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**RESEARCH PAPER**

## Healing the Nation: Historical Context and the Ascendancy of Chinese Martial Arts During the Republican Era

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**ABSTRACT**

To develop a strong cultural and sports nation we must learn from history. Through literature research method and empirical analysis, the study found that: During the Republican period, China was in danger of being destroyed. Against this backdrop, Chinese elites sought various means to save the nation. Martial arts evolved into a symbol of national resilience and as a tool for social reforms. It became a medium for political propaganda and social practice, reaching its highest status in the history of the Republic of China. This research aims to trace the history of sports in China through empirical research method which define the investment in sports leads towards the mental well-being eventually improve the socio-economic infrastructure of Chinese society. For today: traditional sports culture should be vigorously promoted to provide impetus for realizing and building the goal of a strong cultural and sports nation.

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**KEYWORDS** Chinese Martial Arts, Martial Spirit, Republic of China, Status of Martial Arts

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**Introduction**

Chinese martial arts, also known as Wushu or Chinese Kung Fu, is a significant component of traditional Chinese culture. It embodies the unique way of thinking, behaving, and feeling, serving as the most concentrated and distinctive expression of Chinese culture (Ding, 2012). Today, martial arts is one of the main sports promoted in China and is also a competitive event in the Asian Games and the Youth Olympic Games. Chinese martial arts is a traditional national sport; however, its relationship with sports is not hierarchical. As stated in the preface of the History of Chinese martial arts, "martial arts belongs to sports, but it is higher than general sports" (Wu, 1998). The logical relationship between martial arts and sports is one of intersection rather than subordination (Li, 2006). According to An Introduction to Chinese martial arts, martial arts is a dynamic concept with varying connotations and extensions across different historical periods (Wen, 2005). Thus, martial arts is a dynamic cultural phenomenon that manifests differently across historical periods, influenced by political and social needs.

During the Republic of China period, China faced significant challenges: its national power was weak, its people impoverished, and its sovereignty in jeopardy. This era, marked by profound turmoil, led to China being labeled the "Sick Man of East Asia." Against this backdrop, social elites explored various avenues to revitalize the nation. Among these, martial arts faced the threat of obsolescence as firearms dominated warfare. However, the elites believed that China's weakness stemmed from a "sickness" in its people, characterized by physical frailty, backward thinking, and a lack of courage. They posited that martial arts, with its physical exercises and philosophical underpinnings, could cure these ailments. Consequently, a government-led nationwide

martial arts program was initiated to invigorate the spirit of struggle and strengthen the physical condition of the Chinese people. Martial arts thus became a crucial "tool" for national salvation, achieving elevated status and widespread dissemination. The academic elite introduced the concept of the "spirit of martial arts," encouraging individuals to enhance their physical and mental fortitude. Consequently, the political elite formulated policies and established organizations to integrate martial arts into the military, educational institutions, and various societal sectors. Martial arts practitioners founded social organizations to further promote martial arts nationwide. Both academic and martial arts communities actively published journals and books dedicated to martial arts, aiming to guide and proliferate martial arts culture. During the Republican period, martial arts were promoted as a means to strengthen the people and the nation, becoming a political expression. Various sectors of Chinese society turned martial arts promotion activities into a social reality elevating the status of Chinese martial arts to its historical zenith.

### Literature Review

The Republic of China is a particularly important historical period in Chinese history. During the Republican period, the clash of old and new cultures led to radical changes in Chinese society, affecting thinking, lifestyles, and modes of production. Chinese martial arts, as an important part of traditional Chinese culture, also underwent qualitative changes during this period. The abolition of the martial arts system in 1901 and the introduction of Western-style military drills and gunnery techniques marked the complete expulsion of martial arts from the military arena, threatening its historical continuity (Yi, 1998).

In this context of national peril, scholars began to reflect on the fundamental issues facing China, identifying the weakness of the people and the nation as central problems. The notion that a "sick country" stems from "sick people" (Liang, 1901), where the populace's weakness leads to national weakness, gained traction. The reason for the failure of the Opium War in China was the lack of martial spirit (Wang, 1901). Zhang Zhijiang also highlighted that China's national difficulties, and its "sickness" were due to a weakened national mindset. In response to the physical and ideological "sickness" of the Chinese people, various sectors of society, including academia, politics, military, and education, initiated a movement centered on martial arts to save the country. The use of martial arts techniques to strengthen the people's bodies and the spirit of martial arts to bolster their morale aimed to transform the populace and, consequently, the nation. Prominent social elites such as Liang Qichao, Zhang Zhijiang, and Ma Liang advocated for and implemented martial arts education and its associated ethos.

