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The Transformation of Qing Dynasty Manchu Wrestling to Chinese Shuaijiao in
Republican and Modern China

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
1 INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Shuaijiao: Chinese Wrestling	3
1.2 Research Question.....	7
1.3 Literature Review	8
1.4 Thesis Structure.....	9
2 THE ORIGINS OF SHUAIJIAO	11
2.1 Disputed Origins of Shuaijiao	11
2.2 The Relation between Ma Liang's Modernisation and Early Republican Wrestlers and their Legacy	15
2.3 The Mongol Heritage of the Qing Wrestling	18
2.4 Conclusion.....	24
3 THE ROLE OF WRESTLING AND ITS RELATION TO MANCHU IDENTITY IN THE QING DYNASTY	25
3.1 The Importance of Wrestling in Qing Dynasty	25
3.1.1 The Shanpuying and its Role in the Empire	28
4 THE RELATION BETWEEN CHINESE NATIONALISM AND SHUAI JIAO	30
4.1 Anti-Manchu Rhetoric in the Republican Era.....	30
4.2 Sports and Martial Arts as a means to Promote Chinese Nationalism and the Role of Wrestling	35
4.3 The Perception of Wrestling in the Qing Dynasty's <i>Shen Bao</i>	37
4.4 The Portrayal of Wrestling in the Republican Era	38
4.4.1 The Origins of Shuaijiao as recorded by Ma Liang	42
4.4.2 The Contradictory Forewords in the Method of Chinese Wrestling	44
5 CONCLUSION	47
5.1 Limitations	48
REFERENCES	51
Primary Sources	51
Secondary Sources	51
Internet Sources.....	56

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Shuaijiao: Chinese Wrestling

Many nations have their own form of wrestling, Turkey has Yağlı Güreş, India has Kushti and Pehlwani, Korea has Ssireum, Japan has Sumō, and Russia has Sambo. China is no exception in this regard by having its own style known as Chinese Shuaijiao. Chinese Shuaijiao (Zhongguoshi Shuaijiao 中國式摔跤) is the modern name coined in the 1950s that refers to the codified and standardised form of wrestling mainly practised in China.¹ The sport has since spread to other countries, most notably the US, France, Italy, Russia and Canada.² This thesis will explore Chinese wrestling from the Qing Dynasty up until modern times. Chinese wrestling has not been researched often or thoroughly, especially in Western scholarship. The research that does exist, however, proves that wrestling is an important component in Chinese martial arts history, and it would be remiss if this topic were to remain unexplored. More importantly, in the research that does exist, which is mainly in Chinese, there is a tendency to link modern Shuaijiao and Republican Shuaijiao to the long tradition of wrestling in China. While this link is often assumed, little evidence is provided to prove the connection. Therefore, the focus of this thesis is not the long reaching history of wrestling in China but rather the development and history of present-day Chinese Shuaijiao, starting from the Qing Dynasty. This paper shall seek to answer the following question: What are the origins of Shuaijiao and why are its non-Han origins neglected in Republican and modern China?

The main component of this name, *shuaijiao* 摔跤, means wrestling in Mandarin Chinese.³ The term Chinese Shuaijiao is broad in its usage, as it may confusingly be used to refer to any style of wrestling that is deemed native to China and therefore can even be used to retroactively and anachronistically refer to wrestling practised in China before the introduction of this term, as is illustrated by Kang Kang's article.⁴ The usage of "shuaijiao" is therefore misleading, as in Imperial China wrestling was called *xiangpu* 相撲, *jueli* 角力, *guanjiao* 攢角

¹ Wang Xiaodong 王曉東 and Guo Chunyang 郭春陽, "Zhongyang guoshuguan Shuaijiao huodong lishi kaocha yu dangdai qishi" 中央國術館摔跤活動歷史考察與當代啟示 [Historical review and contemporary enlightenment of the wrestling events implemented by China Central Wushu Institute], *Shandong tiyu xueyuan xuebao* 山東體育學院學報 (2017): 47.

² Gao Jing 高京, "Zhongguoshi shuaijiao fazhan yanjiu" 中國式摔跤發展研究 [Research on Chinese Style Wrestling], *Tiyu wenhua daokan* 體育文化導刊 7 (2015): 101.

³ Generic because it is a broad term that can refer to any style of wrestling.

⁴ Kang Kang 康康, "Jingcheng wuxue guanjiao zhi jin 'xi'" 京城武學攢角之今'夕' [The Current 'State' of Martial Practise in the Capital City], *Beijing jishi* 北京紀事 8 (2009): 5.

or *buku* 布庫 among numerous other terms but never *shuaijiao* 摔角/摔跤.⁵ The style of Chinese Shuaijiao is characterised by a wrestling jacket, a *jiaoyi* 跤衣, and its sole focus on throwing techniques, that is, techniques that cause your opponent to lose balance and fall and does not feature any techniques that can be considered ground wrestling or pinning, such as in Judo or various Turkic wrestling styles.

Chinese style wrestling, henceforth to be referred to as Shuaijiao 摔角 when referring to the Republican era, and Chinese Shuaijiao 摔跤 when referring to the Communist era, was formalised in 1917 through the manual *Zhonghua Xin Wushu* 中華新武術 [New Chinese Martial Arts] written by Ma Liang, which was disseminated by the educational department of the Republican Government.⁶ This formalised style has been taught in schools since 1928.⁷ After the People's Republic made the decision to promote the people's ethnic heritage and traditions Chinese Shuaijiao was popularised and spread widely through China. Shuaijiao resembles other Chinese martial arts, and indeed other artisan trades, in the way that it taught to the next generation. It is a faux pas to change whatever you have learnt from the master according to the concept of *shicheng* 師承. Within Chinese martial arts it also improper to teach people who have not officially been formally acknowledged as a student. The art that is passed on takes on a secretive nature due to these customs.

Chinese Shuaijiao is a confusing term because it is a strictly modern term which some would use to refer retroactively to historical wrestling practised in China. Obviously, this is problematic, since this leads to the conflation of historical wrestling practised in China and Chinese Shuai Jiao. To avoid confusion, in this paper Shuaijiao will only refer to Chinese wrestling after 1917. This date was chosen because it is the publishing date of Ma Liang's Shuaijiao manual *Zhonghua Xin Wushu*, the first serious effort made to codify wrestling. He first introduced his "Ma shi wushu" 馬氏武術 (Ma Clan Martial Techniques) to the soldiers under his command as combat techniques.⁸ Ma Liang 馬良 (1875-1947), was also known as Ma Zizhen 馬子真 and would prove to be an important character in both the development of Chinese Shuaijiao as well as Chinese martial arts in general.⁹ Shuaijiao was transformed into a

⁵ Yun Zhang, "Shuaijiao: Introducción al Arte Chino de las Proyecciones" in *Revista de Artes Marciales Asiáticas* (2012): 26.

⁶ Ma Lianzhen 馬廉禎, "Ma Liang yu jindai Zhongguo wushu gailiang yundong" 馬良與近代中國武術改良運動 [Ma Liang and modern movement to improve Chinese Martial Arts], *Huizu yanjiu* 回族研究 1 (2012): 3.

⁷ Chi-Hsiu Daniel Weng, "Modern Shuai-Chiao: Its Theory, Practise and Development," (dissertation, Ohio State University, 1987): 3.

⁸ Ma, "Ma Liang yu jindai Zhongguo wushu gailiang yundong," 38.

⁹ Further details regarding Ma Liang's contributions will be given in section 3.2.

sport from being a military exercise after the adoption of Shuaijiao by the Zhongyang Guoshuguan 中央國術館 (Central Chinese Martial Arts Institution) as an acceptable educational tool to strengthen the people of China. The Zhongyang Guoshuguan was established in 1928 aiming to modernise Chinese martial arts by codifying and standardising the curriculum of each martial art. Chinese Shuaijiao, due to Ma Liang, was recognised as one of the sports ever since then.¹⁰ Subsequently, the first Chinese Shuaijiao competition was held in 1935.¹¹

Under the Central Chinese Martial Arts Institution Shuaijiao was listed as one among fourteen other subjects pupils choose from. Yet, Shuaijiao appears to have held a special position in the institute as Shuaijiao along with *puji* 撲击 (striking) were the only two subjects with a compulsory test.¹² It was also one of the four main mandatory subjects in the competitive program of the Institute, alongside empty hand striking, spear fencing and swordsmanship.¹³ Shuaijiao maintained this state until the chaos of the mid-twentieth century. During the mayhem of the Warlord era and the subsequent invasion of the Japanese, the development of Chinese Shuaijiao was largely halted. The further development of Chinese Shuaijiao proceeded after the hostilities of the Chinese Civil War had settled down. From 1953 onward, excluding the Cultural Revolution of 1966 to 1976, annual competitions were held to compete in Chinese Shuaijiao.

Since it was reintroduced in 1953 Chinese Shuaijiao has not seen a steady increase in popularity under the officials as is evidenced by the lack of participation of Chinese Shuaijiao in the National Games of the People's Republic of China. In the total of 13 times the National

¹⁰ An activity is seen as sports when it is a competitive physical activity between groups or individuals for entertainment purposes. In China, however, the boundary of "sports" is different than in the "west." In Modern China sports is translated as 体育, which Brownell translates as physical culture. In pre-modern China the character 戲 (xi) is used to represent wrestling. Roughly translated this means "game." The difference between a game and a sport is a vague boundary. Chinese martial arts falls into a grey area between being a sport and not being a sport, but that is a debate that is outside of the scope of my research, as I am only attempting to find out where the modern standardised and codified version of Chinese Shuaijiao originated. As such, throughout this thesis, I shall use sports to describe wrestling.

Susan Brownell, *Training the Body for China: Sports in the Moral Order of the People's Republic* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1995), 34.

¹¹ The sources disagree on the year of the competition, Chi-Hsiu Daniel Weng claims 1933, but the newspaper of the time reports 1935, which is corroborated by Wang Jinyu in his research.

"Tiyu ke faqi diyi jie shuaijiao bisai" 體育科發起第一屆摔跤比賽, Lizhi 勵志, 1935.

Wang Jinyu 王金玉, *Zhongguoshi shuaijiao* 中國式摔跤 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe 山西人民出版社, 1989), 4.

¹² Wang and Guo, "Zhongyang Guoshuguan," 44

It is unclear what *puji* refers to, presumably an alternative spelling of *boji* 搏击 [striking], as in a martial arts in which one can strike as opposed to wrestling, in which striking is forbidden.

¹³ Wang and Guo, "Zhongyang Guoshuguan," 44.

Games were held, Chinese Shuaijiao was a category of competition in only six of them.¹⁴ Under the people, however, it seems that in the 1950's Shuaijiao had reached a fever point. Some would go as far as to describe it as "all of the people wrestled," this saying implies that wrestling was so popular that most people were familiar with wrestling.¹⁵ It appears the popularity of wrestling has since diminished since the 1950's. The last time Chinese Shuaijiao was part of the National Games was in 2001, during the ninth National Games. However, even though Chinese Shuaijiao has not been a category of competition in the National Games, various smaller events of recent years since 2003 have increased in popularity judging by the increasing number of participants in. The total number of participants of the larger national events nearly tripled from 491 competitors in 2003 to 1315 competitors in 2007.¹⁶ In recent years, the total number annually remains at around 1000 competitors.¹⁷

In terms of content, Chinese Shuaijiao has changed from when it was practised in the Republic to the present-day. The rules of the Republic were a continuation of the Qing dynasty rules. One would wear a dalian 褡裢 (wrestling jacket) and leather boots. Similar to the rules of the Qing dynasty a contestant would lose the round if any other point of the body than the feet touched the ground.¹⁸ Another continuation of the Qing dynasty rules in the Republic was the way to determine a victor, which was a best-of-three system.¹⁹ To compare, in the Qing a winner was decided by best of three or best of five, in which the loss of each round would be determined by the three-point system.²⁰ From the first to the third National Games after 1949, one match would consist of three rounds lasting three minutes and one minute of rest time in between. Later this was changed to 2 rounds of three minutes and one minute of rest in between. Since 2013, the rules have changed to being two rounds of two minutes with thirty seconds of rest in between. In terms of scoring points, a successful move scores 1, 2 or 3 points depending on various parameters, where the Republican Era competition would grade by half points and full points. All of these changes represent a break from tradition. The way Chinese Shuaijiao

¹⁴ Gao, "Zhongguoshi shuaijiao fazhan yanjiu," 101.

¹⁵ 全民皆跤

Kang, "Jingcheng wuxue guanbiao zhi jin 'xi,'" 6.

¹⁶ Gao, "Zhongguoshi shuaijiao fazhan yanjiu," 100.

¹⁷ Ibid, 101.

¹⁸ Ibid, 99.

¹⁹ *Tiyu yanjiu tongxun* 體育研究通訊, "Guoshu bisai guize: shuaijiao bisai guize" 國術比賽規則: 摔角比賽規則, 1933.

²⁰ Gao, "Zhongguoshi shuaijiao fazhan yanjiu," 99.

has developed in terms of rulesets resemble the 1899 International Judo rules, which also count points and works with a best-of-three system.²¹

The Chinese State was pushing Chinese Shuaijiao to appear on the world stage by attempting to enter the sport into the Olympic Games. They have not succeeded in doing so. It also appears they have largely given up on the matter. The general popularity of the sport or even the emphasis the Chinese central authorities have given to Chinese Shuaijiao has decreased over the last few years. In the 13th National Games of 2017, Chinese Shuaijiao had still not been revived as a category of competition.²²

1.2 Research Question

In literature surrounding Shuaijiao and Chinese wrestling there is a tendency to link Chinese Shuaijiao to the native Han Chinese traditions, even though the historical evidence to suggest so is strenuous. In the context of the strengthening of Nationalist sentiment among the Chinese wrestling has been a useful tool, and explain why various authors would forge the link. Indeed, this nationalistic influence in Chinese martial arts is confirmed by Guo and Wang, who explore the intention of Republican China to promote *bentu tiyu* 本土體育 (sports from own soil) to “protect traditional culture, to defend national pride, to strengthen the citizens and to raise national morale.”²³ The question arises then, if Chinese Shuaijiao did not come from these ancient styles of wrestling as is commonly claimed, where then did it come from? Moreover, while Nationalist sentiment was a great influence in the promotion of other Chinese martial arts, did Chinese Shuaijiao undergo a similar treatment and is that the reason of the discrepancy between the conventional history of Chinese Shuaijiao and what historical evidence shows. The common element most prior research misses are the provision of a concrete link between ancient styles of wrestling and Chinese Shuaijiao. In order to attempt to fill this gap, this paper shall attempt to trace the origins of Chinese Shuaijiao in a reverse-chronological order in order to reach the earliest point of its development through the founding fathers of the sport. Ergo, this paper will attempt to explore the origins of Chinese Shuaijiao as well as attempt to answer why there is so much mystery surrounding the subject. I will do so by tracing its history through

²¹ Tetsuya Onda, “Judo: Historical, Statistical and Scientific Appraisal,” (dissertation, University of Sheffield, 1994): 9-11

²² Zhu Jianliang 朱建亮, Ye Wei 葉偉, and Li Rong 李嶸, “Xin Zhongguo chengli yilai Zhongguoshi Shuaijiao fazhan licheng yanjiu” 新中國成立以來中國式摔跤發展歷程的研究 [Research on the development of Chinese Shuaijiao since the establishment of New China], *Beijing tiyu daxue xuebao* 北京體育大學學報 41, no. 9 (2018): 137

²³ 保護傳統文化、維護民族尊嚴、強健國民體質、提高民族精神。
Wang and Guo, “Zhongyang Guoshuguan,” 44

the material culture of wrestling, the lineages of the founders of Chinese Shuaijiao and historical records, poems and paintings relating to wrestling as well as by comparing what is known of historic styles of wrestling practised in China to Chinese Shuaijiao.

