Japanese imperialism. During the see-off ceremony for Liu, the crowds were reported to have chanted the slogan 'Long Live the Republic of China!' three times.<sup>157</sup> Despite high hopes for success, Liu had arrived in Los Angeles after a 21-day voyage at sea and competed in the men's 100-meter and 200-meter races, and exhausted by the long journey, he was eliminated in the preliminary rounds.<sup>158</sup> Although the outcome was somewhat disappointing, the response Liu received during his participation in Los Angeles made the trip symbolically important for both China and the Olympic movement.<sup>159</sup> On 30 July, when Liu made his appearance in the Olympic arena, the spectators who were aware of the importance of the occasion, cheered him on with loud applause.<sup>160</sup> An American magazine had already taken the lead in this regard by publishing an article about Liu and carrying his photo, which bore the caption 'the only athlete who represents China, a country with a population of 450 million'.<sup>161</sup> Liu's participation thus effectively projected modern Chinese sport onto the world stage.<sup>162</sup>

### *The 1936 Berlin Olympic Games*

Liu's token performance in the 1932 Olympics had encouraged the Chinese to such an extent that a Chinese delegation was sent to Berlin to participate in the 1936 Olympic Games. The CNAAF carried out all the preparatory work for the Games, including selecting and training the athletes at the Qingdao Summer Training Camp in Shandong University. The Camp lasted for 40 days, and 56 athletes were chosen to undergo the training for the Olympics. National and local governments provided the financial support as participation in the Olympic Games was perceived to 'encourage Chinese patriotic and nationalistic spirit, and enhance China's international status.'<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Huaiqing Jiang, 'Liu Changchun duanpao chenggong shi [Liu Changchun's sporting life]', *Qinfen tiyu yuebao [Qinfen Sports Monthly]*, 1933, p. 7.

<sup>158</sup> Shiliu Hu, 'Dishijie Shijie yundong dahuiji [Record of the Tenth Olympic Games]', pp. 121-2.

<sup>159</sup> *Tiyu zhoubao [Sports News Weekly]*, no. 27, 6 August 1932, pp. 1-2. A.D. Morris, p. 134.

<sup>160</sup> Ci Jing, 'Jinbu feiyue zhi shijie yundong dahui [The Tenth Olympic Games]', p. 1.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>162</sup> A. Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, p. 72.

<sup>163</sup> Second Historical Archives of China, *Zhonghua minguo shi dang an ziliao huibian (Di wu ji) [Compilation of Archive Document of the Republic Of China]*, Nanjing, Jiangsu guji chubanshe [Jiangsu Guji Publishing house], 1994, pp. 1005-7.

This time, Chinese teams and athletes participated in a number of events, including basketball, track and field, soccer, swimming, boxing, weight-lifting and cycling.<sup>164</sup> On 11 August, the Chinese martial arts team gave an hour-long martial arts exhibition at the opening ceremony of the Olympics. This included demonstrations of *taiji*, broadsword, cudgel, and sword and spear. For the Chinese government, the demonstration served as an opportunity to showcase Chinese sports to the world in a positive light, and by all accounts was well received.<sup>165</sup>

However, at the actual Games, the Chinese delegation did not achieve good results and failed to win a single medal,<sup>166</sup> but the international contacts made through the Olympics accorded China many further international physical education and sport opportunities, such as invitations to the World Leisure Entertainment Forum, the General Meeting of International Sports Association, and the International Youths' Camp.<sup>167</sup> The Nationalist government subsequently sent many physical education and sport scholars and educators to represent China at these international forums. For instance, Ma Yuehan and Shen Siliang attended the International Athletics Association Conference, Dong Shouyi and Shu Hong attended the International Basketball Association Conference and Rong Zhaoqi and Huang Jiajun attended the International Soccer Association Conference.<sup>168</sup> In addition, a group of around 30 male and female sport experts, including physical education teachers, instructors and professors, were sent by the Nationalist government to study physical education in Germany after the 1936 Olympics.<sup>169</sup> These moves were very important for the transformation and modernization of physical education and sport in China. When the group returned to China, they brought with them novel ideas about physical education and sport.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Long Ji, 'Dishiyi jie yundong dahui de huigu [Retrospect of the Eleventh Olympic Games]', *Zhonghua yuebao [Zhonghua Monthly]*, vol. 4, no. 9, 1936, pp. 52-3.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p.61; Mingxin Tang, pp. 298-9.

<sup>166</sup> Y. Gao, *Sporting Gender: Women Athletes and Celebrity-Making during China's National Crisis, 1931-45*, Vancouver, Canada, UBC Press, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>167</sup> '30 Physical Directors will Make Berlin Trip: Athletic Chiefs to Accompany Olympic Team', *The China Press*, 27 February 1936.'

<sup>168</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 391.

<sup>169</sup> '30 Physical Directors will Make Berlin Trip: Athletic Chiefs to Accompany Olympic Team'.

<sup>170</sup> Chih-Kang Wu, 'The Influence of the YMCA on the Development of Physical Education in China', p. 391.



