7 Coalescence
1921, a Year of Promise

Establishing Goalposts in Shanghai

Let us return to Shanghai in 1921. After the Filipino athletes finally alighted from the *Bustamante*, which had been waiting in the Huangpu River, they found their way to the courts in the Hongkou district of the thriving metropolis. On May 30, although "bad weather prevailed," the Filipino athletes joined others to march in the opening parade in front of a "vast crowd," which, by some estimates, totaled 150,000 by the Games' end.[1] Dr. Chengting Thomas Wang (Wang Zhengting 王正廷), the famous politician and president of the Far Eastern Championship Games, and director J. H. Gray, head of the YMCA in China, welcomed all to the fields of competition. For eager onlookers, this iteration of the Games brought extra drama as some media talking heads, for the first time, identified the visiting team from the Philippines as the "best all-around."[2]

While talented Japanese, Filipino, and Chinese athletes took to the fields, spectators, commentators, and analysts dissected, pontificated on, and, on some occasions, torched performers and performances. At the same time, politicians and businesspeople used the occasion to deliver speeches among high company in boardrooms and lecture halls. Military leaders and educators, meanwhile, linked their industries to the competitions, looking to both recruit and legitimize their objectives through sport. And individual spectators themselves, as James H. Mills notes, carried the stories of the competition back "with them into the community, not simply as a tale to be told but as an experience to be related and relived."[3] In other words, as is the case today, the action on the playing

[1] "Consider Philippines Has Best All-Around Squad at Shanghai Olympic Games," *The Manila Times*, May 31, 1921; and Hoh Gunsun (Hao Gengsheng 郝更生), *Physical Education in China [Zhongguo tiyu gailun* 中國體育概論*]* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 上海：商務印書館, 1926), 117.
[2] "Consider Philippines Has Best All-Around Squad," *The Manila Times*.
[3] James H. Mills, ed., *Subaltern Sports: Politics and Sport in South Asia* (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 3.

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field ricocheted well beyond the field's boundary like a foul ball, impacting various facets of society.[4]

Although news of the 1921 Far Eastern Championship Games might have had a shorter shelf life than contemporaneous political events, like the Wood–Forbes Mission in the Philippines, and although sports news likely had less of a tangible impact on daily life for most people, coverage of the Games plastered the pages of nearly every periodical in China and the Philippines, easily garnering more attention and interest than tired political issues. Sports were simply more interesting. Historian Lang Jing (郎净), noting how sports had "became part of everyday life," tallied sixty sport-related articles in the premier Shanghai newspaper *Shenbao* during a single month in 1921.[5]

The Far Eastern Championship Games, the precursor to the postwar Asian Games, rotated between China, Japan, and the Philippines. American YMCA officials from China and the Philippines got the ball rolling for the competitions by organizing the first Games in 1913, but the leadership of the organization gradually shifted hands to regional professionals.[6] Japanese representatives joined the Far Eastern Athletic Association, the organization that administered the Games, soon after its creation, but no other permanent members joined until 1934 when the Dutch East Indies became a member and sent a delegation.[7] The Games thus formed a sportive triangle between China, Japan, and the Philippines during its heyday.

At the Games, athletes competed in team sports, such as volleyball, soccer, baseball, and basketball; individual sports, such as tennis and swimming; as well as track and field events. For the most part, China performed well in team sports, like soccer and volleyball, Japan excelled in the swimming events, and Filipinos shined in track and field. Each event

[4] Sports historians have long assessed the impact of sports off the field. For studies on the intersection of politics, race, and sport, see the classics: Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete, 50th Anniversary Edition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017); and Runstedtler, *Jack Johnson, Rebel Sojourner*.

[5] Lang Jing 郎净, 近代体育在上海 *Jindai tiyu zai Shanghai (1840–1937) [Modern Sports in Shanghai]* (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe 上海 : 上海社会科学院出版社, 2006), 152.

[6] For a brief introduction to the Far Eastern Championship Games, see Ikuo Abe, "Historical Significance of the Far Eastern Championship Games: An International Political Arena," in *Olympic Japan: Ideals and Realities of (Inter)Nationalism*, ed. Andreas Niehaus and Max Seinsch (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2007), 67–87; Fan Hong, "Prologue: The Origin of the Asian Games: Power and Politics," *Sport in Society* 8, no. 3 (2005): 392–403; Huebner, *Pan-Asian Sports*, 17–73; and Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*.

[7] Siam and India also sent small delegations to different tournaments. The Western Asiatic Games started shortly after the Far Eastern Championship Games, but it shared a similar trajectory. For more on the Western Asiatic Games, see Huebner, *Pan-Asian Sports*, 74–101.

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carried with it a certain number of points that, when tallied up at the end of the Games, revealed an overall champion country for the tournament, much like the medal count at today's Olympics. In 1921, breaking with past patterns, the Philippine team carried away the overall championship with ninety-nine points, while Japan came in second with eighty-two, and China brought up the rear with a disappointing thirty-two points.[8] It was the first time that the home team, which had logistical advantages in the competitions, failed to secure the overall victory.

