

Sport, Nationalism and the Early Chinese Republic 1912-1927

Tony Hwang and Grant Jarvie

University of Stirling

Introduction

Sport development had been influenced by military, economic, political and social chaos. The period 1912 to 1927 was a tumultuous time for China, fragmented and ruled as it was by an assortment of regional military dictators or warlords. The first Chinese Republic was established in 1912 and soon collapsed, in 1916, when the first president Yuan Shih-kai died. National government ceased to exist. Throughout China, warlords carved out autonomous districts with their own armies and tax systems. These warlords were fighting each other in a continual battle for more land for several years. Dr. Sun Yet-sen reorganised the KMT (Kuomintang Nationalist Party) and established a power base in southern China with the support of several local warlords in Canton. Then Sun set up the Whampoa Military Academy near Canton and appointed Chiang Kai-shek as its superintendent. By 1925, the KMT began the Northern Expedition, a military campaign against warlords north of the capital Beijing, uniting the nation under Nationalist rule. Despite the serious internal problem of warlords, external problems centred on the extension of Japanese imperialism and the continuing influence of Western imperialism. Especially, the May Fourth Movement in 1919 and the May Thirtieth Incident in 1925 were the major historical events to enflame Chinese nationalism against Japanese and Western imperialism. These events not only strengthened Chinese nationalism, but also produced critical debates on sport. At least two important debates affected the development of sport during this period. One was that between physical education and military training in schools; the other was between Western sport and indigenous sport. In examining these two key debates here, it is necessary to explain how Chinese nationalism emerged at this time.

The rise of Chinese nationalism

The 1911 revolution marked the end of the Qing Dynasty but, more

significantly, it also ended the two thousand years of unbroken Chinese imperial tradition on 10 October 1911. The leader of the revolutionaries was a Western-educated Christian, Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Sun and other revolutionaries thought that the imperial system was deeply flawed and that China needed a thoroughly modern government. Sun's answer was to form a republic. A republic would achieve two purposes: it would curb foreign enrichment, and it would oust the Manchus who held the throne. It would then be a Chinese government run by Chinese for the good of China. Nationalism, a strong plank in Sun's plan for China, was an idea shared by many who had far less radical plans for the country. In fact, most reformers felt that the imperial system was not the problem. Sun and the other revolutionaries were sure that it was.

Sun was also attracted by such Western ideas as democracy and socialism. He was particularly keen to bring "socialism" (what he called "the people's livelihood") to China. It is important to understand that in this instance by socialism he meant that government had a role in taking care of the people. Sun and other revolutionaries wanted to adapt Confucian paternalism, which taught that the emperor and officials had responsibility for the people's material welfare, to modern times, thereby broadening the idea of the government's social responsibility for people.

The influential writings of Sun reflected a thoroughly Westernised cast of mind. Besides ambitious plans to develop investment with foreign capital, Sun optimistically proposed a timetable for a three-stage transition from military through party tutelage to full constitutional rule, and drew up a five power constitution which added censorial and examination branches. Neither these schemes, nor his Three People's Principles — Nationalism, Democracy and Socialism — supplied the Kuomintang with a workable guide after his death. Sun's achievement was, rather, to personify defiance to bureaucrats, warlords and foreign imperialism at a time when China resembled what he called "a pile of sand". Sun found the words and gestures to inspire those Chinese who sought unity, national dignity and Westernisation. In a discussion of nationalism, Sun argued that:

For the most part the four hundred million Chinese can be spoken of as completely Han Chinese with common customs and habits. We are completely of one race. But in the world today, what position do we

occupy? Compared to the other peoples of the world we have the greatest population and our civilization is four thousand years old; we should therefore be advancing in rank with the nations of Europe and America. But the Chinese people have only family and clan solidarity; they do not have a hundred million people gathering together in China, in reality they are just a pile of loose sand.

Today we are the poorest and weakest nation in the world and occupy the lowest position in international affairs. Other men are carving knives and serving dishes; we are fish and meat. Our position at this time is most perilous. If we do not earnestly espouse nationalism and weld together our four hundred million people into a strong nation, there is a danger of China being lost and our people being destroyed. If we wish to avert this catastrophe, we must espouse nationalism and bring this nationalist spirit to the salvation of the country.¹

In a sense, Sun's notion of nationalism can be seen as a reaction to imperialism. Over the next turbulent decades, the leaders of the Nationalist Party and the leaders of the Communist Party struggled for power under the slogans of Chinese nationalism. Sports development was also influenced by the Chinese sense of nationalism. Within the anti-imperialism and anti-Christian movement, sport was indirectly involved in the debate between Western and indigenous culture.