### 6.5 Conclusion

After the foundation of the Nanjing Nationalist government, Chiang Kai-shek's priority was to restore unity and order in China, and especially to put an end to China's perceived humiliation at the hands of foreigners by abolishing unequal treaties and regaining lost territories. By 1937, the government's control over the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA was greater than ever, which can be seen as an example of the Nationalist government's success in restoring China's sovereign rights in a range of areas. Christian institutions were required to register with the government, a move which was envisaged to enable the wider indigenization and enculturation of the Christian organizations under the influence of the Chinese political and cultural sphere. Therefore, while promoting an essentially foreign religion and set of values, the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, were now effectively interpellated in being active promoters in the process of 'molding a nation state identity among contemporary Chinese'.<sup>171</sup> As Lai and Lam point out, for the Chinese missionaries and YMCA directors, 'the response of Christianity to nationalism [was] carried out in a nationalist manner, the result of which could be nothing but intensifying and justifying nationalism',<sup>172</sup> a process in which religion played a decreasing role. The outset of missionary work in modern China and the approaches and attitudes that many Christian missions displayed toward China would be easy to interpret as examples of cultural imperialism at its crudest (see Chapter 3). As Stanley notes, missionary Christianity 'played an essential role in the ideological thrust of Western colonial aggression'.<sup>173</sup> In this respect, missionaries can be said to have been agents of cultural imperialism by virtue of the assumptions they held regarding the racial, cultural and civilizational superiority of the West.<sup>174</sup> However, when looking at the realities under which the YMCA and other Christian churches and organizations operated in China, and

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<sup>171</sup> C.X.G. Wei and X. Liu, p. 47.

<sup>172</sup> P.C. Lai and J. Lam, *Sino-Christian Theology: A Theological Qua Cultural Movement in Contemporary China*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2010, p. 142.

<sup>173</sup> Brian Stanley, p. 24.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

particularly in relation to the focus to 'serve the nation' as one of primary duties of these Christian institutions, simplistic notions of missionaries' work in China as mere expressions of culture imperialism become increasingly problematized. The Chinese missionaries and YMCA directors 'shared the miseries of the country, joined in the struggle for the survival of the nation, and devoted themselves to the working for social progress.'<sup>175</sup>

It was in the context of protecting the nation that physical education and sport in missionary educational institutions and the YMCA experienced recovery and a certain degree of development from 1928 to 1937 when compared with the previous period of 1919 to 1928. However, despite these gains, the missionary education institutions and the YMCA did not recover the position of authority in matters of physical education and sport in China that they had held in the first two decades of the century. In fact, physical education and sport were used by the Nationalist government as instruments for strengthening the Chinese nation and to improve the physical fitness of the Chinese people, to improve the image of the new nation state, to spread its ideology of nationalism, to inculcate in the Chinese the notions of national identity and national consciousness, and to enhance the international standing and image of China. While in earlier periods, missionary-led sports and physical education fit easily within Mangan's notion of missionary-led sport as a medium of cultural imperialism to embed the colonial enterprise into the lives of colonial subjects<sup>176</sup>, this period becomes an interesting one because it would suggest either that Western physical education and sport gradually merged and became inculturated into mainstream Chinese culture, or that it became indigenized through the nationalistic enterprise which represented a process of negotiation and of active resistance to Western colonialism. The answer, as will be discussed in the conclusion, lies somewhere between the two.

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<sup>175</sup> Z. Xinping, C. Zhen, and C. Mason, *Christianity*, Leiden, Brill, 2013, p. 313.

<sup>176</sup> J.A. Mangan, 'In Pursuit of Perspective: the Other Empire of Sport—Cultural Imperialism for Confident Control and Consequent Legacies', p. 2612.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### 7.1 Introduction

This thesis has discussed how missionary educational institutions and the YMCA's physical education and sport programs, in conjunction with the nation-building project of the Nationalist government, transformed and modernized physical education and sport in modern China from 1840 to 1937. The concepts of cultural imperialism and nationalism have been central to this study to as a conceptual framework to understand how the two were interacted in the process of the development of modern physical education and sports in China. To this end, this thesis has delineated the context of four interrelated periods, pointing to instances where the two concepts have worked to affect the aforementioned process of development; namely, Christianity and the emergence of Western physical education and sport (1840–1908), Christianity and the expansion of Western physical education and sport in China (1908–1919), the diminishing role of Christian institutions in physical education and sport programs in China (1919–1928), and the indigenization and modernization of physical education and sport in China (1928–1937).

This concluding chapter will provide a discussion of the findings of each chapter to address research questions raised in Chapter one, and outline how these findings have made a significant contribution to our understanding of the history of physical education and sport in China. It will also point to some weaknesses in existing theoretical conceptualization through insights developed throughout this thesis.

## 7.2 Research Findings

### 7.2.1 The Introduction and Promotion of Modern Western Physical Education and Sport into China

This research has shown that Western missionaries and evangelists played a fundamental role in the introduction of modern Western physical education and sport to China. The study of this process during the period from 1840 to 1908 shows that evangelists and missionaries became significant agents of change who were able to take advantage of the precarious political situation in China to promote religion and Western style education and sport to the Chinese people. By virtue of a series of unequal treaties signed between China and the Western countries, the missionaries gained the rights to travel and live anywhere in China and to carry out their missionary work. These early missionaries of this period had little intention to revolutionize Chinese society, as their main concern was only to Christianize the Chinese, but when faced by various obstacles posed both by the Chinese people and their traditional customs, they focused on developing Christian education through establishing various missionary schools and colleges. This is how these missionaries then ‘moved beyond simple evangelism to a broader effort to reshape Chinese society’.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, it was to fulfil the aims of Christianizing and ‘civilizing’ China that the missionaries gradually began to emphasize Christian educational enterprise. By the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, a comprehensive educational system from elementary to tertiary education was founded, and a chain of missionary educational institutions spread throughout China. Within this context, modern Western physical education and sport was initially intended to improve students’ health and to build up ‘good Christian character’ among the students. The missionaries saw themselves as instrumental in changing the image of China as the ‘Sick Man of East Asia’ by addressing aspects of Chinese traditional customs and culture which were seen to perpetuate poor physical health among the Chinese youth. Physical education in

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<sup>1</sup> Graham Gael, p. 24.

these schools and colleges was carried out either through formalizing extracurricular activities or through conducting compulsory physical education classes. In addition, interscholastic athletic games started to be held in some cities such as Shanghai, Tientsin and Peking, heralding a popularization of Western sport among greater number of students and the general public.

