Traditional Martial Arts

As Intangible Cultural Heritage

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ICM International Centre of Martial Arts for Youth Development and Engagement under the auspices of UNESCO

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ichcap International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO

LIVING HERITAGE SERIES

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Congratulatory Remarks

I offer my congratulations on the publication of *Living Heritage Series: Traditional Martial Arts*, a project aimed at introducing various martial arts around the world.

Martial arts are traditional sports and precious cultural heritage that embody the history, culture, religion, and philosophy of each country. However, most martial arts have for a long time not been able to gain the same traction as modern sports, and thus have not been transmitted and developed systematically.

The publication of *Living Heritage Series: Traditional Martial Arts* is expected to promote interest in diverse martial arts from around the world and raise awareness about their value as intangible cultural heritage, which will contribute to preserving and transmitting the martial arts of different countries.

It is particularly significant that this publication has been driven by the first cooperation between ICM and ICHCAP, in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Republic of Korea's accession to UNESCO. I hope the two organizations will have great success in promoting martial arts and intangible cultural heritage.

Chungcheongbuk-do Province, as a global hub of martial arts, will also make all possible efforts to transmit and develop martial arts.

I extend my gratitude and appreciation to all who have put time and effort into publishing this book.

Lee Si-jong
Chairperson, ICM Governing Board
Governor of North Chungcheong Province


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ICM Preface

Martial arts are intimately linked with the history of humankind, serving in prehistoric times as a means of hunting, for people to protect themselves and their families, enjoy games and festivals, and fight in war, and in more modern times as a way to train the body and spirit.

Considering that martial arts have evolved and developed into various systems in every corner of the world, I believe this imbues them with an invaluable cultural heritage that has been enriched by human wisdom and philosophy.

It is highly significant and valuable that the joint publication of *Living Heritage Series: Traditional Martial Arts* is the fruit of cooperation between ICM and ICHCAP in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Republic of Korea's accession to UNESCO.

Featuring contributions from experts in different arenas, *Living Heritage Series: Traditional Martial Arts* presents the history, transmission status, and cultural value of martial arts in a number of countries and addresses how to preserve and transmit the martial arts at risk of extinction. I believe this publication will be a valuable asset to the two organizations committed to preserving a diversity of cultures and enhancing mutual understanding and communication among different regions and countries.

ICM will continue to play a key part not only in strengthening cultural diversity by promoting the martial arts of the world, but also in providing quality education, realizing gender equality, and seeking good health and wellbeing of humankind by harnessing the value of martial arts.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the contributors and my colleagues at ICM and ICHCAP for their endeavors in publishing *Living Heritage Series: Traditional Martial Arts*. Thank you.

PARK Chang Hyun
Secretary-General
International Centre of Martial Arts for
Youth Development and Engagement
under the auspices of UNESCO


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ICHCAP Preface

A global sense of crisis in respect of the degradation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) as a result of globalization and urbanization greatly contributed to the adoption and implementation in 2003 of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Based on the 2003 Convention, the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP) has dedicated its efforts to safeguarding and enhancing ICH in collaboration with 48 UNESCO member states in the Asia-Pacific region.

One of ICHCAP's various projects for safeguarding ICH is the publication of books with the aim of raising interest in ICH, as well as gathering, documenting, and safeguarding information and discourses regarding ICH. In particular, the Living Heritage Series, a serial publication of books focusing on the regional and national transmission and safeguarding of specific ICH elements, is designed to ensure "cultural diversity" as a key area emphasized by UNESCO and enhance the visibility of this crucial value by introducing the ICH of various regions and themes.

ICHCAP published the first book in the Living Heritage Series, *Traditional Medicine*, in 2017, and *Tug-of-war Rituals and Games* and *Traditional Food* in 2018 and 2019, respectively. The fourth book of the Living Heritage Series was developed in collaboration with International Centre of Martial Arts for Youth Development and Engagement under the auspices of UNESCO (ICM) under the theme of traditional martial arts, for which papers were gathered through an open call for submissions. Traditional martial arts, an important ICH element for the sustainable lives of communities and humanity, is a theme that will effectively contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. ICHCAP has so far exerted its efforts to showcase cultural diversity through the introduction of traditional martial arts from each region and the sharing of ICH values and experiences. This book is the outcome of the collaboration between ICHCAP and ICM in addition to relevant institutions and expert groups.

