

## Historical investigation on Sports in Gulangyu during Its International Settlement Period

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**Abstract:** This paper uses the historical documents about western missionary and Young Men's Christian Association with the field word to do the research for the sports on Gulangyu Island. Studies have shown that the introduction of Western sports into Gulangyu Island began in 1842. The main carriers were Western military, missionaries and the YMCA. During the period of public concession, the sports of Gulangyu School flourished, and the forms of extracurricular sports activities were mainly based on class and games. The curriculum is mainly composed of track and field, gymnastics and ball games; sports events are gradually emerging, and individual events are held frequently; women's sports have made a historic contribution to women's liberation in the first place in China. The spread of Western sports culture in Gulangyu during the period of public concessions promoted the development of education.

### 1. Introduction

Gulangyu Island is an affiliated island of Xiamen, It is located at the mouth of the Jiulong River and covers an area of about 2 square kilometers. After the Opium War in 1840, the British stationed in Gulangyu and occupied the place of residence; In 1902, the "LAND REGULATIONS FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF GULANGYU, XIAMEN" was signed <sup>[1]</sup>, and Gulangyu was a public concession. In 1945, the Xiamen municipal authorities took back the administrative power of Gulangyu and ended its recent history of humiliation. During the period of public concession, Gulangyu's social environment was stable, economic and educational undertakings developed rapidly, Western culture spread rapidly, and "modern sports" with Western cultural connotations followed. Foreigners, wealthy gentry in Fujian and Taiwan, and overseas Chinese have settled in Gulangyu, developing social public utilities, and setting up education and sports activities. Driven by multiple factors, Gulangyu has formed a unique education system, and sports development follows the trend of the world. Through the study of the history of the development of Gulangyu sports in the period of public concession, it is expected to further enrich the research content of modern Chinese sports history.

### 2. The driving force of Western sports development in Gulangyu

#### 2.1 Western Army

After the opening of Xiamen, foreign troops and consuls stationed in Gulangyu used leisure time to carry out sports activities. According to the book "China Race" by Auslin Coates, published by Oxford University in 1983, there was a horse race in Gulangyu Island in 1842, which was the beginning of the Chinese foreign race. The Sino-British "Nanjing Treaty" was signed, and more than 500 British troops stayed in Gulangyu. In order to facilitate entertainment, the British army built a racecourse in the station and held the first Jockey Club in the autumn of 1842. Since then, the horse racing event has been held in Xiamen by foreigners to become a regular competition, and has formed a scale throughout the southern part of the country, gradually developing into the "Minnan Horse Racing Conference" <sup>[2]</sup>. During the visit of the US Eastern Fleet in October 1908, a series of competitions were held in Gulangyu "Foreigner stadium" in the form of performances,

including football, baseball, tennis doubles, and running [including 100 yards, Obstacle race, weight-bearing races, potato races etc], running long jumps, running high jumps, tug-of-war, wrestling, rowing, boxing, etc<sup>[3]</sup>. Although the Chinese did not participate in sports, they produced great sensory stimulation and objectively played the role of spreading sports.

## **2.2 Western Missionaries**

The missionaries have the dual status of “cultural aggressors” and “ambassadors of civilized communication”. They are influenced by Western culture and education and have the conditions to spread culture. In 1842, the American Reformed Church missionary David Abeel and the American Anglican priest Wm J Boone came to Gulangyu and began to spread the “gospel”<sup>[1]</sup>. The missionaries spread the sports culture in the church school. First, they began to engage in physical education enlightenment at the level of consciousness, and gradually guided the students to participate in conscious physical activities, which finally realized the cultural enlightenment of Gulangyu sports education. In an annual report of the Reformation of Gulangyu Education in 1889, “The first thing is that we want to cultivate people who are physically, mentally and spiritually perfect, and hope that they are sincere and firm<sup>[4]</sup>”, reflecting the Gulangyu School. The concern for the student's body in education.

## **2.3 YMCA**

With the aim of spreading Christianity, the YMCA promotes this aim through education, culture, sports, community service and other related businesses, focusing on the balanced development of young people's “morality, intelligence, physical and group” and the exchange and peace of young people around the world<sup>[5]</sup>. In 1912, the Xiamen YMCA was established in Gulangyu Island. The foreigners' chapel on the 60th Fujian Road was set up as a clubhouse. There were four departments of morality, intelligence, physical and group. There were tennis courts, basketball courts, Table tennis rooms and billiards rooms. Sports activities, organizing sports events such as track and field, swimming and ball games.