With the International Committee of the YMCA establishing its presence in Tientsin in 1895, its work proved instrumental in the development of physical education and sport in big cities. By 1908, the YMCA had started organizing very successful sport exhibitions and matches in Tientsin and Shanghai, despite having been in China for less than twenty years, and with a limited presence of only a small number of branches. However, this proved to be a real milestone because more and more Chinese students in these two cities had started taking part in sports activities and athletic games.

From 1908 to 1919, the expansion of modern Western physical education and sport reached its peak in China. The downfall of the Qing government, the creation in 1912 of the Republic of China which led to in-fighting among the warlords from 1912 to 1927 rendered the country extremely unstable, as there was no central sovereign authority in China. Under these socio-political conditions, missionary educational institutions and the YMCA continued to thrive. Moreover, their physical education and sport work was widely acknowledged by the Chinese elites, who perceived the YMCA's educational endeavours as helpful in inculcating self-belief among the Chinese youth. More importantly for the development of sports education in China, the missionary educational institutions were effective in instilling an enthusiasm for sports, and changed the mindset of the youth by denting derogatory notions of physicality that were formerly prevalent in China. Their reach was broad and comprehensive, encompassing inculcating modern Western attitudes toward the body, designing physical education curricula and teaching methodology, as well as focusing on developing infrastructure for sports education. Their activities covered elementary, high school and tertiary level education, and they ventured a mass level reform by not only introducing certain basic level reforms in classroom curricula, but also conducting regular sports, athletic and extracurricular activities. Infrastructure was developed, sports facilities were

constructed and professional physical education training was provided to teachers. Seasonal intramural and interscholastic athletic contests also became a regular feature of the physical education program of the missionary educational institutions. The influence of these activities is evident in how these developments led to great functional sophistication of national sports activities which led to the wide-scale popularity and adoption of Western sports and Western sports ideology not only among students in Christian colleges and schools, but also in government-run non-religious local schools across China.

The YMCA continued to experience rapid growth between 1908 and 1919, and the number of YMCA branches and members increased dramatically throughout China during this period. The establishment of the physical department of the YMCA in 1908 further enhanced the physical education and sport program. This program comprised of physical education in missionary and indigenous educational institutions, lectures on physical education and sport, leadership training, physical education activities and exhibitions inside and outside the YMCA buildings, and the organization of various regional and national athletic games. It was also during this period that rules for volleyball, indoor baseball, tennis, soccer and track and field were devised for Chinese institutions and published, both in Chinese and English, by the YMCA Publication Department. These were the earliest sports rules in China. Thus, the YMCA played a pivotal role in physical education and sport work in China, until their activities were effectively subsumed by the Nationalist government nation-building agenda from the late 1920s onwards.

### **7.2.2 The Indigenization of Modern Western Physical Education and Sport in China**

Western sports proved to be attractive to Chinese youth, which led to many Chinese youths enrolling in missionary educational institutes and joining the YMCA. However, to attain the position of a physical director in the YMCA, the applicants were required

to demonstrate traits of a sound ‘Christian character and religious leadership’.<sup>2</sup> Since the YMCA physical directors, especially those who were foreigners, endeavoured to introduce Christianity to their Chinese students, they also continued to introduce aspects of Western culture, norms and customs to them. The efforts to Christianize the Chinese were successful, as during the course of their studies, a number of students did convert to Christianity. Many students were receptive to other forms of Western culture, as they were also taught Western manners, such as how to prepare take tea with sugar and milk, how to use a knife and fork to eat instead of chopsticks, and how to dress in European fashion.<sup>3</sup> In the missionary educational institutions, most of the lessons were given in English, and so the students were also exposed to US and British cultures through language education.

From the outset then, it can be argued that Chinese youth were subjected to Western cultural imperialism through the work of the missionaries, even if such act may have not been intended as a means to an end. This said, this research has shown that the case of China differs from many other nations’ trajectory of cultural imperialism. Although modern China, certainly had experienced the impact of Western imperialism’s predominance,<sup>4</sup> yet unlike other colonized countries it was never completely colonized by Western countries. Even if the Christian institutions had focused on the promotion of the Christian message and mission, the response from the local population to their religious call was not always as successful, even if their sports promotion activities were. Apart from their customary beliefs and habits relating to physical prowess, the Chinese were strongly attached to their own cultural values and religious beliefs. This thesis has shown that in the case of China, the local response to YMCA’s and Christian missions’ religious work evidence a considerable degree of agency to negotiate within competing discourses of the body and of cultural identity, and in ways that suggest less a desire to Westernize, more a desire to modernize the nation.