The martial thinking trend during the Republican period was a response to the country's urgent needs, blending traditional martial concepts with influences from Bushido, chivalry, and other philosophies (Yi, 1995). This trend was further shaped by reflections on the defeat in the Sino-Japanese War and the impact of Western cultural thought on Eastern culture (Liu, 2003). During this time, martial arts were extensively applied in military education, physical education, and national spiritual education, driven by the hardships of war, Western cultural influence, and the pressing need for national renewal (Zong, 2022). During the Republic of China (R.O.C.) period, the country was weak, the people impoverished, and national sovereignty was in jeopardy. In this context, the social elite advocated for "martial arts to save the country." The role of martial arts was "upgraded", becoming a tool for social elites to reform the physical and mental well-being of the people (Liang, 2015). Liang Qichao proposed reshaping the spirit of martial arts, suggesting that it could exercise the body, instill courage, and overcome

subjugation to resist invaders and cultivate a self-reliant and strong populace. Similarly, Dr. Sun Yat-sen emphasized the need for a stronger populace to protect the country, while Fan Yuanlian stated that those unwilling to fight were unworthy citizens. Xu Yibing declared that strengthening the nation was achievable through sports, Mao Zedong linked virtue and wisdom to physical exercise, and Chen Duxiu promoted a concept he termed "animalism". Therefore, during the Republican period, martial arts were imbued with special significance. Martial arts became a "weapon of national defense" to save the country and its people(Liu, 2020).

Despite hitting a low point in its history during this period, martial arts was revitalized due to its perceived value in spiritual education, inspiring the Chinese people's collective spirit. In summary, during the Republican period, martial arts transitioned from the fringe to the mainstream, becoming a "tool" for national physical and mental rejuvenation and a "weapon" for defending the country(Yang, 2018).

## **Methodology**

Chinese martial arts is one of the main contents of Chinese traditional culture and has always been a hot spot for research. Different historical periods have shown different states of Chinese martial arts culture due to different political and social demands. However, during the Republican period, the status of martial arts in Chinese social life was raised to the top. To address this phenomenon, literature research method and empirical analysis are applied to analyze the history of the late Qing Dynasty and the Republican Period to find out the specific reasons and manifestations. This study enriches the research related to Chinese martial arts culture and the history of the Republic of China. It also provides lessons for the development of sports today.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **The social background of China during the Republic of China**

The period of the Republic of China was a significant historical era, marking the end of the feudal dynasty and a time of crisis with the country's destiny at stake both internally and externally. At the end of the Qing Dynasty, China was at its weakest economically, militarily, and politically, and the spirit of the Chinese people was at its lowest point. Several factors contributed to this dire situation: Firstly, internal causes played a major role. The Qing Dynasty's closed-door policy led to a missed opportunity to participate in the industrial revolution driven by Western countries. Consequently, the nation remained predominantly agrarian with a handicraft economy, resulting in a low economic model. Secondly, external factors exacerbated the situation. Western powers, having grown stronger, began to invade Eastern countries incrementally. Following the Opium War, Western nations repeatedly invaded China and imposed numerous unequal treaties. They exploited opium trade to deplete China's gold and silver reserves while simultaneously poisoning the physical and mental health of the Chinese people. By the end of the Qing Dynasty, China's sovereignty and territorial integrity were severely compromised. Thirdly, the morale of the Chinese people was shattered. The invasion of Western powers broke the social morale and mainstream thinking of Chinese society, demoralizing the army and depressing the populace. From the First Opium War in 1840 to the founding of the Republic of China in 1912, this period in Chinese history is characterized by humiliation. The Chinese people recognized a substantial gap between themselves and Western countries in military prowess, science and technology, and productivity. The economy, culture, and ideology fostered over more than 2,000 years of agrarian civilization faced unprecedented challenges. The term "sick man" was originally

coined by Emperor Nicholas I of Russia to mock the decline of the Turkish Empire. It was later appropriated by the West to describe China following repeated defeats in conflicts such as the Opium Wars and the imposition of unequal treaties, using the phrase "the sick man of the East" as a metaphor for the Qing Dynasty's weakness and incompetence.