Modern Chinese nationalism came of age on 4 May 1919, when more than 3,000 college students from a dozen institutions in Beijing endorsed a manifesto denouncing the decision of the Paris Peace Conference to transfer Germany's rights in Shantung Province to Japan. This support of Japanese imperialism caused an affront to every Chinese patriot. The student demonstration on 4 May erupted into violent action which brought police repression. But the students' patriotic example inspired similar demonstrations in other major centres, and by the merchant class and other patriots as well as students. May Fourth was thus a milestone in the growth of Chinese nationalism.

Interest in the West and concepts of democracy, science and modernisation were challenged by Marxism as the impact of the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia took effect. It was during this debate that political division

between the Nationalists and Communists occurred. The May Fourth Movement is often discussed in relation to the New Culture Movement that followed in Modern China. The notion implies an attempt to destroy what remained of traditional Confucian culture in the Republican era and to replace it with something new, like enlightenment from the West. The collapse of the old dynastic system in 1911 and the failure of Yuan Shih-kai's Confucian-garbed monarchical restoration in 1916 meant that, politically, Confucianism was almost dead. It had, however, been much more than a political philosophy. It had been a complete way of life, which nationalism and Republicanism only supplanted in part. There were some even among Republicans who felt that certain aspects of the old culture, Confucian ethics especially, should be preserved and strengthened, lest the whole fabric of Chinese life fall apart and the new regime itself be seriously weakened. Others, with far more influence on the younger generation, drew precisely the opposite conclusion. For them nothing in Confucianism was worth salvaging from the debris of the Manchu dynasty. On the contrary, whatever vestiges of the past remained in the daily life and thinking of the people should be rooted out; otherwise the young republic would rest on shaky foundations and its progress would be retarded by a backward citizenry. The new order required a whole new culture. The political revolution had to be followed by a Cultural Revolution.

During and just after the First World War the intellectual spearhead of this second revolution went on the offensive, launching a movement that reached out in many directions and touched many aspects of Chinese society. Roughly it may be divided into six major phases, presented below in more or less chronological order. They are (i) the attack on Confucianism; (ii) the Literary Revolution; (iii) the proclaiming of a new philosophy of life; (iv) the debate on science and the philosophy of life; (v) the 'doubting of antiquity' movement; and (vi) the debate on Chinese and Western cultural values. These phases overlapped each other considerably, and certain leading writers figured prominently in more than one phase of the movement. Sport featured in one of the debates on Chinese and Western cultural values.

From their anti-traditionalist character one may infer that the leaders of the movement looked very much to the West. Positivism was their great inspiration, science and materialism were their great slogans, and _ in the

early years especially _ John Dewey and Bertrand Russell were their great idols. The leaders themselves were in many cases Western educated, though not necessarily schooled in the West, since western-style education was by now established in the East, in Japan, and in the new national and missionary colleges of China. Often college professors themselves, they now had the lecture platform to make use of, as well as the new organs of public journalism and the intellectual and literary reviews which were a novel feature of the modern age. Above all, they had a new audience, young, intense, frustrated by China's failures in the past, and full of eager hopes for the future. The resolution of sport development in China was among their concerns.

Physical Education, Nationalism and Military training

During the early stage of the Chinese Republic, nationalism was more or less the only panacea in the Chinese imagination to save the nation from imperialism. Some debates were raised about military training and physical education in schools among Chinese intellectuals. The notion of a martial spirit was one of the essential educational principles from 1912 to 1917. Militarism was the core concept of physical education in schools. Accordingly, physical education and military training were seen as overlapping physical activities in schools. Some critiques existed on military training in schools. For example, a physical educator, Xu Yibing, argued that military training must be abolished in schools, because the context of military exercise, such as attention, at ease, fall-in, trail arms, sling arms, shoulder armsetc. were boring for the majority of students.² Those training courses were the same at all levels of school. On the other hand, those military training teachers were soldiers who had a lower education than other teachers. However, when military exercise declined after the May Fourth movement in 1919, those former soldiers automatically transferred to PE teaching, since there was a critical shortage of formally educated PE teachers in schools.