For Chinese pundits, most events disappointed, but the men's swimming events of 1921 proved particularly scandalous. Japanese and Filipino athletes carried off the medals in every single men's swimming competition, and in the 100-meter backstroke, Chinese swimmers failed to even qualify for the championship round.[9] This setback led Chinese commentators to grasp for answers, especially with the weight of global orientalist tropes that portrayed Chinese men as "feeble, effeminate, and devious" on their shoulders.[10] The astute physical educator Hoh Gunsun (Hao Gengsheng 郝更生), reflecting on the poor performance in his monograph five years later, attributed the defeat to the turmoil surrounding the May Fourth movement. He lamented, "Had it not been for . . . the disturbed student life of 1919 and 1920 . . . China would undoubtedly have acquitted herself much better than she did."[11]

Some Chinese pundits, on the other hand, dismissed the impact of political upheaval on China's poor performance, instead attributing the losses to what they perceived as racial differences. One Chinese commentator, for example, credited Japanese and Filipino success at swimming competitions to their being "island people."[12] Though a far cry from Herbert Spencer's articulation of race in *Principles of Biology*, this description of Filipinos and Japanese as "island people" contained its own deterministic, racialized logic.[13] Furthermore, the commentator overlooked the lakes, river systems, and 9,000-mile coast of China in his

[8] "Filipino Athletes Made Total of 99 Points in Winning Far Eastern Olympiad at Shanghai," *The Manila Times*, June 6, 1921. See also "Filipino Athletes Won Track Honors During Downpour of Rain," *The Manila Times*, June 5, 1921.

[9] "Filipino Athletes Exceeded All Expectations in Winning First Place in Olympic Meet," *The Manila Times*, June 8, 1921; and You Xiong 幼雄, "Diwuci Yuandong yundonghui jishi 第五次遠東運動會紀實 [Recordings of the Fifth Far Eastern Championship Games]," *Dongfang zazhi* 东方杂志 *[Eastern Miscellany]* 18, no. 11 (1921): 19.

[10] Nicolas Schillinger, *The Body and Military Masculinity in Late Qing and Early Republican China: The Art of Governing Soldiers* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), 2.

[11] Hoh Gunsun, *Physical Education*, 116.

[12] You Xiong, "Diwuci Yuandong yundonghui," 19.

[13] For an overview of changing Chinese conceptions of "race" over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

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analysis, instead highlighting circumstances that gave Japanese and Filipinos a competitive advantage.

Commentators from the Philippines, for their part, also used race to diagnose athletes and dissect performances. Adopting a more optimistic and ameliorative tone, American colonial officials and Filipino and American educators touted sports as a means of racial "improvement." For example, a representative of the Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation stated, "It is our belief that the Filipino can be made to grow taller and bigger; that the stock of the race can be improved considerably, despite many handicaps."[14] In other words, some Filipinos used perceived racial qualities as a means to discuss growth and potential, and sports became a measuring stick for that growth.

Racially informed gossip percolated through the print media, but these commentaries, which steered readers through the endless recesses of hypotheticals and hyperbole, theoretically drew from the competitions themselves, which mostly produced a clear winner and loser. Losing can be difficult, especially when many people are watching and some of those people draft commentaries about said losing, but, if one could lose gracefully, it would send a powerful message. As historian David G. McComb points out, "it is a common cliché that sports reveal the values of a society."[15] For nationalistic commentators, a properly executed humble loss could demonstrate civilizational quality and values.

Powerful people had already set the stage for Filipino commentators to execute such civilizational flexing. An influential American in the Philippine Department of Education, for instance, praised how young Filipinos knew how to lose.[16] Meanwhile, a Filipino commentator said, the "ability to acknowledge defeat gracefully and generously" – or, in other words, to adhere to the nebulous rules and procedures of sportspersonship – weighed on athletes at the Games.[17] So, when elite Filipino ballers succumbed to the upstart Chinese basketball team in Shanghai, their sportspersonship, and therefore their civilizational status, was put to the test.

[14] Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation, *Physical and Vocational Education* (Manila: Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation, 1921), quoted in Celia Bocobo Olivar, *History of Physical Education in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1972), 48.

[15] David G. McComb, *Sports in World History* (London: Routledge, 2004), 4.

[16] This statement came from O. Garfield Jones. See Lou Antolihao, *Playing with the Big Boys: Basketball, American Imperialism, and Subaltern Discourse in the Philippines* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 50.

[17] This is Jorge B. Vargas' definition of sportspersonship. See Jorge B. Vargas, "Vargas Appeals for Cooperation and Patronage of the Xth Far Eastern Championship Games," in *Tenth Far Eastern Olympiad* (Manila: The Sports Review, 1934), 87.

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Digesting Defeat

Shanghai commentators hyped the men's basketball match between China and the Philippines by unleashing a timeless sports metaphor, labeling the game a "war (戰)," as opposed to a "competition (賽)."[18] This language was not unusual considering the close connection between military training and physical education in China, but the weight of the word still made it stand out in the sports section.[19] Leading the Chinese team into "battle" was the "Flying General (飞将军)" himself, Sun Li-jen (Sun Liren 孫立人), who would later become one of Nationalist China's most esteemed military generals, leading actual Chinese armies into actual battles.[20] To cut to the chase, China won the "war," but not without controversy.

One Philippine newspaper recorded the final score as thirty to twenty-seven in favor of China, while several papers from China reported thirty-two to twenty-seven.[21] This disagreement over the score reflected the controversy on the court where both sides demonstrated gritty determination. Keep in mind that the match took place before the invention of the twenty-four-second clock, so most games took the form of low-scoring grudge matches. Effort aside, the unexpected loss embarrassed the star-studded team from the Philippines. One Filipino athlete, when questioned about the game upon his return home, implied that his team had lost due to poor refereeing, noting to deaf ears that he "wants to forget the unpleasant past, and he asked that nothing of it be mentioned in this story."[22] In other words, this athlete lost both the game and the opportunity to spin the loss into amorphous civilizational points.