With the defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War, the image of China as the "Sick Man of the East" began to spread in both English and Chinese newspapers. The Consular Gazette and the North-China Daily News published articles titled "The Condition of China" on October 16 and 17, 1896, revealing the state of China at that time. The articles stated: "China has long been the sick man of the Far East, but since the war all the world has seen for the first time how very sick the sick man is." In November 1896, the Times translated and reprinted this article, further popularizing the term. Subsequently, the phrase "the sick man of the East" appeared frequently in various Chinese newspapers and magazines. For instance, in 1901, the National Gazette published an article titled "The Sick Man of the East," and in 1903, the Universal Gazette published "The Companion of the Sick Man of the East," which pointed out that Turkey, Persia, and Korea, along with China, were referred to as "companions of the same disease." On April 17, 1898, the "The National Protection Committee" was established at the Yuedong Guild Hall on Nanheng Street in Beijing and held its first meeting. Kang Youwei delivered a famous speech, pointing out: "There are 400 million people in China today, no matter how noble or how humble they are, they are all under broken houses, in leaky boats, or on fires. The Chinese are like birds in cages, fish in pots, and prisoners in prisons. The Chinese people were slaves, cattle, dogs, and sheep, at the mercy of others. This is a strange change that has never happened in 20 dynasties in China's 4000-year history. So, everyone is responsible for China's predicament today. Everyone is also responsible for saving China." In 1901, following the capture of Beijing by the Eight-Power Allied Forces and the signing of the Treaty of Xinjiao in the Forbidden City, Liang Qichao published "The Traceability of China's Weakness" in the Qingdao Newspaper, asserting that "a sick country" originates from "a sick people," and that the weakness of the nationals leads to the weakening of the country. In the same year, Wang Rongzu summarized the reasons for China's defeat in the Opium War, attributing it to a lack of martial spirit. Zhang Zhijiang also remarked that China's national difficulties and "sickness" were due to the national mindset being "inert, anonymous, weak, and selfish." Faced with this social background, Chinese scholars realized that the country's strength depended on its people. If each individual was like a "sick man," then the country would also be like a "sick man." Consequently, the idea emerged that to save the country, individuals must first save and strengthen themselves. In this context, Chinese martial arts and the "martial spirit" became seen as "ideological impetus and means of national salvation."

### **Martial arts and martial spirit became the dominant social trend in the Republic of China**

During the Republic of China period, martial arts initially became a means to improve the nation's health. The importance of martial arts was later elevated to embody the "spirit of martial arts," aiming to transform the spirit of the Chinese people. Scholars and talents across various fields who aspired to save the country promoted the spirit of martial arts with the connotations of "patriotism" and "national spirit." In 1903, Liang Qichao pointed out in "New People's Sayings - On Martial Arts" that "if everyone is sick, how can a country not be a sick country." In 1914, Fan Yuanlian emphasized in his article "China's Education in Today's World War" that "China's international status is gradually declining, and the fundamental reason is that China does not have the strength for war. Therefore, the most important thing at present is to awaken the martial spirit of the whole nation." In 1915, the national government in Nanjing promulgated an education decree

stating that martial arts are essential for strengthening the country. The decree highlighted that the strength of the country lies in the strength of its people, which in turn depends on physical strength, with martial arts being key. Thus, martial arts served two purposes: self-defense and national defense. In 1917, Mao Zedong published "The Study of Sports" in *New Youth*, arguing that the country's weakness was due to the "lack of martial arts training among the people," leading to physical weakness. In the international context in which China found itself, the domestic political demand was to "save the nation and strive for its survival." Martial arts became a form of political expression aimed at changing the image of the "sick man" and strengthening the nation.

Social elites of the Republican era recognized that transforming the physical health of the nation was crucial to transforming the nation itself (Liu, 2018). Liang Qichao, in "On Chinese Bushido," emphasized the importance of cultivating the spirit of martial arts in students. He argued that measures to strengthen the military that focused solely on form without spirit could not achieve the goal of a strong nation. Liang advocated for the spirit of martial arts to change the weak Chinese people, cultivating a new populace with modern national consciousness, both physically and spiritually. He introduced the concept of the "Three Forces" of martial arts: heart power, courage, and physical strength. Heart power refers to strong willpower, representing spiritual and faith-based strength. Courage involves the confidence to overcome difficulties. Physical strength aims to change the image of the "sick man" and strengthen the Chinese people's bodies. Liang's idea of the "Three Forces" ignited a craze for the martial spirit. During the Republic of China period, the trend of "martial arts" was driven by the urgent needs of the country and the nation. This trend was the result of the intermingling of traditional martial arts ideology with the spirit of samurai, chivalry, and other influences (Zhi, 2014). The "spirit of martial arts" was generated as a response to these needs. The spirit of Shangwu, which refers to the courage to resist oppression and invasion by foreign enemies, was advocated to strengthen the Chinese military's preparedness (Xu, 2016).

The spirit of Shangwu was also seen as a moldable character trait, with martial arts training being a crucial method for cultivating it (Wen, 2009; Zhang, 2017). Therefore, during the Republican period, amid the challenges of war, the influx of Western culture, and the urgent national needs, the spirit of Shangwu was promoted and widely applied in military education, physical education, and the revitalization of the national spirit. Martial arts experienced significant growth in this social context.