1.3 Literature Review

Many publications discuss Chinese Shuaijiao and Shuaijiao, yet are hesitant to go much into the history and instead focus on the technical aspects, cultural relevance and promotion of the sport. One such example is Dr. Chi-Hsiu Daniel Weng's research. While academic research on Shuaijiao is seldom conducted in English, Dr. Weng's research is a notable exception. Chinese publications on Chinese Shuaijiao are also mainly manuals or treatises on how to conduct training and to list the various techniques and combat strategies of the sport. Some of these books, such as Manchu Bannerman Tong Zhongyi's *Zhongguo shuaijiao fa* 中國摔跤法 [The Method of Chinese Wrestling] and Ma Liang's *Zhonghua Xin Wushu* 中華新武術 [Chinese New Martial Arts] contain clear vestiges of traditions that can be traced back to Qing dynasty wrestling, and can be used as primary sources regarding Shuaijiao in the Republican era. Authoritative historical research on wrestling in China was conducted by Jin Qicong, who analysed most available primary sources to conclude that Chinese Shuaijiao is a Mongolian and by extension Khitanese tradition as well as composing a historical narrative on the tradition of wrestling in China as a whole. Zhao emphasises the link between Dungan wrestling and Chinese Shuaijiao.²⁴ Zhou and Liu conclude that Chinese Shuaijiao is a conglomeration of different wrestling traditions present in the Qing Dynasty and merged by the end of the dynasty.²⁵ A few research articles focus on detailed aspects of wrestling; Torii Ryuzo focused on Khitanese wrestling through an archaeological find and his research discusses the earliest material evidence for Jurchen and by extension Manchu wrestling.²⁶ Wang Xiaodong focuses on the structure and organisation of the Shanpuying, the Qing dynasty wrestling institution. Li Zhengmin then explores the diplomatic functions the Shanpuying was expected to fulfil and its impact on the Qing state. There is a large body of information available on the lives and

²⁴ Zhao Jingyuan 趙敬源, "Huizu banjiao zai gaoxiao jiaoxue fazhan tuiguang yanjiu" 回族絆跤在高校教學發展推廣研究 [Research on the promotion of Hui wrestling in the high school curriculum], *Kaifeng jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao* 開封教育學院學報 36, no. 5 (2016): 145.

²⁵ Sha Xuezhou 沙學周, and Liu Shujie 劉淑傑, "Qingdai jiaoji shoudu pilu - Shanpugong shihua" 清代跤技首度披露 - 善撲功史話 [The First Uncovering of Qing Era Wrestling Techniques - a History of Shanpugong], *Jingwu* 精武 11 (2004): 29.

²⁶ Torii Ryuzo 鳥居龍藏, "Qidan zhi jiaodi" 契丹之角觥 [Chio-ti of the Khitans], *Yanjing xuebao* 燕京學報 29 (1941): 193-200.

achievements of the founders of Chinese Shuaijiao, some of them from academic journals, others appear in martial arts periodicals, while most appear as blog posts on the internet, and are sometimes even self-published. These sources will be used to cross-reference the claims they make on events and how they took place in order to reach conclusions that are more reliable. While Jin Qicong's works does explore the origins of the arts through the observance of largely pre-modern historical sources, research that focuses on both the pre-modern sources on wrestling and the post-Imperial, modern sources of wrestling have yet to be done in any academic capacity. Additionally, the question of why there seems to be a rift, or a lack of dialogue between the research conducted by Jin Qicong and the common theories proposed by other researchers and the layman's history of Shuaijiao has apparently not been posed yet.

1.4 Thesis Structure

The title of the thesis assumes the premise that Qing Dynasty wrestling is Manchu. However, this assertion is not a widely accepted fact, as is apparent in the large body of extant research that claims the contrary. To this end, the first chapter of this thesis shall be devoted to exploring the origins of Chinese Shuaijiao by studying Qing and Republican sources on wrestling in China as well as investigating the lineages of the preeminent Shuaijiao masters of the Republican era, the founding fathers of Shuaijiao, and how these characters shaped modern Chinese Shuaijiao. The second chapter will focus on the wrestling and its wider impact and implications during the Qing Dynasty and in order to understand the change of direction in the development of wrestling in the Republican Era due to the widespread anti-Manchu movement, which is discussed in the third chapter. The discrepancy between historical documentation and common ideas accepted by authors of Shuaijiao manuals from the Republican China is a subject that can be linked to overarching historical and political themes, and shall form the basis of the third and last chapter. This chapter will provide evidence for the notion that Chinese Shuaijiao's real origins were indeed hidden to fit the needs of the nation and will do so by attempting to sketch the overall attitude toward wrestling through a small fraction of news sources of the era as well as using secondary literature. Additionally, the two and only wrestling manuals of the Republican Era that were disseminated widely in China will be taken as a basis for the Republican view on wrestling. These sources shall be analysed taking into account the ideological environment of the Republican Era as well as the context in the martial arts world through extant literature.

2 THE ORIGINS OF SHUAIJIAO

This chapter will show how the Chinese Shuaijiao developed from the Manchu-Mongolian wrestling tradition of the Qing Dynasty. Section 3.1 will discuss the discrepancies between and inadequacies of extant research, mainly to point out several issues that exist within the scholarship. Section 3.2 concerns the origins of Republican Shuaijiao, and link the progenitor of this style to the earlier wrestling of the Qing Dynasty, it will do so by tracing the lineages of many of the most influential masters of Shuaijiao back to Qing Dynasty Manchu-Mongolian wrestling. The tracing is done through referencing interviews, documentaries, journal articles and internet blogs. Section 3.3 demonstrates the origins of the style that was practised in the Qing Dynasty by looking at material, historical, and terminological evidence and evidence from the living traditions itself to ascertain the relation Chinese Shuaijiao has with Mongolian Bōkh. The sources used to provide this evidence are mainly secondary literature, but also some historical sources for the material evidence in the form of Hansen's *Mongol Costumes*, Wu Yourus's *Dianshizhai Huabao* 點石齋畫報 [Dianshizhai Pictorial] and an article from the Republican publication *Liangyou* 良友. Additionally, some modern documentaries and online sources were used to ascertain the similarities between the current living traditions of Chinese Shuaijiao and Mongolian Bōkh.

2.1 Disputed Origins of Shuaijiao

The idea that Shuaijiao, as codified in 1917, is an ancient style that reaches back millennia into Chinese history is often espoused in manuals, treatises and even research papers from China. However, these claims often only go as far as to describe historical examples of wrestling practised in China or among the Han Chinese, yet do not provide evidence as to why Shuaijiao is descended from these ancient wrestling styles.

To illustrate, in Hang Dong's article *Woguo shuaijiao xisu tanyuan* 我國摔跤習俗探源 [the Search for Wrestling Customs in My Country] he gives two possibilities for the origins of wrestling, one is the idea that wrestling comes from Mongolia, because wrestling has always been important to the Mongols, and through the Mongolian people's emphasis has reached its widespread practise and popularity.²⁷ He does not proceed to describe the process then by which it became Shuaijiao, at this point many theories diverge because of a technicality.

²⁷ Hang Dong 杭東, "Woguo shuaijiao xisu tanyuan" 我國摔跤習俗探源 [the Search for Wrestling Customs in My Country], *Shaolin yu taiji* 少林與太極 2 (2012): 7

Shuaijiao can be used as a term to refer to wrestling in general. Since every culture has at one point wrestled it is correct to say that wrestling has been practised in China since prehistory, during which wrestling would have been used to compete for mating rights, among other purposes.²⁸ Hang proceeds to list historical records that concern wrestling from many of the subsequent dynasties until he reaches the Republican era, and finishes with descriptions of other wrestling traditions of other ethnicities. What Hang does, like many others, is to show the history of wrestling in China, as opposed to the history of the specific style called Chinese Shuaijiao or Shuaijiao. Nevertheless, he does assume that Chinese Shuaijiao is a direct descendant of any wrestling style practised in ancient China, as is illustrated by his closing statement: “Under the care of the Party and the State, the sport of Chinese Shuaijiao can be like other traditional sports, gaining new life and development.”²⁹ He assumes so without providing evidence or argument to prove the assumed ancestor-descendant relation between wrestling in ancient China and Chinese Shuaijiao.

While Hang remains vague in his language regarding the origins of Chinese Shuaijiao, Gao Jing is more direct in his argument by proposing that Chinese Shuaijiao is one of the national practises that must be preserved in the context of five millennia of Chinese history.³⁰ Gao too does not provide evidence that Chinese Shuaijiao is five millennia old. Indeed, this notion is purported by Hua and Dai once more who suggest Chinese Shuaijiao was formed through continuous evolution by arguing for movesets and different aspects of wrestling being added through the centuries since the conquest of the Six Kingdoms by the Qin, when wrestling was still called *juedi* 角抵.³¹ Still, they too do not delve into the specific origin of Chinese Shuaijiao, and remain content to describe what is written in historical records without directly linking Chinese Shuaijiao to these historical styles. This trend is not limited to research from Mainland China, as one of the few Taiwanese researchers on the topic of Shuaijiao Fan Zhengzhi also claims that Shuaijiao and *juedi* from *Chi You* 蚩尤 “flow forth from one source.”³²

Additionally, martial arts legends of the 20th century Wen and Zhang in their influential wrestling manual even assert that Shuaijiao is an ethnic sport (*minzu tiyu* 民族體育) popular

²⁸ Hang, “Woguo shuaijiao xisu tanyuan,” 7

²⁹ Ibid, 8.

³⁰ Gao, “Zhongguoshi shuaijiao fazhan yanjiu,” 100.

³¹ Hua Jiatao 花家濤, and Dai Guobin 戴國斌, “Cong *juedi* dao Zhongguoshi Shuaijiao” 從角抵到中國式摔跤 [From *Jue-di* to Chinese Wrestling], *Shenyang tiyu xueyuan xuebao* 沈陽體育學院學報 32, no. 6 (2013): 123.

³² Fan Zhengzhi 樊正治, “Shuaijiao shi” 摔角史 [The History of Shuai Chiao], *Shida xuebao* 師大學報 (1986): 345.

under the Han, and aside from having changed names numerous times throughout the ages from “shuaijiao” 摔角, “shuaijiao” 率角, “guanjiao” 攢跤, “liaojiao” 料跤, “kuaijiao” 快跤 and “kuajiao” 跨跤, to historical names of “jiaodi/juedi” 角抵, “shoubo” 手搏 and “xiangpu” 相撲, the contents of the sports were the same.³³ Regardless, we know that “shoubo,” “xiangpu” and “jiaodi/juedi” each refer to distinct forms of wrestling that stem from different traditions with different rules, different origins and different contexts in which they were practised. “Jiaodi” refers to horn-butting, “shoubo” is pugilism and “xiangpu” is a more generic term to refer to all manners of wrestling akin to the term “shuaijiao.” To claim that the contents were largely the same can only be justified in the sense that all terms refer to some form of combat in which the goal is to defeat the opponent under set terms of engagement.

Finally, Dr. Chi-Hsiu Weng writes that “during the Chou dynasty (1122-221 B.C.) Shuai-chiao [shuaijiao 摔跤] was also named Chiao-li [jiaoli 角力]” and “in the Chin Shu [...] Shuai-chiao was recorded as Hsiang-pu [xiangpu 相撲].”³⁴ The issue with equating “Shuai-chiao” to these ancient names for wrestling is that “Shuai-chiao” is used as a proper noun. The use of the proper noun implies this particular style of wrestling is the equivalent of what was practised millenia ago. It also implies Shuaijiao in some capacity is descended from those earlier forms of wrestling, which cannot be demonstrated. One would likely be hesitant to refer to ancient cuju 蹴鞠 (kick-ball) as the origins of modern football. These two traditions can hardly be linked to each other, as their form is different and there is no direct lineage to trace them to each other, even though they are and were both practised in China only in different time-periods.³⁵ Indeed, research as demonstrated above often invokes the oldest known wrestling traditions that have been dated to the Chinese cultural area as the origin of modern Chinese Shuaijiao. Invariably, the mythical Chi You is mentioned who, according to the stories, wrestled with horns on his head while trying to gore his opponents, called *jiaodi* 角抵 (horn-butting). While these ancient stories prove that the people from the central plains of China did indeed wrestle, these stories are in itself not sufficient evidence to prove that Chinese Shuaijiao practised today is related to those ancient practises. Indeed, Jin Qicong argues that such claims

³³ Wen Jingming 溫敬銘, and Zhang Wenguang 張文廣, *Zhongguoshi shuaijiao* 中國式摔跤 [Chinese Shuaijiao] (Beijing: Renmin tiyu chubanshe 人民體育出版社, 1957), 1.

³⁴ Chi-Hsiu Daniel Weng, “Modern Shuai-Chiao: Its Theory, Practise and Development,” (dissertation, Ohio State University, 1987), 3.

³⁵ Generally, in Asian martial arts ‘lineage’ denotes a line of consecutive master-student relations and does not refer to ancestral lineage.

“are actually not credible.”³⁶ In Chinese Shuaijiao or Shuaijiao there are no horns, there is no goring and there certainly is no traceable lineage to prove that present day Chinese Shuaijiao has evolved from *jiaodi*. Indeed, it has proven difficult to trace a living martial art back to even the Song dynasty, let alone the semi-mythical age of Chi You 蚩尤 and Huang Di 黃帝.