Furthermore, in one of Dr. John Dewey's speeches given at Nanking University in 1919, (Dewey was the most influential American pragmatist philosopher and writer on psychology and social affairs in China), he claimed that "Mass physical education development is the most urgent problem for every country today. Can China approach this mission? It is

better to improve personal and mass hygiene, teach a knowledge of physical education in society rather than focus on military education and military training which only applies to military schools”³. Dewey’s thoughts influenced a number of intellectuals against military exercise in schools. Hu Shih, for example, one of the principal leaders of the May Fourth movement and New Culture movement, was a PhD student under Dewey at Columbia University in 1914. Hu was greatly influenced by Dewey’s ideas and remained a life-long advocate of the pragmatic bit-by-bit, try-it-and-see approach, as opposed to the grand solutions offered by “isms” like Marxism. On account of Dewey’s visiting lectures over 11 provinces of China from 1919 to 1921, his philosophy of pragmatism was recognized as one of the long-term influential Western imports in modern China. It is entirely appropriate briefly to present Dewey’s concept on physical education here.

Dewey believed that education was necessary for democratic citizenship, social efficiency and social experience. Besides, Dewey considered mind and body to be integral parts of the human whole, and believed that the body or physical aspect of humans served as the conductor of experience. More, the philosophical position of the body relative to epistemological considerations and the nature of our existence becomes an important issue. Dewey believed play to be purposeful activity that directed interest through physical means. Play was not a physical act that had no meaning. Rather it was an activity that integrated mind and body. The philosophy of Dewey was used to justify team sports in physical education because they promoted democratic activities and social interaction. The societal benefits derived from participation in physical education were very significant and did much to ensure strong support for physical education and athletics.⁴

While Dewey was in China, he spread his pragmatism successfully. Dewey and his student Hu Shih made a contribution to the development of mass education and physical education in China. Nonetheless, they did not mention the core problem of imperialism and nationalism in China. Under the trends of anti-militarism and anti-military drills, one physical education teacher, Chang Bao-chen, held an opinion different from that of the majority of intellectuals on the controversial issues. Chang argued that while Dewey’s suggestion for democratic education of the masses and

socialism was fine for China, Chinese people were unable to pick themselves up at that moment. Therefore, the Chinese needed military education to discipline themselves. Chang doubted that the Western idea of democracy could make human happiness and well-being satisfactorily. In 1919 Chang wrote:

Why don't the British give freedom to India? Why cannot Koreans be independent after the peace conference at Versailles? Why don't colonial countries donate some of the pervading benevolence to indigenous people in their colonies instead of carrying on a punitive campaign and slavery? What are colonists thinking and doing about their colonies today? While Europeans advocate humanism, however, their humanism is merely for strong nations, not for weak nations in the world. If we abolish military drill in schools, we are giving up our defence power and binding up our own body. Recently, a lot of scholars insist on abolishing military drill and building up formal physical education. Their reasons for abolishing military drill in schools are (i) military drill is mechanical, partial, forced with no freedom of speech; (ii) military drill is incompatible with the human body physically and psychologically. However, what kind of sport is "formal physical education"? If military drill is mechanical, forced and disciplined, then I want to emphasize that gymnastics has rules and words of command, hasn't it? If military drill is partial, then I wish to illustrate that sport is not partial to the human body. Military drill is only 1-2 hours in a school curriculum, it will not affect a student's physical development. Therefore, in my view, if China wants to progress on physical education, it should improve the methods and context of physical education. It is not necessary to debate the problem of military drill.⁵

Chang was one of the very few physical educators who supported military drill in schools, not only because China needed militarism to strengthen herself, but also because the world was under the domination of imperialism. Chang argued that improving physical education and abolishing military drill were different issues. If Chinese physical educators wanted to reform physical education in schools, they should focus on teaching methods and the context of physical education. Except in his view of militarism, Chang could be one of the earliest Chinese physical educators who had seen the real face of imperialism in the 1910s. Further to the debate on militarism, one of the founders of Chinese physical education,

Xu Yibing, firmly opposed military-style calisthenics in schools. Xu said that:

In 1904 and 1905, revolutionary thinking among the people was spreading by the day everyone said that without a martial education it would not be enough to save the nation from extinction. So in school *ticao* [calisthenics and gymnastics] classes, martial spirit was established as the main goal, and military-style calisthenics became the standard. But with this trend came a multitude of corrupt practices, with your average unintelligent, immoral soldier coming right out of the barracks and in one swoop becoming a teacher, ineffective and not worth a damn. These are people that do not even know what a professor is or where a school is, excessive drinkers and mad gamblers, who love to fight like wolves and whom nothing would be below. Not a year goes by that the schools' reputation is not soiled, that society's faith is not lost, that students and their fathers and brothers do not hate *ticao* classes even more, to the point now where it is seen as poison.⁶

In Xu's view, military-style calisthenics was not suitable for the school curriculum, not only because of the context of military calisthenics but also because of the corrupt soldier teachers in schools. Some historians, such as Hsu and Gu, have explained anti-military calisthenics like Xu's as merely the logical result of the Western "tide of thought" brought by the modernist May Fourth Movement of 1919, or a reaction to the World War I defeat suffered by Germany which was seen as a falling symbol of militarism in China.⁷ However, military-style calisthenics was continually seen as an important part of school programmes which was separated from the physical education course. After the debates on military calisthenics, the other debates on indigenous sport were continued.

Nationalism and Indigenous Sports - Martial Arts and Jingzuo (sitting in silence)

Ancient Chinese physical culture consisted of a large number of different activities and events. It is not necessary to consult all traditional Chinese sports development in modern China. I merely illustrate some debates on Chinese martial arts and Jingzuo (to sit still with a peaceful mind or to sit as a form of therapy) with Chinese nationalism at this time. "Martial arts"

is an English translation of several classical Chinese terms which were adapted to Japanese language and culture. The terms came to Europe and America primarily from Japan, not China, because of the high level of development of the martial culture in Japan and its duration there, as well as of a greater Western familiarity with that tradition. The term is now used around the world, either in English or in local translation.⁸

In China, the English term “martial arts” was also introduced from Japan in the early part of the twentieth century. Chinese martial arts are presently known as *wushu* or *guoshu* (national arts), in earlier times were called *wuyong* (military valour) or *wuyi* (military skill). Either Japanese pronunciation “Bu” or Chinese pronunciation “Wu” are using the same character, which is commonly translated as “martial” or “military”. Traditionally, Chinese martial arts were a kind of military training or military sports. For example, ancient Chinese physical culture consisted of a large number of different activities and events and these activities according to Gu maybe classified within the following broad categories:

Military sport: archery, chariot races, contests of strength, *wushu* (martial arts), jogging, jumping, throwing, hurling, weight lifting, football, polo, hunting, tug of war and swimming.

Medical sports: *qigong* (breathing exercises), *daoying* (fitness exercise of which there were many forms), massage, *yangsheng* (keeping fit), *fushi* (keeping fit on a diet), *taijiquan* (traditional Chinese shadow boxing), *yijinjing* (exercises to relax the muscles), *baduanjing* (a set of exercises that comprised eight movements, each beneficial to a certain part of the body), manipulation of health-preserving balls, and climbing.

Recreational games and sports: *lishu* (shooting arrows as part of a ceremony or for amusement), *touhu* (throwing darts into a port), *baixi* (a general term for ancient Chinese songs, dances and aerobatics), singing and dancing, vehicle racing, horse racing, chess, kite flying, swinging, dragon-boat racing, aquatic sport, ice-skating, hiking and various other various other activities during festivals and at temple fairs.⁹

These sports, Gu argues, constitute the largest collective subsystem of ancient Chinese physical culture. The most familiar modern sport that has developed out of these practices is *wushu*. The practice of *wushu* may be

divided into two categories: the art of fighting barehanded and the art of fighting with weapons. Generally speaking, Chinese used the term “martial arts” relative to a fighting system in Chinese culture. Historically, therefore, the Chinese martial arts exercise was prohibited in civil society during the alien dynasties, since the martial arts exercise might encourage the subordinate class to raise Han Chinese nationalism against alien domination. Thus, the White Lotus Sect (*Bailianjiao*), for example, was a religious secret society which contained the ideas of Buddhism and some Taoism, originating in China in the thirteenth century. Its first period of widespread military activity was in the mid-fourteenth century as part of the movement to overthrow the Mongol regime. During the Mongol Yuan dynasty, the White Lotus resisted what was seen as alien rule and struggled for the restoration of the Song court (960-1279) which was under Han Chinese control. The White Lotus Sect persisted when the Mongol conquest came to an end and was resurrected in the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644-1911) when it was committed to restoring the Ming (1368-1644), the last Han Chinese dynasty.

