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Literatization vs. Civilization: A Preliminary Comparison of the Development of Sport in China and the West with a Focus on Violence

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Abstract: This article highlights the differences in the civilizing process in China by examining the development of sport. Focusing on the problem of violence, it shows how the evolution of forms of differentiation caused the decline of the violent game *jiju* and the rise of the elegant game *chuiwan* as China transformed from a strictly stratified *mendi* rank society to an open gentry society of greater functional differentiation. The development of the entertainment industry of cuju rather than a function system of sport documented an idiosyncratic literatization. This resulted from the structure of the first post-aristocratic society as a meritocratic commoner society. The unique yin/yang dual structure as a compromise of functional differentiation with hierarchical order brought about a paradoxical domestication of violence.

There is a near consensus that modern sport originated in England and spread to the rest of the world around the 19th century (Elias/Dunning 1986, Ch. 3; Guttmann 1993; 1994). The globalizing process, however, induced a sportization of various local games and bodily practices (e. g. Kiku 2004). Simultaneously, sport became a general concept. People began to not only rewrite their histories from this new perspective, but also to challenge the dominant Western notion of sport from the perspective of social constructivism, and to search for alternative definitions or body cultures (Coakley 2007, 5 ff.; Eichberg 2010; Eisenberg 2002; Tang 2009). The development of sport in the modern world society can thus be summarized as "diminishing contrasts" and "increasing varieties" between different strata,

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nations and civilizations, just like Elias's civilizing process (Elias 2000, 382 ff.; Maguire 1994).

The differentiation of sport in world society did not lead to a homogenization of sport despite the diffusion and imitation among centers and peripheries, and despite the fact that functional differentiation became an unavoidable and undeniable fact in all regions.[1] In Taiwan, *yundong* – the taken-for-granted synonym of sport – means e. g. not only sport, but also exercise, physical education and the cultivation of life or vitality (*yangsheng*). Some include planting and singing as *yundong* because the basic meanings of *yundong* are to move. Even things like sauna, spa, or sitting quietly, which appear to be immobile activities, are considered *yundong* because they improve the circulation of *qi* within the body (Tang 2010b).

Apart from these semantic ambiguities resulting from the "translated modernity" (Liu 1995), structural complexities should also be considered. In this article I trace the succession between *jiju* (something like polo), *cuju* (something like soccer) and *chuiwan* (something like golf) in China, to investigate the Chinese civilizing process. I argue that the decline of vigorous, violent ball games and the rise of leisure, elegant ball games relates to the change of forms of differentiation, i. e. a transformation from a strictly stratified noble society to a non-aristocratic society of greater functional differentiation.

I. More Civilized, Less Violent?

According to Elias (2000), Western Europe, when it transformed from a stratified noble society to a modern class society, underwent a civilizing process that disciplined violence. This process began from the decisive transformations of warriors to courtiers in the absolutist courts. The state's monopoly of violence created a pacified environment that facilitated interdependencies. These interdependencies caused a constant pressure of foresight and self-restraint that finally imprinted a civilized habitus on individuals.

A corresponding disciplining of violence appeared in sport. Sport came to be an effective substitution for physical violence and a successful solution to the loss of the pleasurable satisfaction of simpler and more spontaneous violence. It was a desperate quest for excitement in an unexciting modern society; and it was a

1 Whether the functional differentiation was also the primary form of system differentiation in a specific region is another thing to be examined.

pleasurable controlled decontrolling of emotions (Dunning 1993; Elias/Dunning 1986; Imbusch 2005, 24 f.).

The civilizing thesis gives the impression that modern society (and sport) is less violent than pre-modern societies (Goody 2006, Ch. 6). Dunning clarified that the civilizing process involved a "paradoxical development – that a game has grown less violent in certain respects and simultaneously more violent in others" (Elias/Dunning 1986, 232; cf. Imbusch 2005).[2] Elias (1997) said also that civilization never ended and is always endangered. The monopoly of physical violence was a double-edged invention. Despite the formation of a strong conscience, and an advance in the threshold of revulsion against violence, people could now watch or even do violence without a bad conscience, as the violence in sport, the holocaust and terrorism attest.

System theorists sensitive to paradox in general would agree with Elias's figurational approach, which views both the use and the conditioning of violence as strengthened in modern society. This phenomenon was not a singularity, but a common phenomenon in the modern functionally differentiated society, as seen in the old sociological debate about the relation between differentiation and integration (Luhmann 1977, 242 ff.; 1997, 601 ff.), or in current discussions of inclusion and exclusion (Foucault 1979, Ch. 9; Stichweh 2009).