It is within this context that cultural imperialism as a prism through which to read

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<sup>2</sup> Physical Directors’ Society of the Young Men’s Christian Associations of North America, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> Jane Hunter, p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> Ryan Dunch, p. 314.

modern Chinese sports history becomes contested as a tool for reliable historical analysis of the cultural interaction which took place in modern China, or for exploring the impact of the missionary movement and its physical education and sport work in modern China, especially in the period after the 1920s when nationalist sentiment in China intensified dramatically. The way in which the Chinese adopted Western physical education and sport was closely linked with a project of weaving it as part of what Bairner calls ‘a rightful cultural inheritance rather than the result of the imperialist imposition of an alien culture’.<sup>5</sup> In fact, Chinese society seemed ‘possessed to deflect or selectively absorb missionaries’ influence’ on physical education and sport.<sup>6</sup> During the latter part of the 1920s, a wave of nationalism and reformation swept the country. The May Fourth Movement and three waves of the Anti-Christian Movement occurred between 1919 and 1927, resulting in the outbreak of widespread hostility towards Christianity in modern China, so much so that opposition to the religion was even officially sanctioned during this era.<sup>7</sup> Under the influence of these nationalist movements, the Chinese began to take control of education, physical education and sport which had hitherto been run by mostly foreign missionaries.

During the period of 1928 to 1937, the development of nationalism resulted in furthering the indigenization of Christian institutions and their physical education and sport programs, as well as the modernization of sports in China. The Nationalist Party overcame the warlords, occupied Peking and officially established the capital in Nanking in 1928. Since that time, the Nationalist government spared no efforts to ‘restore unity and order, end foreign humiliation, abolish unequal treaties, regain lost territory, and ultimately restore China’s sense of self’ and began to take away sovereign rights in different areas from the foreigners around China.<sup>8</sup> Missionary educational institutions and the YMCA were required to register and be supervised by the Nationalist government. Their activities had to be in accordance with the relevant

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<sup>5</sup> A. Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Porter, p. 387.

<sup>7</sup> K. Yip, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Y. Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China: Modernization, Identity, and International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 23.



government's regulations and policies. At the same time, Chinese personnel were being officially favoured to gradually acquire most of the administrative positions in these Christian institutions.<sup>9</sup> Tellingly, missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, though Christian institutions, became very active promoters of 'a nation state identity among contemporary Chinese'.<sup>10</sup> Even if the Christian institutions and their physical education and sport programs underwent a recovery shortly afterwards, they no longer held a leadership position in physical education and sport in China no longer existed.

By the 1930s, the Nationalist government had taken sovereign rights over China's sport from the Christian institutions and had established official control over physical education and sport in China. In effect, physical education and sport were used by the Nationalist government to unite the entire nation and to strengthen the people's political will by instilling in them national consciousness through projecting the country's national image at the international stage through competitive sport. Even though there were a series of debates about traditional sport versus Western sport, both the traditionalists and the modernists eventually began to cooperate for the common cause. As a result, both forms of sport were used as a tool to strengthen their nation and the Chinese race, as well as to earn prestige for their country through international competitive sport. This historical process of harnessing indigenous physical education and sports as a nation-building project problematizes the notion of one-way Western cultural imperialism.

### **7.2.3 Problematizing the Use of Cultural Imperialism as the Singular Interpretative Framework to Understand the Development of Modern Sport**

Despite the notion that sports and physical education were eventually indigenized and led by the Chinese themselves, the question now remains as to whether this all represents a form of cultural imperialism that was simply introduced by Western

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<sup>9</sup> 'Quanguo gongsili daxue, duli xueyuan, zhuanke xuexiao yilanbiao [Table of the List of Universities and Colleges in Modern China]', pp. 306-16.

<sup>10</sup> C.X.G. Wei and X. Liu, *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective: Historical and Recent Cases*, p. 47.

missionaries and consequently merged into the very core of notions of modern Chinese national identity. In this concluding part, we will assert that the answer lies somewhere between these two positions as cultural imperialism as a tool for foreign encroachment was by and large made ineffective in the way in which the Chinese Nationalist government appropriated Western sports in its own nation-building projects.

The missionaries, in general, were driven to work in China by their belief in the Christian doctrine of salvation of the soul through personal relationship with God through Christ's sacrifice, and the responsibility of each believer to respond to this sacrifice through proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to all mankind. However, while the religious aspect was driven by personal belief in God and the work of evangelism was perceived as an individual response to it, the missionary and YMCA educators also strove to promote their modern Western knowledge and culture in the belief that it was only through moulding the country into a Christian country that it could survive in the modern world. While the spiritual mission was their primary focus, the missionaries saw China was in need of Western religion and civilization to adopt modern values to progress from its state.<sup>11</sup> For this reason, other aspects of Western culture and knowledge were also introduced by the missionaries, such as customs, language (English in particular), and Western knowledge of mathematics and geography. Missionary educational institutions and the YMCA in China used modern physical education and sport to bring social change, and Western civilization into China.

One of the most significant changes for the Chinese was that the adoption of Western physical education and sports brought about a significant change in cultural attitudes toward muscular bodies. As Western sports set and demanded high standards of physicality (as opposed to the traditional view held by the Chinese), provided a strong justification for extending the Western rule 'as necessary for bringing [the] local population up to Western [physical] standards'.<sup>12</sup> Physical education work of

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<sup>11</sup> O.K. Ling, *The Changing Role of the British Protestant Missionaries in China, 1945–1952*, p. 193; J.K. Fairbank and D.C. Twitchett, *The Cambridge History of China: Republican China, 1912–1949*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 172.