On the other side of the court, the basketball victory carried extra significance for China. After all, the Philippine national team, which would later be christened the "Islanders" by fans at the Berlin Olympics in 1936, had earned a dream team-esque reputation for greatness.[23] Long before Stephen Curry and other NBA stars wowed viewers with their elite

[18] You Xiong, "Diwuci Yuandong yundonghui," 19; and Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*, 96. For more on sports as war, see McComb, *Sports in World History*, 20 and 28.

[19] For more on military training and physical education in China, see Schillinger, *The Body and Military Masculinity*, 49–94.

[20] Li Hongwen 李洪文, *Sun Liren quanzhuan* 孙立人全传 *[A Biography of Sun Liren]* (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe 北京：团结出版社, 2016), 32.

[21] "Track and Field Championship Cinched by Filipino Athletes," *The Manila Times*, June 1, 1921; "Yuandong yundonghui 遠東運動會 [Notes from the Far Eastern Championship Games]," *Xuesheng Zazhi* 學生雜志 *[Student's Magazine]* 8, no. 7 (1921): 43; You Xiong, "Diwuci Yuandong yundonghui," 19.

[22] "How They Came," *Philippines Free Press*.

[23] Jorge Afable, ed., *Philippine Sports Greats* (Mandaluyong: MAN Publishers, 1972), 2. Li Hongwen stresses the significance of the victory for China in his biography of Sun Liren. See Li Hongwen, *Sun Liren quanzhuan*, 32.

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handles, these Filipino pioneers would "dribble the spheroid behind their backs."[24] Out of a total of ten Far Eastern Championship Games from 1913 to 1934, the Philippine team won every basketball tournament with the glaring exception of 1921's, when they succumbed to China and the "Flying General."[25] In other words, the Chinese victory while "playing with the big boys," to turn a metaphor by historian Lou Antolihao on its head, was a big deal.[26]

In fact, any Chinese victory against a Philippine basketball team led to celebrations in China. Eight years later, when Nankai University defeated the University of the Philippines in an exhibition match in Tianjin, one delighted Chinese editor gushed, "Nankai triumphed 37 to 33, sending the awe-inspiring Filipino team fleeing with their arms over their heads."[27] Basketball, which grew in popularity in China and the Philippines around the same time that it took off in the United States, provided a new channel of interaction for Chinese and Filipino competitors. In both countries, colleges and universities promoted international friendlies, sports federations organized tournaments, and media heads crafted new meanings and sponsored new rivalries.[28]

Soccer, which provided another such avenue for interaction, somewhat balanced the playing field for China and the Philippines. In front of rowdy crowd, the highly favored men's team from Hong Kong added yet another trophy in 1921.[29] Whereas Filipinos dominated the basketball competitions, Chinese athletes often triumphed in soccer at the Far Eastern Championship Games, leading Filipinos to invite Chinese teams to the islands to help Filipino players improve, but these invitations seem to have provided little benefit to the Filipino hosts.[30] Not mincing words,

[24] Afable, ed., *Philippine Sports Greats*, 3.
[25] Christian Bocobo and Beth Celis, *Legends and Heroes of Philippine Basketball* (Manila: The House Printers, 2004), 16.
[26] Antolihao uses this phrase to describe the Filipino mindset when playing basketball against others. See, Antolihao, *Playing with the Big Boys*, 7.
[27] "Feilibin daxue lanqiudui dabai ertao 菲立濱大學籃球隊大敗而逃 [University of the Philippines Basketball Team is Defeated and Flees]," *Zhongguo xuesheng* 中國學生 *[The Chinese Student]* 1, no. 4 (1929): 31.
[28] For basketball in the Chinese community in the Philippines, see Chung Fong Ko, "The Chinese Students in the Philippine Islands," *The Chinese Students' Monthly* 16, no. 8 (June 1921): 625; and Silverio Jorge, "Athletics Among the Chinese in the City of Manila," *Feilübin Huaqiao jiaoyu congkan* 菲律賓華僑教育叢刊 *[The Philippine Huaqiao Educational Magazine]* 1 (1917): 6–7.
[29] Hoh, *Physical Education*, 116.
[30] Chen Jinjiang 陳錦江, "Zhengfei ji 征菲記 [Tour of the Philippines]," *Donghua tiyu zhoukan* 動畫體育周刊 *[Tung Hwa Sports Digest]* 1, no. 2 (1933): 8–9 and 16–19; "Feilübin jianian huadianhui zhu benxiao zuqiudui canjia 菲律賓嘉年華典會諸本校足球隊參加 [School's Soccer Team Invited to Play in the Philippines Carnival]," *Sili Lingnan daxue xiaobao* 私立嶺南大學校報 *[Lingnan Private University School Paper]* 44,

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one Chinese commentator celebrated a Chinese team's "sweep of the foreign island (夷島)," noting that the victories would "make enemies not dare look down upon Chinese of the Celestial Kingdom."[31] Soccer provided some comfort for China at the Far Eastern Championship Games and some balance in the sports triangle, but it never reached the level of cultural significance as basketball.