In short, in modern research, both Chinese and non-Chinese, it is generally assumed that Chinese Shuaijiao and Shuaijiao descend from various historical wrestling styles that were practised in China. Chinese Shuaijiao is then made out to be the result of a gradual evolution of these historical wrestling styles. This theory places all historical wrestling in China on a single bloodline, where all stem from one source, Chi You. These assumptions are made without providing historical evidence as to why Shuaijiao is an evolution or descendant of these historical Chinese wrestling styles. For this reason, it is important to find out what historical evidence does tell us about the origins of Shuaijiao.

³⁶ Jin Qicong 金啟琮, and Kai He 凱和, *Zhongguo shuaijiao shi: shuaijiao de yuanliu he bianhua* 中國摔跤史: 摔跤的源流和變化 [The History of Chinese Wrestling: the Origins of Wrestling and its Change] (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe 內蒙古人民出版社, 2006), 6.

2.2 The Relation between Ma Liang's Modernisation and Early Republican Wrestlers and their Legacy

Ma Liang 馬良, or Ma Zizhen 馬子真 (1875-1947), was a Chinese Muslim officer part of the Beiyang Army who led a tumultuous life. Aside from his contributions to martial arts, he was deeply involved in politics and war. During the Second Sino-Japanese war he joined the Wang Jingwei faction and as such was branded a *hanjian* 漢奸 (traitor to the Han/Chinese), for which he was imprisoned. During his time as an instructor in the army, he used Chinese martial arts to train the soldiers. He deemed Chinese martial arts an important tool in educating soldiers, but was aware that the martial arts of China at the time were not fit for widespread and standardised teaching. As such, he attempted to modernise Chinese martial arts by codifying several different facets of fighting, one of these facets was wrestling.

Ma Liang's modernisation of Chinese martial arts was important for the standardisation of what was a diverse and vague practise under the collective label of *shuaijiao*, a term that is in this aspect as general as the term *wrestling*. *Shuaijiao*, as such, did not exist when Ma Liang first made his attempts in codifying and modernising Chinese martial arts as a whole. During this period, however, Ma Liang was not the only one spreading his lineage of wrestling. There were numerous wrestlers, many of whom from the North of China and had a martial lineage tracing back to the Qing dynasty's Shanpuying, who were teaching and passing on their own particular lineage as well.³⁷ The former wrestlers of the Qing Dynasty Shanpuying wrestling division busked on the streets, or established wrestling schools to sustain themselves.³⁸ The former head coach of the national Chinese *Shuaijiao* team Li Baoru and martial descendant of the Shanpuying confirms in an interview that many of the former renowned wrestlers were forced to make a living out of street performances.³⁹ However, as Ma Liang was the one who took the opportunity to perform at the 1923 *Zhonghua quanguo wushu dahui* 中華全國武術大會 (All China National Wushu Ensemble), it was his style that caught the attention of the *Zhongyang Guoshuguan* 中央國術館 (Central Chinese Martial Arts Institute), the central institute governing all martial arts in China.⁴⁰ Yet, many of the wrestlers who practise Chinese *Shuaijiao* today claim martial descendancy from these renowned wrestlers and not necessarily

³⁷ The Shanpuying was an influential wrestling institute of the Qing dynasty based in Beijing. Further details concerning the Shanpuying and its contributions and history shall be discussed in section 4.1.

³⁸ Kang, "Jingcheng wuxue guan'jiao zhi jin 'xi,'" 9.

³⁹ Song Liming 宋黎明, "Jiaoren shuo jiao" 跤人說跤 [Wrestlers talk Wrestling], *Zhonghua wushu* 中華武術 (2005): 10

⁴⁰ Wang and Guo, "Zhongyang Guoshuguan," 45.

from Ma Liang or his teaching. In this context, it is known that Ma Liang's style of wrestling was the main style of wrestling with the official government institute behind it to promote it. What then was the origins of his style and how did it come to be this way?

When Ma Liang first began his modernisation process of sports and martial arts, he taught something that was dubbed “Ma shi ticao” 馬氏體操 (Ma Clan Gymnastics). It is believed that this form of sports education had great influence from his own style.⁴¹ However, concerning the wrestling aspect of his modernisation process he invited Ma Qingyun and Wang Weihai to instruct his soldiers in the art of wrestling. Ma Qingyun, Wang Weihai and Ma Liang were all students of Ma Changchun 馬長春, who was a student of Ping Jingyi 平敬壹 (ca. 1830-1908). Ping Jingyi lived in Baoding in the Late Qing Dynasty and represented the martial arts of the Qingzhenshi jie 清真寺街 (Mosque Street). This long lineage of Hui Muslim wrestlers would point to the idea that there is a Hui Muslim influence present in the standardised version of Chinese Shuaijiao as Ma Liang spread. However, there is evidence to suggest that Ping Jingyi's style of Baoding Fast Wrestling, characterised by its wrestling jacket and its aggressive, proactive style was a merger between the Manchu and Mongol style that was common in the Qing dynasty combined with some techniques from the Shaolin Temple.⁴²

The martial lineage of Ma Liang and his instructors links their style and subsequently Chinese Shuaijiao to the other lineages practised in that era, therefore also the various styles of wrestling still practised in China today. Indeed, Ma Liang's connection to Baoding Fast Wrestling links him to another important character in the Chinese Shuaijiao world, the Kuaijiao Hua Hudie 快跤花蝴蝶 (Fast wrestling floral butterfly), Chang Dongsheng 常東昇.⁴³ He was responsible for bringing the art of Baoding Fast Wrestling to Taiwan and subsequently, to the USA. Baoding Fast Wrestling is a Chinese wrestling style and since it can compete under the rules of Chinese Shuaijiao, and frequently does, it is seen as Chinese Shuaijiao and not a separate sport. Since the lineage of Ma Liang and the Baoding Fast Wrestlers are the same, the relation between Ma Liang's style and the Baoding style of his era can only be described as one of siblings.

⁴¹ Ma, “Ma Liang yu jindai Zhongguo wushu gailiang yundong,” 38.

⁴² Han Lijie 韓立傑, “Baodingfu de Goutuizi” 保定府的勾腿子 [The hook-leg of Baoding prefecture], in Jiluzhe: Hebei dianshitai ‘Zhongguo Hebei’ Lanmu 10 zhounian 1993.10 - 2003.10 記錄者: 河北電視臺‘中國河北’欄目 10 周年 1993.10 - 2003.10 [Recorder: the 10th anniversary of the Hebei TV Station's program ‘Chinese Hebei’ 1993.10 - 2003.10], edited by Wan Kai 萬凱 (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe 五洲傳播出版社, 2004), 110.

⁴³ Chang Dongsheng is known in the West as Chang Tungsheng, perhaps noteworthy is that he, like Ma Liang and many of the renowned Baoding wrestlers, was also a Hui Muslim.

Nevertheless, this only covers one city in China. In order to connect Ma Liang's style to the styles of Beijing and Tianjin, the wrestling capitals of China, no further needs to be looked than Ma Liang's wrestling lineage. It was previously established that his style ultimately descended from a merger of Manchu and Mongol wrestling combined with some techniques from the Shaolin temple. When we trace the lineage of renowned masters from Beijing and Tianjin, who many wrestlers claim lineage from nowadays, it becomes clear that their styles are directly descended from the wrestling practised by the Manchus. Therefore, the style Ma Liang practised is connected to the styles practised by those in Beijing and Tianjin by way of common ancestry.

Firstly, the style of Shuaijiao practised in Beijing is clearly descended from the Shanpuying. The progenitor of Beijing wrestling was an instructor of the Shanpuying known as Wan Baye 宛八爷, or Wan Yongshun 宛永顺.⁴⁴ Wan Yongshun was the founder of the Tianqiao Wrestling School, a prominent wrestling school in Beijing, which gained great popularity in Beijing. This kind of wrestling was unique as it was a blend between the comedic performance art *xiangsheng* 相声 (crosstalk) and wrestling, creating a form of comedic performance wrestling art known as *wuxiangsheng* 武相声 (martial crosstalk).⁴⁵ He is responsible for spreading the Shanpuying wrestling style after the fall of the Qing. The Tianqiao School was not the only school responsible for spreading wrestling in Beijing. There were many other jiaochang 跤场 (wrestling grounds) in Beijing. The teachers at these wrestling grounds were often wrestlers from the now disbanded Shanpuying. Many of these wrestlers stayed in Beijing and remained in Beijing to teach, their style of wrestling forms the basis of Beijing wrestling.⁴⁶ Beijing wrestling is therefore the direct descendant of the Manchu-Mongol wrestling style of the Shanpuying.

⁴⁴ The Shanpuying was an influential wrestling institute of the Qing dynasty based in Beijing. Further details concerning the Shanpuying and its contributions and history shall be discussed in section 4.1.

Wang Xiaodong 王曉東, "Qingdai guojia shuaijiao zhuzhi 'Shanpuying' kaolue" 清代國家摔跤組織‘善撲營’考略 [Textual research on 'Shanpuying,' a national wrestling organisation in the Qing dynasty], *Tiyu xuekan* 體育學刊 22, no. 2 (2015): 113.

⁴⁵ "Shouwang Tianqiao shuaijiao, shuo de hao haishi shuai de hao" 守望天橋摔跤, 說得好還是摔得好 [Watching Tianqiao wrestling, do they talk better or wrestle better?], directed by Li Xin 李欣 and Zhang Jian 張妍, *Zheli shi Beijing* 這裏是北京 (Beijing: Beijing dianshitai xinwen pindao 北京電視臺新聞頻道, 2015), online video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQJ8L78yESA>

⁴⁶ Zhang Wenjin 張文瑾, "Shuo 'Jingjiao'" 說‘京跤’ [Talking about 'Beijing wrestling'], *Zijin Cheng* 紫禁城 [Forbidden City] 7 (2009): 120.

Secondly, also in Tianjin the dispersed wrestlers of the Shanpuying first spread the wrestling skills of the Qing Court to the public.⁴⁷ When the lineages of the masters of Tianjin who are responsible for the dissemination of wrestling are traced, it is revealed that the wrestling of Tianjin has deep connections with the wrestling of Beijing. Many of the most influential wrestling master from Tianjin can trace their lineage to one person: Cui Xiufeng 崔秀風, also known as Xiaogui Cui 小鬼崔 (Cui the Little Devil), he was a wrestler from the Shanpuying named so because Empress Dowager Cixi allegedly called him a xiaogui 小鬼 (little devil).⁴⁸ Pupils of Cui Xiufeng include the renowned wrestler Wang Kunshan 王昆山⁴⁹ and the famous Tianjin wrestling champion Bu Enfu 卜恩福.⁵⁰ These wrestlers characterise the Tianjin wrestling style, and since their styles descend from the Shanpuying, it can be said the wrestling of Tianjin descends from the Shanpuying.

In conclusion, the style of wrestling that Ma Liang codified was a kind of wrestling that was widely practised by wrestlers concentrated in the North of China. The relation between Ma Liang's style and the other wrestlers of the Early Republic is therefore one of siblings. His style is more closely related to the Baoding school than it is to the Tianqiao School, yet in the end, they all stem from the same source, the Manchu-Mongol wrestling tradition that was practised in the Qing Dynasty.

2.3 The Mongol Heritage of the Qing Wrestling

Since the Qing Empire's focus was on Inner-Asia, they also assumed the most threatening enemies to come from Inner-Asia also, as it had always done historically. In order to safeguard the Empire, maintaining relations with the Mongols was of paramount importance, especially in the earliest years of the Manchu state.⁵¹ Wrestling then, alongside horseracing, the playing of Mongolian music and horse wrangling were the cultural tools the Qing used to foster

⁴⁷ *Tianjin difang zhi* 天津地方志 [Tianjin Gazette], "Shuaijiao" 摔跤 [Wrestling], <http://www.tjdfz.org.cn/tjtz/tyz/ctty/sj/> (accessed January 2, 2019)

⁴⁸ Zhang Wenjin 張文瑾, "Shuo 'Jingjiao'" 說'京跤' [Talking about 'Beijing wrestling'], *Zijin Cheng* 紫禁城 [Forbidden City] 7 (2009): 120.

⁴⁹ Sina, "Zhang Hongyu shi gen shei xue de shuaijiao jiyi?" 張鴻玉是跟誰學習的摔跤技藝 [Who did Zhang Hongyu learn wrestling skills from?], last modified September 15, 2016, <https://m.iask.sina.com.cn/b/7SN5ucSEU5.html>, (accessed January 15, 2019)

⁵⁰ Shanpuying, "Shanpu dashi jianjie" 善撲大師簡介 [Biographies of the grandmasters of shanpu], last modified February 22, 2006, <http://www.shanpuying.com.hk/history3.html>. (accessed, January 15, 2019)

⁵¹ Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: the Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 122.

relations with their Mongol allies.⁵² In early Qing history, this desire to remain on good terms with various Mongol tribes is reflected by the number of marriage ties, diplomatic exchanges and by the various alliances forged between Mongol tribes and the Later Jin Jurchen who became the Qing Manchus. As Lü points out, wrestling was one of threads that held the fabric of the alliance between Mongols and Manchus together.⁵³ Naturally, if wrestling was one of the ways of maintaining on good terms with the Mongols, then it must be assumed that the wrestling styles practised by all participants during those diplomatic exchanges must have been very similar if not identical. Jin Qicong found that the Mongols heavily influenced the wrestling practised in the early Qing, as most of the renowned wrestlers of the Qing in this era were in fact Mongols.⁵⁴ Not to mention the fact that Hong Taiji, as he was the Great Khan of both Manchus and Mongols, granted titles to his Mongol wrestling champions in Mongolian, not Manchu.⁵⁵ No competition can ever be held if one party is playing by different rules, therefore, the Manchus and Mongols must have used one set of rules during their exchanges. These rules in any sports are what define the way the sport is practised and which skills are emphasised. For example, if one wrestler's tradition trains in ground techniques, yet the tournament in which he participates prohibits ground techniques, and only allows throwing, then it would be logical that this person would forsake the training of ground techniques in order to perfect his throwing. Therefore, it can be deduced if the Manchus deemed wrestling with Mongols as important, and they did, as the Shunzhi Emperor was recorded as being outraged by the fact that his Manchus lost against the Mongols,⁵⁶ then it would make sense that the wrestling art of the Manchus would adapt to the rules of these Manchu-Mongol wrestling competitions. In other words, the rules of the engagement determine the style of wrestling practised. What the original way of Manchu wrestling in the tradition of their Jurchen forebears entailed, however, remains a mystery. The Jurchens left behind little in the way of text and the then ruling Mongols of the Yuan Dynasty deemed such matters too trifling to record.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, it appears that that

⁵² Hao Yanxing 郝延省, “‘Sai Yan Si Shi’ de lishi jiazhi yu xiandai qishi” ‘塞宴四事’的歷史價值與現代啟示 [A modern revelation and the historical value of the ‘Four Matters of the Banquet beyond the Great Wall’], *Nanjing tiyu xueyuan xuebao* 南京體育學院學報 26 (2012): 27.