<sup>12</sup> Stefan Hübner, p. 2.

missionary educational institutions and the YMCA in China, though it was integrally connected with evangelical work, had been an enterprise for the missionaries to 'transform the world's most populous nation' into the mould of a global civilization.<sup>13</sup>

This change was envisaged on the idea of 'muscular Christianity', a concept then popular in Europe and America. The basic premise of muscular Christianity was that taking part in sport could contribute to 'the development of Christian morality, physical fitness, and "manly" character' in individuals.<sup>14</sup> The widely-held Christian belief at that time was that one's physical condition had religious significance; and that the body was an instrument in the service of God, so 'the effort to have a sound body was an effort to be a good Christian'.<sup>15</sup> The adherence to the idea of muscular Christianity in the second half of the nineteenth century had a sustained impact to determine how seriously Anglo-American and other European Christians were viewing the relationship between sport, physical fitness and religion.<sup>16</sup> It was no wonder that sporting activities would get ever greater popularity not only in Christian institutions and the modern educational system, but also throughout Western societies. Later, these Western countries especially the America and Britain, having the well-equipped Christian institutions, became the avant-guard of Western imperialism, and through them modern sports were introduced, promoted and regulated in other countries around the world, including China. China during this period had been labelled as the 'Sick Man of East Asia' due to political instability and vulnerability.<sup>17</sup> The missionaries found the Chinese as being physically weak and living a hand-to-mouth existence. Thus, physical education and sport were greatly emphasized by missionary educational institutions and the YMCA to nurture a Western and essentially Christian image of manhood.

Confucianism emphasized civility and held martial attitudes and practices in contempt, and accordingly exercise and manual labour were also disparaged by the educated and

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<sup>13</sup> Mark Dyreson, 'Imperial 'Deep Play': Reading Sport and Visions of the Five Empires of the 'New World', 1919–1941', p. 2429.

<sup>14</sup> Nick J Watson, Stuart Weir, and Stephen Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond', p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Koen De Ceuster, p. 57.

<sup>16</sup> Jim Parry et al., p. 80.

<sup>17</sup> Fan Hong, *Sport, Nationalism and Orientalism: The Asian Games*, p. 85.

wealthy Chinese in the late Qing period. The upper classes wore flowing gowns, grew their fingernails and prioritized intellectual pursuits. However, with the popularity of modern Western physical education and sport in China, the Chinese especially Chinese youths actively participated in various Western sporting activities and games, and in general the spirit of sportsmanship, fair play, friendship, and good-will used to be witnessed during these activities and games. Such a way of introducing and popularizing physical education and sport among Chinese people signalled a transformation in traditional Chinese cultural norms toward the body.<sup>18</sup> Modern Western physical education and sport were instruments offered to the Chinese who were converting to Christianity. Physical education and sport were being presented as elemental modalities of Western culture; also once the conquered accept such antecedents, such as, the physical education and sport of a foreign culture, it is then a crucial further step towards accepting the religion and the customs of the West. Therefore, missionary educational institutions and the YMCA's attempt to Christianize China were one of the most important reasons behind the introduction and promotion of modern Western physical education and sport in China. In fact, physical education and sport were used as agents of change for the propagation of religion and culture by the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA in their project of Christianizing China.

Particularly during the period from 1840 to 1920s, the morale of the Westerners in China was high due to the success of their physical education and sport programs that they were taking it as their 'right and indeed the responsibility' to 'help' the Chinese – a people 'of different and, by implication, lesser religion or civilization than their own'.<sup>19</sup> Prior to the emergence of Chinese nationalism in 1920s, foreigners held the major leadership in the management of physical education and sport in China. In missionary educational institutions and the YMCA, most of the leading leaders and directors used to be foreigners, and they alone developed policies for Christian organizations and institutions. This fact was ever more evident at the time of the first three FECCGs from 1913 to 1917. Most of the leaders of Chinese delegations at these events were foreigners

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<sup>18</sup> Elwood S. Brown, pp. 173-4.

<sup>19</sup> R. Jackson, *Sovereignty: The Evolution of an Idea*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007, p. 74.

who both selected and trained the athletes. Even the rules of competitive events in the first two National Games were written in English, and the commentary on matches was also made in English. In this sense, Christian missionaries and YMCA directors thus played a significant part in instigating a process of social and cultural change in modern China, and - both intentionally and unintentionally - inculcated a particular set of beliefs, values, knowledge, and behavioural norms on China.<sup>20</sup>

However, we argue that the transformation in their beliefs on physicality and approach towards Western physical education and sport evidences a negotiated process that complicated simplistic claims that Christian institutions' activities in China during this period were simply an example of straightforward imperialism that the local population was unable or defenceless to resist. This is because reading this historical process as a simplistic act cultural imperialism renders the native response to it as passive and meaningless, because it affords the missionaries' intentional or unintentional drive to introduce aspects of Western values and culture too significant a role in moulding modern Chinese society. Reflecting objectively on and analyzing the historical trajectory in the light of the evidence provided in this thesis, it becomes clear that for missionaries and physical directors, the continued presence and success in China depended on 'their value and usefulness, the willingness of local leaders and their people to cooperate with them, the possibility of Christianity being constructed in a manner answering to local circumstances'.<sup>21</sup> The missionaries brought their cultures and cultural and religious beliefs to China, but the Chinese people eventually consumed them for their own benefit, and capitalized on them especially to nurture Chinese nationalism, thus demonstrating the historically proven 'Middle Kingdom' way of handling foreign influences: either get absorbed or indigenize.<sup>22</sup> As a result, when Western culture came into China, the Chinese responded by resisting, selecting and reshaping the cultural products they chose to absorb.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See also a very nuanced discussion on cultural imperialism and sport in the context of colonized Singapore and Australia: Peter Horton, 'Singapore: Imperialism and Post-imperialism, Athleticism, Sport, Nationhood and Nation-building', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 30, no. 11, 2013; Peter A Horton, "Padang or Paddock": A Comparative View of Colonial Sport in Two Imperial Territories', *ibid.* vol. 14, no. 1, 1997.