Living Heritage Series: Traditional Martial Arts introduces traditional martial arts that are performed around the world, featuring papers written by authors from a number of different countries. Martial arts comprise a kind of ICH element that is transmitted and developed in close linkage with the history and identity of each individual and community, allowing practitioners to refine themselves and overcome their limitations through physical fitness training and mental discipline, while learning to care for others. As such, the philosophies and values of martial arts have permeated lives within each community

through the repetition of transmission, transition, and recreation over generations, thereby contributing to the establishment of healthy societies. A myriad of stories involving traditional martial arts will guide the readers of this book to explore the intangible value of traditional martial arts. At a time when the entire world is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, I hope that traditional martial arts as introduced by this book will contribute to the fostering of strong spirituality and physical fitness, and aid the readers in overcoming this crisis through wisdom.

Many people contributed their outstanding support in the lead-up to the publication of *Living Heritage Series: Traditional Martial Arts*. I would like to extend my appreciation for the efforts of ICM in collaboration with ICHCAP in seeking to enhance the significance of traditional martial arts as an ICH element and introducing their value to the world through the publication of this book. I am pleased and proud to witness the enthusiasm and passion committed to this serial publication come to fruition. I hope that, as they read *Living Heritage Series: Traditional Martial Arts*, readers will appreciate and share the importance of the intangible values imbued in traditional martial arts.

KEUM Gi Hyung
Director-General
International Information and Networking Centre for
Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region
under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP)

Introduction

Park Seong-Yong and Ryu Seok-Yeol

Editors-in-chief

Introduction

Park Seong-yong and Ryu Seok-yeol, Editors-in-chief

Living Heritage Series: Traditional Martial Arts is a product of a collaborative initiative by the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP) and the International Centre of Martial Arts for Youth Development and Engagement under the auspices of UNESCO (ICM).

From its initial planning and request for papers, *Living Heritage Series: Traditional Martial Arts* has focused on the values of each country's traditional martial arts as described from the perspective of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). This indicates that any explication or description of traditional martial arts has to encompass the values and characteristics of ICH, which brought about a paradigm shift in cultural heritage policies. For a more in-depth understanding, we will delineate the definition of ICH and the fundamental spirit of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by UNESCO and examine the relationship between ICH and sustainable development.

The purposes of the 2003 Convention are (a) to identify and safeguard ICH, (b) to ensure respect for the ICH of the communities, groups, and individuals concerned, (c) to raise awareness at the local, national, and international levels of the importance of ICH and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof, and (d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance. Article 2 of the 2003 Convention states the definitions of "intangible cultural heritage" and "safeguarding" activities thereof. "Intangible cultural heritage" means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith. The domains of ICH are defined as (a) oral traditions and expressions, (b) performing arts, (c) social practices, rituals, and festive events, (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and (e) traditional craftsmanship; surely, these can be viewed as almost all related to the cultural development of humanity.

Under the 2003 Convention, "safeguarding" of ICH means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of such heritage, including identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, enhancement, and transmission, as well as revitalization. It places the top priority on safeguarding ICH that represents each country's traditional culture, particularly those at risk. It is also necessary to be mindful of the focus of the 2003 Convention that stresses the participation of communities, groups, and individuals, among others, to ensure the safeguarding of ICH; the communities, groups, and individuals concerned are the primary administrators who safeguard and transmit ICH. Moreover, the

principle of preventing any hierarchy from forming between ICH elements, communities, or cultures is considered to be the fundamental spirit of the 2003 Convention. On top of this, the fulfillment of the 2003 Convention enhances communication and mutual understanding toward ICH and seeks balanced development among all regions in international cooperation.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that keen attention has been drawn to the relations between ICH and sustainable development in recent years. The United Nations adopted its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encouraging the achievement of these SDGs in all areas of social development. UNESCO also underscores the importance of ICH "as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development" in the 2003 Convention.

