

中國體育概論

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
IN CHINA

INTRODUCTION

Historically, physical education was not unknown in China. It is no exaggeration to say that in one form or another, it was in vogue as early as four thousand years ago. Later, through different dynasties, it attained very high standards and increased in variety. There is, doubtless, a wonderfully rich mine of information and experience for one who would do research in this field. For the last five hundred years, however, physical education, because of various influences, not only did not make much progress but actually retrogressed.

During the past two decades or more we have not been, as some people may suppose, inaugurating physical education as such in China for the first time. We have simply been introducing certain features of the physical education of the West. Many of these are exceedingly attractive and helpful, and others of doubtful value. They also greatly served to revive a keen interest in certain features of physical education of our own.

At present, we seem to have two schools of physical education: the one of China, and the other of Europe and America. They are, it is reported, strenuously competing with each other for supremacy, and many people are in doubt as to which to follow. A thorough study of what the two schools stand for and how each has been developed to meet the needs of the people concerned, however, will at once show that

a. In principle, they are not and cannot be in conflict; they may rightfully have different emphases.

b. They are not mutually exclusive and should not be; each, because of its usefulness, has its place.

c. They cannot claim superiority one over the other; they have been developed in different circumstances to meet different needs.

d. It is unnecessary for us consciously to try either to harmonize them or to make them supplement each other. We must not push uniformity or standardization too far.

As to the future of physical education in China, we should diligently study the needs of our people in this field, and through various experiments try our best to meet them. These experiments will, of necessity, include a revival of those principles and features of our own physical education which are of permanent value, and further introduction and incorporation of those of the physical education of the West which will prove to be to our advantage.

Still, mere revival or imitation or adaptation will not spell any real advance or insure satisfaction. Discernment, broad-mindedness, and creativeness are necessary qualities in our leadership in physical education to-day. We must discover new principles and emphases, and invent and create new features in physical education demanded by our people of this and later generations. Our wonderful heritage in this field, enriched now by our contact with Western civilization, should enable us to evolve a physical education most suitable and helpful to our own people and, to say the least, also suggestive to the West.

I deeply appreciate the author's kindness in asking from me a word of introduction. With what I have written above, I very gladly introduce this book to my fellow countrymen and also to the people of other countries who are at all interested in physical education in China.

DAVID Z. T. YUI.

Shanghai

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INTRODUCTION

For the past fifty years, the development of modern education in China has been steadily progressing. In the beginning, the work was chiefly undertaken by foreign missionaries and government officials of the old school. Later on, a handful of returned students and foreign Sino-logues began to adapt and evolve principles of education suitable to China. However, on account of the lack of preliminary preparation, much of the work done was chiefly imitative and devoid of initiative. But within the last ten years, the spirit of independence and self-reliance has been growing, which is a healthy sign of life. Independent development of modern education in China necessitates not only continued inspiration from the outside world, but China must also find its own historical foundation upon which to construct the superstructure of a system of modern knowledge which will suit the genius and traditions of the Chinese people. Already in certain branches of modern science such as geology, biology, and medicine, studies have been made with great success in Chinese geological formations, fauna and flora, and the diseases peculiar to China. This is only the beginning of scientific investigation, and it is the hope of all Chinese educators to make adequate contributions in all branches of knowledge so that modern education will live and propagate independently.

Such being the firm conviction of all educators in China, it gives me great pleasure to read over Mr. Gunsun Hoh's book on "Physical Education in China." It fills a decided need and the author is to be congratulated for having undertaken this piece of work. In the threefold development of China's manhood, physical energy and vigor will play a very important part, in as much as many basic intellectual and

moral qualities, such as alertness, capacity, efficiency, courage, and judgment can only spring from a vigorous body and a clear mind. China, despite her millions, is calling for adequately prepared young men and young women to shoulder the very heavy responsibilities in the tremendous task of reconstruction.

Y. S. TSAO,
President of Tsing Hua College.

PREFACE

The author's purpose has been to collect all possible information in regard to the history of physical education in China, and particularly to endeavor to ascertain the point from which we may possibly build up a suitable all-round program for physical education in China to be worked out eventually — if not in this generation, at least in the next.

The various topics have been treated separately, under different headings. The discussions deal largely with historical materials, but the general approach of the entire work is from mere local traditional facts to generally recognized historical facts; then from general historical facts to such facts as have been obtained from eyewitnesses; and finally to future expectations and possibilities.

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN CHINA

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN CHINA

The legendary history of China extends over many thousands of years—some have reckoned as many as ninety-six millions of years.¹ According to H. G. Wells, it goes back to the time between the age of reptiles and the age of mammals, grass, and land forests. For this long period, practically nothing can be obtained as references for our study except some legendary statements. Consequently, to reconstruct the history of physical education is a difficult task.

However, toward the end of this mythological age, one thing may be mentioned as an interesting indication of the early development of physical education in China. Some centuries before Huang-ti (黃帝), the first authentic ruler in Chinese history, a ruler known as Yin K'ang Shih (陰康氏) instituted a form of dancing for curing swollen feet, probably caused by dropsy or by anæmia—a thin condition of the blood due to famine associated with the flood then raging over large parts of the country.² The dance itself is known as the "Major Dance," the technic of which has never been explained.

¹ "An Outline History of China," by H. H. Gowen.

² Lu Shih (路史).