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Porter, p. 386.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.375.

<sup>23</sup> Ryan Dunch, p. 311.

Thus, the history of sport in China has a close relationship with the development of nationalism in modern Chinese. Nationalism also holds that as a contributor to the development of nationalism and national identity, sport is frequently taken as ‘a vehicle for the expression of nationalist sentiment’ and is used by existing nation states or politicians for specific purposes.<sup>24</sup> These purposes include nation-building, promoting the nation state, consolidating and promoting national identity and sovereignty, giving cultural power to separatist movements, inculcating the notion of national consciousness, securing legitimacy and enhancing international standing and image.<sup>25</sup>

For China, the peoples’ resilience was boosted by a very strong and uncompromising nationalist stand of the Chinese Qing government. The Self-Strengthening Movement and Hundred Days’ Reform were initiated by some government officials and scholars. These reform movements awakened the Chinese people to the fact that they could not submit themselves unquestioningly to foreigners, but they could yet learn some positive things from the West, be it in terms of military training, education, politics, economy or culture. Thus, the need for physical education, especially military gymnastics, was stressed both by the nationalists and the revolutionaries as crucial to cultivating the fighting force of the Chinese people. The situation had already been favouring transformation, as equally conducive opportunities for all provided by the missionary education institutions and the YMCA in China were encouraging more and more Chinese youth from middle and upper classes to learn Western ways, and they were joining the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA. Besides, the local institutions also began to emulate the Western Christian institutions’ model of modern physical education and sport. With the expansion of the work of missionary educational institution and the YMCA, the corporeal and somatic signs of Western style modernity did take hold as signs of progress and modernity through the activities of the missionary educational institutions and the YMCA. Modern Western sport especially the international games provided the Chinese with a good chance to understand the boons of modernizing the Chinese body, nurturing the nationalist feelings, and experiencing an

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<sup>24</sup> A. Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, p. 49.

<sup>25</sup> J. Hargreaves, pp. 161-82; A. Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, pp. xi, 18; Zhouxiang Lu and Fan Hong, *Sport and Nationalism in China*, p. 1; Colin Brown, ‘Sport, Modernity and Nation Building: The Indonesian National Games of 1951 and 1953’, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde*, 2008, p. 433.

emerging sense of nationalist pride. The Chinese, especially the Chinese youth, once their passion and intellect were ignited, made their mark in every athletic activity. Thus the success of the Christian institutions' physical program did not depend only on the efforts of the missionaries and physical directors, but also greatly on the changing attitude of the Chinese towards modern physical education and sport and on their readiness to seek help from the missionaries and physical directors in this regard. The willingness of the local governors, educators and students to cooperate with the YMCA personnel and missionaries for a positive transformation in Chinese society was crucially significant in its own right as well. In fact, embracing modern Western physical education and sport, on the part of the elite Chinese, government officials and the public was arguably the first collective experience of self-actualization through the development of a common cause for competitive sport for all to cherish and to materialize as a tangible expression of Chinese nationalism.

### **7.3 Limitations of Research and Future Research**

Despite the contribution of this research, several minor omissions may be addressed through further research. The limitations are reflected in the following aspects. First, the data for historical research is inevitably incomplete. A significant number of primary documents in mainland China relating to Christianity in modern China were destroyed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976. There is, however, a considerable volume of valuable documentation located in libraries and archives in places such as Taiwan and the US. In future, we will endeavour to access more substantial and valuable historical data from these archives and libraries to further the study of the history of Christianity and sport in modern China. In particular, although the YMCA's work principally focused on men and boys, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) also worked to promote sport among women and girls, which has not been covered in this study due to the word limit of the thesis. However, the way in which this thesis has discussed muscular masculinity offers a framework within which late-Victorian ideas of femininity and their intersection with the work of the YMCA in China can be addressed in future research as the physical education programs in

missionary educational institutions for girls differed from those in the institutions for boys and men. Future research on the influence of the YWCA and other missionary educational institutions on women's physical education and sport in China can make a valuable contribution to knowledge in this field. Finally, missionary educational institutions and the YMCA's development and their physical education and sport work after 1937, which is an era beyond the purview offered in this thesis, is another area that requires further research.

### **7.4 Concluding Remarks**

This research has made an important contribution to existing knowledge and understanding on the historical development of physical educational and sports in modern China. While most of existing research on cultural imperialism in the context of missionary work and sport has been confined to analyses of the activities and enterprises of colonial powers in the colonized countries, China has been shown to be different in the sense that, prior to the arrival of the Westerners, it had long existed as a large-scale bureaucratic state which was never entirely colonized by the Western imperial countries. Therefore, missionary work and its physical education and sport program in modern China both embraced as well as evidence unique features to many other countries to which missionaries introduced sports as a vehicle for evangelization. Moreover, this research is one of the only few studies which have discussed the limits and possibilities the concept of cultural imperialism to analyze how Christianity became an inspiration for the transformation of sport in modern China. This thesis has therefore made a significant contribution to the field of Chinese sport history through tracing the historical process of indigenization of Western sport in China, and how this very process of inculturation and agentic use of physical education programs by the Chinese problematizes the notion of cultural imperialism as an adequate explanatory category to describe this process. If not applied objectively, the cultural imperialism model is ineffective for an understanding of the impact of missionaries on Chinese society and the subsequent transformation and indigenization of physical education and sport in



modern China.<sup>26</sup> More precisely, the way in which Chinese nationalism played an active role in resisting, selecting, and reshaping the cultural products (modern physical education and sport) evidences a process which was that of an active negotiation, rather than a passive consumption of Western culture.<sup>27</sup> This said, the programs of Christian physical education and sport had long-lasting effects on how physical education and sports became the way of defining ‘modern’ bodies as they were incorporated in the wider education program of modernizing China under the Nationalist government. While doing away with the religious aspects of Christian faith, this rational-instrumental form of modernity based on Christian ethics of the body informed the way in which the Chinese elite adopted Western physical education and sport as a means to achieve their political and cultural ambitions. These values were put in service of the nation, through processes of imbuing the spirit of unity and patriotism in the Chinese people, supporting the enterprise of nation-building, educating the Chinese people, and signifying independent nationhood, as well as projecting outward an image of a modern state in international relations.