The theme of this volume, traditional martial arts, is a significant element of ICH that has developed in lockstep with the social, cultural, political, and economic progress of each country and region. Hundreds, if not thousands, of martial arts are known to exist across the world. Nevertheless, only a few of them, such as judo, taekwondo and muay thai, have been able to establish themselves as official games with coordinated support and efforts; with a large number of practitioners worldwide, these martial arts are an object of study in various academic fields and have evolved into both major martial arts and commercial sports that attract institutional and financial assistance.

In contrast, many other martial arts are lagging behind under deprived circumstances, some at risk of becoming extinct. Since 2008, UNESCO has played a pivotal role in preserving and promoting such underprivileged martial arts through its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In 2011, Korea's traditional martial art, taekkyeon, was inscribed on the list for the first time as a pure martial art, and subsequently, many other various martial arts, including Brazil's capoeira and Kazakhstan's kurash, were recognized for their ICH values by UNESCO. In 2018, traditional ssireum wrestling from South and North Korea was jointly inscribed on the Representative List, shedding new light on martial arts as a medium of cross-national exchange and reconciliation that embrace psychosomatic discipline, self-control, community spirit, and other values.

Over the past decade, martial arts came to comprise 14 items out of 463 on the Representative List. This marks a historic milestone for raising awareness of the values of martial arts and leading the renaissance of martial arts in the international community.

In addition, the Kazan Action Plan was announced at the 6th International Conference

of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS) in 2017, further strengthening the significance of physical education and sports in efforts aimed at achieving the SDGs pursued by the international community. The Kazan Action Plan underscored the notion that sports and physical activities for all are a significant base for preventing violence and forming a sound, sustainable society. Taking into consideration the close association between martial arts and sports, the role and potential of martial arts are being acknowledged as an instrument to achieve the SDGs as well. In fact, the ICM under UNESCO issued a joint research report on youth development through martial arts.

The joint publication of *Living Heritage Series: Traditional Martial Arts* aims to keep pace with the zeitgeist that considers sports and physical activities to be both the optimal method and fundamental right for mankind to achieve peace, and to preserve and promote the ICH values of traditional martial arts in conformity with the spirit of the 2003 Convention. It was made possible to bring this book into the world thanks to the support of many precious contributors, including martial arts practitioners worldwide, scholars, and personnel at cultural heritage institutions. We hope that such efforts and interest will lay the foundation for the protection and transmission of traditional martial arts.

Capoeira, Its Value as ICH and the Open School Project: Experiences and Reflections

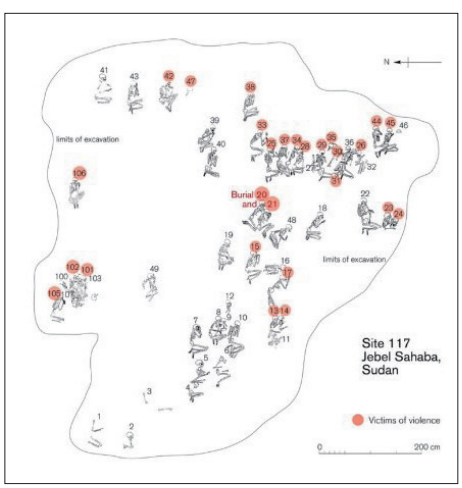
Ọbádélé Kambon, PhD

Founder, Abibifahodie Asako Capoeira;
Senior Research Fellow, University of Ghana

01

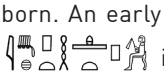
Capoeira: History and Background

Afrikan combat arts and sciences are the very oldest in the world as Afrikan people are the first human beings in the world. According to Hamblin, "the oldest discovered cemetery in the Nile Valley at Jebel Sahaba in Nubia (northern Sudan)—broadly dated to roughly 12,000–9000—provides the earliest evidence of tribal warfare, for roughly half of the 59 skeletons at site 117 had flint projectile points among the bones, probably indicating death in battle; some had evidence of multiple healed wounds, perhaps indicating repeated fighting" (2006, p. 32). This site has since been more accurately dated to between 13,140 and 14,340 years ago (Graham, 2016). At another massacre site at Nataruk in contemporary Kenya were found a mixture of people killed with blunt instruments, sharp pointed weapons, projectiles, and so on. According to Lahr *et al.*, "Ten of the twelve articulated skeletons found at Nataruk show evidence of having died violently at the edge of a lagoon, into which some of the bodies fell. The remains from Nataruk are unique, preserved by the particular conditions of the lagoon with no evidence of deliberate burial" (2016, p. 2). Researchers at Nataruk also found:



Map of cemetery 117 at Jebel Sahaba. The red dots indicate those who experienced a violent death © British Museum

> five, possibly six, cases of sharp force trauma to the head and/or neck likely associated with arrow wounds, five cases of blunt-force trauma to the head, two cases of possible ante-mortem depressed bilateral fractures of the knees, two cases of multiple fractures to the right hand, and a case of fractured ribs. Only two of the skeletons in situ show no apparent evidence of peri-mortem trauma, although in both cases, the position of the hands suggests the individuals may have been bound at the time of death. (Lahr *et al.*, 2016, p. 5)

It is in the context of training for self-protection, and the protection of one's family and nation that Afrikan combat arts and sciences were born. An early instance of such training can be seen in the tomb of  imAxw Ptahhotep (Romano, 2007).

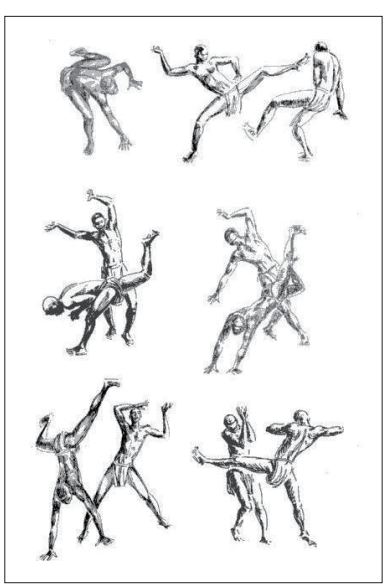
Traditional Afrika is replete with examples of training in combat arts and sciences for self-protection. It is within this context that capoeira, also known as *Kipura* in Kikôngo and *Engolo* in Kimbundu, was born in Angola. According to Desch-Obi,

> The techniques of the *engolo* closely resembled the fighting style of the zebra. The zebra's combined ability for lethal kicking and nimble defense relate it to the practice of *engolo*. Neves e Sousa argues that the *engolo* was named after the zebra and that the kicks executed with the hands on the ground were direct imitations of the kicking of the zebra. These "zebra" or inverted kicks executed with the hands on the ground were the most distinctive and characteristic kicks of the *engolo*, as well as its American derivatives. (Desch-Obi, 2008, p. 38)

Wrestlers' scene from the tomb of imAxw Ptahhotep (Romano, 2007)

From the mid-16th century, many Afrikans were enslaved by the better-armed Portuguese and taken to Brazil, and they took their combative skills with them (Desch-Obi, 2008; Kambon, 2018; Pakleppa *et al*., 2013; Powe, 2002; Kent, 1965). In many instances, capoeira was repressed, as noted in the following passage from 1817 in which Police Intendent Paulo Fernandes Viana states:

> The same penalty [of 300 lashes and three months of forced labor] will apply to all those who roam around the city, whistling and with sticks, committing disorder most of the times with no aim, and which are well known by the name of capoeiras, even if they do not provoke any injuries or death or any other crime. (Assunção, 2004, p. 70)



Engolo of Angola, as documented by Neves e Sousa (1965), featuring the Zebra-like inverted kicks

According to Talmon-Chvacier (2008, p. 82), citing the publication *Cidade do Rio* of December 10, 1889:

> Capoeira is the greatest evil the empire has bequeathed us. When the monarch's police decided to suppress capoeira and imprison those who practiced it, the measures were always limited to signing a "promise of good behavior" and two or three days in jail. After their release, the Capoeiras were often recruited by the secret police.

This type of state repression and stigmatization continued until Juracy Magalhães, the governor of the State of Bahia, invited one of the capoeira *mestres,* Mestre "Bimba into the governor's palace for a private demonstration of his Regional, somewhere around 1936" (Assunção, 2004, p. 136).