The problem at hand is not the change of the degree of violence, but rather the change of the kinds of violence. What the civilizing thesis stressed was a shift of the "threshold of repugnance," a shift in the balance between external constraints and self-constraints, and a shift in the balance between affective and rational (to be precise, instrumental) violence. Dunning (Elias/Dunning 1986, Ch. 8) provided a typology of such a structural transformation from the perspective of change of social bonding. In the pre-modern, segmental bonding, where the local community was self-sufficient and only under intermittent pressure from a weak central state, there was little social pressure to exercise self-control over physical violence. Thus violence was openly displayed in everyday life and people got pleasure from directly inflicting pain on others and from seeing others suffer. The fights between individuals tended to escalate into feuds between groups and became long-lasting. The pre-modern folk forms of sport were like a ritualized extension of fighting between local gangs, and expressed a relatively high level of open violence.

In modern functional bonding, however, where the local community is nationally integrated into extensive chains of interdependence and under contin-

2 Dunning (2009) later emphasized the dynamics between civilizing, de-civilizing and dys-civilizing processes.

uous pressure "from above" from a strong and highly centralized state, the social pressure to exercise self-control is great, so that people appeal to violence rationally, and usually only enjoy a vicarious pleasure from watching mimetic violence but not real violence. Modern forms of sport embody the search for a new balance between pleasure and restraint, and express controlled, rational violence rather than spontaneous, affective violence. The civilizing process did not reduce the rate of violence, but rather led to the predominance of violence in more muted forms.

The typology suggested by Dunning is heuristic. Luhmann's systems theory, however, may provide better insight and a systematic explanation. The rupture between pre-modern and modern sports consisted not in the degree or types of violence, nor in the quantification or rationalization (Guttmann 2000; 2004). It is also not enough to only talk about professionalization. The decisive change that distinguishes modern from pre-modern sports lies in the differentiation of sport as a function system in which the public as audience also has a role. Not only does sport become an end in itself, but each play that takes place sporadically can now be connected to each other and be compared (Stichweh 1990; 1995; Werron 2005; 2007).

It is this structural transformation from stratification to functional differentiation that resulted in the change of the types of violence and not the other way around. Elias already saw that both industrialization and sportization were only symptoms of a deeper-lying transformation, but he did not name it (Elias/Dunning 1986, 151). Dunning's typology is a step forward, but his framework was neither broad enough nor abstract enough. Nor can it grasp the Chinese case, which is neither segmental, nor functional bonding, but something in-between. While I agree that the monopoly of violence is a key factor, I think its monocausal, uni-linear framework is not refined enough. China very early on had a pacified situation at the societal level by way of monopolizing violence, but it did not penetrate local communities by today's standard. In this respect, Luhmann's four different forms of system differentiation offer better theoretical equipment to tackle the question how and why the different types of violence, as well as different ways of disciplining violence, correlated with different societal structures.

II. The Development of Ball Games in China

Elias (2000, 378 f.) stated that a civilizing process can be found "wherever, under competitive pressures, the division of functions makes large numbers of people dependent on one another, wherever a monopolization of physical force permits and imposes a co-operation less charged with emotion, wherever functions are

established that demand constant hindsight and foresight in interpreting the actions and intentions of others." Based on these criteria, Goody (2006, Ch. 6) argued that there was a civilizing process in China even earlier than Europe. The challenge is not to confirm its existence (Mennell 1996, 122), but to explain its nature and "sociogenesis."

Lacking the historical support, I cannot fully satisfactorily answer these questions. However, I can use the development of sport in China as an illustration to find important clues to think about these questions and to find a departure for further studies.

The Chinese have long played ball games, especially competitive ball games (e. g. Lin 1990; Liu 1985; Liu/Zhang 2005; Liu/Zhao 2008; Tang 2009; Vogel 2000b; 2000a; Yang 2000). In the Warring States period (481 – 221 B.C.), the kick-ball game *cuju*, also called *taju* or later *cuqiu*, was already invented as a means of training soldiers. It became popular in Han (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.), not only in the army and in the court, but also among the populace. Many powerful families enjoyed playing and watching *cuju*, and became patrons for players. Although scholars still debate the details, it is certain that two teams competed on the same field to kick the ball into the goal of the opposing side. Wrestling was a legitimate means to escape the blocking.