⁵³ Lü Yuhuan 呂玉環, “Qingdai shuaijiao fazhan guocheng yu Qingchao zhengzhi de guanxi” 清代摔跤發展過程與清朝政治的關係, *Lantai shijie* 蘭臺世界 6 (2014): 94-95.

⁵⁴ Jin Qicong 金啟琮, “Zhongguoshi Shuaijiao yuanchu Qidan, Menggu kao” 中國式摔跤源出契丹, 蒙古考 [A study on the origins of Chinese Shuaijiao from Khitan and Mongolia], *Neimenggu daxue xuebao* 內蒙古大學學報 22 (1979): 240.

⁵⁵ Lü Yuhuan, “Qingdai shuaijiao fazhan,” 95.
Jin and Kai, *Zhongguo shuaijiao shi*, 122.

⁵⁶ Xu Suqing 徐素卿, “Manzu de xiangpu” 滿族的相撲 [Wrestling of the Manchus], *Tiyu wenshi* 體育文史 1 (1983): 46.

⁵⁷ Jin, “Zhongguoshi shuaijiao yuanchu Qidan, Menggu kao,” 240.

the original Manchu way of wrestling before the establishment of the Later Jin, whatever it may have looked like, was to some degree modified to adapt to Mongol ways of wrestling.⁵⁸ As for what Mongolian wrestling looked like and where Jurchen wrestling may have come from is more thoroughly researched. It is believed that Mongol and Jurchen wrestling comes from Khitanese wrestling, based on an ancient vase unearthed in 1931 at the site of the old Eastern Capital of the Khitans in Manchuria dating back to the Khitan Liao Dynasty (916-1125) on which wrestlers are depicted who wear boots and some kind of wrestling jacket.⁵⁹

It is perhaps interesting to note the Manchus were not strangers to adapting elements of Mongol culture. It is generally agreed that the Mongols influenced the Manchu wardrobe.⁶⁰ Clothing elements typically ascribed to Manchus such as robes with narrow sleeves, known as arrow sleeves, buttoned side-closing lapels as well as riding slits in the robe were actually all adapted from the Mongols.⁶¹ More widely known is that the script of the Manchus was adapted from the Mongolian script as well.⁶² In short, Mongol wrestling influenced the wrestling of the Manchus as practised for the diplomatic matches between the Mongols, just as other elements of Manchu culture were adapted from the Mongols.

Consequently, the wrestling of the Manchus after the establishment of the Shanpuying must have been influenced by Mongolian wrestling for the same reasons the wrestling of the Manchus was influenced by the Mongols before the establishment of the Shanpuying; namely, the idea that the Manchus were more concerned with maintaining relations with the Mongols rather than preserving tradition. The difference being that for the Shanpuying there is an abundance of evidence to support the Mongol influences on the wrestling camp as opposed to the more speculative nature of the argument for Early Qing and Later Jin wrestling, before the establishment of the Shanpuying.

Firstly, the Manchu word for wrestler is *buku*, a Mongol loanword. Indeed, the word *buku*, is derived from the Mongol word *böke* which bears the same meaning.⁶³ Secondly, the

⁵⁸ While Jurchen wrestling may not have been recorded, it is known that the Jurchens wrestled. It is likely that they took on the traditions of the Khitan after the Jurchen seceded from the Empire. If this is true, then the Mongol tradition and the Manchu tradition ultimately come from one source: the Khitan.

⁵⁹ Torii Ryuzo 鳥居龍藏, “Qidan zhi jiaodi” 契丹之角觝 [Chio-ti of the Khitans], *Yanijing xuebao* 燕京學報 29 (1941): 193-200.

⁶⁰ Wang Zehang 王澤行, “Manzu fushi yanbian guocheng tanxi” 滿族服飾演變過程探析 [An evaluation of the developmental process of Manchu clothing], *Yishu yanjiu* 藝術研究 2 (2013): 31.

⁶¹ Liu Fei 劉菲, “Mengzu fushi yu zaoqi Manzu fushi de xingcheng” 蒙族服飾與早期滿族服飾的形成 [Mongolian dress and the formation of early Manchu dress], *Neimenggu daxue yishu xueyuan xuebao* 內蒙古大學藝術學院學報 1 (2014): 99.

⁶² Peter Perdue, *China Marches West; the Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 126.

⁶³ William Rozycki, “buku” in *Mongol Elements in Manchu*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 37.

wrestling jacket of the Shanpuying, the dalian, *daliyan* or *fokto* in Manchu, is in many ways similar to the Mongol *tsodok* or *tsejimeeg*. Some features are unique to Mongol and Shanpuying wrestling, such as the exposed chest, which according to Mongol legend was invented in order to prevent women from participating after a woman participated in a tournament and became champion.⁶⁴ Still, ethnographer Hansen thinks the costume is of Chinese origin due to the decoration.⁶⁵ Finally, the wrestling grounds were covered in camel fur and the wrestling belt was made of camel hair, this must also have been a Mongol or Hui influence, since there are no camels in the forested homeland of the Manchus.⁶⁶ To add to the previous, more obvious borrowings from Mongolian wrestling, there two elements that both traditions share but of these elements it is uncertain whether they are of Manchu or Mongol origin.

The first shared element is the rest of the Shanpuying's costume excluding the jacket. They wore boots, trousers and leggings covering the front of the trousers, this is still visible with Inner-Mongolian wrestlers, who wear this costume to this day during their wrestling. Early 20th century Khorchin wrestlers (see image 2) bear an even more striking resemblance to the *Dianshizhai Huabao* 點石齋畫報 (Dianshizhai Editorial) print of the late 19th century (see image 1) of Manchu wrestlers from the Shanpuying.⁶⁷

The second shared element is the dance that the wrestlers of the Shanpuying danced before wrestling, a custom still preserved in Beijing and Tianjin style wrestling, called *zoujia* 走架, *paojia* 跑架, *huanghuaajia* 黃花架 or *huangguaajia* 黃瓜架.⁶⁸ Among the Mongols, there are two main styles of ceremonial dance before wrestling. One is dominant in the Republic of Mongolia, here they dance with the arms spread out and lifting the legs while going forward, this is known as *devekh* in Mongol wrestling and mimics the Garuda.⁶⁹ In Inner Mongolia there

⁶⁴ Soon Jung-Kwon, "A Study of Athletic Uniforms in Mongolian Naadam Festival," *Journal of the Korean Society for Clothing Industry* 3 (2001): 127.

⁶⁵ Henny Harald Hansen, *Mongol Costumes: Researches on the Garments Collected by the First and Second Danish Central Asian Expeditions under the Leadership of Henning Haslund-Christensen 1936-37 and 1938-39* (Copenhagen: Glydenal, 1950), 89.

⁶⁶ Although the natural habitat of the Bactrian camel does border closely to the Manchu homeland, Manchus were not pastoral nomads as the Mongols were. Since the camels have evolved to live in flat arid deserts and stony plains and continued to be herded in such habitats, it can be assumed that the Manchus did not traditionally domesticate these animals.

R. Ji, P. Cui, et al., "Monophyletic origin of domestic bactrian camel (*Camelus bactrianus*) and its evolutionary relationship with the extant wild camel (*Camelus bactrianus ferus*)," *Animal Genetics* 40, no. 4 (2009): 378.

⁶⁷ Wu Youru 吳友如, *Dianshizhai huabao* 點石齋畫報 [Dianshizhai Pictorial] (Shanghai: Dianshizhai 點石齋, 1884-1898), volume 6 page 15.

⁶⁸ "Jinmen wanjiao ren' diyi ji zhongguoshi shuaijiao | CCTV jilu" 《津門玩跤人》第壹集 中國式摔跤 | CCTV 紀錄 [Wrestling Players of Tianjin' Episode 1, Chinese Shuaijiao | CCTV documentary], Youtube video, 4:48, posted by "CCTV jilu" CCTV 紀錄, June 15, 2018. <https://youtu.be/Gg6iEeVihFc>

⁶⁹ Stefan Krist, "Wrestling Magic: National Wrestling in Buryatia, Mongolia and Tuva in the Past and Today" in *the International Journal of the History of Sport* 31 (2014): 425.

is a dance called *magshikh* and it mimics the lion.⁷⁰ This dance is similar to what Beijing and Tianjin wrestlers still practise. The wrestlers of Tianjin claim the *huangguajia* is not only a ritual dance but serves a practical purpose in demonstrating your own skill and being able to see the skill of the opponent through these movements as well. The two dances are still too similar to be considered unrelated, especially when it is considered how closely intertwined other aspects are between the two traditions. Though it has to be said that the Republican audience seemed to have been unaware of the relations and did not link the two dances as the *magshikh* was considered “strange taste” which may be interpreted as foreign, unfamiliar or weird.⁷¹



(Image 1: wrestlers from the Shanpuying.⁷²)

⁷⁰ New World Encyclopedia, “Mongolian Wrestling,” last modified October 18, 2018, http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Mongolian_wrestling (accessed May 17, 2019)

⁷¹ 异味

Qinfen tiyu yuebao, “Gezhong biaoayan: Menggu shuaijiao: Menggu shuaijiaodui zhen lihai” 各种表演: 蒙古摔跤: 蒙古摔跤队真厉害 [Various demonstrations: Mongolian wrestling: the Mongolian Wrestling Team is truly Awesome], 1935.

⁷² As can be seen, the wrestlers depicted in this late Qing pictorial wear an open-chested jacket, a belt, trouser, leggings covering those trousers and boots.

Wu Youru 吳友如, *Dianshizhai huabao* 點石齋畫報 [Dianshizhai Pictorial] (Shanghai: Dianshizhai 點石齋, 1884-1898), volume 6 page 15.



(Image 2: on the left the typical Khorchin costume with jacket, trousers, leggings and boots.⁷³)



(Image 3: Inner-Mongolian wrestlers dancing *magshikh*.⁷⁴)

⁷³ Liang You 良友, “Gexiang biaoyan: Mengguren biaoyan shuaijiao, Hanren zhi yu saizhe, wu bu dabai” 各项表演：蒙古人表演摔角，漢人之與賽者，無不大敗 [Various demonstrations: Mongolians perform wrestling, all of the Han participants suffered great defeat], 1935.

⁷⁴ Sina, July 3, 2014, “Chuantong yule huodong fuyu caoyuan boboshengji” 傳統娛樂活動賦予草原勃勃生機 [Traditional entertainment activities give the steppes life force], http://nmg.sina.com.cn/travel/view/2014-07-03/073012197_2.html.



(Image 4: Li Baoru (right) and Feng Wenwu (left) demonstrating *huangguajia*.⁷⁵)

2.4 Conclusion

Jin Qicong argues that due to China being a large country composed of many ethnicities it would follow that not all achievements or contributions to the country's rich cultural legacy were products of Han Chinese, and non-Han contributions deserve recognition as well.⁷⁶ Evidence suggest that the Chinese Shuaijiao tradition derived from Manchu-Mongol stand-up wrestling. Of course, it is possible and even likely that Han Chinese elements were added to the wrestling tradition as a whole during the Qing dynasty and the subsequent Republican era, yet, the core of the sport remains firmly rooted in Manchu rules and Manchu style dress. From archaeology, history, terminological evidence and evidence from the living traditions itself, it does appear that Chinese Shuaijiao has strong connections and almost certainly shares common ancestry with Mongol Bōkh, and is certainly directly descended from the Manchu wrestlers at court, who in turn had much Mongol influence in their style.

⁷⁵ “Li Baoru xiansheng he Feng Wenwu laoshi biao yan huangguajia” 李寶如先生和馮文武老師表演黃瓜架 [Mister Li Baoru and teacher Feng Wenwu demonstrate Huangguajia], Tengxun video, 0:04, from a private video, posted by “bailutaijigongfuguan” 白露太極功夫館, June 26, 2016 <https://v.qq.com/x/page/i0518vj4ezg.html>.

⁷⁶ Jin, “Zhongguoshi shuaijiao yuanchu Qidan, Menggu kao,” 240.

3 THE ROLE OF WRESTLING AND ITS RELATION TO MANCHU IDENTITY IN THE QING DYNASTY

3.1 The Importance of Wrestling in Qing Dynasty

The Manchus ruled the Qing Dynasty. Many traditions such as how the Chinese wore their hair, how they dressed, what language they spoke, which kind of bows they shot and indeed what kind of wrestling they practised were influenced by the ruling Manchus. Qing Dynasty wrestling is a broad term that describes all wrestling practised in the Qing Dynasty. This would encompass many traditions that are not incorporated into Chinese Shuaijiao. As such, these traditions shall not be discussed in this chapter, or indeed this thesis. This subsection will explore what kind of influence the Manchu way of wrestling had on the development of wrestling in China, and attempt to sketch a landscape of the way wrestling the elite Manchus of the Qing Dynasty practised and perceived wrestling.

First of all, wrestling in the Qing Dynasty was not called shuaijiao 摔跤/摔角. In fact, all Chinese sources from the Qing Dynasty consulted refer to wrestling with one of five terms: “jue li” 角力 “liao jiao” 撩跤/撩交, “guan jiao” 贯跤/贯角, “bu ku” 布庫 and “xiang pu” 相撲. Since the rulers of the Qing were Manchus, they also had their own names to refer to wrestling and the institution that governs wrestling. It must to be clarified that in Manchu and Mongol both, the word used to refer to wrestling as a noun is not derived from the verb like in Chinese or English. In Manchu the verb is *jafunumbi* and in Mongol the verb is *barildahu*. All these names and terms have slight nuances. Buku, for example, is thought by Wang Saishi to refer to the native wrestling tradition of the Manchus largely uninfluenced by various Mongol, Dungan and Chinese wrestling after the Shanpuying was established.⁷⁷ “Shanpugong” 善撲功 refers to specifically the art practised by the Camp, but cannot refer to any other tradition.⁷⁸ This is unlike “xiangpu,” which is frequently used to refer to Japanese Sumō 相撲, or in Chinese reading, *xiangpu*. Regardless, in Qing Imperial documents the ruling Manchus placed tremendous importance on the practise of wrestling, in fact, Jin Qicong even claims “the Manchus viewed it as one of the most important martial skills.”⁷⁹ Evidence toward this claim

⁷⁷ The Shanpuying was an influential wrestling institute of the Qing dynasty based in Beijing. Further details concerning the Shanpuying and its contributions and history shall be discussed in section 4.1.

