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Physical Education and Sports in China from 1922 to 1949, the Nationalist Government's Removal to Formosa

*By Kohsuke Sasajima**

The Nationalist Party unified China in 1928 suppressing long continued civil war since the fall of the Ching dynasty. But as the results of the Japanese invasion, the Manchurian Incident broke out in 1931 and then followed the China Incident in 1937. After 1937, the coastal provinces of China were occupied by the Japanese forces. The Nationalist Government had to move far into remote interior province and a puppet government was established under the Japanese occupation forces. The Pacific war which broke out in 1942, came to an end by the surrender of Japan and the Nationalist Government could restore its sovereignty throughout China. After the War the Kuomintang (the Nationalist Party) came heavily into conflict with the Communist Party. Though the Kuomintang maintained superior position to the Communist Party at first, the day went against them gradually at the latter part of 1947 and had to evacuate from the continent to Formosa in 1949, losing their footing at last.

The Kuomintang adopted and promulgated the new 6-3-3-4 schooling system based on the American system in 1922 instead of the Japanese educational system which had been in force before that time. In 1928, when they could unify the whole territory of China they reformed the school system putting in force a new one. To carry this system into effect thoroughly, "the Educational Law" was issued in 1929. Laws and regulations for each school in accordance with this "Educational Law" were made up and thus educational system was established and consolidated firmly under the Nationalist Government. These laws and regulations have clearly been provided with the objectives of physical education, times allot-

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ment of physical education, and curriculum activities. The physical education teacher's school was established in every place.

The characteristics of the educational system in 1928 is consist of the education based upon Dr. Sun Yat Sen's Three Principles of People, repletion of Normal school education, equal educational opportunities to both sexes and military training.

Keeping step with the stabilization of the domestic affairs, these have been held sporting and athletic events in many places of the country. The Nationalist Government issued laws and ordinances one after another for the encouragement of physical education and sports.

In these laws and ordinances it was stipulated that the National Athletic Meet shall be held once in two years, the Provincial Athletic Meet, once a year. As for the facilities for physical education it was provided that the ground, the gymnasium and the pool shall be constructed for each school, and that, ground shall be constructed for each province and for each city. However, on account of international situations or due to domestic circumstances, the National Athletic Meet have hardly been held regularly every other year and the construction of the ground and the gymnasium for each school and for each city or province, too, haven't been accomplished as stipulated and anticipated.

The National Athletic Meet which was to be held once in two years, could have been held the 3rd in 1924, the 4th in 1930, the 5th in 1933, and the 6th in 1935, since 1922, by the time of the outbreak of China Incident. Besides these National Meets, there have been held the North China Athletic Meet and the Central China Athletic Meet, the Provincial Athletic Meet and the Nation-wide Meet for respective event. The representative athletes to the Far Eastern Championship or to the National Athletic Meet were selected from among the participants of the North China Meet, the Central China Meet, the Nation-wide Meet, and the Provincial Meet.

In response to the stabilization of Chinese domestic affairs, there have been teams coming from abroad. In 1924 a team made a tour for the Davis Cup Tournament, in 1927 a table tennis team visited Japan. In this way, the government strived for the improvement of the technique of the athletes by means of sending Chinese teams abroad. The International Athletic Meet which the Chinese teams have participated to were the Far Eastern Championship Games and the Olympic Games. They have participated to the Far Eastern Championship

Games since the first Meet consecutively, but at the tenth Meet there arose a complication with regard to the participation of teams of Manchukuo and the Chinese teams broke away from the Games though they had continued to take part for twenty-one years in the Games. The Chinese teams have taken part in the Los Angeles Meet of the Olympic Games in 1932 and in the Berlin Meet in 1936, but there was nothing particular worth mentioning in record.

Keeping pace with the rising tide in all sorts of games, the establishment of organization to control athletic events was necessary and associations were organized for each kind of game out of necessity. Among them we could find an association for the preservation of Kuo Shu, the time honoured sport in China.

The coastal provinces were under the occupation of the Japanese Army since the China Incident which broke out in 1937, as most of colleges and other higher grade schools were in the cities of these provinces, it was inevitable that they were suffered much from this incident. Almost more than a half of these schools had to move to the remote interior land. As a matter of course, the facilities could hardly be provided sufficiently in so short a time. Above all, the facilities for physical education school were not the matters to fill immediate needs, the hardship was imaginable.

The Nationalist Government which removed to the interior land, put in force a revised educational system and attached importance to the military training. For the elevation of the physical standard of the people, laws and ordinances regarding to physical education were issued. Data for the sporting events in this period are hardly obtainable and everything remains in obscurity. It is imaginable that there have scarcely been held the athletic meet on account of the War.

Meanwhile, the puppet government which was organized in the occupied area by the Japanese military, too, put in force a revised educational system in 1928. As the result of removal of many schools to the interior land, it was necessary to reorganize another physical education school for the area under the Japanese occupation. Athletic associations, too, were made up and they participated in the Japan-Manchukuo-China Athletic Meet, though there have been held many other athletic meet, there was no record worth special mention, owing to the evacuation of good instructors to the remote interior land during the War.

The Nationalist Government, recovering the sovereignty with the termination of the War, restored finally its seat to Nanking. Schools, which had been in

evacuation to the interior provinces during the War, came back to their former sites.

The Athletic Meet reopened. The 7th National Athletic Meet was held in 1948, the representative players came from Manchuria from Formosa, both had long been under possession of Japan, and from all other provinces of the land. When everything seemed to turn hopeful for the athletic events and to become active gradually, the conflict between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party grew in intensity and this resulted in the evacuation of the Nationalist Government to Formosa.

When it was going to be hopeful and active under the blessed circumstances of domestic stabilization, the physical education and sporting events in China had to suffer from the War, caused from the Japanese Invasion. When their reconstruction were getting underway, there broke out the civil war as the result of the intense conflict between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Such being the case, the physical education and the sporting events could not grow active as if the buds were nipped before they grow bigger. Under the circumstances as these, it was impossible to expect a good results in records. (Of course we could see some improvement in their records of performances.) For all that, it can be said that the physical education system in school, achieved their growth and social physical education, too, became extensively active.