By the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the Qing banned perverse religious sects but not martial arts, which was the core part of the military civil examination. As a result, the White Lotus Sect not only utilized martial arts as a tool to gather members but also built up more martial arts courts to spread martial arts with the creed of the White Lotus Sect.¹⁰ The influence of the White Lotus Sect spread to large areas of north and central China between 1793 and 1796. This White Lotus Sect was finally suppressed by a militia organised by local landlords and officials in 1804.¹¹ A number of new branch sects (with different names) proliferated over China after the Qing’s strict prohibition in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹²

One of the most famous branch sects was the *Yihequan* (Fists of Righteousness and Harmony), popularly known as the Boxers. In fact, the Boxers’ early slogan was “Anti-Qing for restoring Ming”. Somehow it transferred this slogan to “Support Qing and exterminate the foreigner” at the end of the nineteenth century. How did the Boxers transfer their opposition to all foreigners? It is outside the scope of this paper, but surely the Boxers had a strong tinge of Chinese nationalism. The Boxer Rebellion began in North China in 1898 as a popular peasant protest movement. In the past it was

believed to be both anti-dynastic and anti-foreign. However, recent scholarship indicates that it was a strictly anti-foreigner movement, not a domestic rebellion. They were called “Boxers” because they practiced traditional Chinese martial arts. The Boxers believed that when they took part in certain rituals, spirits would possess them, making them impervious to foreigners’ bullets. Hence they were extraordinarily brave in battle. The Boxer Rebellion was suppressed by the military units of eight foreign countries in 1900.¹³ On the other hand, the emergence of Shao-Lin Temple Boxing was another similar story of martial arts under the notion of traditional Chinese nationalism. Shao-Lin Temple was seen as orthodox Buddhism which was different with Paganism. Significantly, Shao-Lin Boxing was considered as the major school of martial arts in modern China in its later development.

A number of reasons might be given as to why Chinese martial arts exhibited a high degree of Chinese nationalism and religious culture before the twentieth century. In fact, there seems to be a certain degree of agreement among Chinese historians concerning some of the principal reasons: (i) that martial arts was a form of Chinese cultural nationalism; (ii) that martial arts was an informal form of religious Buddhism and Taoism; (iii) that martial arts aroused the imagination of Chinese nationalism; (iv) that martial arts exercise was a traditional gathering for subordinate classes; (v) that martial arts was a core part of Chinese traditional physical culture; (vi) that martial arts was a kind of physical, spiritual and mental training; and (vii) that martial arts was not in any sense scientific.

During the early Chinese Republic period, promoting a martial spirit was one of the aims of education¹⁴. Martial arts were suggested as the core part of education in schools to raise national martial spirits. In 1915, the Ministry of Education proclaimed that the proposal of military education should be put into effect. The proposal was that all schools should teach traditional Chinese martial arts and martial arts teachers should be educated at teacher training schools¹⁵. Later, a further proposal for promoting traditional Chinese martial arts as a gymnastic course in schools was introduced to inspire people’s martial spirit. This proposal recognised that “the world is dominated by social Darwinism, people shall have a martial spirit to struggle for their country amidst the world’s high competition at the present time. Following this world trend, China has also promoted her

martial spirit and has added gymnastic exercise in the tri-balance of education on wisdom, morality and the body over the last two decades. But today Chinese people are still weak after learning the Western form of education. Historically, the traditional Chinese martial arts is over thousands of years old. Therefore, it is necessary to promote traditional Chinese martial arts which is more suitable for Chinese people. All schools should put martial arts in the gymnastic courses”¹⁶. At that time, most Chinese educators still thought of gymnastics as “physical education”. The Ministry of Education probably inherited the idea of social Darwinism from those previous reformers such as Yen Fu, Tang Ssu-tung and Liang Chi-chao. It was the first time that martial arts was put on the school curriculum formally in China. Also Chinese martial arts teaching methods had changed, from traditional individual teaching to group teaching which following instructional command and movement. Obviously, the new martial arts teaching method was influenced by Western gymnastics exercises and military drill.

