

Gertrud Pfister/Liu Yueye (Ed.)

Sports – the East and the West

Documentary volume of the IIIrd International ISHPES Seminar
in Shunde, Guangdong, China

ISHPES · Publications of the International Society for the History of
Physical Education and Sport · Vol. 6

1999. 204 pp. 19,80 EUR. 17 x 24 cm. ISBN: 3-89665-034-3

East meets West – the meeting between East and West is overdue in many areas, especially in the area of sport history. The ISHPES Seminar was the first systematic scientific exchange on the subject of interacting developments of Eastern and Western physical activities.

Different forms of body and movement cultures have developed in the East and the West – forms which demonstrate how physical activities, social and cultural conditions patterns of thinking and the way of being-in-the-world are mutually dependent on each other.

From a Western point of view the East was for centuries an empty space on the map – a world associated with phantasies and dreams. Since Marco Polo's voyage of discovery in the thirteenth century, for instance, few reports have come to Europe from China. To Pietro da Alfaro in 1580 travelling to China seemed equally as utopian as flying to the moon. Even today we know very little about the ancient cultures, religions and the colourful variety of physical activities in the East.

Western influence on South-East Asia grew in the 19th century. After the turn of the century sport of Anglo Saxon origin, a symbol of modernity, started to spread across Eastern countries. Sport began to displace and supplant traditional forms of physical culture. What at first seemed to be a one-way process – the universalisation of modern sport – is increasingly turning out to be a complex interweaving of influences. In recent decades the fascination of 'the other' and the exotic has been growing in the West and there has been an extraordinary boom in the Eastern religions, body practices and forms of movement. In Germany, for example, sports centres that have sprung up on nearly every „street corner“ include Tai Chi, Qi Gong, yoga or karate in their programmes.

Both these processes, the process of sportification with its demand for universalisation and the growing importance of Eastern practices in the West, need a historical approach as well as scientific analysis. It is important on the one hand to fight the westernization of the world and the accompanying loss of cultural identity, life style and mentalities. On the other hand one must ask whether the adoption of Eastern body and movement practices in the West makes sense or whether it encourages the trend towards global uniformity.

This volume will contribute towards uncovering the manifold links between the past and the present, and towards bringing traditions back to mind, not least in order to strengthen cultural identities.

ISHPES – Studies • Vol. 6

Gertrud Pfister/Liu Yueye (Eds.)

Sports – the East and the West



ACADEMIA



Academia Verlag • Bahnstraße 7 • 53757 Sankt Augustin
Tel. +49 2241 345210 • Fax +49 2241 345316
E-Mail: info@academia-verlag.de • Internet: www.academia-verlag.de