

Title	Effects of militarism, nationalism and militant spirit on school physical education in the Republic of China
Sub Title	
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Publisher	慶應義塾大学体育研究所
Publication year	1968
Jtitle	体育研究所紀要 (Bulletin of the institute of physical education, Keio university). Vol.8, No.1 (1968. 12) ,p.101- 103
JaLC DOI	
Abstract	
Notes	Abstract
Genre	
URL	https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AN00135710-00080001-0101

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Effects of Militarism, Nationalism and Militant Spirit on School Physical Education in the Republic of China

*By Kohsuke Sasajima**

In the Republic of China educational reformation has been carried out several times since 1912 when the present form of the country was set up—from the Japanese-style education system into the American 6-3-3 system.

During that time, her social conditions have taken bewildering changes caused by successive occurrence of civil wars due to leadership rivalries among militarist groups, World War I, consolidation of the Republic and Communist China, dissolution of the two, unification of the land by the Nationalist Party, the Manchurian Incident attendant with Japan's invasion to the Continent, Sino-Japanese War, and subsequent World War II.

A variety of educational spirits has governed the Chinese educational world during the time of 34 years (1912 to 1945).

This writer will discuss effects of militarism, nationalism and militant spirit, which may be considered to have affected on physical education in that country.

Militant educational spirit saw dominance twice, namely, in a period from the end of the Ching Dynasty to just the beginning of the Republic, and in 1915 to 1916. In the former case, the spirit was made much of as an effective means to protect China from the attack for colonization by some powerful Western nations. The second prosperity of the spirit in 1915 to 1916 was attributable to the Japan's expedition to Shantung District due to World War I and the Chinese' concept of national humiliation caused by Japan's presentation of the 21 Articles suggesting her aggression to China.

In the educational circle decision was made for militant educational spirit but it declined before it was hardly translated into action because of the confused domestic af-

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fairs as well as the ending of the war.

Nationalistic educational spirit was aimed at self-supporting and self-strengthening the nation in the background of her troubles both at home and abroad. The spirit became dominant just when the Chinese requests were unaccepted at the 1919 Paris Peace Congress while militarists and bandits were rampant within the land. The said spirit was further dominant given impetus by the May 30 Incident in 1925. The purpose of the spirit was to give military education and train instructors inspired with militarism. Various decisions were made to execute education under the spirit, and military drill that had been cancelled on the advice of an American Education Inspection Group was revived as military training. While the spirit was gradually growing, the People's Government of China that had united the country through the conquest of the Northern District began to attempt to unify spirits. As a result, the nationalistic educational spirit was then declined.

Meanwhile, an educational right recovery movement occurred as one of the by-product spirits from nationalistic educationalism. That movement was to take the educational right back in the Chinese' hands, the right having been in the hands of foreigners who had carried out their own education and who had been in an extraterritorial standpoint from the Chinese educational system.

The Government took interest in that movement and issued various laws and ordinances to limit the activities of schools managed by non-Chinese. In 1919, there was issued a law stipulating that on private schools not based on the then school system in China allows to be set up. Thus the educational right recovery movement was ceased successively.

The law forced mission schools, that had so far had no physical education program because of their own curriculum, to carry out physical education lessons in accordance with the Chinese Educational Law.

Military educationalism was aimed at breeding of self-defense; the People's Government adopted such military educationalism as the basic policy, issuing various ordinances for execution of military education at schools.

With expansion of such military educationalism, China collided with Japan who attempted to invade into the Continent, resulting in the Manchurian Incident. The military education was further accelerated upon that opportunity.

At the time of Sino-Japanese War and subsequent World War II, the lessons of each school was revised to suit the wartime, with the result that physical education and mi-

litary drill were strengthened. However, the determination of World War II made such military education decline; lessons were restored to the original state while military drill was cancelled.

Out of the three above-mentioned spirits, military educationalism was most dominant and was most affected school physical education. Militant educational spirit was weakest.