The hit-ball game *jiju*, also called *jiqiu* or *daqiu*, was played on horseback with stick. Like polo, two teams attacked and defended around hitting the ball into the goal. This was such a violent competition that players could die playing. The earliest record of *jiju* was written at the end of Eastern Han in the third century. We do not know how this game developed in the period of divided rule of the Six Dynasties (221 to 589), but it became common after the empire was unified again in Tang (618 to 907), and in 747, *jiju* was officially introduced into military training.

It was customary to hold a *jiju* match between the Tang and nomadic states in diplomatic meetings. For some northern states (e. g. the Jurchen, 1115 to 1234), *jiju* was associated with a kind of cult for heaven. But playing ball on horseback was not necessarily a nomad custom. For example, the popularity of *jiju* in Khitan (916 to 1124) was a result of sinicization.

Jiju was an expensive pastime and limited to "nobles" in the Tang. But strict social stratification played a more significant role. Outside the courts and houses of bureaucrats with high ranks, *jiju* was played primarily by soldiers. Service in the army was a privilege rather than an obligation under the contemporary military institution of *fubing* that consisted of professional soldiers who cultivated farmland in peace time. Like the military service, *jiju* was a symbol and a means for characterizing one's social status.

With the rise of *jiju* in Tang, *cuju* gradually lost its military function, but not its popularity, which remained second only to *jiju*. With the invention of the inflat-

able leather ball, amazing skills became the focus of spectators. *Cuju* developed many variations and shifted its weight slowly toward entertainment. The variants *daju* (or *daqiu*)[3] and *baida* did not use any goals and were particularly popular among women. People competed either with each other or performed by oneself. The points consisted in the specified kicking way and the stipulated kicking turn. The variant *yueju* involved a rivalry who kicked the ball higher. Recent research argues that people played with only one goal. This variant called *zhuchang* set up a net high with a hole between two posts in the middle of the field, which served as the goal. Two teams stood respectively on one side of the net, eliminating the chance of body contact. The competition lay in their skill of transmitting and receiving the ball, and above all their precision of shooting.

Jiju was also subject to variation from the Tang onwards. People substituted donkeys or mules for horses. The simplest version was that players hit the ball on foot. These changes related to economic conditions and a reduction of speed to ensure safety. *Jiju* seemed to remain popular in court circles and among militarists in the Five Dynasties (907 to 960), but in the Song (960 to 1279) it underwent a critical transformation. The founder of the dynasty did not favor ball games. *Jiju* therefore became a routine ceremony in the court and was decoupled from military training. In this period, *jiju* was limited to professional players in the army and to court entertainers, and was not common among the populace. When the Song was forced southward, *jiju* suffered an irreversible decline. A direct and apparent reason was that it was not easy to obtain horses.

As *jiju* declined in popularity, *cuju* became prevalent in Song, even among commoners. And as it did so it underwent a critical transformation. First, the opportunity of body contact was totally eliminated. Second, associations of *cuju* players appeared. Despite of the participation of amateurs or fans, these voluntary associations consisted primarily of professional players and were more like guilds or occupational corporations. This development toward professionalization together with the tendency of a decrease in competitiveness and increase in performance led to the emergence of an entertainment industry. Most people did not play *cuju* themselves, but enjoyed watching the performance of professional players. They were not amateurs, but only spectators.

Complaining that *cuju* caused distraction and frivolousness, the founder of the Ming dynasty (1368 to 1644) prohibited it in the army and punished offenses with cutting off a foot. This ban had only a temporary effect. Soldiers and commoner continued to play *cuju*, and we can find records indicating that literati,

3 Due to the ambiguities of the Chinese, *daju* and *dajiu* could mean hit-ball game or kick-ball game (Liu 1985, 204 ff.). One must be careful to distinguish them by using the other information from the context.

women and children also played *cuju*. However, all in all, *cuju* declined in Ming. This reflected on the disappearance of the custom to play *cuju* on the *hanshi* (cold eating) festival that was common since Tang. *Cuju* was practiced primarily in the brothel and distanced gradually from "normal entertainment," not to mention sport. It was substituted lastly by *jianzi* (shuttlecock-kicking) that was cheaper and allowed more tricks. Similarly, we find records about the play of *jiju* in the Ming court, but no longer in the army, not to mention among the populace. Furthermore, besides the usual *jiju*, a new type of rivalry without body contact (i. e. a match of penalty shootout) also emerged alongside the development of *cuju*.