Basketball to this day is wildly popular in the Philippines and China. Even during the early years of the communist revolution in China, when leaders regularly denounced anything tangentially American, revered Marshals Zhu De (朱德) and He Long (贺龙) promoted basketball competitions.[32] The compilers of the commemorative *Legends and Heroes of Philippine Basketball*, meanwhile, describe the sport as the "favorite pastime" of Filipinos.[33] In more candid terms, Pedro D. Villanueva, long-time editor of the sports section in *The Philippines Herald*, wrote right before the 1934 Games, "We almost regard the Far Eastern Olympic basketball title as the private property of the Philippines."[34]

Long before the Blue Eagles–Green Archers rivalry shaped the Philippine sports world, the Islander–Dragon rivalry captured the hearts and minds of spectators in Asia, linking Chinese and Filipinos through the bonds of sports.[35] Basketball might have provided "another means for China to engage with, respond to, and potentially, proclaim superiority

no. 1 (1930): 390; Nanyang wenhua shiyebu 南洋文化事業部, "Guowai tongxun di bashier hao 國外通訊第八十二號 [Overseas Reports from the 28th]," *Jinan xiaokan* 暨南校刊 *[Jinan University Periodical]* 37–40 (1930): 20–21; and "Shanghai Lehua zuqiudui fu Fei zhi bisai 上海樂華足球隊赴菲之比賽 [Shanghai Lehua Soccer Team's Philippine Match Record]," *Feilübin yanjiu* 菲律賓研究 *[The Philippines]* 2 (1928): 122.

[31] Chen, "Zhengfei ji," 19. Chen used the word "yi 夷" to describe the Philippines. Lydia Liu has described this word, in combination with the early English translation as "barbarian," as a "super-sign" that rippled across multiple languages, taking new meanings along the way. See Lydia H. Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 13 and 32–38.

[32] Judy Polumbaum, "From Evangelism to Entertainment: The YMCA, the NBA, and the Evolution of Chinese Basketball," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 4, no. 1 (2002): 197.

[33] Bocobo and Celis, *Legends and Heroes of Philippine Basketball*, 15. See also Afable, ed., *Philippine Sports Greats*, 9.

[34] P. D. Villanueva, "Everything Points to Another Basketball Victory in the Philippines," in *Tenth Far Eastern Olympiad* (Manila: The Sports Review, 1934), 47. For a brief introduction to Pedro D. Villanueva, see Regino R. Ylanan and Carmen Wilson Ylanan, *The History and Development of Physical Education and Sports in the Philippines* (Manila: Self-published, 1965), 50–51.

[35] The Ateneo de Manila Blue Eagles and De La Salle Green Archers have long competed with one another in basketball and other sports. For more on fan culture and the rivalry in the Philippines, see Miguel Antonio N. Lizada, "Masculinity, Patronage Politics, and the Feminization of School Spirit in the Ateneo-La Salle UAAP Rivalry," *Philippine Sociological Review* 63 (2015): 191–216.

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over the West," as historian Judy Polumbaum establishes.[36] And sports more broadly might have resulted in a "happy wedding of American and Philippine practices," as Janice Beran observes.[37] But basketball also linked athletes and observers from China and the Philippines, creating yet another pitch on which to exchange ideas, build partnerships, and settle disputes.

Historian Lou Antolihao encourages scholars to examine sports using "a post-binary analysis that transcends the colonial fixation on disentangling the complex empire–colony relations."[38] Or, to put it differently, he challenges us to recognize that sports were more than simply the "promise of the foreign" – a phrase historian Vicente Rafael applies to Filipino elites' use of Castilian in the late nineteenth century.[39] Researchers should follow the lead of Zhu De and He Long and treat Asian athletes and physical educators as autonomous agents who engaged with and created unique and unexpected meaning in sports. James Naismith, a Canadian studying at Springfield College in the United States, invented basketball in this small city in western Massachusetts, meaning that basketball was as "foreign" to Rucker Park in New York City, which was constructed in 1950, as it was to the courts that used to grace Rizal Park in Manila.[40] It is time for our histories to reflect this multidimensional reality.

Ogling Athletes and Carnival Queens

Women athletes participated in the Far Eastern Championship Games for the first time in 1921, though only in a dance demonstration.[41] Women would not join in on team sports at the Games until the 1923

[36] Polumbaum, "From Evangelism to Entertainment," 199.

[37] Janice A. Beran, "Americans in the Philippines: Imperialism or Progress Through Sport?" *International Journal of the History of Sport* 6, no. 1 (1989): 82.

[38] Antolihao, *Playing with the Big Boys*, 187.

[39] Vicente L. Rafael, *Promise of the Foreign: Nationalism and the Technics of Translation in the Spanish Philippines* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005). See also Antolihao, *Playing with the Big Boys*, 20. Mark Dyreson's description of sports as a "language" inspired this comparison. See Mark Dyreson, "Globalizing the Nation-Making Process: Modern Sport in World History," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 20, no. 1 (2003): 92.

[40] Naismith himself recognized that the game had taken off in China and the Philippines, noting its incorporation into girls' sports programs and regional competitions. See James Naismith, "Basket Ball," American Physical Education Review (May 1914): 345, James Naismith Papers, Springfield College Archives, ms506-01–22–001; James Naismith, "Basketball – A Game the World Plays," *The Rotarian* (January 1939): 1, James Naismith Papers, Springfield College Archives, ms506-01–22–015–01; and James Naismith, *Basketball: Its Origin and Development* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996): 147–153.

[41] *The Ladies Journal* [Funü zazhi 婦女雜志] featured images of the dancers wearing all white in front of onlooking crowds; see, "Diwujie Yuandong yundonghui zhi Zhongguo nüxuesheng youyi 第五屆遠東運動會之中國女學生游藝 [The Recreations of Chinese Girl Students at the Fifth Far Eastern Championship Games]," *Funü zazhi* 婦女雜志 *[The Ladies' Journal]* no. 7 (1921).