Wang Saishi 王賽時, “Cong buku dao shanpu” [From Buku to Shanpu], *Tiyu wenshi* 體育文史 3 (1987): 14-15.

⁷⁸ Sha and Liu, “Qingdai jiaoji shoudu pilu,” 28.

⁷⁹ 摔跤是滿洲最重視的壹種武技

Jin and Kai, *Zhongguo shuaijiao shi*, 142.

can be found in numerous documents from the Qing. To illustrate, the *Qinding huangchao wenxian tongkao* 欽定皇朝文獻通考 [Comprehensive Examination of Literature Compiled on Imperial Order of the Imperial Dynasty] reads:

When ascending the throne Nuomuqi and Wubashi led the troops to come and conduct the rituals and to organise a feast with music and dance. Nuomuqi and his fellows were bid to compete in archery and the guards and high officials were told to compete in archery and to choose a champion to play in the game of wrestling.⁸⁰

From this passage, it can be observed that formal occasions and merrymaking at those occasions would not be complete without wrestling being an integral part of them. Yet, wrestling did not merely serve the purpose of entertainment, as some Republican authors would assert about the Qing dynasty state of wrestling. The *Xiaoting Zalu* 嘯亭雜錄 [Xiaoting Miscellaneous Records] records:

At the start of the Empire the various lords, fighting personally in the heat of battle, pacified the areas of Liaoning and Shenyang include the sons of the former Prince Lie such as the Prince Keqin and the Prince Ying. The various lords pacified Shanzuo [Shandong], each of them has a share in the triumph, only the former Prince Huishun [Hvse] did not join the army as his youth prohibited him from doing so; nevertheless, he was graced with extraordinary courage, and made many a khan seem common. At birth, he had beard growth counting ten strands, they found this quite odd. In the era of Shunzhi, there was an envoy from the Khalkha who wrestled with the Emperor's men, yet none could move him. The Prince [Hvse] heard of this, and asked Prince Lie to attend court under the guise of being a guard and mingled among the crowd. The envoy wrestled with him, yet was skillfully and swiftly thrown [by Hvse]. Shizu [Shunzhi] rejoiced and bestowed countless gifts [upon Hvse], at this time he was twenty years of age. Afterward he would tell others: "In this life the loneliness is distressing, life is not nearly as wonderful as it is made out to be." Prince Lie was greatly surprised and saw this as an ill omen; he died before many years had passed.⁸¹

⁸⁰ 升禦座諾木齊烏巴什等率部衆朝見行禮畢設樂舞大宴令諾木齊等較射又令侍衛大臣等較射選力士為角觝之戲

Qinding huangchao wenxian tongkao [300 juan] 欽定皇朝文獻通考[300 卷] [Comprehensive Examination of Literature Compiled on Imperial Order of the Imperial Dynasty] (Beijing: Wuyingdian 武英殿: 1787): juan 卷 155 page 5.

⁸¹ 國初諸王，披堅執銳，撫定遼、沈，先烈親王諸子中如克勤郡王、穎毅王。諸王平定山左，各著有勞績，惟先惠順王以年幼未經從軍，然天授神勇，眾罕與匹。生有髭須數十莖，人爭異之。順治中，有喀爾喀使臣至，與近臣角抵，俱莫能撓。王聞之，請於烈王，偽為護衛入朝，雜於眾中，使臣與鬥，應手

The passage signifies the high esteem which good wrestlers enjoyed. Aside from being adored in the higher levels of Qing society, wrestling was also a widespread practice throughout much of the Qing military machine. The *Qing Huidian* 清會典 [The Collected Canon of the Qing] of the Guangxu reign (1874-1908) records:

Every time a camp exercises outside [they need to] practise foot archery, mounted archery, lancing from horseback, large formation demonstration, small military demonstration, three arrows from horseback, pike against mounted lance, and on foot the hard bow, soft bow, practising the sabre, the whip, the long spear, horse vaulting, camel vaulting, wrestling and other skills.⁸²

The *Yanpu Zaji* 簪曝雜記 [Yanpu Miscellaneous Records] records:

[...] buku and all [these] games are military practises.⁸³

As can be observed, wrestling was not only practised by the higher echelon of society, nor was it reserved for Imperial banquets, but also widespread among the multitudes of soldiers who were expected to train wrestling for military purposes.

Furthermore, the importance the Qianlong Emperor assigned to wrestling is visible through the *Yuzhi wuti Qingwen Jian* 御制五體清文鑒 [Imperial Pentaglot Dictionary]. In this mirror dictionary that was personally revised by Qianlong there is one chapter that is fully devoted to the classification of wrestling terminology which is simply titled “liaojiao lei” 撩跤類 [wrestling matter].⁸⁴ The rest of the dictionary is also sorted by subject, yet other martial arts aside from those deemed traditionally important by the Manchus such as archery on foot and mounted archery are not present. This instantly elevates wrestling to a much higher degree of importance than any other martial art practised in China apart from archery.

而仆。世祖大悅，賞賚無算，時年甫弱冠也。後嘗告人曰：「此間殊寂寞惱人，未若諸天樂也。」烈王方訝為不祥，未逾年薨。

Zhaolian 昭梈, *Xiaoting zalu* 嘯亭雜錄 [Xiaoting Miscellaneous Records] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1980), 42.

⁸² 凡外營之訓練以時習步射習騎射習馬槍操演大隊小過堂馬上三箭槍過馬槍步下硬弓軟弓舞刀舞鞭舞長槍騙馬跳馬跳駝攢跤等技。

Kun Gang 崑岡, *Qing Huidian* 清會典 [The Collected Canon of the Qing], edited by Wang Yunwu 王雲五 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan yinhang 臺灣商務印書館印行, 1968), 1023.

⁸³ [...]布庫諸戲皆以習武事也。

Zhao Yi 趙翼, *Yanpu Zaji* 簪曝雜記 [Yanpu Miscellaneous Records] (Edo 江戸: Yamada-ya Sasuke 山田屋佐助, 1829): Juan 1 page 13.

⁸⁴ *Yuzhi wuti Qingwen Jian* 御制五體清文鑒 [Imperial Pentaglot Dictionary] (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe 民族出版社, 1957): 974-996

3.1.1 The Shanpuying and its Role in the Empire

More significant is the establishment of the institution called Shanpuying 善撲營 (the Camp/Division of Excellent Wrestling).⁸⁵ The Shanpuying in Manchu is called Buku Kifu Kwaran.⁸⁶ The wrestling art practised in this Camp is sometimes referred to as *Shanpugong* 善撲功 (Excellent Wrestling Skill).⁸⁷ I suspect that it is the combination of three reasons as to why Kangxi set up this Camp. Firstly, he was an avid wrestler himself, and desired to promote the practice in the empire. Secondly, Kangxi, being the de-jure ruler used wrestling to seize power from Oboi, the de-facto ruler, and had the Camp set up to commemorate this victory.⁸⁸ Finally, he saw the need, like his Grandfather Hong Taiji saw the need to maintain amicable relations with the Mongols, who adored wrestling.

Nevertheless, as the name implies, the camp focused on training wrestlers. The camp was located in Beijing and counted 300 members, of which 50 were archers, 50 were riders and the remaining 200 were wrestlers.⁸⁹ The camp was split into two wings, left and right, based on which way the direction the camps are located from the perspective of the Imperial Palace. Each of the wings was headed by a different wing commander, both of whom answered to the same *Zongtong Dachen* 總統大臣 (President). The likely purpose of this split of the camp, Yuhuan writes, was to stimulate rivalry between the two sides so that the wrestlers would always remain competitive.⁹⁰ In the same vein of reasoning, the salary differed for each wrestler depending on rank; the higher the rank the higher the salary.⁹¹ In turn, his wrestling merit determined his rank, which he could only prove by wrestling and defeating higher ranked wrestlers. Aside from their normal salary, the wrestlers could also earn money by receiving rewards from the Emperor by doing extra duties such as performing at banquets and accompanying the Emperor on his battue hunts. The Mulan Battue/Mulan Autumn Hunt (Mulan Weilie/Mulan Qiuxian 木蘭圍獵/木蘭秋獵) was a Manchu tradition named after the Manchu word *muran* for the battue held during the deer mating season. The Emperors of the Qing would go to Chengde, beyond the Great Wall, to hold this event. In the event the Inner-Eurasian

⁸⁵ “buku kifu kūwaran” in Hu Zengyi 胡增益, *Xin Man Han da cidian* 新滿漢大詞典 [A Comprehensive Manchu-Chinese Dictionary], Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe 新疆人民出版社, 113.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Sha and Liu, “Qingdai jiaoji shoudu pilu,” 28.

⁸⁸ Zhaolian 昭槁, *Xiaoting zalu* 嘯亭雜錄 [Xiaoting Miscellaneous Records] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1980), 5.

Wang, “Qingdai guojia shuaijiao zhuzhi ‘Shanpuying’ kaolue,” 111.

⁸⁹ Wang, “Qing Dai guojia shuaijiao zhuzhi ‘Shanpuying’ kao lue,” 111.

⁹⁰ Lü Yuhuan, “Qingdai shuaijiao fazhan,” 95.

⁹¹ Wang, “Qing Dai guojia shuaijiao zhuzhi ‘Shanpuying’ kao lue,” 112.

heritage of the Manchus would be celebrated and Inner-Eurasian subjects of the Manchus, mainly Mongolic, Turkic and Tibetan lords would be invited to join the Great Khan in the festivities. Zhao Yi records that the Mulan hunts were organised so frequently “to subjugate all Mongols, make them harbour fear [our] might and respect [our] virtue, [by] repressing the head and have them submit so that they do not dare to have [ill] intentions.”⁹²

In short, wrestling was in the Qing Dynasty a way to maintain diplomatic relations with the Central Asian subjects, allies and tributaries. It was also used to receive and display the symbolic strength of Manchu and Imperial power to other foreign dignitaries and emissaries. Aside from serving diplomatic roles among the elite of the Empire, wrestling was also mandatory training among military divisions of the Qing. Among the common people, especially in the North of China, the practise of wrestling was widespread and unregulated, representing a normalised activity among the men of the population. It can be concluded that wrestling was highly regarded and emphasised by the ruling dynasty of the Empire. Through their continued support, wrestling was encouraged to grow and develop especially close to the centre of power.

⁹² 駕馭諸蒙古使之畏威懷德弭首帖伏而不敢生心也。

Zhao Yi 趙翼, *Yanpu Zaji* 簞曝雜記 [Yanpu Miscellaneous Records] (Edo 江戸: Yamada-ya Sasuke 山田屋佐助, 1829): Juan 1 page 14.

4 THE RELATION BETWEEN CHINESE NATIONALISM AND SHUAI JIAO

Sports and physical education are often used as tools to strengthen the nation and the ideals a nation wishes to propagate. Wrestling was no exception in this regard, yet some work was required in order for Shuaijiao and Chinese Shuaijiao to be suitable for nationalistic purposes. This chapter shall cover how Republican martial artists and martial arts researchers set in motion the metamorphosis of Qing dynasty wrestling into what would ultimately become known as Chinese Shuaijiao. Section 5.1 will discuss the anti-Manchu environment of the Republican era and the difficulties any Manchu art would face in such an environment. Section 5.2 shall discuss the usage of Chinese martial arts and sports as a means to promote nationalism in China through selecting two newspapers of the period that reflect the greater trends of the time using prior research. Section 5.3 shall illustrate the perception of wrestling during the Qing Dynasty through using the *Shenbao* 申報 (1872-1924), which was critical in the formation of public opinion in Imperial China, and analysing the context in which wrestling is mentioned in these *Shenbao* articles. Section 5.4 will analyse the perception of wrestling the Republican age through using the search function in the databases *Minguo shiqi qikan quanwen shuju ku* 民國時期期刊全文數據庫 [Republican Chinese Periodical Full-Text Database] (1911-1949) and the *Shenbao* to look for changes in the terms used to describe wrestling. The subsections of 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 will concern the only two wrestling manuals, Ma Liang's *Zhonghua Xin Wushu* and Tong Zhongyi's *Zhongguo Shuaijiao Fa*, widely distributed in the Republican era.⁹³ These influential manuals shall be analysed in to shed light upon the perception of wrestling during this era. The final section of this chapter shall draw some conclusions based on the discrepancies and similarities of the results of the different perceptions as pointed out in the previous sections.

4.1 Anti-Manchu Rhetoric in the Republican Era

Chinese nationalism in the late Qing Dynasty was partially born out of the resistance against the various Western imperialist powers. However, due to the incompetence and inability of the Qing imperial government to resist foreign transgression, under the influence of Western views on race and nationality, the revolutionaries began to view the Imperial government as the target

⁹³ Fan Zhengzhi 樊正治, "Shuaijiao shi" 摔角史 [The History of Shuai Chiao], *Shida xuebao* 師大學報 (1986): 355.

of revolution.⁹⁴ In this way, the revolution was aimed at the Chinese Feudal system, rather than any particular ethnicity or race. Nonetheless, the reigning Imperial house of China were Manchus, descendants of those who were traditionally seen as Dong Yi 東夷 (Eastern Barbarians).⁹⁵ The extant distinction between what was Hua 華 (Chinese) and what was Yi 夷 (Barbarian) was emphasised to justify the resistance against the Manchu. It was seen as an unnatural status quo for the inferior Manchus to reign over the superior Han.⁹⁶ Indeed, it was unnatural for the Manchus, who should be in the frigid North, to inhabit Chinese land at all; Chinese and non-Chinese are distinct and may never be confused, either in race or living space.⁹⁷ “Mongols had exploited the emperorship in order to enforce artificially a proximity of alien peoples with the Chinese.”⁹⁸ This artificial proximity clashes with the popular Western ideal of “one nation, one state,” which Dikötter identifies as racial nationalism.⁹⁹ The discrepancy between ideal and reality would logically lead to the conclusion that the Manchus must be expelled. In this manner, the racial issue occupied a prominent place in revolutionary rhetoric.¹⁰⁰

Aside from the intellectual resistance against non-Han rule, the dissatisfaction from common classes was apparent. Evidenced by the establishment of many anti-Manchu secret societies and the multiple large-scale late nineteenth century revolts such as the Nian rebellion and the Taiping Rebellion. The peasant class felt the state was faltering and thereby failing the people, since the Manchus were reigning, it was natural to blame all misfortune upon the ill rulership of the Manchu Emperor and his court.¹⁰¹

In essence, anti-Manchuism was a combination of several factors: the modernist critiques against the Imperial system, anti-foreign prejudice, the sustained resistance of Chinese literati and gentry and the widespread agrarian discontent. Indeed, Rhoads argues that the “perilous condition” of China at the time “could easily be blamed upon the government, the

⁹⁴ Zheng Xinzhe 鄭信哲, *Minzu zhuyi sixiangchao yu guozu jiangou: Qingmo Minchu Zhongguo duo minzu hudong ji qi yingxiang* 民族主義思潮與國族建構:清末民初中國多民族互動及其影響 [The Thoughts of Nationalism and Nation Building: the Interactions of the Chinese Nationalities in the Late Qing and Early Republic of China and Its Effects] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe 社會科學文獻出版社, 2014), 5.