# **3. Historical Investigation of Gulangyu Sports during the Period of Public Concession**

## **3.1 School Sports**

During the period of public concession, Gulangyu's social and economic development, developed education, the island's educational institutions are concentrated, and the density of primary and secondary schools is the highest in the country. The quality of teaching is also quite significant in Fujian and in Taiwan and Southeast Asia<sup>[1]</sup>. Western sports in the Gulangyu spread the historical choice of education, and education has also promoted the development of sports.

### **3.1.1 Extracurricular sports activities**

The church school promotes sports, the earliest form of sports in Gulangyu is extracurricular sports activities, the content is mainly based on class exercises and games. Founded in 1898, “Huaide Kindergarten” is the first kindergarten in Chinese history, it promotes European and American education models, respects young children, and pays attention to the free growth of young children. There are images of extracurricular sports activities in the historical photos of the Huaide Kindergarten. Weizheng Primary School conducts health exercises, and is inspected by the teachers of the value of the day. The weekly statistical scores, the merits and demerits, and the use of the superior flag to encourage<sup>[6]</sup>, also carried out Boy Scout training. According to The Reformed Church In China:1842-1951, Gulangyu pastor and doctor ShiHeli wrote in his diary: “At the end of the 19th century, at the primary school in Gulangyu It has begun to allow students to do half an hour of gymnastics early in the morning. Such activities not only promote the physical exercise required for students to maintain good health, but also cultivate students' habits of early rise and group activities<sup>[7]</sup>”.

The church school has a sports field, and the sports team is formed according to the students' interests and specialties. In 1898, Yinghua Middle School established the football team at the

beginning of its establishment. It was the first school in Fujian Province to carry out football. The athletes were divided into four groups: tiger, leopard, lion and elephant. Yinghua Middle School holds a school sports meeting and often conducts sports exchange activities with friendly schools in Hong Kong and Fuzhou. According to the record, “in 1937, the teachers and students of the Shengtishi Middle School in Hong Kong visited Yinghua Middle School for a week. They had a friendly match with Yinghua Middle School basketball, tennis and football teams. As a result, the team basketball team won and the tennis score was equally divided, the football lost.”

### **3.1.2 Setting up sports as a course**

The church school brought advanced Western educational thoughts, teaching models and teaching content, and the early Yinghua Middle School opened a fencing course<sup>[8]</sup>. In 1890, the Xunyuan Middle School added the composition, drawing and music as compulsory courses, which was the earliest physical education course in Gulangyu<sup>[8]</sup>. In the early 20th century, a teacher from Xunyuan Middle School recorded that “all students must attend at least three hours of physical exercise per week except for military training. The school has designed a set of plans to give each student the opportunity to learn track and field. Sports and other popular sports such as basketball, football, volleyball, tennis; in order to meet the sports needs of students, the school has two basketball courts, two volleyball courts, a tennis court, a football field and runway and bunkers.<sup>[8]</sup>” Afterwards, Gulangyu Middle School followed the example of setting up sports as a course, the development of sports in Gulangyu School began to take shape and gradually improved, the teaching content of physical education curriculum increased year by year. Clearly recorded in the American scholar historian Gerald F DeJong “The Reformed Church In China: 1842 – 1951”, when football, board Sports such as the ball have entered the men’s primary and secondary schools in Gulangyu, and specially arranged physical education teachers or specialized personnel to guide students to consciously exercise activities<sup>[8]</sup>. Gulangyu Weizheng Primary School textbook selection, the school's various textbooks, the use of the World China Business and other bureaus published textbooks, art sports and other subjects, the use of self-edited textbooks<sup>[6]</sup>. It can be seen that during the period of public concession, Gulangyu primary and secondary schools all offer physical education courses, equipped with physical education teachers, and the venue facilities are relatively complete. Some schools also compile sports textbooks and formulate relevant systems to promote sports activities.

### **3.2 Sports events**

Under the promotion of church schools and the YMCA, the number of people involved in sports activities has increased year by year, and sports events have increased. In 1931-1934, Gulangyu held four consecutive Xiamen swimming competitions, The number of participants was 58,61, 84, 70 respectively. There were adult men, women's groups and children's groups. The adult group projects were set at 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 yards freestyle, 200 yards breaststroke, 100 yards backstroke; children's group project 25, 50 , 100 yards freestyle; women's group project: 25, 50, 100 yards freestyle; 25, 50 yards backstroke. In 1931-1935, five consecutive drum dances were held. The third session began with women's competitions. The fifth session was attended by children. The number of participants was 54, 68, 89, 108, and 76 respectively. The 4th Annunciation Gulangyu International Swimming Competition. In 1934, a sailing competition was held. The route was Gulangyu-Monkey-Gulangyu, with 17 participants and one self-provided sailing vessel. It is one of the regions where sailing competitions were started earlier in China. In 1921, the first women's basketball game was held in Gulangyu, the earliest women's sports event in Xiamen; the Xiamen Football Open was held in 1930, the Xiamen and Gulangyu Football Tournament was held in 1932; and the Xiamen Popular Cup Volleyball Open was held in 1930. During the period of public concession, Gulangyu held social sports events mainly for swimming and ball games. Women and children also began to participate in sports activities and had a certain level of competition.