The authentic history of China begins with Huang-ti in the year 2697 B.C. It is commonly believed that people long before this period were gradually ceasing to live in "nests" in the trees, learning to clothe themselves with leaves, catching animals as their daily food, fishing with nets, and producing fire by rubbing one piece of wood against another; and later they were also taught how land could be cultivated and how herbs could be used as medicine.

The general development of physical education in China may be discussed by periods to show the progress and the retrogression of physical education in its relation to the philosophic background of general Chinese culture. It seems advisable to divide Chinese history into five periods: Period One, from Huang-ti (2697 B.C.) to the end of the Shang (商) dynasty (1122 B.C.); Period Two, the Chou (周) dynasty (1122–255 B.C.); Period Three, from the beginning of the Ch'in (秦) dynasty (255 B.C.) to the end of the Sui (隋) dynasty (A.D. 618); Period Four, from the inauguration of the Tang (唐) dynasty (A.D. 618) to the downfall of the Sung (宋) dynasty (A.D. 1127); and Period Five, from the rise of the Mongols or the Yüan (元) dynasty (A.D. 1127) to the decline of the Manchus (A.D. 1911).

PERIOD ONE—HUANG-TI TO SHANG DYNASTY

(2697–1122 B.C.)

Huang-ti was a man of great power and intelligence. He was not only a warrior, but also a statesman. We see him raising standards of living, constructing a mint for the coinage of copper money, fixing standard weights and measures, introducing uniform taxation of land, making a calendar, teaching cooking, and making all sorts of instruments and implements—boats, carts, bamboo musical instruments, and the like. People learned to weave hemp and raise silkworms.

Likewise, Huang-ti developed the art of writing, made medical researches, and promoted agriculture. During this formative period came the development of other arts of life. Many systems of physical education can be traced to this time, namely, hunting, wrestling, archery, swordsmanship, *ts'u chü* (蹴鞠), and dancing.

HUNTING. In early Chinese history, hunting is often mentioned as constituting a part of the imperial ceremony. The ruler led the people out hunting, after their farming was done, to encourage them in the art of defense. Besides, there were other benefits in the background: the first one was to kill harmful animals in order to improve farming conditions, and the other was to gather suitable animals from the woods to sacrifice to Heaven. The official hunt was usually held during the autumn and winter seasons. Hunting, therefore, was not only an essential part of the imperial ceremony, but was also an important event in the life of the people.

WRESTLING. Famous as good wrestlers were the brothers of Ch'ih-you (蚩尤), who was chief of the savage tribes arrayed against Huang-ti. On the battlefield, these brothers, with a sort of helmet covering their heads, wrestled with their enemies.

ARCHERY. Bows were invented by Hui (揮) and arrows by I-mou (夷牟), both of whom were ministers in Huang-ti's court.¹ There was no particular development of this art until the Hsia (夏) dynasty, when the famous archer Hou-i (后羿), (2188-2127 B.C.) usurped the throne of Siang (相). He delighted in the exhibition of his skill with the bow and spent most of his time in hunting during his reign of eight years.

SWORDSMANSHIP. It is believed that under Huang-ti the first Chinese sword was made from copper discovered at "Head" Mountain (首山). Ch'ih-you is said to have used

¹ Shih Pên (世本).

swords for fighting even before Huang-ti.¹ The detailed development of swordsmanship, at this period, cannot be clearly traced.

Ts'u CHÜ. *Ts'u* means "to kick" and *chü* means "ball." *Ts'u chü* can therefore be interpreted as a kind of ball game. The cover of the ball was made of leather, which was filled with feathers and hair. Huang-ti originated this game to teach his soldiers alertness and coöperation. The original rules of this game are unknown.



One of the Ancient Dancing Postures

¹Kuan Tzü (管子).

DANCING. Dancing came into existence several centuries before Huang-ti. Judging from the rapid growth that occurred during Huang-ti's reign, we cannot but believe that Huang-ti was a patron of dancing, though our history mentions no dance except the *yün-mên* (雲 門), a type of dance that was supposed to belong to Huang-ti's time. Yao (堯) (2357-2255 B.C.), the great grandson of Huang-ti, established the *hsien-ch'ih* (咸 池), a dance used in the ceremony of worshiping Heaven.¹ Shun (舜) (2255-2205 B.C.) won the favor of the neighboring savages by teaching them the *ts'i* (戚) dance. In the Hsia dynasty (2205-1783 B.C.), during festivals and ceremonies, people expressed their feelings, especially when happy, by dancing. Two distinct types of dance gradually developed, the military and the ceremonial.

PERIOD TWO — THE CHOU DYNASTY (1122-255 B.C.)

"The Chou Dynasty marks the beginning of a new epoch in Chinese history. With it the real authentic history begins. In it are to be found the origins and principles of Chinese civilization. The Chou dynasty was to the empire what Greece was to Europe; for most of the customs, laws, and institutions which we see to-day have been handed down from this period."² There was a primary school for every twenty-five families; a high school for every five hundred families; and a college for every twelve thousand five hundred families. A boy was of school age when he reached his eighth year. The higher branches of learning consisted of

1. Rituals (禮)
2. Music (樂)
3. Archery (射)
4. Horsemanship (御)
5. Literature (書)
6. Mathematics (數)

¹ Lu Shih (路 史).

² "Outlines of Chinese History," by Li Ung Bing.