Assunção goes on to document the progress toward decriminalization as follows:

> Decriminalization came soon in the form of a certificate that a teaching inspector issued on 9 July 1937 to Mestre Bimba, acknowledging him as a teacher of physical education and registering his academy in the Tororó neighbourhood with the Bahian Department of Education, Health and Social Security. … The exhibition for the state governor, which had contributed to the institutionalization of capoeira on a regional scale, was later replicated on a national level. On 23 July 1953, Bimba met Getúlio Vargas, the … then democratically re-elected President (1951–1954) [who] allegedly said on that occasion that "capoeira is the only truly national sport". The nationalist discourse on capoeira had finally made it to the very top. (Assunção, 2004, p. 137)

Mestre Bimba (left) and Mestre Pastinha (right) (Parceiro, 2020)

Subsequent to the legalization of capoeira, another important mestre, Mestre Pastinha, "In 1949 … finally managed to establish a center for Capoeira Angola, which was officially recognized in 1952" (Talmon-Chvaicer, 2008, p. 126).

Capoeira has since made great strides in terms of popular culture, appearing in movies such as *Cordão de Ouro* (1977), *Only the Strong* (1993), *The Protector* (2005), *Besouro* (2009), and *Undisputed III: Redemption* (2010) among many others and through video games such as the Tekken series (Eddy Gordo and Christie Monteiro) and *Street Fighter III* (Elena). As a result of greater sensitization through media as well as the on-the-ground efforts of many dedicated mestres and practitioners, huge capoeira groups with thousands of members have established a presence in countries throughout the world. Some of the largest include Abada, Cordão de Oro, Senzala, Muzenza, Axé Capoeira, and Capoeira Brasil. Ironically,

although capoeira is an art originating in Afrika, many of the largest groups are led by non-Afrikans and some cater specifically to non-Afrikans in Eurasia, Australia, North America, and other regions. However, one of the major strides in completing the circle has been the return of capoeira to Afrika, its true home and place of origin. Capoeira has a presence in Ghana, South Afrika, Angola, Senegal, Togo, Congo DRC, Côte D'Ivoire, Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and others. At the forefront of capoeira in Ghana has been Abibifahodie Capoeira, founded in 2009.

This chapter will discuss the role of Abibifahodie Capoeira (www.abibifahodie.com), as a propagator of capoeira as Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) through the recent UNESCO-ICM Capoeira Open School of 2019.

Abibifahodie Capoeira (Ghana) and the UNESCO-ICM Open School 2019: Propagating Capoeira as ICH

Capoeira—like many Afrikan combat sciences throughout the continent and diaspora—has a natural way of combining dance-like movements with combat in order to enable better attack and defense (Assunção, 2004; Desch-Obi, 2008; Pakleppa *et al.*, 2013; Talmon-Chvaicer, 2008; Kambon, 2018). Capoeira combines physical (aerobatics, combat art, and dance), musical (drumming and singing), and philosophical elements (culture, ritual) related to the Afrikan=Black worldview. During the Open School, students learned the fundamentals of all these aspects, constituting a wealth of knowledge and skills transmitted from one generation to the next as encapsulated in the UNESCO definition of ICH. In this chapter, therefore, I will focus on capoeira and its value as ICH combined with my experiences and reflections as an instructor in the Open School project 2019.

In pursuit of relaying ICH, we set the following goals for the Open School project:

1. To develop a sense of community (for students to help each other as a group, train together and learn together).
2. To create a fun environment for learning the physical aspects of capoeira (relays, *roda* [capoeira circle], music, rhythm, and acrobatics).
3. To introduce Afrikan culture by teaching words, songs, stories, and philosophy of capoeira via engaging ways such as through music and videos.

Modalities for Instruction as a Means of Inculcating Value for Capoeira as ICH

The instructional team was composed of myself Nana Kwame Pɛbi Date I (Ọbádélé Kambon, PhD), Kwabena Danso, and Nii Armah. Kwabena began training with Abibifahodie Capoeira in 2009, while Nii Armah began his training in 2015. We began the Open School by assessing the specific skills that the learners already possessed.