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iteration in Osaka, and even then their participation – without medals – was limited to volleyball and tennis.[42] Commentators had thus not yet arrived at some of the more sophisticated and onerous reporting that "paid close attention" to and "published individual criticism" of not just women's performances, but also their posture and technique.[43] Nonetheless, gendered commentary flowed through the sports pages and regular columns.

In 1921, when few women appeared on the fields themselves, some commentators leveraged their absence to score political points. The head of the Philippine delegation, calling for the participation of women in the Games upon his return to the Philippines in 1921, for instance, added unprompted, "This will result in a great boost of athletics for girls and women in the Far East, and relatively China and Japan need this boost more than the Philippines."[44] By highlighting the deficiencies of China and Japan, this commentator turned women's sports into a rhetorical tool to give the Philippines a slap on the back. This commentator thereby followed a common imperial discursive strategy that linked "progress" to women's "improvement."[45]

In many subtle ways, gender, like an expertly curled stone, slid its way into Games-related coverage. As is the case today, pundits followed athletes around in their daily lives, ready to drop "bombshell" reports at a moment's notice.[46] Filipino journalists, for example, proudly touted how "Filipinos were the first ones to stand up and offer their seats" to a group of Chinese women while riding the tram car in Shanghai.[47] This "praiseworthy" behavior supposedly contrasted with that of Chinese athletes who "didn't seem to be very enthusiastic about giving up their seats to the ladies."[48] As performers on and off the field, athletes felt the obligation to fulfill gendered societal expectations.[49]

[42] F. N. Carl, "Watch Our Girls!" in *Tenth Far Eastern Olympiad* (Manila: The Sports Review, 1934), 62–64; and Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*, 88–89.

[43] You Jianming 游鉴明, *Chaoyue xingbie shenti: Jindai Huadong diqu de nüzi tiyu* 超越性别身体：近代华东地区的女子体育 *(1895–1937) [Transcending Sex and the Body: Women's Sports in the Modern Huadong Area]* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京：北京大学出版社, 2012), 146.

[44] Osias, "The First Victory of Filipino Athletes," 396.

[45] Catherine Hall, "Of Gender and Empire: Reflection on the Nineteenth Century," in *Gender and Empire*, ed. Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 50–51.

[46] Andrew Morris has described this process from the Chinese perspective as weathering "the judgmental gaze of China's Asian neighbors and rivals." See Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*, 161.

[47] "How They Came," *Philippines Free Press*. [48] Ibid.

[49] For more on gender as performance, see Judith Butler's classic essay, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 519–531.

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One columnist from the *Philippines Free Press*, in a special issue on the Games, related a story about how a Filipino woman in Shanghai had abandoned her traditional clothing to become a "flapper."[50] The columnist, contrasting her with "pretty Japanese and Chinese girls," complained that Filipinas in Hong Kong and Shanghai would rather die than wear their "own beloved costume."[51] In this regard, this columnist foreshadowed similar anxiety-ridden male criticisms, which Andrew Morris describes as "ogling for the nation," that would haunt female athletes in the 1930s.[52] But while commentators were only beginning to experiment with sports-related gender tropes in 1921, they, like nimble fencers, landed gendered jabs on other topics.

Whereas Filipino observers used the condition of women in China as a rhetorical punching bag, Chinese observers viewed Filipino women as models to emulate. Chinese traveler and hopeless romantic Wu Hanfang (鄔翰芳) confided in his 1929 travel memoir that Chinese men who might "look down upon Filipinas" when they first arrive at the archipelago later ended up wanting to marry them. He wrote, "The first year [Filipino women] look like devils (鬼), the second year they look half-devil, half human, and the third year [Chinese men] become engrossed by the devils."[53] Apparently, Wu drew from personal experience in his "expert" analysis because he continued with a story about falling head over heels for the mestiza daughter of the head of the Cebu Chinese Chamber of Commerce.[54]

Wu Hanfang and others from China devoted countless pages to the lives of women in the Philippines inside and outside of sports in the early twentieth century.[55] Earlier in his book, Wu described how young

[50] F. M. Benedicto, "Benedicto Is Cruel with the Ladies," *Philippines Free Press*, June 18, 1921.

[51] Ibid. For more on the political power of clothing in the Philippines, see Mina Roces, "Women, Citizenship and the Politics of Dress in Twentieth-Century Philippines," in *Gender Politics in Asia: Women Manoeuvring Within Dominant Gender Orders*, ed. Wil Burghoorn, Kazuki Iwanaga, Cecilia Milwertz, and Qi Wang (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008), 11–42.

[52] Andrew D. Morris, "'The Me in the Mirror': A Narrative of Voyeurism and Discipline in Chinese Women' Physical Culture, 1921–1937," in *Visualizing Modern China: Image, History, and Memory, 1750-Present*, ed. James A. Cook, Joshua Goldstein, Matthew D. Johnson, and Sigrid Schmalzer (Lanham, MD: Lexington Book, 2014), 111. See also Gao Yunxiang (高云翔), *Sporting Gender: Women Athletes and Celebrity-Making during China's National Crisis, 1931–45* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 58–60; and Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism, and Freedom*, 170–175.

[53] Wu Hanfang 鄔翰芳, *Feilübin kaocha ji* 菲律賓考察記 *[A Visit to the Philippine Islands]* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 上海：商務印書館, 1929), 85. For a broader history of Chinese tropes of the "South Seas," or Southeast Asia, see Bernards, *Writing the South Seas*.