A number of martial arts societies were organised after 1910. The Jingwu Physical Culture Society, for example, was the biggest and most popular Chinese martial arts society which spread through China and South East Asia from 1917 to 1929. Up to 1929, there were 42 branches and over 400,000 members. Jingwu Physical Culture Society was the first sports society to combine Western and Chinese physical culture, which not only taught Chinese martial arts and military training, but also taught Western sports, such as gymnastics exercise, athletics, football, basketball, volleyball, tennis and swimming. According to the organisation and course of Jingwu Physical Culture Society, it might be seen as the Chinese version of the YMCA. However, the headquarters of the Jingwu Physical Culture Society in Shanghai was destroyed twice by Japanese invasion in 1932 and 1937, because of its propaganda of patriotism and anti-Japanese imperialism.¹⁷

While the martial arts development was part of school education since 1915, some critical debates on indigenous and Western sports were raised during the New Culture Movement. The open assault on Confucianism which began in 1916 was led by Chen Tu-hsiu, one of the Chinese Communist Party’s founders, editor of a magazine entitled *New Youth*. As he suggests, the individual in society is comparable to the cell in a body.

Its birth and death are transitory. New ones replace the old. This is as it should be and need not be feared at all. In one of his articles, he criticised the objectives of the classical feudal education system by over-emphasizing literary memorizing and neglecting physical exercise. Thus, he advocated the tri-balance on wisdom, morality and the body. In this sense, his idea is similar to that of Yen Fu who pointed out the importance of physical training in education and argued that “The principal aim of this teaching is the development of intelligence, bodily vigour and moral virtues”.¹⁸ Though Chen Tu-Hsiu argued that a student’s physical strength is one of the essential elements in present educational policy¹⁹, he disagreed about putting martial arts in the school curriculum because of anti-traditionalism and anti-militarism. He insisted on three warnings on sport - no martial drill, no boxing and no violent competitive games²⁰.

One of the other famous anti-martial arts writers was Lu Xun, who argued that the propaganda of traditional Chinese sport was based on superstition, feudalism and anti-science. Lu argued that “ I do not mind if some people think martial arts is a special skill and enjoy their own practice. This is not a big matter. However, I disagree with the propaganda of traditional Chinese martial arts because educators promote martial arts as a fashion, as if all Chinese people should do the exercise, and most advocates promote martial arts in a ghost-like spirit. This social phenomenon is dangerous”²¹. In Lu’s view, over-emphasising the function of Chinese martial arts might raise a similar patriotism to that of the Boxer Rebellions in 1900.

Besides the debates on Chinese martial arts, the other debates were between “Quiet sport” and “Active sport”. “Active sport” was seen as physical activities such as gymnastics, swimming, ball games, athleticsetc. There is no clear definition of “quiet sport”, but it does mean a kind of traditional Chinese breathing exercise Jingzuo (sitting in silence or meditation) which means to sit still with a peaceful mind or to sit as a form of therapy. In ancient China, Jingzuo was often combined with Buddhism, Taoism and Zen. Some physical culture intellectuals advocated Jingzuo as a national legacy.

One of the most famous Jingzuo supporters was Huang Xing, who was the founder of *Physical Culture Weekly (Tiyu Chou Pao)* 1918-1920. Huang

emphasised the reasons why he promoted Quiet sport. “The first reason is that Quiet sport made people’s minds clear. Especially today there are only about sixty to seventy percent of physical educators’ minds that are pure in China The first condition of quiet sport is to curb one’s temper and desire. If one can take away his/her temper and desire, then certainly his/her mind will be clear”²². Later, Huang argued:

Over the last decade or more, sport development is not successful there are many complicated reasons. The major reason is that most leaders are not interested in physical culture in our society “A healthy mind is based on a healthy body”. Now everyone considers that it is necessary to advocate physical culture and a number of people have searched for “the method of promoting physical culture”. However, except in developed provinces, most people still do not know anything about the completed proposal of the “Physical Culture Promotion Plan” over the last six months This obstacle is from the old custom of Chinese society which thought that those leaders must enjoy high rank and live in ease and comfort. Therefore, those leaders do not want to do physical exercise which will affect their high rank’s status They also misunderstand that physical culture merely belongs to military men. As a result, quiet sport is very suitable for individuals and leaders.²³