⁹⁵ Dongyi 東夷 translates to Eastern Barbarian, and was used by the Han to denote the non-Han people from the East, originally the people from modern day Shandong. The meaning of dongyi shifted throughout the ages and could be used to refer to the people living in Northeast China, Japan and Korea.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Frank Dikötter, *the Discourse of Race in Modern China* (London: Hurst, 1992), 27.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 28.

Zheng, *Minzu zhuyi sixiangchao yu guozu jiangou*, 59.

⁹⁹ Dikötter, *the Discourse of Race in Modern China*, 123.

¹⁰⁰ Zheng, *Minzu zhuyi sixiangchao yu guozu jiangou*, 6.

¹⁰¹ Kauko Laitinen, *Chinese Nationalism in the late Qing Dynasty: Zhang Binglin as an Anti-Manchu Propagandist* (London: Curzon Press, 1990): 32.

Manchu court and the Manchu people as a whole.”¹⁰² National identity is maintained by constantly seeking to differentiate between what is friend and what is foe.¹⁰³ For the revolutionaries, Manchus, among others, were clearly the foe. The biased view of the Qing Empire as a conquest state based on racial separation by which an inferior and barbarian race leeches off the Chinese race was widespread at the time.

The late Qing Dynasty and Republican era were characterised by anti-Manchu and anti-Imperialist rhetoric directed at the Imperial government and the foreign powers that preyed on China. Revolutionary thinkers of the time used anti-Manchu rhetoric to encourage the people to rise up against their oppressive and ineffective overlords by listing the various evils the Manchus had wrought upon the Chinese nation. A phenomenon manifest clearly in Zou Rong’s rhetoric as he called for the genocide of the Manchus as “all Manchus residing in China shall be driven out or killed as revenge.”¹⁰⁴ Zou Rong 鄒容 (1885-1905) is a famous anti-Qing revolutionary who was martyred at the age of 19 and published the influential book *Gemingjun* 革命軍 [The Revolutionary Army] in 1903. Furthermore, the Tongmenghui, the secret revolutionary alliance founded by Sun Yat-Sen in 1908, believed that “driving the barbarian Manchus back to the Changbai Mountains” would be the only way to restore the Chinese nation.¹⁰⁵ Simply said, the Manchu were portrayed as a foe to the Chinese people.

After the successful overthrow of the Qing in 1911, the Nationalist revolutionaries attempted to reconcile the five major ethnicities of China, the Han, the Manchus, the Hui Muslims, the Tibetans and the Mongols. To this end, the ideal to pursue was no longer of a Han ethno nationalist nature, but rather of a Nationalism that incorporated members of a new ethnicity labelled “Zhonghua minzu” (中華民族). This incorporation of smaller ethnicities into a large one is reminiscent of the Qing efforts to define “the Chinese (Zhongguoren 中國人) as a collection of ethnically diverse groups.”¹⁰⁶ This ethnicity was formed, the Nationalists argued, just as the Han originally were formed incorporating numerous smaller ethnicities into a singular one called Han, or how the Mongols united smaller ethnic constituents into a greater

¹⁰² Edward Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928*. Studies on Ethnic Groups in China (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000): 15.

¹⁰³ Zheng, *Minzu zhuyi sixiangchao yu guozu jiangou*, 35.

¹⁰⁴ 驅逐住居中國之滿洲人，或殺以報仇。

Zou Rong 鄒容, *Gemingjun* 革命軍 [The Revolutionary Army] (Taipei: Zhongyang wenwu gongyingshe yinhang 中央文物供應社印行, 1954), 44.

¹⁰⁵ Shehong Chen, “Being Chinese, becoming Chinese-American: The transformation of Chinese identity in the United States, 1910-1928,” dissertation, the University of Utah, 1997: 24.

¹⁰⁶ Gang Zhao, “Reinventing China: Imperial Qing Ideology and the Rise of Modern Chinese National Identity in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Modern China* 32, no. 1 (2006): 13.

collective, so would the “Zhonghua Minzu” be the new Chinese nation to form out of these five major ethnicities.¹⁰⁷ Through this new definition of people living in the Chinese Nation (Zhonghuaminzu 中國民族) became an ethnicity (minzu 民族) as well as a nationality (guomin 國民) simultaneously.¹⁰⁸

Yet among the people, the hate for the Manchus was deep-seated and could not be forgotten so easily. Before and during the revolution, the Manchu people were treated as savagely as they had treated the Chinese. A prelude of anti-Manchu violence occurred in the Taiping rebellion, when 40,000 Manchus were slaughtered in Nanjing followed by another 10,000 in Zhengzhou. During the transition from Qing to the Republic, China saw another wave of genocide during which 10,000 Manchus were killed in Wuhan and another 20,000 in Xi'an. These atrocities were committed in the name of “national revenge” and sometimes justified as just retribution for what the Manchus did to the Chinese centuries before.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, according to Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1868-1936), the revolutionary scholar also known as Zhang Binglin 章炳麟, the entirety of the Manchu people was to be held accountable for the atrocities committed against the Chinese centuries before. Their unjust taking of rightfully Chinese land could only call for the just deportation of all Manchu people, back to their homeland of the three North-eastern Provinces.¹¹⁰ Harrowing accounts of the “Ten Days at Yangzhou” and “the Jiading Massacre,” two massacres carried out by the Manchu invaders against the Chinese during their conquest of China in 1645, were spread widely as a means to inspire anti-Manchu fervour. Whether the term genocide is fitting in this instance or not, the Manchus nevertheless suffered severe persecution for their ethnic identity. In order to avoid persecution, many Manchus took Chinese names and strayed as far away from any Manchu cultural identity markers as possible. The high degree of Sinification among the Manchus meant that the assimilation into Chinese culture was thorough.

Chinese Martial Arts often trace their lineage back to the secret societies that harboured anti-Manchu sympathies during the tumultuous Qing Dynasty, and were allowed to proliferate and flourish after the fall of the Manchus. These martial arts styles include the world-famous Hung Gar (Hongjia Quan 洪家拳), Wing Chun (Yongchun Quan 永春拳) and Choy Lay Fut

¹⁰⁷ Zheng, *Minzu zhuyi sixiangchao yu guozu jiangou*, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Rhoads, *Manchus and Han*, 203.

¹¹⁰ “Zheng chouman lun” 正仇滿論 [On the Righteous Hatred of Manchus], *Guominbao* 國民報, August 10, 1901, reprinted in *Xinhai geming qian shiniian jian shipian xuanji* 辛亥革命前十年間時論選集 [Anthology of essays from the ten years prior to the Xinhai Revolution], edited by Zhang Nan 張枬 and Wang Renzhi 王忍之 (Beijing: San Lian Shu Dian 三聯書店, 1978), 94-95.

(Cailifo Quan 蔡李佛拳) styles, arguably the most widely known and most practised forms of Chinese martial arts to date. In popular culture, anti-Manchuism through martial arts is reflected in the explosively popular 1928 film *Burning of the Red Lotus Monastery*. This film portrays Han martial artists resisting the Manchu regime, and became so popular as to spawn no less than eighteen sequels in three years from 1928 to 1931.¹¹¹ The very act of practising these martial arts was an act of rebellion against the Qing government, as even the basic martial arts salute of these styles symbolise anti-Qing allegiance. For example, in Choy Lay Fut each of the hands symbolise the sun and the moon, when placed together this forms the character of “ming” 明, the same one used in the Ming Dynasty, a sign that one adhered to the movement of “overthrowing the Qing, restoring the Ming” (fan qing fu ming 反清復明).¹¹² It should be noted, however, that there were at least during the early phase of the Boxer Rebellion, many Manchu run martial arts societies that were in practice indistinguishable from the Chinese ones and proclaimed the slogan “support the Qing and purge the foreigners” (fu qing mie yang 扶清滅洋).¹¹³ The Qing court, in order to avoid the ire of these secret societies, clandestinely supported the Boxer Rebellion.¹¹⁴ Shuaijiao however, is originally Manchu and has long been associated with the Inner-Eurasian, non-Chinese barbarians and therefore does not fit in the anti-Manchu fervour of the Republican age nor the nationalistic rhetoric of the time which underlined the “utility of cultural and racial origins in bolstering an injured national identity.”¹¹⁵ Then, similarly to how practising an anti-Qing art was an act of rebellion of the Qing, the practising of a Manchu art during the Republic may well have been seen an announcement of one’s loyalties to the fallen Empire. In this environment, the proposition that the wrestling art of the Manchus or even the practitioners of a Manchu art that markets itself as such would be able to survive is unlikely. Therefore, wrestlers would refrain from advertising their style as Manchu heritage; similar to how Manchus of the period ceased to identify themselves as Manchu for fear of persecution. Instead, perhaps the only way to survive and thrive for a formerly Manchu

¹¹¹ Ibid, 322.

¹¹² Huang Jianjun 黃建軍, “‘Cailifo’ chuangshiren Chen Xiang de wushu wuxue sixiang yanjiu” ‘蔡李佛’創始人陳享的武學思想研究 [On the Martial Arts Thoughts of ‘Choy Lee Fut’ Founder Chan Heung], *Tiyu yanjiu yu jiaoyu* 體育研究與教育 26, no. 4 (2011): 79.

¹¹³ Pamela Kyle Crossley, *Orphan Warriors: Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990): 174.

¹¹⁴ Kauko Laitinen, *Chinese Nationalism in the late Qing Dynasty: Zhang Binglin as an Anti-Manchu Propagandist* (London: Curzon Press, 1990): 42.

¹¹⁵ Jing Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism and Literature: The Making of Modern Chinese Identity, 1895-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005): 2.

wrestler is to make his art Chinese in order to fit within the nation's newly formed "ethnicised national identity."¹¹⁶

In addition, since the wrestling of the Late Qing and Republic was heavily influenced by the Mongolian style, it seems strange why there was little widespread attempt to ascribe Shuaijiao 摔跤 to the Mongolians entirely. Yet, when taking into account that Mongols were also seen as barbarians from the same stock as the Manchus and that the Chinese Nationalists targeted the Mongolians as "substitute for the Manchu," it becomes entirely clear as to why promoting wrestling as a Mongolian art would face precisely the same issues as promoting wrestling as a Manchu art.¹¹⁷

4.2 Sports and Martial Arts as a means to Promote Chinese Nationalism and the Role of Wrestling

Sports and physical prowess have since the late Qing been seen by the Chinese as one of the means with which the European nations were able to dominate the world.¹¹⁸ A strong and physically powerful civilisation in which every citizen participates, not only the military, would then also evolve to be seen as the means to obtain a powerful nation.¹¹⁹ The link between physical strength and the practise of martial arts is apparent. Indeed Lu, Qi and Zhang argue that from the beginning "Chinese nationalism was tightly bound to Wushu [武術 martial arts]" and that "after the 1911 nationalist revolution, wushu was recognised by most of the Chinese as a basic means to 'preserve the nation' and 'preserve the race.'"¹²⁰

"The development of physical education in Europe was inseparable from the rise of modern nationalism after the French Revolution."¹²¹ However, in China, physical education "developed along efforts to turn a dynastic realm into a modern nation-state according to the political ideas of the times."¹²² In the beginning of the 20th century, the "Chineseness" of physical education was hotly debated.¹²³ An article from the bi-monthly newspaper of the 7th Northern Revolutionary army in 1927 proposes to reinvigorate wrestling. This army was to

¹¹⁶ Jing Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism and Literature*, 3.

¹¹⁷ Burensain Borjigin, "the Complex Structure of Ethnic Conflict in the Frontier: Through the Debates around the 'Jindandao Incident' in 1891," *Inner Asia* 6 (2004): 50.

¹¹⁸ Zhouxiang Lu, Hong Fan, "From Celestial Empire to Nation State: Sports and the Origins of Chinese Nationalism (1840-1927)," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* (2010): 482.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 484.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 320.

¹²¹ Susan Brownell, *Training the Body for China: Sports in the Moral Order of the People's Republic* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1995), 46

¹²² *Ibid*.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 19.

demonstrate the art of wrestling in the city of Datong 大同, the message reminds the soldiers to do their best in order not to ruin the name of either their army or wrestling. They also had to realise that the average Japanese was quite skilled at Jūdō, which came ultimately from China through Chen Yuanyun 陈元赞 (1587-1671), and that it is a shame that wrestling has deteriorated to such a degree in China.¹²⁴ The message serves as a reminder that wrestling is not foreign after all. Similarly, in a periodical from 1936 it is passionately argued that Chinese martial arts, including Shuaijiao, have lost their essence. Chinese martial arts no longer measure up to foreign martial arts, especially Japanese Jūdō.¹²⁵ Wrestling is therefore not portrayed as a foreign import, but rather an old, albeit neglected, Chinese practise. These articles match Liang Qichao's exhortation to return to a form of "Chinese Bushido [way of the warrior]," which was lost in the Han Dynasty, in order to save China.¹²⁶ Both Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929), the foremost intellectual leader of early 20th century China, and these articles look to Japan as an example to emulate. Once again, wrestling is torn between a foreign and Chinese identity. It can be deduced that Chinese nationalism demands wrestling to be Chinese. The development of Ma Liang's *Zhonghua Xin Wushu* was precisely the solution to the question of the foreign identity of wrestling, whether that identity be Manchu, Japanese or Western. Wrestling was transformed into becoming a part of *guocui tiyu* 國粹體育 (national essence physical culture).¹²⁷ Proponents of *guocui* believed foreign training methods would be ineffective for Chinese bodies, which means Ma Liang's Manchu-Mongol wrestling had become quintessentially and irrevocably Chinese.

The Republican government, in its attempts to use sports to "create a modern nation-state," made efforts to spread the "influence of physical education by instituting programs in all schools." The Central Chinese Martial Arts Institute promoted sports for "strengthening the

¹²⁴ There are several theories on the origins of jujutsu, the martial art that judo was based on. One of these theories is that three Japanese warriors travelled to China in the Late Ming dynasty to and learned the craft from Chen Yuanbin and then introduced jujutsu in Japan.