An additional pre-instruction assessment was performed to ascertain each individual student's openness to participation in capoeira class. We asked for those who had already heard of capoeira as well as those who may have practiced or seen it before. We also asked for those who had done non-Afrikan martial arts before. With specific regard to openness, we were looking for those who were already open to embracing the various aspects of capoeira, including (but not limited to) the physical, philosophical, and musical facets. As ICH also relates to instruments, objects, and artifacts, many of these were introduced to the students so that they would have exposure to some of the tangible aspects of ICH transmission.

There were significant outcomes from the Capoeira Open School within the six-week period from June 24 to August 2, 2019. The classes were structured to provide three routines, each of which accentuated physical, mental, cultural, and spiritual aspects. These were designed to accentuate the acquisition of capoeira holistically as ICH.

As part of the Asako Afrikan=Black Combat Capoeira instruction, students were taught to avoid the tendency to block kicks and punches. They were taught to evade these attacks to set up their own counterattacks, and in terms of outcomes, students were able to grasp this approach very early. Again, this goes back to propriety: doing the appropriate thing at the appropriate time. This is one of the core values of capoeira that is demonstrable in various other Afrikan combat sciences and arts. These are also the primary modalities of setting traps into which one lures the opponent with the overarching principle of attacking without being attacked. After having seen capoeira performed a few times, the learners grasped this principle and made it a part of themselves and their approach to Afrikan combat science. Thus, we were able to actually gauge and measure transmission of capoeira as ICH.

While these movements and principles were taught with teacher evaluation in mind, we also regularly included a portion toward the end of the class focused on self-evaluation and reflection—key components of growth and development in the internalization of ICH as

Okunini Kambon showing Capoeira films at Tema Royal School © Okunini Ọbádélé Kambon

Okunini Kambon teaching Asako music and instruments in the Twi language at Nima Spread Out Initiative © Okunini Ọbádélé Kambon

Okunini Kambon with students for the final demonstration in Nima © Okunini Ọbádélé Kambon

transmitted by us as facilitators. This ensured that students remained self-reflective, self-directed, and, therefore, self-motivated in their learning such that they would be able to correct any problematic movements, (anti)social behaviors, and/or unproductive personal attitudes.

In addition to the aforementioned outcomes, students were shown documentaries and short clips in which the history of capoeira was discussed as well as the ancient Afrikan combat arts and sciences (now commonly referred to as "martial arts") as a whole (Pakleppa *et al*., 2013). This initiative was designed to accomplish the goal of facilitating mental development as outlined in the specific objectives of the Open School, which is also commensurate with expectations of ICH transmission. The mental and spiritual aspects of capoeira were also highlighted through the students' introduction to and participation in capoeira music sessions, using instruments such as the berimbau (single-string bowed instrument, agogo (cowbell), caxixi (shaker), reco-reco (notched scraping instrument), and atabaque (drum). The capoeira songs are significant in that they delve into the history and folklore surrounding the art and its origins. Introducing them during the Open School was intended to ensure the learners felt connected to their ancestors and ancestral art as passed down throughout the centuries—again, key components of ICH transmission.

Another outcome of which we are particularly proud is that we organized a final event in Nima on August 2, 2019 at which students from both schools converged to demonstrate what they had learned publicly. A major thoroughfare was blocked off after obtaining the

required permit. The occasion was graced by the assemblyman of the Nima area as well as other prominent religious figures and dignitaries. Han Changhee of UNESCO-ICM was also able to attend and even participate in the festivities. The demonstrations took several forms. From each site, we gave the most advanced students a routine of sequenced movements to perform. At the final program, they performed this routine with exceptional accuracy to the delight of the gathered crowd. We gave all the other students numbered movements that they were able to do on command when the number was called out. After this, students demonstrated their acrobatic abilities. This was followed by a light-sparring *roda* in which students from the two sites sparred against each other. A significant outcome was that we produced a final video highlighting the Capoeira Open School as a whole and the final event specifically. Students also received certificates, and those who did not get t-shirts in the beginning were given some by Han.

