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The Influence of May 4th Movement (5.4-Movement) on the Physical Education of the Chinese Schools

*By Kohsuke Sasajima**

The First World War from 1914 to 1918 has exerted a great influence on China.

Domestically, the influence of western powers on China was reduced and as the result national capitalism and national industry gradually developed with the birth of working classes and the development of labor movement.

Externally, the Russian Revolution of 1917 influenced greatly to China and stimulated the social reform movement of China resulting to the increased concern of the Chinese intellectuals for breaking through the shackles of feudalism.

With the break-out of the War Japan entered the War immediately, and obtained the German interests in Shan-tung Province. In 1915, the treaty of twenty-one demands was signed between Japan and China. At the Paris Peace Conference, China claimed the abrogation of the unequal treaty, withdrawal of the twenty-one demands and the return of the German interests in Shan-tung Province but her claim was not approved.

Protesting against this decision, students in Peking organized the demonstration on May 4th 1919. The Chinese government's high-handed policy for this demonstration had made it a nation-wide strike by stimulating the students of the nation and merchants and workers joined this strike.

The government surrendered to this strike and on June 10th, decided the dismissal of the responsible officials and the refusal of the signature of the peace treaty.

The protest movement had come to an end by this decision, but the anti-feudalism and the anti-imperialism movement continued to be developed throughout the country.

The European and American powers established missionary schools in various

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places and educated the Chinese young people from the end of Ching dynasty, for the purpose of strengthening their positions in China which had opened her door by the Opium War.

These schools were placed outside the government control and were quite different in the national educational system with schools under government control. From the end of nineteenth century to the beginning of twentieth century, unified educational policy was established and the unions which were organized in many parts of the country controlled curriculums and other educational policies.

The "educational right recovery movement" which aimed to take back the educational right to the Chinese people had been greatly developed with the uplift of the anti-cultural-aggression movement coming from the intensified anti-imperialism movement which resulted from the 5.4-movement. From 1922 to 1923 all the educational organizations developed unified struggles.

With this the government started the educational right recovery movement; the Peking Government in 1925 and the Nationalist Government in 1926 respectively promulgated the regulations. The Nationalist Government which unified the nation after completing the war against the Northern Provinces promulgated the law ordering all private schools should be placed under the control of Chinese Education Law. As the result, the "educational right recovery movement" completed its purpose.

A survey on influences on school physical education which were brought about from the 5.4-Movement and the accompanying "educational right recovery movement" shows that the latter is more important than the former. The American-type new education system which was promulgated in 1922 could not regulate curriculums because of the confused political situation, but in curriculums made by educational associations the old military gymnastics was replaced by the sports influenced by the American-type education system.

The exaltation of the nationalistic education idea resulting from the influence of the 5.4-Movement and the successive occurrence of civil wars among military cliques made educational organizations decide to adopt military training in curriculums in 1925.

After the 5.4-Movement co-education problem was discussed and most of the colleges and other schools adopted the co-education system, but the physical educa-

tion curriculum for boys and girls was respectively different.

The evil custom of "Bound Feet" which had existed tenaciously in spite of the repeated prohibition order was rapidly declined by the resistance to the old custom brought about by the 5.4-Movement and the improvement of woman's social status.

Girls emancipated from the "Bound Feet" custom could practise physical education and play sports freely. This is a great advantage to the physical education.

The curriculums decided by the missionary school educational unions in 1915—the curriculum later became the object of the educational right recovery movement—differs in each union.

In the West China Christian Education Union, physical education was enforced for four years of the elementary schools, in the East China Education Union, no physical education was enforced in any schools and in the Central China Christian Education Union, no physical education curriculum could be seen in secondary schools. Even in elementary and secondary schools attached to colleges which were the leaders of the Chinese sports, excepting very few, physical education lessons were not enforced.

By the "Private School Regulations" promulgated in 1929 as the result of the educational right recovery movement, the missionary schools were placed under the control of the Chinese education law and the physical education had come to be enforced in those schools. This, viewed from the standpoint of physical education, was a very wonderful event.

Most of the privated schools established by foreigners, except missionary schools, were in the area of extraterritoriality therefore, they were not the object of the educational right recovery movement excepting a few.