### **Social Manifestations of the Prosperity and Development of Martial arts During the Republican Period**

The flourishing of martial arts in the Republic of China was not merely an abstract concept but a palpable social phenomenon. The martial arts boom during this period was primarily driven by top-down promotion, with the government leading the charge in promoting martial arts. Concurrently, the dissemination of martial arts also became a cultural phenomenon, extending from state policy to the grassroots level. The government facilitated the spread of martial arts by supporting martial arts techniques, the spirit of martial arts, martial arts periodicals, specialized books, and related cultural activities. These efforts, sustained over a long period, resulted in widespread martial arts practice across China. The overall prosperity of martial arts during the Republican period exemplifies the success of these promotion activities.

### **Official Promotion by the Nanjing National Government: Central National Martial Arts Center**

The Central National Martial Arts Center played a crucial role in popularizing martial arts across China. In 1928, Zhang Zhijiang proposed to the National Government to rename "martial arts" to "National Art(Guoshu)", a change that was officially adopted. On March 15, 1928, the Nanjing National Government issued Document No. 174, establishing the "Central National Martial Arts Research Museum," which was later renamed the "Central National Martial Arts Museum" in June, with Zhang Zhijiang as the director. Subsequently, martial arts museums were established at the provincial, municipal, and county levels. By 1933, over 300 national martial arts museums had been set up in 25 provinces, with each province's chief executive serving as the head of the museum. The goal was to achieve "Strong Species to Save the Country" by promoting physical fitness among the populace. The National Martial Arts Center employed martial arts master's as instructors and enrolled youths nationwide. Classes were categorized into professors' classes, teacher training classes, men's training classes, women's training classes, youth classes, and juvenile classes. The curriculum included "national martial arts, sports, and military training," significantly contributing to the nationwide popularization of martial arts.

In 1932, the Central National Martial Arts Museum established the "Central National Art Museum Sports College" in Nanjing, enrolling 120 students with qualifications including high school or college graduates, sports college graduates, and military school graduates. In 1936, it was renamed the "National College of Physical Education and Sports," with a three-year program. By August 1945, when the school was dissolved, it had trained over 500 students across five classes. Graduates were often assigned as instructors in the military or military schools nationwide or joined the military directly. As wars continued to erupt across the country, national martial arts centers gradually closed. The Central National Martial Arts Center was dissolved in 1948, marking the end of its historical role. During the Republican period, the political leadership of the state spearheaded a nationwide movement for martial arts practice. The centralized national martial arts halls were significant in spreading and promoting martial arts. Firstly, the government-led rebranding of "martial arts" to "National Art(Guoshu)" and its nationwide promotion elevated martial arts's status in China. Secondly, it brought together martial arts master's from various schools, providing them with employment and preserving martial arts traditions during wartime. Thirdly, the official organization of nationwide martial arts education greatly developed and disseminated martial arts throughout the country. Lastly, it cultivated a large number of martial arts talents and advanced the development of martial arts as a discipline.

### **Civilian Promotion by Social Organizations: Shanghai Chin Woo Athletic Federation**

Chinese civil society has long had associations and organizations of a martial arts nature, and during the Republic of China (R.O.C.) period, various folk martial arts associations emerged in response to the era's unique challenges. According to incomplete statistics, there were 25 martial arts associations and organizations in Beijing, such as the Beijing Sports Research Society and the Zhonghua Shangwu Society, and more than 20 similar organizations in Tianjin, such as the Zhonghua Samurai Association (Zong, 2022). With 50 martial arts community organizations in Beijing and Tianjin alone, it can be inferred that many other regions also saw the rise of numerous martial arts organizations. An example of such an organization is the Shanghai Jingwu Gymnastics Association. The primary aim of these associations was to revitalize the spirit of martial arts and cultivate robust physical fitness among the Chinese people. Chart 1 details some of the martial arts associations in Beijing and Tianjin, highlighting their shared goals of promoting martial arts and improving public health.

Chart-1: Some martial arts Community Organizations in Beijing and Tianjin  
(The main reference is in: Zhuo Ran. (1924). Sports Series. Beijing: Sports Research Society, 243)

