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“‘A QUESTION OF NAMES’ : THE TWO CHINAS ISSUE AND THE
PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA’S RETURN TO THE OLYMPIC GAMES”

BY

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Faculty of Kinesiology

Submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

China established relationship with the IOC soon after World War I. After vigorous participation in the early editions of the Far East Games, the IOC recognized a Chinese National Olympic Committee. Subsequently, China entered athletes in the Olympic Games of 1932, 1936 and 1948.

The civil war, which resulted in the defeat Kou Ming Tang (KMT) and its subsequent retreat to the island of Taiwan, prompted confusion within the IOC. Two sport organizations emerged, one in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and one on Taiwan, each claiming to represent each other's athletes in international sport affairs. The developing East-West Cold War polarized attitudes and influenced discussions within the IOC on Chinese representation in the Olympic Games. For thirty years the major barrier preventing solution of the problem was the question of names, that is, the insistence by each in being referring to in all global matters as China. The initial impasse reached its climax with the PRC's withdrawal from the Olympic Movement in 1958.

In the 1970s, the international situation changed and, combined with an improvement in political and economic environments in the PRC, a solution was reached on the "Two Chinas" issue. The PRC was admitted to the IOC as a full Olympic partner in 1979. Prime factors in the formula for solution of the problem were: (1) the PRC was recognized by the United Nation and Taiwan was expelled in 1971, (2) The PRC developed a better dialogue and relationship with IOC, primarily due to Avery Brundages's retirement as president, (3) changing relationship with United States, (4) increasing international respect and recognition, and (5) The China's internal environment was improved dramatically by the initiatives of Deng Xiao Ping's new policies implemented in 1978.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

On the evening of 23 September 1993, millions of people in China expectantly awaited the decision from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) meeting in Monte Carlo as to which world city would host the 2000 Olympic Games. Beijing was considered a favourite. People in Sydney, Manchester, Berlin and Istanbul, the other candidate cities, also waited expectantly for the IOC's decision. When IOC President Samaranch opened the envelope and announced: "The winner is Sydney," Australians immediately hailed their victory with boundless joy; people in China mourned.

Beijing's bid had failed; an almost certain victory turned into defeat at the last moment by the difference of only two votes. A dream had been shattered, but, on the other hand, the close vote signalled that Beijing had won extensive global support for its bid. Given Beijing's bid for the Olympic Games of 2000, and the startling expansion of the Olympic Movement within China over the last decade, it is appropriate to investigate the history of the Olympic Movement in China which, in effect, generated the events surrounding the scenario noted above.

China is an ancient country. It owns a history of thousands of years. Its culture has lasted almost without change for millennia. It was not until the period following the Opium War in 1840, that foreign culture, in this case, Western culture, began to penetrate into China. Such penetration produced the beginning of great change. After the Xi Hai Revolution of 1911 and the transformation of China from a dynastic to a national state, the country emerged as a semi-capitalist, semi-democratic entity. Among the Western ideas which penetrated into China were concepts of physical education, competitive sport and the Olympic Games. The subject of the Olympic Games in the Chinese context claims the attention of this thesis.

Though China entered international sports affairs and initiated a relationship with the IOC as early as May 1915, it did not actually participate in the Olympic Games until 1932. After a long civil war between communists and nationalists (KMT), which intensi-

After the end of World War II, the People's Republic of China (PRC) came into being on 1 October 1949. The defeated KMT government evacuated to Taiwan. Thus, from this time in history, "Two Chinas" existed. The evolution of "Two Chinas" gave rise to a series of troubling incidents in international and IOC affairs. For instance, the PRC withdrew from the IOC and from all international sports federations in 1958 due to a series of controversies stemming from the issue of "Two Chinas." The PRC decision taken in 1958 prompted its absence from the Olympic Movement for a period of 25 years. However, world events and the phenomenon of "Ping Pong Diplomacy" in 1971 ushered in the beginning of a new era of detente and problem solution. Eventually, the issue of "Two Chinas" in confrontation with the IOC was settled in 1981, resulting in the PRC and Taiwan competing together for the first time in 1984 at the Games of the 23rd Olympiad in Los Angeles.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate the implications of the "Two Chinas" phenomenon on the PRC's participation in the Modern Olympic Games. Furthermore, other questions pertinent to the study will be explored. They are:

- (1) What relationship existed between the early Chinese Olympic Movement and the political regime of Nationalist China?
- (2) How did the "Two Chinas" issue originate? Why was it so difficult for the IOC to solve the issue?
- (3) Why did the PRC withdraw from the International Olympic Committee?
- (4) How did global politics and domestic ideology affect the Olympic Movement in the PRC in the 1960s and 1970s?
- (5) What was the effect of the Cultural Revolution on the return of the PRC to the Modern Olympic Movement?
- (6) What were the factors inherent in the PRC's return to the Olympic family in 1984?

Justification of the Problem

“In scarcely eighty years, the Olympic Games have grown from a fin-de-siecle curiosity of regional interest to an international cultural performance of global proportion.”^① Being a significant global social and cultural phenomenon, the Olympic Movement has drawn the attention of Western scholars in various academic areas. Be that as it may, China’s record for initiating sociocultural research similar to Western efforts is discouraging.