The more popular game in Ming was *chuiwan*, a refined ball game akin to today's golf. This beat-pellet game most likely evolved from *budaqiu* (hit-ball on foot) in Tang, a mild variant of *jiju* popular among women and children. The rise of this elegant ball game witnessed again a transformation from a direct body contest to an indirect contest. *Chuiwan* was played since the Song and became common in the Yuan (1279 to 1368) and Ming. This leisure game was welcomed among gentry (*shen*), merchants, literati and even women, and was more of a relaxation or entertainment rather than violent sport competition. The light competitiveness was used primarily for fun. There was no violence, only the taste and delight of life.

By the Qing (1644 to 1911), *jiju* and *cuju* disappeared almost completely. The Manchus not only promoted their own wrestling, but also transformed *cuju* to ice *cuju* that was not easy to play in most parts of China. The various ball games declined. When the Chinese encountered modern western sport in the late Qing, they were awakened to the fact that they had their own tradition of sport. When they rewrote their history, an "invention of tradition" often appeared. A representative case was the discourse about the Chinese "foot-ball" (*zuqiu*) tradition that attributed the finding of *cuju* to the mythical figure Huangdi (Morris 2004, 41 ff., 120 f.).

III. The Chinese Idea of Yangsheng

Neither *jiju*, nor *cuju*, not to mention *chuiwan*, was a ritualized contest between local communities, as Dunning wrote of pre-modern folk game. They were "civilized" ball games. How to explain this given the particular trajectory of a succession between *jiju*, *cuju* and *chuiwan* as the representative games in Tang, Song and Ming? Not only did the "degree" of violence decrease, but the opportunity of body contact was gradually eliminated so that the possibility of violence was fundamentally deleted.

A quick answer is that this development resulted from the idea of *yangsheng*. *Yangsheng* meant nurturing life, usually by way of adequate moving and absorbing of *qi* as well as avoiding harm to vitality due to inadequate moving and consuming of *qi*. The Chinese "move" (*dong* or *yundong*) not only in order to enhance bodily health, but to nourish the whole person based on a harmony with the nature. It is therefore plausible that concern over the nourishment of vitality caused Chinese to gradually retreat from violent ball games such as *jiju*, which consumed much energy and strength, and to shift their interest to unexciting but gentle ball games such as *chuiwan*. The historical record shows that high officials, mostly Confucian scholars, frequently protested *jiju* or *cuju*. Beside the consideration of indulgence in play, health and safety were important reasons of their opposition, especially when the emperor or the crown prince played *jiju* or *cuju* himself. Han Yu, the famous pioneer of Neo-Confucianism, persuaded e. g. his superior that the connection of inner organs is weak, and the fluctuation resulting from riding fast and bumpily was very dangerous to this connection (Lin 1990, 220). Taoism put a greater emphasis on vitality and disliked violent activities. It was said that *jiju* hurt the vitality of both the players and the horses (Liu 1985, 208).

Such persuasion, warning, and opposition usually did not work until the Song. The thought of *yangsheng* alone was not sufficient to explain the change of ball games. Rather, it serves only as general background, a lasting important factor that cannot be neglected, but still needs further explanation.

However, this touches a critical difference between ancient China and the modern West. In contrast to Chinese culture, which views both body and mind as made up of *qi*, and ultimately as one (Ishida 1989, 67 f.; Kubny 1995, Ch. 5; Kuriyama 1999), the modern West not only separated the body from the mind, but also had a rationalist bias that treated the body as a kingdom of desire that must be disciplined (Hargreaves 2003, 256). But a repression of the body was accompanied by an upward revaluation of it. This involved a paradoxical strengthening of both sides at once and a crucial shift from a pessimistic to an optimistic view in which proper training strengthened the body, rather than caused its loss (Stichweh 1990, 380 ff.).

