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## A Study on Changes of Sports in China with Alteration of Dynasty

## By Kohsuke Sasajima\*

In China where alteration of dynasty took place frequently, gymnastics and sports were influenced significantly by such alterations. The influence was insignificant except for special cases so long as the alteration was from one Han dynasty to another but it was significant when the alteration involved different races.

In the case of sumo or wrestling in China of which history dates back to B. C. era, for example, it was customary for wrestlers to wear short pants (sometimes with or without belt and sometimes wearing a loincloth) with naked upper half of the body for over a thousand years from Han to Tang to Sung ages as indicated by old documents and excavations. They wrestled barefooted or wearing shoes but general attire remained the same. With the advent of Yuan, a Mongolian dynasty, however, they now covered their upper half of the body and wore boots. In the Ming dynasty, a Hang dynasty, they returned to the old custom but in the Ching dynasty, a Manchurian dynasty, they switched to wear a shirt with half-length sleeves, long trousers and boots. These changes are considered to clearly reflected change in dynasty.

Some sports became particularly popular in dynasties other than Hang's, including Chi-wan, a sport similar to golf in the Yuan dynasty and skating in the Ching dynasty. Sports that became popular with a new dynasty include Machiu (a kind of horseback ball game) in Tang and water sports in Sung (South and North).

Many sports became obsolete with alteration of dynasties and in particular with alteration from a dynasty of one race to that of another. In the feudal age, the people did not afford to enjoy sports and other recreations, which were only for the governing class. Facilities for sports and recreations were generally located in the Court. As a result, the sports that failed to interest Royal family and governing class were destined

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to decline.

In China, many ball games continued to be played, sometimes very popularly and sometimes not. With the advent of the Ching dynasty whose governing class showed no interest in these games, however, all ball games including those with very long history ceased to be played.

Ups and downs of sports in China wele closely related, in this way, to alterations of dynasty.