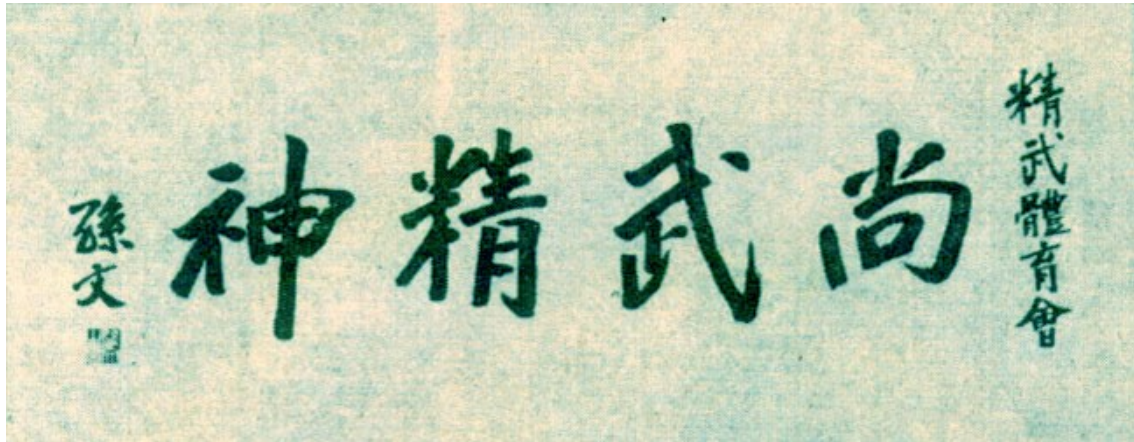
Wushu ethnic group (e.g. Chinese martial arts)	Established	spot	Head or initiator	goal
Sports Research Institute	1912.12	Beijing, capital of People's Republic of China	President: Yuan Liang Vice President: Xu Longhou	Study on sports revitalization the spirit of war
Fencing Club	1912.07	Beijing, capital of People's Republic of China	President: Yin Xuexue	Revitalization of developed sports the spirit of war
Beijing Wushu Sports Association	1919.10	Beijing, capital of People's Republic of China	there is none	Developing China's various martial arts and fostering sound sports for the nation
martial arts group	1924.04	Beijing, capital of People's Republic of China	NG CHUNG CHIU	Promoting the martial spirit of the nation. expound the truth about martial arts
Chinese Martial Arts Association (CMA)	1912	Tianjin	Initiator: Li Cunyi, Bian Yueting, Feng Guozhang	Train the inherent martial arts of China; exercise the physical fitness of the nation.
Tianjin Wushu Association	1924.07	Tianjin	Wang Yifu	Developed sports Advocacy of national skills
Tianjin Jinde Martial Arts Association	1924.08	Tianjin	Wu Xichen (1936-), senior PRC politician, minister of defense during Spring and Autumn period	To develop sports and rectify the defects of martial arts and to promote personal morality.

During the Republic of China period, the most famous and influential martial arts organization was the Chin Woo Athletic Federation in Shanghai. Founded by Huo Yuanjia on July 7, 1910, the Chin Woo Gymnastics Association was later renamed the Chin Woo Athletic Federation on April 6, 1916. The Chin Woo Athletic Federation was a mass martial arts organization dedicated to teaching and promoting Chinese martial arts and cultivating revolutionary forces. It holds the distinction of being the oldest and earliest civilian sports organization with significant influence in the history of modern sports in China. The Chin Woo Athletic Federation was symbolized by the three-star flag and emblem, representing Physical Education, Intelligence, and Morality. The association advocated the Chin Woo spirit of "patriotism, cultivation of the body, justice, and assistance to others," as well as the goals of "strengthening the country, strengthening the people, and strengthening the body." It aimed to promote Chinese cultural values through physical education.

By 1929, the Chin Woo Athletic Federation had established more than 40 chapters throughout China and Southeast Asia, with a membership exceeding 400,000. Starting in 1920, the association began opening chapters in various parts of Southeast Asia, including Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Kuala Lumpur, where the Women's Chin Woo Athletic Federation was also established. Subsequent chapters were founded in Thailand, Macau, the United States, and Canada. In 1920, the Chin Woo Athletic Federation held its 10th Anniversary Conference, attended by over 20,000

people. At this event, Dr. Sun Yat-sen presented a plaque titled "The Spirit of Martial Arts," as shown in Chart-2, which he personally inscribed.

Chart-2: Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Gift to the Chin Woo Athletic Federation "The Spirit of Martial Arts"



The Chin Woo Athletic Federation made significant contributions to martial arts, the people, and the country during the Republic of China period, marking its historical significance. Firstly, it widely spread martial arts throughout China and Southeast Asia through a network of general associations and chapters, taking martial arts from China to the world. Secondly, it actively promoted martial arts in various schools, contributing to the integration of martial arts into educational institutions. Thirdly, the association emphasized martial arts morality, instilling values such as patriotism, moral cultivation, justice, and assistance to others as the spirit of martial arts practice. Lastly, it propagated the principles of democracy and science, facilitating the integration of Chinese martial arts with Western sports.