Pan Dong 潘冬, and Ma Lianzhen 馬廉禎, "Lun Mingqing zhiji de Zhong Ri wuyi jiaoliu yu roushu yuanliu zhibian" 論明清之際的中日武藝交流與柔術源流之辯 [Sino-Japanese Martial Arts Exchange at the Turn the Ming and Qing Dynasties and Argument of Jujutsu Origin], *Chengdu tiyuan xueyuan xuebao* 成都體育學院學報 (2011): 25

Ma Ximin 馬西民, "Diqi jun weiduiying zai Datong dongguan wai biaoyan shuaijiaoshu ji" 第七軍衛隊營在大同東關外表演率角術記 [Record on the Wrestling Demonstration of the Guard Division of the Seventh Army outside the Eastern Gate of Datong] *Beifang guomin gemingjun diqi jun ban yuekan* 北方國民革命軍第七軍半月刊, 1927

¹²⁵ Tian Dianfeng 田鎮峰, "Shuaijiao jiaoben xu" 率角教本序, *Qiushi yuekan* 求是月刊, 1936

¹²⁶ Brownell, *Training the Body for China*, 47

¹²⁷ Ibid, 52.

nation and strengthening the race.”¹²⁸ Shuaijiao was established as one of the obligatory subjects for professors, trainers and students alike and in fact is even considered “one of the important subjects of the Central Chinese Martial Arts Institute.”¹²⁹ With the issues of promoting *guocui* instead of foreign arts, as well as the nationalist and anti-Manchu ideologies present at the time, it was an absolute necessity to erase the Manchu-Mongol origins of the art and commit entirely to the notion that Shuaijiao was Chinese.

4.3 The Perception of Wrestling in the Qing Dynasty's *Shen Bao*

During the Late Qing, since the establishment of the Shenbao newspaper from 1872 onwards, there was a frequent mention of the Shanpuying and wrestling using the term *guanjiao*, usually mentioned when they either had to perform their skills for the various Mongol princes, but sometimes also for Hui tributaries who came to pay tribute to the Emperor. The reports on the exploits of the Shanpuying are almost formulaic, with the descriptions of each event being almost identical to the previous. For example:

At 11:50 in the morning of 23rd of the past first month, the Emperor took seat on the Imperial Carriage and left for the Hall of Purple Splendour to ascend the Treasured Throne in the Yellow Tabernacle. All of the Inner and Outer Mongol Lords, Beile and Beise, Taiji, Tabunang and Great Lhama et cetera were split in two wings according to order and rank. On the left before the tent was the ceremonial master. After the Emperor concluded the bestowing and dividing of the tea to the Mongol Lords, they were granted milk tea, kumys, food dishes and baubles, each of them knelt down and curtsied. When the Emperor supped, he observed the wrestling of the men of the Shanpuying, and through this division's official granted nameplates. The Emperor decreed that Xiang and Shun and others, 16 in total, wrestle, perform camel acrobatics, horse acrobatics and play various tunes from Mongol and Western Territory at that venue. After this concluded, the Emperor retired to the Palace and the Mongol Lords each left.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ 強國強種

Wang and Guo, “Zhongyang Guoshuguan,” 45.

¹²⁹ 中華國術館的重要項目之壹

Ibid., 45-47.

¹³⁰ 去臘二十三日上午十一點鐘逾五十分時皇上駕至紫光閣升黃幄御寶座所有內外蒙古王貝勒貝子公臺吉塔布裏大喇嘛等分為兩翼各按秩序侍立幄前左為伯邸領班 皇上進茶賞茶畢分賞蒙古王公等奶茶奶酒菓餚玩物各王公跪受行禮 皇上用晚膳閱看善撲營官兵貫跤經該營堂官進呈名牌欽命祥順等十六人當場貫跤次閱駝馬蒙古西番各曲畢始乘輿還宮蒙古王公等各散

Shenbao 申報, “Jingshi zaji” 京師雜紀 [Miscellaneous Records of the Capital], February 18, 1889

Out of the 118 search results for the term 善撲, 18 reports follow the format of the passage above. Many others are simple messages that report the changing of the commanders of the divisions, or describe the military inspection of the Shanpuying.

The reporting of wrestling through the Shanpuying in the Qing Dynasty *Shenbao* represents a steadfast continuity of tradition. The reports are matter-of-factly, without embellishing language. All of these passages which contained the words “Shanpuying,” from before 1911, have in common that they all concern the Emperor and his Feudal relation with his Inner-Eurasian subjects. Wrestling here seems to be both a reward for the loyalty of the Mongols and other Inner-Eurasian subjects as well as a display of the Emperor’s sovereignty and power. The connection between wrestling and Manchu tradition, in these passages through Imperial tradition, is clear. Through the research of these newspaper articles it can be seen that not only was wrestling seen as an Inner-Asian, nomadic activity, it had also effectively been Manchurified and placed within the bounds of Manchu identity markers, albeit to a lesser extent than speaking Manchu or shooting arrows. The fact that these newspapers articles were widely disseminated had no doubt a great effect on the perception of the public. It is therefore likely that at the end of the Qing dynasty, the general perception of wrestling would have been that it was an imperial activity as well as one that was closer to the nomadic, Inner-Eurasian world and Manchu identity than it was to the Chinese world.

4.4 The Portrayal of Wrestling in the Republican Era

One of the last entries on the exploits of the Shanpuying ends somberly with the mention that the annual gatherings of the two wings of the Shanpuying have been cancelled due to the state funeral of 1908. With the death of the Shanpuying, and the overthrowing of the Imperial Regime, the reporting on wrestling also changed drastically. An article from March 15, 1923 reports that there were celebrations during which wrestling (guan-jiao 攢交) was shown as entertainment alongside other “variety acts.”¹³¹ The 1939 article “Wan Qing yiduanjian: maiwen gushi, guan-jiao kaozheng” 晚晴簃斷簡：賣文故事、攢跤考證 [Incomplete Records of the Side Room of the Late Qing Dynasty: Stories from Literary Busking - Textual Research on Wrestling] provides a isolated view on wrestling that is not reflected in the other sources from the Republican era. The author Zhang Qinglin writes that the Mongols and Manchus excel at wrestling and that it is part of their culture to such a degree that “children from a young age

¹³¹ *Shenbao* 申報, “Taiyuan” 太原 [Taiyuan], March 15, 1923.

see wrestling as an ordinary game.”¹³² Zhang continues to state that the Qing regime, from beginning of the Empire, has always placed utmost importance on the practice of *guanjiao*. From his article, it is perhaps telling to see that Zhang uses the term “*guanjiao*” instead of “*shuaijiao*” when talking about the Qing dynasty and its Manchu wrestlers. While the article is not concerned with the origins of the art, as he makes no mention of it, he does not refrain from mentioning the great contributions to the art of wrestling of the Manchu Qing dynasty. This diminishment of Manchu contribution to wrestling is a recurring theme in Republican sources, as shall be seen in the rest of this section. Yet, Zhang’s free admission of the importance the Manchus ascribe to wrestling is unique in Republican sources. The overall sentiment of the Central Chinese Martial Arts Institute seems to be that *Shuaijiao* needs to be practised by young people and is echoed in newspaper of the time. Mr. Tian writes then that the athletics of other nations are improving daily, and implores that *Shuaijiao* needs to be “promoted with great force.”¹³³ The idea that *Shuaijiao* was an ancient Chinese art and needs to be revived in order to preserve a lost art, or indeed, to compete with the Japanese is a sentiment that can be found widely in newspapers from this period.

There is a shift in terms used to describe wrestling when the Qing Empire fell in 1911. Figure 1 shows the immediate change in term usage. Whereas before the fall, the Manchu term “*buku*” 布庫 and “*jueli*” 角力 yield the most search results. Note that the results for “*buku*” using this searching method yield results that have nothing to do with wrestling, yet show up because they are components of proper names. Nevertheless, it is striking that after the fall of the Qing, there are no results for the term *buku*. Understandably, with the dissolution of the Shanpuying, there are no entries after 1911 that contain the term “*shanpu*” 善撲. Regardless of how many search results yielded by “*buku*” are unrelated to wrestling, the fact that there are no results for *buku* after the Qing points to an aversion to the Manchu term. Alternatively, the disappearance of “*buku*” might be a result of the decline of wrestling as an activity. This explanation, however, does not seem likely, as there are other terms that refer to wrestling that now replace the use of “*buku*.” Indeed, in the Republican era the most common terms used for wrestling are “*jue li*” 角力 and “*shuai jiao*” 摔角. While “*jue li*” has always been a popular

¹³² Zhang Qinglin 張慶霖, “Wan Qing yidianjian: maiwen gushi, *guanjiao* kaozheng” 晚晴簃斷簡：賣文故事、攢跽考證 [Incomplete Records of the Side Room of the Late Qing Dynasty: Stories from Literary Busking - Textual Research on Wrestling] *Wuyun risheng lou* 五雲日升樓, 1939.

¹³³ 大力提倡

Tian Yurong 田毓榮, “Qingdai: Shanpuying zhi *shuaijiao*” 清代：善撲營之摔角 [Qing Dynasty: The Wrestling of the Wrestling Division], *Guoshu Sheng* 國術聲, July 27, 1936.

term, even in the Qing Dynasty, the term “shuai jiao” 摔角 yielded no search results from before 1911 at all. It appears that in the Republic using the term “shuai jiao” 摔角 had totally supplanted “buku” when using it to refer to wrestling. In conclusion, through observing the numbers and some articles, it is quite clear that the Republican sources moved away from anything that would mark Shuaijiao as overtly Manchu.

	1872-1911 frequency (Shenbao 申報)	1911-1949 frequency (Shenbao 申報)	1911-1949 frequency (Mingguo shiqi qikan quanwen shuju 民國時期 期刊全文数据)	Total frequency
攢跤 guanjiao	0	0	2	2
貫跤 guanjiao	75	1	1	77
攢角 guanjiao	0	0	0	0
撩跤 liaojiao	0	0	0	0
料跤 liaojiao	0	0	0	0
角力 jueji	164	231	162	557
角抵 juedi/jiaodi	19	16	8	43
角觝 juedi/jiaodi	17	13	1	31
摔跤 shuaijiao	3	6	30	39
摔角 shuaijiao	0	182	264	446
率角 shuaijiao	0	44	8	52
布庫 buku	441	17	1	459
相撲 xiangpu	63	114	41	218
善撲 shanpu	118	2	2	122
手搏 shoubo	35	30	0	65
Subtotals	935	656	520	
				2111

(Figure 1: the frequency of the search results of different terms that refer to wrestling.)

4.4.1 The Origins of Shuaijiao as recorded by Ma Liang

Ma Liang's *Zhonghua Xin Wushu* (Chinese New Martial Arts) was the means by which Ma Liang attempted to standardise and codify Chinese martial arts. He published his works in several volumes: fist and legs, straight double-edged sword, staff and, naturally, wrestling. These books were widely disseminated by the Central Chinese Martial Arts Institute, and would serve an important role in the spreading of martial arts education throughout China in the early Republican period from 1917 onwards until other manuals were published. Ma Liang, like all authors after him, does attempt to explain the origin of Shuaijiao. As discussed in section 5.2, the purpose of this manual was to rebrand wrestling by distancing wrestling from its Manchu background. This section shall discuss what Ma Liang writes in this foreword to achieve that rebranding.

Firstly, Ma Liang diminishes the Manchu-Mongol heritage of Shuaijiao by invoking the ubiquity of wrestling in two separate places. Firstly, his foreword begins by stating that the origins of the Shuaijiao subject (Shuaijiao Ke 摔跤科), formed out of empty-hand jueji, a term used historically, but also at the time of his writing to refer to the act of wrestling. Secondly, he continues to write “these techniques are primal nature to animals.”¹³⁴

Secondly, Ma Liang writes that wrestling by the time of Qianlong this art had been diminished to be called a “variety act.”¹³⁵ Instead of saying that wrestling in the Qing Dynasty enjoyed a period of high development and widespread practise under Qianlong Ma Liang states the opposite. He contrasts the allegedly low level of wrestling of Qing Dynasty wrestling by referring to the high level of Song Dynasty wrestling through Yue Fei 岳飛 (1103-1142). By doing so he attempts to establish that wrestling is in fact from the Song dynasty and that the wrestling of the Qing dynasty in Qianlong's reign is in fact a bastardised “variety act” version of the original and superior form of wrestling that was practised in the Song.

Thirdly, he contrasts the universality of wrestling by claiming the specific origins of his own style as he writes “warriors of old” practised wrestling and that wrestling “was popular with Yue Wumu [a.k.a. Yue Fei] of the Song Dynasty.”¹³⁶ He continues to state that the skills passed down from Yue Fei were “what is today known as Shuaijiao.” By claiming Yue Fei was

¹³⁴ 斯術爲動物之本性。

Ma Liang 馬良, *Zhonghua Xin Wushu: Shuaijiaoke chujijiaoke* 中華新武術: 摔跤科初級教科 [New Chinese Martial Arts: Wrestling Fundamentals] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan yinhang 商務印書館印行, 1917), 1.

¹³⁵ 杂技 Ibid.

¹³⁶ 歷代武士/乃興於宋代岳武穆。

Ma, *Zhonghua Xin Wushu*, 1.

particularly fond of wrestling, and that the Shuaijiao practised in Ma Liang's time came from Yue Fei, Ma Liang instantly reshapes Shuaijiao into a nationalistic and patriotic Chinese martial art. This is because Yue Fei won sweeping victories against the Jurchens, the ancestors of the Manchus. In the late Qing Dynasty Yue Fei had already been transformed from a Chinese God into a "National Hero," a national hero who for Republican intellectual Zhang Taiyan represented total resistance against Manchu rule and whom Zhang used to emphasise the "necessity of racial thinking."¹³⁷ In fact, in the beginning of the 20th century, "Yue Fei became the national hero of the anti-Manchu movement."¹³⁸ To compare, linking martial arts styles to Yue Fei to inspire some kind of Nationalistic enthusiasm had precedent in the Republican era. Several styles of fighting have been linked to Yue Fei, such as Manjianghong quan 满江红拳 (A river of blossoms fist), named after a poem Yue Fei allegedly wrote, and Xingyi Quan 形意拳.¹³⁹ Ma Liang claims the wrestling he practises and is disseminating in his book comes from Yue Fei, who is the symbol of anti-Manchu resistance. It is likely that Ma Liang chose to link wrestling to Yue Fei because of this political reasoning.