According to Huang’s view, most physical educators need quiet sport to make their minds clear. Also, leaders need quiet sport to change their minds to support and promote sport. Huang’s idea of quiet sport was an exercise to make soul-searching on sport for physical educators and social leaders in China. Furthermore, Huang explained that Jingzuo is a kind of exercise to cultivate people’s physical and mental capabilities. Huang pointed out four essentials of Jingzuo, which were (i) posture (ii) breathing (iii) avoiding closed eyes and sleep (iv) prevention and treatment of diseases²⁴. Jingzuo was very popular in 18 provinces and rural areas during this period. One of its advocators, Jiang Wei-qiao, was a teacher at Beijing University. Jiang’s studies on the method of Jingzuo were re-printed over 14 times in four years.²⁵

Contrarily, some other intellectuals raised different views on Jingzuo. Lu Xun argued that children and youth needed more physical activities than sitting in silence. Lu criticised Jingzuo as not being scientific and caused

passive thinking. An article also questioned that, "After eight years of the 1911 Revolution, education, economics and politics have shown no progress or are even worse than before but only two things show progress, poker and Jingzuo. Except for proper labour, everyone is skilled in the field of poker and Jingzuo in China today."²⁶ In today's view, we may see those intellectuals were wrong to think Jingzuo was useless and unscientific. Scientists have undertaken research on ancient Chinese sports such as Xing-Qi, Qi-gong and Jingzuo, and affirmed their value for physical and spiritual health. During the New Culture Movement, however, Jingzuo was blamed not only for being passive, but also as a symbol of traditionalism.

According to these debates on military training, physical education and indigenous sports, it is important to bear in mind that the Chinese sport combined with nationalism incessantly during the Chinese Republic period. Eichberg argues that physical exercise did not become a mass movement until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when its association with nationalism was a result of the achievement motive common to both sports and nationalism.²⁷ In China, physical training was pursued for the goal of establishing a new state. The linkage of physical culture with the strength of the state is ancient and strong; modern sport and modern nationalism have simply given it a new twist. This link is a natural result of the fact that victory in sports can symbolize physical and natural dominance. The control and ordering of physical bodies in time and space was the goal in establishing a new regime, and sports provided a potent metaphor for the process.²⁸

Furthermore, Jarvie has argued that there is a great danger in over-emphasising the role of sport in the making of nations.²⁹ At a general level, the relationship between sport and nationalism has rested upon a number of common arguments: (i) that sport itself is inherently conservative and that it helps to consolidate official or central nationalism, patriotism and racism; (ii) that sport itself has some inherent property that makes it a possible instrument of national unity and integration, for example, in peripheral or emerging nations; (iii) that sport itself provides a safety valve or outlet for emotional energy for frustrated peoples or nations; (iv) that sport itself helps to reinforce national consciousness and cultural nationalism; (v) that sport itself at times has contributed to unique political

struggles, some of which have been closely connected to nationalist politics and popular nationalist struggle; and (vi) that sport itself, whether it be through nostalgia, mythology, invented or selected traditions, contributes to a quest for identity, albeit local, regional, cultural or global. In some cases it is easier to accept the idea that sporting forms and sporting relations help to reproduce, transform or construct the image of a community without accepting the notion of it being imagined. Many of these factors operated within the development of sport in China during the early Republic period.

Conclusion

The debates on military training and physical education were launched by Chinese intellectuals. Some believed that military drills could strengthen Chinese martial spirit to save China from imperialist invasion. Some believed that military drill was an informal physical education unsuitable for students in schools. However, the majority of Chinese intellectuals completely supported the notion that Chinese students needed more physical exercise in schools. Further debates were about indigenous sport. Martial arts or *Jingzuo* were kinds of traditional Chinese physical exercise which had a value in culture. Among those critics of the New Culture Movement, no matter whether they were anti-traditionalist and anti-Confucianist, there were those who supported and advocated indigenous Chinese physical culture. They all acknowledged that China had to strengthen her nation and race by physical culture. Particularly, Chinese people needed more physical exercise to strengthen themselves and save their nation from imperialism. After the critical debates on Western and Chinese culture, Western sport continued to influence indigenous development. The arrival of Western sport forced the Chinese to reassess their martial tradition. Chinese martial arts absorbed methods of Western sport and, through scientific study, made improvements in teaching, competition and games. For example, in the 1920s, Western physical culture led to a standardization of competition, and fair rules and regulations were employed by Chinese martial arts. The first national martial arts games were held in 1923 in Shanghai. Martial arts continued to play a significant role in the development of Chinese nationalism and sport after the Chinese Nationalist Party reunified most of China in 1928. In summary, nationalism can be seen as the core theme of sport development during this period.

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