### Publication of Journals and Magazines Specializing in Martial Arts

At the end of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China, China experienced a period of cultural collision and exchange between the East and the West. During this era, martial arts techniques were popularized nationwide, and martial arts culture spread throughout the country. The rapid development of printing technology at the end of the Qing Dynasty transformed traditional Chinese publishing methods, making magazines, journals, and newspapers the primary channels for disseminating ideas. Against this backdrop, various periodicals focusing on martial arts were issued. The first martial arts periodical, *Wugaku*, was published after the Russo-Japanese War. Lu Guangxi, a member of the League of Allied Powers, believed that Japan's victory over Russia was due to the prevalence of "Bushido." Consequently, on May 30, 1908, Chinese students at the Japanese Army School in Tokyo founded the journal martial arts. The journal later moved to the Beiyang Army Book Compilation Bureau at Hufangqiao, outside the front gate of Beijing. The primary aim of the journal was to learn from Japan, promote the spirit of martial arts, and discuss the military equipment of various countries. From 1909 to 1939, 34 martial arts journals were published, as shown in Chart-3.

Chart-3: Summary of martial arts Periodicals in the Republic of China (The main reference is in: ① Meng Tian. "The Beginning of Modernization of Chinese Wushu: Analysis of the Trend of Thought of Wushu Journals during the Republic of China Era" [J]. *Sport Science Research*, 2018, 39(05): 22-27.; ② Guan Shuo. "Research on Chinese



Modern Wushu Communication and Evolution (1911-1937)" [D]. Beijing Sport University, Ph.D., 2017: 83-84.)

serial number	issuing organization	Journal Name	spot	Date of publication	Purpose and Content
1	Martial Arts Compilation and Translation Society	martial arts (social science) (monthly)	Founded in Tokyo, Japan and later moved to Beijing	1909	Learning from Japan and promoting the spirit of martial arts. Exploring military education and military equipment in various countries (military-oriented)
2	Shanghai Chinese Knights Association	all kinds of martial art sports (some claiming spiritual development) (monthly)	Shanghai	1921	Instruction in martial arts, promotion of sports methods, improvement of women's physical and mental health, introduction of general knowledge of family hygiene, and enhancement of people's physical fitness.
3		Jingwu(Chin Woo) (monthly)	Shanghai	1920	The core publication of the Jingwu Sports Association, a pioneer in promoting martial arts and sports in China. (Contributed greatly to the cultural dissemination of martial arts and sports at the time)
4		Central Magazine (monthly)	Shanghai	1923	
5	Chin Woo Athletic Federation	Jingwu Illustrated News (monthly)	Shanghai	1927	
6		Jingwu Spring and Autumn	Shanghai	1929	
7		Seibu Annual Report (monthly)	Shanghai	1930	
8		Jingwu Journal (monthly)	Shanghai	1933	
9		Jingwu Magazine (collection of books on martial arts) (monthly)	Shanghai	1933	
10	Jingwu Sports Association (Foshan Chapter)	Foshan Jingwu Monthly	hillsides Foshan prefecture level city in Guangdong	1925	Martial Arts and Physical Education Opinion on current affairs
11	Jingwu Sports Association (Hong Kong Chapter)	Jingwu Magazine (monthly)	fact	1925	Martial Arts and Literature

					Popularize martial arts culture and related technical knowledge	
12		martial arts		Xiamen, subprovincial city in Fujian	1934	
13	Beijing Sports Research Association	Sports Series			1924	Revealed the shortcomings of the old national martial arts system, which was not written, and advocated the open study of martial arts.
14		Central Academy of Arts and Crafts Repertoire (bimonthly)		capital of China at different historical periods	1928	
15	Central Martial Arts Center (Taiwan)	Chuo Kokushikan Lenten Magazine		capital of China at different historical periods	1929	Popularize Wushu and awaken the whole nation to the nationalization of Wushu.
16		Martial Arts Weekly		capital of China at different historical periods	1930	Emphasize the function and value of martial arts sports to strengthen the body and defend the enemy
17	Zhejiang Provincial Martial Arts Center	Zhejiang Provincial Martial Arts Center Monthly Magazine		Hangzhou subprovincial city and capital of Zhejiang province in southeast China	1929	
18	Zhejiang Provincial Martial Arts Center	Chinese Martial Arts Monthly		Hangzhou subprovincial city and capital of Zhejiang province in southeast China	1934	
19	BeiPing Kokugikan (Chinese Martial Arts Center)	physical education		Beijing, capital of People's Republic of China	1932	
20	Jiangsu Provincial Martial Arts Center	Annals of the Jiangsu Provincial Guoshu Museum			1929	
21	Hunan Martial Arts Training Center	National Art Semi-Monthly		Changsha prefecture level city and capital of Hunan province in south central China	1932	