[54] Wu Hanfang, *Feilübin*, 97–99. The head of the Cebu Chinese Chamber of Commerce wasn't keen on allowing his daughter to marry someone who would move to China, so Wu Hanfang's infatuation ultimately came to naught.

[55] Paul J. Bailey downplays this coverage in his research on Chinese "othering" in women's magazines, but as I have shown here, significant and largely positive portrayals defined

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Filipinas frequented movie theaters, partook in social dancing, and worked in factories.[56] Other commentators, channeling the liberationist mentality of the May Fourth era in China, which nominally began right before the 1921 Games, described to readers back in China how young women and men in the Philippines interacted with one another freely at picnics, camps, and dances, and how they could choose their own marriage partners.[57] One writer admired everyday displays of affection by couples, citing how young men and women held each other's hands while walking down the street, which is ironic considering the Philippine commentary mentioned earlier.[58]

For Chinese readers, women in the Philippines served a similar discursive function as Burmese women for Indians. In her article on a prominent Indian social worker's ethnographic accounts of Burmese women in the early twentieth century, Shobna Nijhawan describes how Indians saw in Burma a model for Indian women to be "progressive *and* traditional rather than overtly Westernized."[59] Nijhawan stresses how this "South–South encounter" provided "a medium to think in new idioms of feminism and nationalism."[60] Chinese viewers, likewise, saw in the Philippines a safe harbor to discuss what historian Louise Edwards calls the "hotly contested image" of the modern (and traditional) Asian woman.[61]

Perhaps nothing captures the complexities of Chinese ogling of Filipino women better than the extensive discussions of Philippine beauty

Chinese observations of Filipino women in the early twentieth century. See Paul J. Bailey, "'Othering' the Foreign Other in Early-Twentieth Century Chinese Women's Magazines," in *Women and the Periodical Press in China's Long Twentieth Century*, ed. Michel Hockx, Joan Judge, and Barbara Mittler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 292.

[56] Wu Hanfang, *Feilübin*, 79–83.

[57] Huang Yanpei 黃炎培, *Dongnanyang zhi xin jiaoyu: houbian Feilübin* 東南洋之新教育：後編菲律賓 *[Southeast Asia's New Education: The Philippines]* (Shanghai: shangwu yinshuguan 上海：商務印書館, 1918), 93; and Lin Jianbang 林建邦, "Feilübin funü gaikuang 菲律濱婦女概況 [Survey of Women in the Philippines]," *Funü zazhi* 婦女雜志 *[The Ladies' Journal]* 9, no. 7 (1923): 66.

[58] Chen Mei'an 陳枚安, *Nanyang shenghuo* 南洋生活 *[Life in Southeast Asia]* (Shanghai: shijie shuju 上海：世界書局, 1930), 110.

[59] Shobna Nijhawan, "At the Margins of Empire: Feminist-Nationalist Configurations of Burmese Society in the Hindi Public (1917–1920)," *Journal of Asian Studies* 71, no. 4 (2012): 1020.

[60] Ibid., 1023–1025.

[61] Louise Edwards, "Policing the Modern Woman in Republican China," *Modern China* 26, no. 2 (2000): 143. Mina Roces describes how Filipino women expertly navigated the demands of appearing both "modern" and "traditional" in their push for suffrage in the American colonial era. See Mina Roces, "Is the Suffragist an American Colonial Construct? Defining 'the Filipino Woman' in Colonial Philippines," in *Women's Suffrage in Asia: Gender, Nationalism and Democracy*, ed. Louise Edwards and Mina Roces (London: Routledge, 2004), 24–48.

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pageants. The Manila Carnival and its attached Carnival Queen contests, which contained its own type of performative competition, grew with the global exposition craze of the era, capturing the imagination of Manila's residents.[62] The Carnival also helped inspire the Far Eastern Championship Games as some of the earliest celebrations featured Asian friendlies.[63] According to *The Manila Times*, the Carnival Queen was essentially a "popularity contest" where the "lady receiving the highest number of votes, be she American, Filipina, or European" would become Queen.[64] But popularity contests, just like sports competitions, mean nothing without an audience, and, as seen in the images of winners that appeared in the popular Chinese journal *The Young Companion* in successive years, China hosted one of those attentive audiences.[65]

Nearly every Chinese visitor to the Carnival over the years commented on and created meaning in the event. This is unsurprising as Filipinos themselves used the beauty pageant to achieve various goals. Historian Genevieve Clutario argues that elite Filipino mestizos "regarded constructions of Filipina beauty as a means to solidify their privileged status," and they used the beauty competition to define those standards.[66] Perhaps Chinese observers saw an opportunity to borrow from Filipino discourses that linked beauty, nation, and modernity, especially when the Philippine pageant winners were Chinese mestizos or fully Chinese. The editors of *The Young Companion*, for instance, shared with obvious glee that the Carnival Queen in 1929 had Chinese heritage.[67]

Reading into conversations about the Carnival Queen contest and women in the Philippines more broadly, we see that Chinese held complicated and sometimes contradictory definitions of beauty. Wu Hanfang, as mentioned earlier, described Filipinas as possessing a concealed but

[62] For an overview of the Carnival, see Genevieve Clutario, "Pageant Politics: Tensions of Power, Empire, and Nationalism in Manila Carnival Queen Contests," in *Gendering the Trans-Pacific World*, ed. Catherine Ceniza Choy and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 257–283. For a general overview of the "exhibitionary complex" of the era, see Alexander C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siecle Europe* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010); and Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876–1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

[63] Elwood S. Brown, "Physical Work in the Philippines," *Physical Training* 11, no. 8 (1914): 261–264.