Such an idea is foreign to the Chinese thought of *yangsheng*. For Chinese, if one hoarded vitality and did not allow desire to drain the body of life, he could not only resist disease but also delay decay and death. As Zhuangzi said, "[*q*]*i* gathered together is life; *qi* dispersed is death." Losing self-control and the depletion of vitality were but alternate faces of the same sickness (Kuriyama 1999, 223, 268). This difference hints at a different development of sport, as well as a different path of civilization in China. The Chinese ideally required an emotional self-mastery, but no repression or constraint of emotion – no matter internal or external. According to the thought of *yangsheng*, both "too much" and "too little" hurt life. Although

such extreme situations could sometimes be advantageous for cultivating vitality if one knew how to correctly utilize them, a paradoxical combination of control and decontrol was not thought to be normal. And the movement of body was important only because it could guide and promote the circulation of *qi*. Neither fun, nor the visible body, but the invisible vitality was the goal of *yangsheng*.

IV. Literatization as Transformation from Mendi to Gentry Society

It was the societal structure and its transformation that directly determined the civilizing process and the trajectory from *jiju* via *cuju* to *chuiwan*. I call the Chinese civilizing path "literatization." This means the ascendancy of the literati and the dissemination of their values, but above all a change of societal structure that involved different paths of state formation and a different evolutionary trajectory of forms of differentiation in comparison to the "civilization" in the West described by Elias.

The period of "elimination contest" in Elias's sense appeared far earlier in China, i. e. in the Warring States period (Gernet 1996, Ch. 3; Hui 2005; Lewis 1990; Mennell 1996, 119). It created a system of territorial states and formed the crucial transition from feudal to imperial China, in which it monopolized violence so that "[t]he people were brave in public warfare and fearful of private vendettas" (Sima 1993, 93). Local communities were administratively reorganized so that states could interact with uniform subjects without intermediaries.

Violent competition among states shook the old societal structure, enabled innovation, liberated new social forces, and released free floating resources. The dynamics that enabled the transition was the nascent functional differentiation (Tang 2004). The patronage of *cuju* players mentioned above was based on this development. It was in this period that the upper rank *shi* transformed from warriors to literati. In China, the taming of warriors was achieved primarily by substitution and self-transformation, not by courtization.

The unification of territorial states strengthened centralization. All areas were under control of non-hereditary bureaucrats sent by the central government. However, local governments had considerable autonomy. As Spierenburg (2001, 98) points out, Elias's concept of *Gewaltmonopol* means only military monopoly rather than the nonoccurrence of private violence. Neither the prevalence of blood revenge during the Han (206 BC to 220 AC) was a symptom of lacking monopoly of violence, nor the legal prohibition a sign for the disgust with violence as such. State formation alone was not sufficient to facilitate changes in behavior.

The bureaucratic empire was a result of a societal transformation. The Chinese bureaucratic empire since the Qin (221 B.C. – 206 B.C.) was a particular combination of stratification, centre/periphery-differentiation and functional differentiation. A new hierarchy emerged, namely literati, peasant, craftsman, and merchant. The literati, namely the scholar-official, played a critical role that enabled a combination of stratification and functional differentiation. Based on this new stratification, politics gained superiority to other social spheres and could claim a primacy in the nascent functional differentiation.

Parallel to the rise of a new hierarchical order with the emperor at the apex, powerful literati clans came gradually into being, and built quasi-aristocratic forces. They became de facto hereditary because these locally rooted clans could influence the recommendation of local communities and hence almost monopolize opportunities of office-service. The following political separation led to a fragmentation of sovereignty. Personal bondage and dependency became stronger, and a de-civilizing tendency took hold.[4] The societal structure ran backward to a relatively strictly closed stratification, namely *mendi* rank society.

The next great structural change, the so-called Tang-Song transition involved a transformation from *mendi* to gentry society (e. g. Bol 2000; Fogel 1983; Hartwell 1982; Miyazaki 1992; Naito 1992). *Mendi* society was a quasi-aristocratic society. Its system differentiation consisted of stringent stratification and functional differentiation. In this stratified order, upper ranks possessed a de facto predominance and privilege in all social spheres because they could easily transform their political power to economic capital, social capital and cultural capital, and vice versa on the basis of the same organizing principle in different spheres. Although stratification was still the primary form of differentiation, the long-term embeddedness of functional differentiation in the stratification produced a reciprocal embeddedness. The prosperity of literati clans depended ultimately on a continuing possession of high-rank offices.

The force that propelled the transformation from *mendi* to gentry society was the further development of functional differentiation, such as the civil examination, the invention of private banks and the emergence of a national market, the privatization of belief, the diffusion of printing, and the emergence of mass entertainment (Tang 2004; 2010a). But it was still embedded in the form of stratification and center/periphery differentiation, and could not totally escape from both to find its own way. Therefore, the Tang-Song transition remained a structural change within the form of bureaucratic empire rather than a fundamental morphological mutation.