In essence, he stresses that wrestling is a common practise and a normal thing to practise, even to the point that animals do it. Then he points to the commonality of wrestling with all "warriors of old." Nevertheless, wrestling is construed as a purely Chinese Nationalist practise, adhering to the ideology of the Central Chinese Martial Arts institute while completely bypassing its Manchu-Mongol origins. It is apparent Ma Liang attempted to diminish the Manchu-Mongol heritage of the art he codified by invoking the ubiquity of wrestling. More importantly, he credited the invention of Shuaijiao to an ancient hero who is famous for his successful campaign against the Jurchens. He continues to diminish the Manchu element by belittling the contributions of wrestling of the Qing dynasty. The foreword written by Ma Liang is a clear example of the reimagining of the history of Shuaijiao that is still widely espoused these days.

¹³⁷ Marc Andre Matten, "The Worship of General Yue Fei and His Problematic Creation as a National Hero in Twentieth Century China" *Frontiers of History in China* (2011): 82.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Yue Fei is widely believed to have written *Man Jiang Hong* 满江红 (A river of blossoms), a poem in which there are utterances as "壯志飢餐胡虜肉，笑談渴飲匈奴血" (ravenously devour Jurchen flesh with steadfast will, thirstingly engulf Hunnic blood in laughing banter). It should be noted that the origins of this poem are disputed and it is not entirely sure whether Yue Fei authored this poem or not. However, the poem is still widely accredited to Yue Fei.

Ji Shangbing 姬上兵, "Dui Xingyiquan qi yuan, liupai yu fazhan de sikao" 對形意拳起源，流派與發展的思考 [Thoughts on the Origins, Schools and Development of Form-Intention Fist], *Shandong tiyu xueyuan xuebao* 山東體育學院學報 27, no. 1 (2011): 36.

4.4.2 The Contradictory Forewords in the Method of Chinese Wrestling

Tong Zhongyi 佟忠義 (1878-1963) was a Plain White Banner Manchu. He published in 1935 was published by the Zhongguo Shuaijiao She 中國摔交社 (Chinese Wrestlers Association). His background in wrestling does not seem to have been connected to the Shanpuying at all, but rather from the time he spent learning the craft from his Mongolian teacher. Not only was his teacher Mongolian, but his elder martial-brother was also a Mongolian called Cai Jintian.¹⁴⁰ In fact, Tong Zhongyi himself claims that most of the techniques he teaches in his book were popular among Mongolians and Manchurians.¹⁴¹ This book was one of the only ones available in China at the time, causing it to have been of great influence to Chinese Shuaijiao. So great, that it is still considered one of the most concise and comprehensive books that teaches Chinese Shuaijiao to this day. With China's newly formed ethnicised national identity in mind, it is quite telling that Tong Zhongyi, who published in 1935, far into the Republican era, did not refer to his style of wrestling as merely Shuaijiao 摔角 (wrestling) but as Zhongguoshi shuaijiao 中國摔角法 (Method of Chinese Wrestling).¹⁴² This title specifies that the wrestling described in the book was not Japanese, Russian, Greco-Roman, or indeed, Mongolian or Manchu wrestling; it was Chinese.¹⁴³ In the many forewords present it becomes apparent that there appears to have been some sort of active avoidance to mention the origins of the art among some writers. Others take care to mention a long reaching history into antiquity and yet others make only mention that the art was popular among Manchus and Mongols, making no mention of its origin.¹⁴⁴ The following section will deal with the gingerly treatment the origins of Shuaijiao has received in the foreword section of Tong Zhongyi's book and how the manual represents a deliberate attempt to detach Shuaijiao from the Manchus.

Firstly, Chen Jiaxuan, one of the writers of the forewords in Tong Zhongyi's book, writes in 1931:

¹⁴⁰ Zhongyi Tong, *The Method of Chinese Wrestling*, trans. Tim Cartmell. (Berkeley: Blue Snake Books, 2005), v.

¹⁴¹ Tong Zhongyi 佟忠義, *Zhongguo shuaijiao fa* 中國摔跤法 [The Method of Chinese Wrestling] (Taipei: Yiwen 逸文, 2002), 37.

¹⁴² Note that the 角 *jiao* in Tong Zhongyi's 中國摔跤法 *Zhongguo Shuaijiao Fa* is different from the 跤 *jiao* used in 中國式摔跤 *Zhongguo Shi Shuaijiao*, the name coined in the 1950's.

¹⁴³ Of course, by this time, the Mongolian and Manchu ethnicities were both officially part of the Chinese Republic.

¹⁴⁴ It is customary in Chinese books for people other than the author to write a foreword. It is also common to see multiple forewords by multiple different writers in one book. Tong Zhongyi's book is no exception in this regard.

The art of Chinese wrestling flourished under the Ching [sic] Dynasty. More than half of the soldiers of the Eight Banners practised the art. The royal family enjoyed it in their leisure time, when the art was continually demonstrated for their entertainment. It is said that the origins of the art lie within the wrestling style of the Mongolians, “Guan Jiao,” and the Tibetan “Bu Ku.”¹⁴⁵

Chen is aware of the term buku, which is Manchu for wrestler, yet he ascribes it erroneously to the Tibetan language, which is seen nowhere else in literature, modern or ancient. This might mean that either Chen Jiaxuan simply made a mistake, or, he deliberately avoided ascribing the term to the Manchu people in order to make the book more palatable to whichever party would take offense to the Manchus. Chen Jiaxuan continues and writes about ancient wrestling, but does not attempt to interlink the styles of wrestling in which the “origins of the art lie within the wrestling style of the Mongolian” and the ancient wrestling which was practised in China.

Contrastingly, Jin Yiming in 1933 writes:

In looking back at the history of Chinese wrestling, we see its origins in ancient times. It is said that Qi You [sic] wore horns and gored his opponents. During the Han and the Chin [sic] periods, it became a spectator sport. Mongolians used wrestling as a test of strength. The Manchurians called the art “Bu Ku.”¹⁴⁶

This second foreword directly contradicts the former in two points. The obvious one being the assertion that the term “Bu Ku” is not Tibetan, but rather Manchu. In this case the acceptance of the fact that the wrestling had Manchu-Mongol origins is somewhat mitigated by the second contradiction in this foreword. Here, the Mongols are no longer the origin of Chinese Shuaijiao, rather, the ancient Chinese are portrayed as the progenitors of Shuaijiao. The answers given in these forewords face the same issues as the explanations given in modern sources that were discussed in section 3.1, the assumptions the authors make about the origins of Shuaijiao are simply not correct. The most simple and straightforward explanation that can be given for the confusion about the origins of Shuaijiao is that all authors sought to avoid mentioning the inconvenient history of Shuaijiao. In their attempts to fabricate Shuaijiao history more palatable

¹⁴⁵ 摔角之術，盛於有清，八旗士兵 [...] 說者謂其淵源於蒙人之“貫跤”，藏人之“布庫。Chinese text taken from Tong, *Zhongguo shuaijiao fa*, 11.

Translation taken from Zhongyi Tong, *The Method of Chinese Wrestling*, trans. Tim Cartmell. (Berkeley: Blue Snake Books, 2005): 1.

¹⁴⁶ 考摔跤一道。發源於上古。有謂因蚩尤能以角抵人。故名角觝。漢秦時。演為戲劇。蒙古人。則用以考取力士。清語曰布庫。

Chinese text taken from Tong, *Zhongguo shuaijiao fa*, 13.

Translation taken from Tong, *The Method of Chinese Wrestling*, 3.

to their audiences they contradict each other, as it appears, they did not corroborate their versions of Shuaijiao history to each other.

Subsequently, the final piece of evidence needed to prove that the confusing forewords and wrong histories were a deliberate attempt at detaching Shuaijiao from its Manchu roots is in the words of the author himself. Tong Zhongyi refrains from pinning down the exact origins of wrestling as he says that it is difficult to “precisely ascertain the exact time and place martial arts were created in my country.” He proceeds, as seems typical, to reference Chi You and his *jiaodi* and proceeds by saying “wrestling is the progenitor of all martial arts.”¹⁴⁷ As such, he avoids answering what exactly is the origins of Shuaijiao. Tong continues that wrestling was most popular among the Manchus and Mongols, and that most northern martial artists are skilled at wrestling. He chooses to elaborate on the importance of the practise of Shuaijiao, and that is to strengthen the national spirit of “my country” and to counteract the fact the “country is weak and the people frail.” He closes by stating that it is his sincere wish “we will overcome the insult of being called the sick man of Asia, and that our country will take its rightful place as an equal among nations.” It is clear that Tong Zhongyi, emphasised the unity of the nation by using words like “my country” and “we.” Perhaps it was necessary for him, being a Manchu, to emphasise that he too stands for the Revolution and that the spreading of Shuaijiao is not for any other purpose than to defend and strengthen the Chinese nation.

Going by these forewords alone, without prior knowledge of the history of Chinese Shuaijiao, one might become confused due to the many contradictions and inconsistencies between the forewords. It signals that the exact origins of the sport are a difficult subject to broach. What happened between these forewords mirrors the conflict between what has happened among recent publications on Chinese Shuaijiao. That is, there is no clear consensus on the origins of Shuaijiao because of conflicting explanations. The authors refrain from directly pointing out that Shuaijiao is Manchu-Mongolian, and not because they did not know. Considering the fact that Tong Zhongyi himself so clearly states his Chinese nationalist intentions in his foreword, it can be concluded that in the manual of Tong Zhongyi, even though he was Manchu himself, there was a deliberate attempt to divorce Shuaijiao from its Manchu heritage.

¹⁴⁷ Tong, *Zhongguo shuaijiao fa*, 38

5 CONCLUSION

The answer to the first question of the thesis, what the origins are of Chinese Shuaijiao, is answered through the tracing of the lineage of Ma Liang. Through referencing historical sources, prior research and tracing the lineages of the most influential wrestlers of the Republic, it can safely be concluded that Chinese Shuaijiao came from the Shanpuying. The Shanpuying in turn has its wrestling roots planted in Qing Dynasty policies, which resulted in Qing Dynasty wrestling deriving much of its practise from Mongolian style wrestling. While wrestling in the geographical area of present-day Mongolia can be traced to the prehistory through rock paintings, it is generally accepted that the current form of Mongol wrestling, with wrestling jackets, likely comes from the Khitanese. As such, the link Qing Dynasty wrestling has with Khitanese wrestling is twofold. Perhaps the Mongol influence in Manchu wrestling can best be described in waves; the first wave of influence came when the Jurchens were once subjects of the Khitanese. It was likely that they absorbed some of the Khitanese practises, it is then assumed that *balisu xi* 拔裏速戲 of the Jurchens was an adaptation from Khitan. The second wave took place in the Later Jin Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing, where Hong Taiji, in his attempt to foster relations with the various Mongol tribes he was trying to befriend, tried to adapt to the Mongols by wrestling them.

Chinese Shuaijiao as it is now, then, is not a Han tradition. Han wrestling traditions as they are recorded in various historical chronicles, treatises, images and commentaries do not reflect what is practised in Shuaijiao, even though wrestling was a popular pastime in several Dynasties of China such as Han, Tang, Sui and Song. Since neither the lineage of the wrestlers of the Republic suggests, nor can it be deduced from the customs or rules of the wrestling game that Shuaijiao is related to the Han traditions of wrestling, it stands to reason that it must be concluded that Shuaijiao is not a Han tradition. Shuaijiao, instead, is clearly descended from the Qing Dynasty Manchu-Mongol school of wrestling which was in turn derived from Khitanese practises.

As for the second portion of the research question: the question of why the researchers, authors, wrestlers of the Republic who researched Shuaijiao, but also the writers and researchers now who research Chinese Shuaijiao so clearly felt the need to link Chinese Shuaijiao to ancient Han practises is now also clear. At first, it could be assumed that they simply did not have the resources available to them at their time of writing these books to reach the conclusion that Shuaijiao was Khitanese. Yet, the light treading of the various authors around the subject of the origins of Shuaijiao, as well as the demonstration of these Republican

authors that they were well aware of the Mongolian influence on Shuaijiao proves that it was not ignorance that caused them to accredit the origins of Shuaijiao to Han wrestling traditions of bygone empires. Indeed, the more likely reason is that the Chinese felt a need to strengthen the Chinese Nation through the proliferation of martial arts by promoting a genuinely Chinese art. A good martial art to practise that made people strong and virile, of which Kanō Jigorō's Kōdōkan Judō was sufficient proof, was wrestling. However, Shuaijiao was a problematic martial art, since it is so clearly Manchu. The same Manchu that the Xinhai revolution was aimed at. The solution, nevertheless, was simple. Wrestlers of the time emphasised the Chinese contributions to the art of Shuaijiao and minimised the Manchu-Mongol origins. Sometimes going as far as to forego the true origins of the art by linking the origins of the art to Chinese National heroes, as was common in the Republic and Late Qing. Simply put, Chinese Shuaijiao is not recognised as a Manchu-Mongol or Khitanese art because anti-Manchu fervour would prevent the art from spreading among the Chinese people. That alone would make promoting such a sport unpalatable to the vehement nationalists of the Central Chinese Martial Arts Institute or the Chin Woo Athletic Association.

The fact that modern research in China continues the trend of ascribing Chinese Shuaijiao to pre-Yuan China can be explained as a mere remnant of the Republican past and the rhetoric that marked the age. Alternatively, it could be a conscious attempt to propagate Han ethno nationalist ideals among the practitioners of the art. In either case, in the spirit of Chinese unity of all the ethnicities that make up China, it is time to reaccredit Chinese Shuaijiao to the Manchus and Mongols who make up a sizeable portion of China's population. After all, one should give credit where credit is due.

5.1 Limitations

This paper is limited in the scope of its sources. In order to ascertain the portrayal of Shuaijiao more accurately more databases of Republican and Late Qing newspapers would have to be surveyed. Additionally, due to time constraints it was not possible to survey the large quantity of newspaper sources on the basis on their content. These two aspects would have made for a much more complete overview on the perception of wrestling in the late Qing and Republic. In section 5.3, for example, the search term Shanpuying was used, and the results were looked at in conjunction with the context the terms appeared in, yet this task alone cost much time. To do the same for multiple search terms would not be viable. Another oversight is that no Manchukuo sources have been surveyed, it would have been interesting to see what changes

occurred there, in the homeland of the Manchus. Moreover, concerning the recent development and the personal styles of the preeminent Shuaijiao experts, it would have been expedient to consult experts in the field on the matter, as well as interviewing the living descendants of the wrestling masters mentioned in the thesis. I suspect that there is a lot of information about Shuaijiao that was simply never put to paper. Finally, in order to ascertain the heritage of Chinese Shuaijiao it would have been useful to conduct research on the technical aspects of the art and to compare the style to Mongolian wrestling on a technical basis, the historical style as described in Tong Zhongyi's and Ma Liang's manual. Such a research however, would take a tremendous amount of time and resources.

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