22	Tianjin Martial Arts Center	Chinese Martial Arts Monthly	Tianjin	1934	
23	Yinxian County Guoshu Hall, Jiangsu Province	A weekly commemorative magazine of Yin County Guoshu Hall	Yin county in Jiangsu	1931	
24	Shanghai Chinese Martial Arts Center	Guomindang, one of the indigenous peoples of Taiwan (monthly)	Shanghai	1935	Promote national martial arts Promoting Martial Virtue
25	Shanghai Yangwu Martial Arts Association	martial arts	Shanghai	1932	Breaking down all the suspicions and misunderstandings of the people is the gradual evolution of the statecraft. The scientificization of statecraft.
26	Hunan National Martial Arts Training Institute	National Art Semi-Monthly	Hunan	1932	Organize the culture and techniques of the various martial arts styles
27	Shanxi Provincial Association for the Promotion of Chinese Martial Arts	Shanxi Guojutsu Sports Journal	Shanxi Province	1934	Public research to scientificize the art of nationalism
28	Shanghai Martial Unified Monthly	China Martial Arts Monthly	Shanghai	1934	Organize the culture and techniques of the various martial arts styles Scientification, concretization, universalization and unification of national arts
29	Tianjin Martial Society	Moral Arts Martial Weekly	Tianjin	1935	The mastermind of national martial arts thinking, firstly, advocates the spirit of martial arts, secondly, arouses all the people to seek to strengthen the body and self-defense, in order to strengthen the country, and thirdly, advocates the use of scientific methods to sort out the various skills sunk in the rivers and lakes, in order to break down the old absurdity of the speech and vices.
30	Shandong Jinan Health Experiment Society	Quarterly Journal of International Studies	Ji'nan, subprovincial city and capital of	1934	To promote the national art, to revitalize the spirit of the people, to cultivate

			Shandong province in northeast China			the spirit of vigor, to face the difficulties and dangers without avoiding them, and to know the way of cultivation and encouragement, this is the so-called thing that has a bearing on the prosperity and decline of the nation.
31		Quest for truth (a monthly magazine)	Ji'nan, subprovincial city and capital of Shandong province in northeast China	1935		
32		nobleman's spirit	Ji'nan, subprovincial city and capital of Shandong province in northeast China	1936		
33	Jinan Health Experimental School	Improvements in technical combat	Ji'nan, subprovincial city and capital of Shandong province in northeast China	1937		
34	Shaanxi Province Chenggu County Guoshu Research Association	Chinese Martial Arts Monthly	Chenggu county in Ningxia	1939		Promote national martial arts

As seen in Chart-3, the functions and values of martial arts periodicals varied across different time periods. The initial period of martial arts periodicals (1909-1921) aligned with the mainstream social culture to help form the "spirit of martial arts" trend. During the second stage (1922-1927), periodicals were primarily issued by the Chin Woo Athletic Federation, its local chapters, the Central Martial Arts Museum, and its local chapters. These periodicals continued to promote the spirit of martial arts and advocated for the public study of martial arts. The third stage (1928-1939) saw the prosperity of martial arts periodicals with the formation of ideas such as the "scientificization of national martial arts" and "scientificization of all people." A benign development pattern emerged, progressing from advocacy to reform and promotion.

Martial arts periodicals during the Republican period significantly publicized and promoted martial arts culture, playing a crucial role in its dissemination. Firstly, the rich and varied content accelerated the popularization of martial arts knowledge. Secondly, the spread of martial arts ideas from different regions of China facilitated the exchange and propagation of martial arts concepts. Thirdly, diverse dissemination texts advanced the inheritance and continuity of martial arts culture.

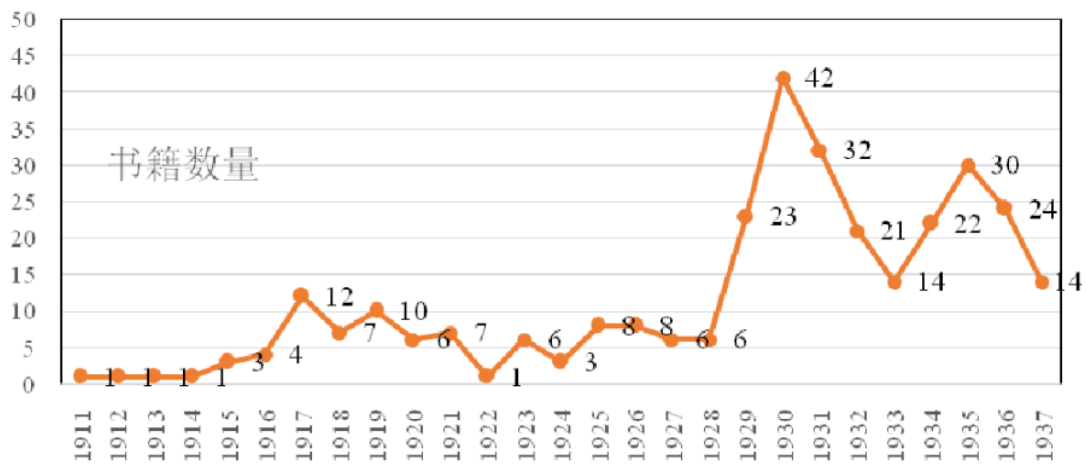
### Publication of Specialized Books on Martial Arts