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<sup>26</sup> J. Fu, *Corporate Disclosure and Corporate Governance in China*, p. 35.

<sup>27</sup> Ryan Dunch, p. 311.



## Appendixes

### Appendix One: The Results of the First National Games<sup>1</sup>

#### (1) The Field Events

<b>The Senior Group</b>		
I. Shanghai 52	II. North China 15	III. South China 13
IV. Nanking-Suzhou 12	V. Wuhan, 7	
<b>The Junior Group</b>		
I. North China 39	II. South China 24	III. Shanghai 6
IV. Nanking-Suzhou 3	V. Wuhan 0	
<b>The Intercollege Group</b>		
I. St John University 37	II. Nanyang Univeristy 34	III. Tientsin YMCA Board School 10
IV. Wuchang Wenhuan University 9	V. Tientsin Industry University 6	VI. Xiehe University 3

#### (2) The Championship for the Individual Performance of the Games

<b>Sports</b>	<b>Senior Division</b>	<b>Junior Divsion</b>	<b>Intercollegiate Division</b>
50yard		South China	
100 yard	Shanghai	South China	St John University
150 yard		South China	
220 yard	Shanghai		St John University
440 yard	South China	South China	Nanyang University
880 yard	South China		St John University
120-yard low hurdle	South China		St John University
880-yard relay race	Shanghai	North China	St John University
Long jump	Shanghai		St John University
High jump	Wuning	North China	Tientsin YMCA
Pole vault	Shanghai		Nanyang University
Shot put	North China	North China	Tientsin Industry College
Weight throw	Shanghai		Nanyang Univeristy

The winner in basketball was North Section basketball team.

The winner of the soccer was South Section.

<sup>1</sup> Mingxin Tang, p.68; Shiming Luo, *Aoyun laidao zhongguo [Olympics Games to China]*, pp.144-5.

**Appendix Two: The Events for the First Far Eastern Championship Games<sup>2</sup>**

- (1) Track and Field
- (2) 1000-yard race, 220-yard race, 440-yard race, 880-yard race, One-mile race, 120-yard high hurdles, Running high jump, Running broad jump, Pole vault, Discus throw, 12-pound shot put-best hand, Javelin throw-best hand, 5-mile run, Pentathlon (running broad jump, Shot-put, 220-yard run, Discus throw-free style, one-mile run), Decathlon (100-yard run, Running broad jump, Shot put-best hand, Running high jump, 440-yard run, 220-yard low hurdles, discus throw-free style, Pole vault, Running hop-step-jump, One mile run), Half-mile relay-team of four, One-mile relay-team of four
- (3) Tennis (singles and doubles), Basketball, Baseball, Volleyball, Association football, Full Marathon race
- (4) Swimming: 50-yard free style, 100-yard free style, 440-yard free style, One mile free style, 100-yard back stroke, 220-yard breast stroke, 200-yard relay- team of four

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<sup>2</sup> G. Hoh, *Physical Education in China*, p.100.

### **Appendix Three: Curricula of the YMCA School of Physical Education<sup>3</sup>**

The comprehensive four-year study program of the YMCA School of Physical Education was so devised that would enable students, after the completion of two years, to have some work experience before returning to finish the final two years. The first two years covered basic curricula including religious and Bible studies, the history of the YMCA, biology, anatomy, microscope anatomy, kinesiology, physiology, physiological chemistry, exercise physiology, bacteriology, hygiene, anthropometric, first aid and emergency, teaching methods of gymnastics, gymnastics, teaching methods of sports practice, physical department administration, and primary physical education teaching method. After the first two years, students could get the Xiuye Degree and obtain the title of Tiyu Yuan (physical education Instructor).

The second two years dealt with advanced curricula more advanced curricula including advanced religious and Bible studies, YMCA administration, school administration, the principles and major works of all the YMCA departments, general psychology, cerebrology, children psychology, history of education, general sociology, social psychology, economics, sanitary science, school hygiene, genesiology, diagnostic pathology, somatology, massage and sport hygiene, sport history, sport philosophy, physical education administration, sport facility and equipment, oratory, Chinese, English, technology practice, and teaching practice and field work. After graduation, students could get Tiyu Degree and qualified for the title of Tiyu shi (physical education director).

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<sup>3</sup> J. Kolatch, p.66.