[64] "Queen of the Carnival," *The Manila Times*, December 13, 1907, 3, quoted in Clutario, "Pageant Politics," 262.

[65] See, for instance, "Jianian huahui zhi xuanju huahou 嘉年華會之選舉花後 [Carnival Beauty Pageant Selection]," *Liang you* 良友 *[The Young Companion]* 18 (1927): 34; and Chen Bingren 陳秉仁, "Jianian huahui 嘉年華會 [Carnival]," *Liang you* 良友 [The Young Companion] 35 (1929): 20.

[66] Clutario, "Pageant Politics," 268.

[67] Chen Bingren, "Jianian huahui," 20.

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profound beauty. Kiang Kang-hu (Jiang Kanghu 江亢虎), on the other hand, said of the beauty pageant, "In the eyes of Westerners, Spanish mestizos are the most beautiful, while in the eyes of Easterners, Chinese mestizos are the standard-bearers."[68] Regardless of standard-bearers, modernity and beauty flowed together at the Carnival just like modernity and sports at the Games.

Historian Cho Kyo argues that "a people whose civilization is regarded as highly developed is likely to be viewed as physically appealing, whereas an ethnic group deemed 'backward' is considered ugly."[69] Perhaps Chinese fascination with the annual beauty contest in the Philippines reflected their growing tendency to connect the archipelago with modernity, as outlined in Part II. After all, images of the Carnival Queen often appeared next to images of muscular athletes from exhibition games and cutting-edge products that glowed under "electric lights that illuminated [the Carnival] like the light of day."[70] Beauty, sports victories, and modernity became one, and, for many Chinese and Filipino observers, they found a comfortable home in the Philippines.

The Greater Coalescence of 1921

The Far Eastern Championship Games augmented the many linkages that we have explored throughout this monograph. For example, in Chapter 3 we briefly followed renowned Philippine liberal educator Camilo Osias to Nanjing and Shanghai where he delivered speeches on vocational education. During that trip he met with his Chinese counterpart Huang Yanpei (黃炎培) and toasted friends at several banquets.[71] However, although educational meetings dominated his itinerary, Osias had actually trekked to China as the Philippine representative to the Far Eastern Championship Games.[72] In other words, his critical speech about education was merely a by-product of his attendance at a regional sports meeting. Sports, education, and diplomacy merged like the events

[68] Kiang Kang-hu, *Jiang Kanghu nanyou huixiang ji*, 94.
[69] Cho Kyo, *The Search for the Beautiful Woman: A Cultural History of Japanese and Chinese Beauty*, trans. Kyoko Selden (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 5.
[70] Lin Jianbang 林建邦, "Jiyou jianian huahui 記遊嘉年華會 [Visiting the Carnival]," *Shaonian Zazhi* 少年雜志 *[The Youth's Magazine]* 6, no. 8 (1916): 5.
[71] Camilo Osias (Aoxiya 奧西亞), "Ji Feidao yuandong yundonghui daibiao Aoxiya jun zai Shanghai zongshanghui zhi yanshuo 記菲島遠東運動會代表奧西亞君在上海總商會之演說 [Remembering Philippine Far Eastern Championship Games Representative Mr. Osias' Speech at the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce]," *Zhongguo yu Nanyang* 中國與南洋 *[China and Malaysia]* 2, nos. 2/3 (1921): 137.
[72] "Track and Field Championship," *The Manila Times*.

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of the decathlon, linking Osias, and the Filipino athletes, journalists, and coaches he led, to China.

During one speech in Shanghai, veering from sports and education to address politics, Osias predicted the imminent demise of the discriminatory Bookkeeping Act, which we explored in Chapter 2.[73] Only one month before, when the organizers of the Games remained in preparation mode, businessman and lawyer Albino Z. Sycip (Xue Minlao 薛民老), one of the Founders from Chapter 6, had made his way to Shanghai to rally opposition to the Bookkeeping Act.[74] At several meetings with high company, Sycip described the resistance to the discriminatory legislation to receptive ears.[75] With the friendly competitions of the Far Eastern Championship Games in the foreground, Chinese from the Philippines seized the moment to keep political issues alive and relevant in the metaphorical luxury boxes.

Meanwhile, 1921 also marked the year that scholar Liu Shimu (劉士木) traveled from Shanghai to Nanjing to deliver a speech warning of Japanese encroachment into Southeast Asia, thereby presaging common anxieties we will return in Chapter 9.[76] With the Games, which boasted large athletic delegations from Japan and the Philippines, as a backdrop, Liu Shimu implored Chinese to learn about, invest in, and travel to Southeast Asia.[77] In addition, 1921 also coincided with the Wood–Forbes Mission in the Philippines when independence became a real possibility and liberal Chinese commentators grasped onto every independence-related news story coming from the archipelago.[78] In other words, the summer of 1921 was a time of coalescence, when sports,

[73] Osias, "Ji Feidao," 137. See also "Axiyasi yanshuo Feidao shangye jiaoyu 阿西亞斯演說菲島商業教育 [Osias Speaks on Philippine Commerce and Education]," *Shenbao*申報, June 11, 1921.

[74] "Wu tuanti huanying Feidao Huaqiao daibiao 五團體歡迎菲島華僑代表 [Five Organizations Welcome the Philippine Chinese Delegation]," *Shenbao* 申報, April 15, 1921.