### **3.3 Women's sports development context**

The feudal concept of Chinese women “to be more expensive with foot-binding” has been

circulating for a long time. In 1874, John Macgowan of the London-based London Society established China's first anti-foot-binding organization, the Women's Foot Society, and women began to realize the dangers of foot-binding to the body<sup>[8]</sup>. In 1905, the Qing government issued a decree prohibiting women from binding feet, liberating women's feet, and enabling women to have the physiological conditions for participating in sports activities. In 1870, the American Reformed Church opened a women's school in Xiamen, and a year later opened a teaching point in Gulangyu. This is the earliest women's education in Gulangyu<sup>[10]</sup>. Subsequently, Wudai Women's School, Tianwei Women's School and Xiamen Women's Normal School were founded. Girls' schools run schools in accordance with Western education models, and Jude, Ciqin and Huairan Girls' Schools actively offer physical education classes. In 1926, a missionary said: "A few years ago, Xiamen held a sports meeting, and no female student participated. Last year, the same sports meeting was held. Almost every four contestants were students from Gulangyu Girls' School."<sup>[11]</sup>. In the 1930s, he won the women's basketball championship in Xiamen twice. In 1935, the Fujian Provincial Games won the women's team's winning prize. The volleyball team and the tennis team represented Fujian Province in the national sports meeting. Cijing female actively engaged in sports activities and built a sports field. At the first sports conference in Xiamen in 1937, student Hong Qiongzhu won the women's discus champion. The words and deeds of female school students imperceptibly affect local women. Women have a new understanding of their own values and re-constructed women's social roles.

#### **4. The social impact of Gulangyu Sports during the period of public concession**

##### **4.1 Cultivate outstanding talents**

The deep feelings of sports, good music and strong foreign language ability are the most prominent characteristics of the cultural people who came out of Gulangyu<sup>[11]</sup>. During the period of public concession, Gulangyu had a good educational environment and trained a large number of outstanding talents. Lin Yutang, a master of Chinese and Western culture, studied at the Xunyu middle school. He is the captain of the St. John's University Rowing Team. He is the creator of the school's one-mile race record. He once represented China in the Far East Games and loves tennis, football, baseball, and sports<sup>[12]</sup>. The first female member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, "Mother of Wan Ying" Lin Qiaozhi graduated from Xiamen Women's Normal School, and served as the captain of the school basketball team during the school; Professor Ma John, a famous sportsman, stayed at the Gulangyu Church School and remained comprehensive. The physical exercise has laid a good foundation for sports.

##### **4.2 Establishing a sports system**

As early as 1915, when American sportsman Ilias hosted the Xiamen YMCA, he invited the youth club sports officer Ke Lekai to teach sports theory such as track and field rules, competition methods, volleyball rules, and competition methods. This was the earliest systematic teaching in Xiamen. The course of sports theory. With the introduction of Western sports and the introduction of the sports system, the sports industry has developed rapidly, and the sports promotion methods with the characteristics of Gulangyu, sports team training system, competition methods and school sports have been gradually formed, which has promoted the development of sports.

##### **4.3 Change lifestyle**

With the settlement of Westerners and overseas Chinese, the Western urban model was successfully transplanted, and its lifestyle has followed. Gulangyu has quickly become a world of Western civilization. Western sports culture has flooded into the tide, and has rapidly developed into the mainstream sports culture of Gulangyu. As a result, people have changed their sports concepts and gradually realized the functions of sports fitness and competition. Some people have developed the habit of physical exercise. During the period of public concession, under the management of the Road Committee, it is possible to use the round-the-island walk to do healthy and hourly

exercise<sup>[13]</sup>. It can be seen that physical exercise has become part of the life of Gulangyu people.

## 5. Conclusion

The development of modern sports in Gulangyu Island is the epitome of the development process of China in the early stage of sports globalization. During the period of public concession, the sports of Gulangyu School flourished. The forms of extracurricular sports activities were mainly based on class exercises and games. The curriculum was mainly composed of track and field, gymnastics and ball games. The performances of school sports teams such as Yinghua, Yude and Xunyuan were outstanding. Sports events have gradually emerged, and individual events have been held frequently; women's sports have made a historic contribution to women's liberation in the first place in China.

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