During the Republic of China period, the spread and promotion of martial arts led to the publication of numerous specialized books on martial arts. Chinese martial arts has evolved through various historical dynasties, resulting in a rich diversity of schools

and styles, each with unique cultural characteristics. Consequently, a large number of books covering a wide range of martial arts disciplines were published.

From the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911 to the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War in 1937, a total of 313 specialized martial arts books were published (Guan, 2017). Chart-4 illustrates the number of these books published at different points in time.

Chart-4: Statistical Chart of the Publication Time and Number of Martial Arts Books from 1911 to 1937 (The main reference is in: Xiong Shanshan.(2015). *Research on the Literature of Martial Arts Books in the Republican Period* ,Mphil Thesis. Wuhan Institute of Physical Education)



As shown in Chart-4, the number of martial arts books was relatively low in the early stages of the Republic of China, a period marked by the initial dissemination and promotion of martial arts. The number of specialized martial arts journals was also low during this time. However, with the formalization of martial arts as a school sport in 1915, the publication of martial arts books began to increase, resulting in a small peak in 1917. At this stage, martial arts books were mainly martial arts textbooks, with notable works such as Ma Liang's *The New Martial Arts of China*, which became a standardized textbook for colleges and universities nationwide.

A second peak in martial arts book publication appeared after 1929. This surge was directly related to the activities of the Central National Martial Arts Museum and its local chapters, as well as the Chin Woo Athletic Federation and its local chapters. As these major martial arts organizations grew and matured, they began to publish a large number of specialized books on martial arts, in addition to spreading martial arts techniques and distributing specialized journals. The publication of martial arts books reached a peak in 1930, with 42 books published that year. These specialized books satisfied the public and students' needs for learning martial arts culture and practicing techniques, while also serving to regulate and guide martial arts culture and techniques.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the special historical period of the Republic of China witnessed an unprecedented development of martial arts techniques and culture due to the promotion of the "spirit of martial arts." The government's vigorous promotion, along with active cooperation from various departments and fields, created a unique state of development for martial arts. Firstly, martial arts and its "martial spirit" were elevated to an unprecedented level, becoming a "good medicine" to address China's predicament. The government took the lead in establishing departments for the promotion and teaching of martial arts, such as the Central Guoshu Institute, and set up local Guoshu Institutes in provinces, cities, and counties, forming a national teaching network. Secondly, the spontaneous establishment of the Chin Woo Athletic Federation and its local chapters by the private sector became a crucial force in disseminating martial arts. Additionally, various social organizations established martial arts journals and magazines, which were distributed nationwide to promote martial arts culture and spirit. Moreover, a variety of specialized books on martial arts were published, which, together with the martial arts periodicals, became key mediums for the dissemination of martial arts. In conclusion, the combined efforts of all social sectors during the Republican period resulted in the status, breadth, and depth of martial arts dissemination reaching a historical peak.

## **Recommendations**

Learn from history in order to create the future. Observing the development of martial arts in the Republican era from today's perspective will surely provide suggestions for the development of society and sports today. In Chinese feudal society, after the change of dynasties in each regime, the ruling class in the pre-dynastic period in the political, social, military and other aspects of the management of the "martial arts" will take the policy of "banning. In the Republic of China, the practice of martial arts by all people became the mainstream culture of the society. This is because the traditional Chinese culture and custom of "martial arts" injected a strong spiritual impetus into the development of China at a time when the country was facing a critical situation. Therefore, the traditional culture of a nation is the culture engraved in its genes, which is most capable of stimulating the vitality of the nation. A nation's traditional culture is the driving force behind its progress and development. This sheds light on the development of sports in contemporary society: in terms of national policy and the development of social sports, it is important to focus on the protection and development of traditional national sports while developing competitive sports; School education should reflect the nurturing value of traditional sports culture. In terms of ideology and physical education, traditional sports culture should be integrated, and historical experience should be learned to help integrate sports and education. It is important to see the key role and value of traditional sports culture in enhancing the country's cultural self-confidence and helping school education, and to vigorously promote traditional sports culture to provide impetus for the realization and construction of the goals of a strong cultural and sports nation.

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