**Appendix Four: Student Athletic Participation at Yenching University, 1931– 32<sup>4</sup>**

<b>Intercollege (31)</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Field hockey	16
Tug of war	21
Interclass (192)	
Soccer	56
Basketball	45
Volleyball	71
Playground baseball	55
Track	47
Cross country	11
Tug of war	33
Intercollegiate (87)	
Soccer	27
Basketball	16
Cross country	6
Track	23
Playground baseball	27
Volleyball	24
Tennis	8
Ice hockey	12
Field hockey	12
Baseball	27
Open Tournament (118)	
Basketball	68
Playground baseball	44
Tennis	57
Ping pong	26
Bicycle race	16
Individual (408)	
Tennis	372
Handball	62
Track	103
Badminton	37
Chinese boxing	87
Ping Pong	287
Hiking	151
Bicycle	286
Swimming	265
Equitation	48

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<sup>4</sup> K.A. Wee, p.48.

**Appendixes**

Fishing	197
Skating	240
Horseshoe pitching	53
Desired Facilities (397)	
Golf	115
Archery	78
Swimming (indoor)	450
Wrestling	51
American boxing	33
Bowling	35
Marksmanship	100
Rowing	185
Fencing	73

Appendix Five: The Swimming Classes of Fuzhou YMCA in 1933<sup>5</sup>

<b>Class classification</b>	<b>Length(weeks)</b>	<b>Number of the participants</b>	<b>Times</b>	<b>Hours</b>
<b>Special member</b>	14	38	52	87
<b>Regular member</b>	14	6496	85	261
<b>Women member</b>	10	65	30	32
<b>Foreign member</b>	4	92	26	34
<b>Students member</b>	4	146	22	12
<b>Male member</b>	6	288	36	36
<b>Female member</b>	4	145	24	30
<b>Class for members' family</b>	3	35	18	18
<b>The 87 division of the GMD Army</b>	8	593	23	42
<b>The Fourth corps of the military police</b>	4	158	21	26
<b>Summer class for officials work in Ministry of education</b>	2	257	11	22
<b>Girls from Foochow Middle School</b>	2	50	12	15
<b>In all</b>	8708		27	615

<sup>5</sup> Shanghai Archive, No.U120-0-257-53.



**Appendix Six: Physical Education Classes Arranged for Adult and Youth in the Tientsin YMCA in 1933<sup>6</sup>**

	<b>Name of the Class</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Average Number for Participators</b>
<b>Adult</b>	Priest	Monday, Tuesday	9:30-10.30am	16-17
	Apparatus Gymnastic	Tuesday, Thursday	4:30-5:30pm	18
	Corpulent Members	Monday, Tuesday	5-6pm	10
	Martial Art	From Monday to Friday	7-9am	30
	Calisthenics	Tuesday, Friday	8-9:30pm	20
	Jump Ball Class	Monday, Thursday	8-9:30pm	20
	Director Class	Wednesday	10am-3pm	12
	Jingjin	Tuesday, Friday	5-6:30 pm	16-17
	Zhonghua	Wednesday	8- 9:30pm	14-15
	Youdui	Monday, Tuesday	7-8 pm	13-14
	Feidui	Tuesday, Friday	7-8pm	18-19
<b>Youth</b>	Qingjin	Monday, Tuesday	5-6pm	14-15
	Qingqing	Tuesday	4-5pm	13-14
	Friendship	Thursday	4-5pm	13-14
	Zhenqing	Monday	3-4pm	10
	Zhongqing	Tuesday	3-4pm	12-13
	Qingguang	Thursday	3-4pm	10
	Qingping	Tuesday	3-4pm	13-14
	Boy(I)	Thursday	4-5pm	14-15
Boy(II)	Tuesday	4-5pm	10	

<sup>6</sup> Shanghai Archive, No. U120-0-256-69.

**Appendix Seven: The 1929 National Sports Law<sup>7</sup>**

- (1) The young men and women of the Chinese Republic have a responsibility to receive physical education and parents or guardians have a responsibility to encourage it.
- (2) The aims of physical education are to bring about orderly development and suitable health, as well as physical power. Also [important is] the power to resist and to endure together with the growth of all faculties of the body so as to enable [each Chinese person] to be able to endure every type of labour.
- (3) In planning physical education programs, whether for boys or for girls, age and individual bodily strengths and weaknesses must be considered. These should be factored in.
- (4) All customs and habits which hinder the regular growth of the bodies of young men and young women should be strictly prohibited by the administrative organs of countries, municipalities, towns, villages and hamlets; and its program should be fixed by the Ministry of Education Committee and the Training Commissioner's Department.
- (5) Each self-governing hamlet, village, town and municipality must erect public sports grounds.
- (6) Schools at the upper middle school level and above must all establish physical education as a compulsory subject and must, at the same time, comply with the previously announced military physical education program.
- (7) All physical education committees established among the people must be registered under the supervision of the local government, and make application to the Ministry of the Interior, and consult with the Training Commissioner's Department. However, those people who are serving the people's physical education in scientific research and in investigation of teaching material are not bound by this limitation. In matters of budget, all physical education authorities should be closely controlled by the local government, which must watch its financial situation and call in higher

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<sup>7</sup> J.Kolatch, p.37.

government control bodies to help it in making decisions.

- (8) The physical education organized in each county, municipality, village, town, and hamlet must accept the control of the local government and its position under that department in charge of education.
- (9) All physical education personnel responsible for schools' or people's physical education committees must have proper credentials. The regulations regarding the nature of the credentials are to be fixed by the Training Commissioner's Office.
- (10) All physical education personnel who have served for three years or more in good standing should be given suitable rewards by the Training Commissioner's Department, with the Department to work out the details.
- (11) The Training Commissioner's Department should set up a special higher level physical education committee to deal with the research findings of special organizations and to examine the situation abroad so as to serve the objective of the people's physical education.
- (12) All physical education groups must inject group traits into the government program.
- (13) This law takes effect from the day on which it is issued.



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