4 One example was the consumption of flesh out of revenge (Haar 2000, 125).

By substituting stringent with open stratification, this gentry society became the first post-aristocratic society in human history (Fogel 1996). The nobility disappeared and the Confucian literati came to dominate Chinese society, which was a particular combination of meritocracy and autocracy.

The interplay between an open stratification and a not yet fully accomplished functional differentiation made the gentry society more like a modern class society than a traditional aristocratic society. Previously, an individual member of the powerful literati clans became an official due to his clan. Now, the gentry lineage formed and became honored due to the achievement of an individual member who successfully became an official. The gentry could not guarantee their status only by pedigree, and needed to maintain their status and to transform their specific superiority into other forms of capital with more effort (Esherick/Rankin 1990; Hymes 1986).

The heterogeneity of gentry produced the need for distinction to justify their leadership. As a means of distinguishing themselves, the gentry also appealed to furniture, antiquities, paintings, participation of public charities, courtesanship as romantic love, and sport, in addition to the traditional means of education, civility and clothing (Brook 1993; 1998, 218–233; 2008, Chs 3, 5; Clunas 1991; Levenson 1957; Tang 2010a; Wu 2007). The refined *chuiwan* was a means of distinction for the "inactive" gentry.

V. The Relevance of Societal Structure

The succession of *jiju* to *cuju* to *chuiwan* is clear when put in the context of the transformation from *mendi* to gentry society. The popularity of *jiju* in Tang reflected the prevalence of martialism in the *mendi* rank society. The fact that *jiju* could be used as a pretext and cover of conspiracy explains that contemporaries saw the risk of injury or death as normal, and did not stop playing (Liu 1985, 208 f.). Even literati, including famous poets like Du Fu and Li Bai, not only praised, but also played *jiju* (Cutter 1989, Ch. 3). Neither the introduction of the civil examination, nor the idea of *yangsheng* alone led to a replacement of vigorous sport by elegant entertainment.

As mentioned above, *jiju* was not only a fashionable pastime among the upper rank, but also a symbolic distinction of "noble" status. However, structural conditions did not lead to a complete diffusion of *jiju*. The game of social mobility was still more like a situation of all or nothing. The new rich learned courtesy and manners of the upper rank, but were not necessarily accepted as members.

A structural base for the total differentiation of sport was not realized until a transformation to gentry society with open stratification. The further development of functional differentiation, especially the rise of economic cities and consumption culture enabled both this transformation and the succession between *jiju*, *cuju* and *chuiwan*. The shift of *cuju* from patronage to professionalization was a sign of functional differentiation and cannot be explained by the monopoly of violence and state formation. We can see parallel phenomena in other fields, such as painting and drama. However, functional differentiation was still embedded in the form of stratification and center/periphery differentiation. While the members of *cuju* associations consisted of rich, dissolute sons of distinguished families and idlers, the professional *cuju*-player had the status of *jian* (mean), like the performer (Lin 1990, 313, 319). This resulted from a combination of open stratification with insufficient functional differentiation, and cannot be understood by Dunning's dichotomy of segmental and functional bonding.

What differentiated was a system of entertainment rather than sport. This particular development and the substitution of *jiju* by *cuju* related to the ascendancy of the literati and the devaluation of the military that was embedded in the change from *mendi* to gentry society. In the warfare period of Five Dynasties, soldiers were key assets. Tattoos were used as a means to prevent soldier from fleeing. Simultaneously, many military leaders often took the position of local governor or even emperor with the support, election or even coercion by soldiers. These low educated leaders often plundered people more cruelly than robbers. Both cases led to the negative perception of the military, and a change of the soldier's social status. Military service that was an honorable, quasi-aristocratic privilege in Tang became a shameful career in Song.

The new upper stratum – the literati that gained a leading status primarily by passing the civil examination – were not accustomed to use their bodies as means of distinction. Had the literati maintained a martial ethos, a function system of sport might have developed in China. As it were, the gentry watched but did not practice *jiju* or *cuju*. It is no wonder that one Ming emperor played *chuiwan* himself, but only watched *jiju* and *cuju* (Liu/Zhang 2005, 30). Adapting to this change, the supporter of *cuju* and *chuiwan* promoted that *cuju* and *chuiwan* were good for *yangsheng* (Liu/Zhang 2005, 30; Liu/Zhao 2008, 91). But this could not save their fate of decline in the post-aristocratic gentry society whose upper stratum was heterogeneous and changing.