[75] Albino Sycip (Xue Minlao 薛敏老) and Wu Kecheng 吳克誠, "Feilübin buji an jielüe 菲律濱簿記案節略 [Summary of the Philippine Bookkeeping Law]," *Yinhang yuekan* 銀行月刊 *[Banking Journal]* 1, no. 11 (1921): 8–15.

[76] Zhaotang 肇棠, "Liu Shimu xiansheng yanjiang 劉士木先生演講 [Mr. Liu Shimu's Speech]," *Zhongguo yu Nanyang*中國與南洋 *[China and Malaysia]* 2, nos. 2/3 (1921): 51–56.

[77] Ibid., 55.

[78] See, for instance, Gui Zhi 桂埴, "Feidao duli wenti 斐島獨立問題 [The Philippine Independence Question]," *Xuelin zazhi* 學林雜志 *[Academia Magazine]* 1, no. 2 (1921): 63; and Hualu 化魯, "Feilübin xuanju yu duli yundong 菲律賓選舉與獨立運動 [Philippine Elections and the Independence Movement]," *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 *[Eastern Miscellany]* 20, no. 21 (1923): 15–16. An earlier version of this monograph contained a full chapter on Chinese reporting on Philippine independence.

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politics, and society blended together like the colors on a well-designed jersey. It was a time of optimism despite the ample uncertainty of the era.

But, alas, all good things must come to an end. On June 6, 1921, the coast guard ship *Bustamante*, commanded by Captain Juan M. Panopio, labored back to Manila carrying the triumphant Filipino athletes on board.[79] While Filipinos had lost the basketball and soccer tournaments, they had succeeded elsewhere, bringing home the overarching victory. When the athlete-laden vessel arrived in Manila Bay five days later, siren blasts sounded from boats "flagged and decorated for the occasion," welcoming them home.[80] After the ship docked, Filipino athletes alighted to join a parade that took them across the city from the Aduana to Taft Avenue to the Normal School.[81] At the Normal School, the athletes enjoyed a regal homecoming colored by speeches from prominent officials.

Before we move onto the next chapter, let's take a moment to listen in on those speeches. With political objectives in mind, parade organizers had invited Leonard Wood and W. Cameron Forbes, who were then leading the Wood–Forbes Mission to determine whether the Philippines was ready to gain independence, along with Senate President Manuel Quezon and Manila Mayor Ramon Fernandez, to serenade the coaches and athletes.[82] Forbes was coy in his speech, opting for rote commentary on developing strong bodies, but Wood connected Philippine performance with civilizational development.[83] Quezon, meanwhile, whom we will hear more from below, leaning on the trope of the stoic athlete who "shuts up and dribbles," stressed the importance of sportspersonship and comportment.[84] Though the parade theoretically celebrated returning Filipino athletes, politics loomed large in the ceremonial performance.

News columnists, feeling less pressure to rein in hyperbolic reflexes with trophies already secured, poured praise on the athletes. Borrowing from the famous statement of Roman dictator Julius Caesar, the *Philippines Free*

[79] "Filipinas Ha Ganado el Lier Puesto en la Olimpicos [The Philippines Has Won First Place in the Olympics]," *El Ideal* [The Ideal], June 6, 1921.
[80] "Olympic Athletes to Get Royal Welcome Today on Return from Shanghai," *The Manila Times*, June 11, 1921.
[81] "Wood and Forbes Asked to Address Conquering Heroes of Olympic Meet," *The Manila Times*, June 10, 1921.
[82] "Wood and Forbes," *The Manila Times*.
[83] "Accept Umpire's Decisions Without Protest Quezon Tells Olympic Heroes Big Demonstration Was Staged Sunday," *The Manila Times*, June 13, 1921.
[84] Ibid. Journalist Laura Ingraham famously told NBA superstar Lebron James to "shut up and dribble" after Lebron James spoke out against racism in 2018. See "Laura Ingraham Told Lebron James to Shut Up and Dribble; He Went to the Hoop," *NPR*, February 19, 2018, www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/02/19/587097707/laura-ingraham-told-lebron-james-to-shutup-and-dribble-he-went-to-the-hoop.

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Press described how Filipinos "came and saw and conquered."[85] The editors of *La Nación* wrote, "The superiority in physical culture is one of the manifestations of the superiority of a people."[86] The editors of *La Vanguardia* employed the language of race, writing, "The laurels won in Shanghai proclaim the perfection of our race."[87] These editors implied that Filipino triumph on the sports field reflected a racial maturity that warranted parallel rewards off the field, or in other words, the granting of independence after the Wood–Forbes Mission.

The Games became a rhetorical shuttlecock in an overcrowded gymnasium. While sports could serve as a unifying force that brought together not just the athletes and coaches but also pundits and spectators, they also revealed the destabilizing potential of politics. In 1921, political debates remained relatively tame. However, by the 1934 competition in Manila, events in the boardroom, which echoed growing geopolitical anxieties outside it, led to the end of the Far Eastern Championship Games. Politicians would confiscate the shuttlecock, completely ending the game, to continue the metaphor from earlier. Between those two pivotal meets in 1921 and 1934, a select group of Filipino and Chinese educators and athletes, many of them veterans of the Games, traveled to the neutral grounds of the International YMCA College in Springfield, Massachusetts, to explore an ultimately abandoned pathway toward closer collaboration.

[85] "How They Came," *Philippines Free Press*.
[86] "What Other Editors Say: Our Success," *The Manila Times*, June 6, 1921.
[87] "What Other Editors Say: Lessons of a Success," *The Manila Times*, June 8, 1921.

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