Although Chinese Olympic activity can be traced to almost 100 years past, academic activity related to Olympic studies in China commenced but a few years ago and lags far behind western scholarship. For instance, only 33 articles were published in China on Olympic matters in the periodical literature of physical education between 1949 and 1974, most of which were translations from English material.^② Olympic scholarship in China remains at a story-telling level, or is expressed in propaganda style. In general, the study of Chinese Olympic history exists in the form of prejudiced opinion, underscored by strong political accent. Most articles that have been written do not reflect much objectivity, nor do they analyze political and social conditions in China which have impacted on the growth and development of Olympic matters there.

Very few books related to Chinese Olympic history have been written in English, even since Beijing’s bid for the Olympic Games of 2000. Therefore, a major justification for this thesis is to help inform western countries about China.

Europe and America have long been regarded as centres for Olympic scholarship since the Olympic Movement was born in 1894. The scope of European and American scholarly initiative is accented by the influence of history, culture, psychology, and language. Thus, Western scholars have paid less attention to the research achievements of other regions in the world. A problem for Chinese scholars has always focused on how to introduce Chinese Olympic history to the Western world. Since Beijing’s bid for the 2000 Olympic Games, this problem has become even more serious, magnified by the fact that Beijing may well bid for the 2004 Games. Beijing and China, each now established before

① John J. MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981, P. 1.

② *Olympic Studies*, Beijing, China: Institute of Physical Education, 1994, P. 254.

the gaze of the world Olympic community, prompts another reason why I have embarked on this thesis. To draw more attention to the Chinese Olympic Movement in order to promote further development of the Olympic Movement in China itself, may be felt to be cause enough for producing on this thesis.

Limitations

The study was subject to the following limitations:

- (1) The research was limited by the nature and extent of sources available dealing with Chinese Olympic history, and by the accuracy and reliability of such sources.
- (2) The research was limited by my own language background and personal experiences.

Delimitations

The study investigated the Period of China's involvement in the Olympic Movement between 1895 and 1984, but concentrated on events that occurred between 1949 and 1981, the so-called period of "Two Chinas" estrangement.

Research Methods

This study documented and collated events surrounding China's Olympic history. To this end, the narrative-descriptive method of research was used. In describing events, an attempt was made to detect and explain relationships between them and the historical condition. Historical research involved the collection and analysis of the data and subsequent presentation of the facts.

Personal Explanation

With respect to the transliteration of Chinese names appearing in the study, the Chinese tradition of placing the surname first is followed throughout.

Several terms have appeared over the past quarter century, seldom serving to clarify

and often promoting increased antagonism in the debate over recognition. With respect to PRC, the following have at one time or another been used: People's Republic of China, China, Communist China, Red China, Mainland China, Continental China, Democratic China, Democratic Republic of China, and Peking China and Beijing China. For Taiwan the following names have been used: Republic of China, Taiwan China, Formosa China, National Republic of China and Taipei. To underline the often bitter rhetorical disagreement stemming from this confusion of names, appellations have been quoted in their original form, however, the term "China" has been used consistently to refer to the area, both before and after 1949, under the effective control of the mainland government. Taiwan (KMT) and the PRC were used consistently in this study to refer to two different areas.

Material from sources in Chinese utilized in this thesis have been expressed in their English equivalent form. All translations from Chinese to English are the author's.

CHAPTER II A BRIEF SUMMARY OF RESEARCH SOURCES

There is an extensive gap in Olympic studies between Western countries and China as a whole owing to social, cultural and historical reasons.

There were 947 articles related to the Olympics published in periodicals of physical education in China during the 17 year period from 1975 to 1992, ^① most of them similar in context to those published before 1975. As far as the current status of Chinese Olympic historical studies in China and abroad is concerned, research and writing, both in English and Chinese, is limited. Two recent works, however, can be noted. The first text Olympic Movement ^② written in Chinese, was produced for the first university course in China dealing with the Olympic Movement. Published in 1992, it attempts to explain and illustrate the Olympic phenomenon from the standpoint of dialectical and historical materialism. The book also introduces the reader to the Olympic ideal, general Olympic history, and the effect of the Olympic Movement in China. Olympic Movement is divided into four parts. A general review of Chinese Olympic history is presented in the final part.

The second publication The Proceedings of Olympic Studies^③ is really a collection of scholarly papers presented at a seminar on Olympic topics held in Beijing on 24 July 1993. The Proceedings, written in Chinese, were published in February 1994 after Beijing failed in its bid to host the 2000 Olympic Games. The second part of the Proceedings is comprised of fourteen articles. Some of them specifically explore the process of assimilation of the Western-oriented Olympic Movement into Chinese culture.

Early Chinese Olympic history literature, sparse though it is, is well worth noting

① Olympic Studies, Beijing, China: Institute of Physical Education, 1994, p. 253.

② Olympic Movement, Beijing, China: Sports Press, 1992.

③ Olympic Studies, op. cit.