The situation became worse as merchants could win a social recognition as gentry purely by virtue of wealth since the 18th century, although they at the outset often pretended to be lover of culture. Lacking the upper stratum as carrier or patron, the entertainment industry of *cuju* could not but decline in a still stratified society, except that functional differentiation could break the binding of stratifica-

tion and make the professional player from the stigmatized mean to the role model. By contrast, *cuju* could maintain its popularity in Japan's stratified noble society, although it underwent a similar transformation toward entertainment (Wu 1992).

Lastly, feuds and dragon-boat rivalries that looked like "an institutionalized test of the relative strengths" deciphered by Dunning (Elias/Dunning 1986, 236) deserve our attention. As functional differentiation was enhanced during the Tang-Song transition, the political system still maintained its dominant position by appealing to morality as a means of social cohesion, and by responding with a policy of inclusion as a means of reinforcing control, such as the codification of the patriarch's power, recognition of previously illegitimate beliefs or sacrifice, and a combination of informal mediation and formal adjudication. Although the state maintained its rule and the appearance of social unity, a yin/yang dual structure that led to the separation of the nominal from the real became prevalent (Tang 2004; 2010a).

This created a paradoxical phenomenon: the state retreated from its earlier duties, such as substantive care of populace and building of infrastructure, while its autocracy was strengthened. Its penetration to the locality was intensive yet superficial in that it did not comprehensively delve into daily life, but rather focused on elements like order and taxation. The state tacitly allowed and sometimes even facilitated people's self-administration. Due to this mode of penetration, people still felt a need for self-help. Feuds were therefore widespread in the south – zones of inclusion and emigration with high degrees of lineage organization (Lamley 1990). Local governments often pretended not to see these illegal conflicts because lineage was an assistant to their rule in the yin/yang dual structure.

Unlike feuds, the dragon-boat rivalries with the characteristics of "ritualized contest" involved primarily a mass entertainment. They were at times prohibited by local governments, but more often due to the harm and death caused by crowds, rather than collective conflicts (Chen 2008). There was a case of conflict between "ethnic groups," i. e. a feud between people with pedigree of different provinces (Perdue 1986). But it was an occasional, though intrigued conflict in a principally pacified society with the monopoly of violence in the hand of the state rather than regular feuds that took place in a world following the law of the jungle.

VI. Conclusion

It appears that *yangsheng* outshines other body activities in China. This impression is strengthened by the fact that ancient Chinese had no concept of muscle, not to mention the idea of strengthening the body by muscle training. Early

Chinese thought that the cultivation of vitality was the most important, where violent bodily movements only consumed the energy of life. Even the martial arts became decoupled from practical contests and patterned on dance since the late Ming.

However, ancient Chinese partook in various competitive ball games. That these games disappeared and were almost forgotten was a result of literatization as a particular civilizing process. The fact that *jiju*, *cuju* and *chuiwan* were popular in different periods was not an accident; it correlated with contemporary social structures. While *jiju* was an exclusive representation of status monopolized by nobles, *chuiwan* was an elegant entertainment of the literati and a useful means of distinction for the rising gentry. The development of *cuju* as entertainment witnessed this transition. Lacking the martial noble, sport developed in an aura of consumption culture as means of distinction for status rather than a disciplinary means. The unique yin/yang dual structure of gentry society as a compromise of functional differentiation with hierarchical order brought about a paradoxical domestication of violence. Modern Western sports conditioned violence while maintaining martialism and permitting violence in a disguised form at a higher level. Literatization in China, on the other hand, took another path of avoiding and invisibilizing violence, allowing the martial ethos to collapse.

The prevalence of *yangsheng* was not natural, however, but also a product of the turn of literatization. This had to do with the further development of a religious system that the search for an external pill (i. e. alchemy) gave way gradually to the search for an internal pill by *qi*-exercise in the secularized and syncretized tendency since the mid Tang (Tang 2004). It was this shift of emphasis of the idea of nourishing vitality, and especially the widespread diffusion of printing about *yangsheng* since Ming, that not only the literati cared about, but also commoners (Chen 2009). As such, *yangsheng* became the dominant body culture and nearly the only orientation in China.

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