Okunini Kambon teaching children at Nima Spread Out Initiative © Okunini Ọbádélé Kambon

Overall Assessment and Suggestions for the Preservation and Transmission of ICH

Overall, my assessment is that the Open School produced successful outcomes in several ways, one of which being that it helped as a capacity-building initiative for students and for teachers who were open to learning alongside the youth. This was significant in that it has given students a chance to model themselves after adults with whom they have built a rapport of love and trust over a significant period of time. Further, it ensured that although the program has come to a conclusion, there is still an opportunity for the teachers to engage students during physical education classes and guide them with an understanding of what the children are doing as they continue practicing their capoeira. This has made a contribution to Afrikan children learning about arts from elsewhere in Afrika, thereby playing a part in the transmission of historical and cultural values.

It was specifically significant that girls were given an opportunity to participate alongside boys. This is consistent with UNESCO-ICM's expressed goal of contributing to youth and women's physical and emotional development and to improve leadership skills and community engagement through physical education methods and training. In the final analysis, this goal was attained via a structured and well-thought-out program as coordinated by Abibifahodie Capoeira specialists/instructors.

By way of assessment and suggestions, I am of the view that a final program such as the one that we organized in Nima on August 2, 2019 should form a regular part of concluding ceremonies for Open Schools conducted in the future. One reason for this is because it is directly in line with the goal of community engagement for ICH. Because the program was open to the public and, indeed, conducted in a public space that usually experiences heavy traffic (i.e., on an otherwise-busy street), the community was able to observe and even participate in the closing ceremony. This made community stakeholders feel like they were a part of the project and were not left out. Evidence of this was in the assemblyman's suggestion that we organize a Nima Capoeira Festival in which the main highway would be blocked off so that the entire community could participate in the training, classes, sparring *roda*, and other associated festivities. This type of initiative clearly would not have been suggested if everything had been done behind closed doors without community involvement and participation.

By the end of the Open School, we ascertained that students had come to understand the importance of stretching, warm-ups, and strengthening exercises. Further, they were able to do the *ginga* (the basic capoeira swing), *esquiva* (dodges, three different types), kicks (*martelo*, *bênção* direct kicks, and *meia lua* round kicks), acrobatics (*aû* cartwheel, *macaco* squat position, etc.). More than this, we were able to collectively build a sense of community by encouraging all to participate in the *roda*. These outcomes were evident at each school through the coordination of the program from its inception to its completion. It was also evident in the aforementioned final program, which brought the schools together so that learners could see that they were not isolated, but part of a larger community of learners. This was especially apparent in the final program where everybody played an important role in the circle, whether playing in the circle or making the music; clapping and

singing. As such, the Capoeira Open School 2019 was clearly in alignment with all aspects that define ICH transmission. I am certain that without the Open School, most, if not all, of the children would never have been exposed to capoeira, its music, its history, its theory, and its practice as aspects of the preservation and transmission of ICH.

Okunini Kambon with co-instructors Kwabena Danso and Nii Armah presenting certificates to Open School youth © Okunini Ọbádélé Kambon

Conclusion

In conclusion, the third Open School in Ghana was an amazing success, as attested by Han Changhee, who was able to observe and even participate in the final program. Certificates provided to the youth certainly gave them a sense of pride and accomplishment in knowing that they were a part of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that was truly great. Both locations—Tema Royal School and Nima SOI—benefited greatly from the program as the student evaluations attest. The duration of the project allowed for significant progress to be made within a relatively short period of time. Undoubtedly, the Capoeira Open School was an experience that students will never forget. Although our budget was small, I am happy that we were able to take the resources allocated to make a successful impact on so many students across different locations.

I am certain that our objectives of teaching of capoeira as ICH (involving capoeira philosophies, cultural values/ethos, techniques, and related activities including the music and history) were met. Students demonstrated a significant improvement in their understanding of all areas taught. Further, their interest in and passion for capoeira have certainly been enhanced by the overall experience.

In sum, the 2019 Open School was definitely an amazing success and we look forward to continuing our work with UNESCO-ICM in the accomplishment of its goals and the fulfillment of its mandate for the betterment of Afrika and beyond for the preservation of our unique and underrepresented ICH in the area of combat arts and sciences.

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Challenges Facing Vietnamese Traditional Martial Arts Seen from a Case Study of Bach Ho

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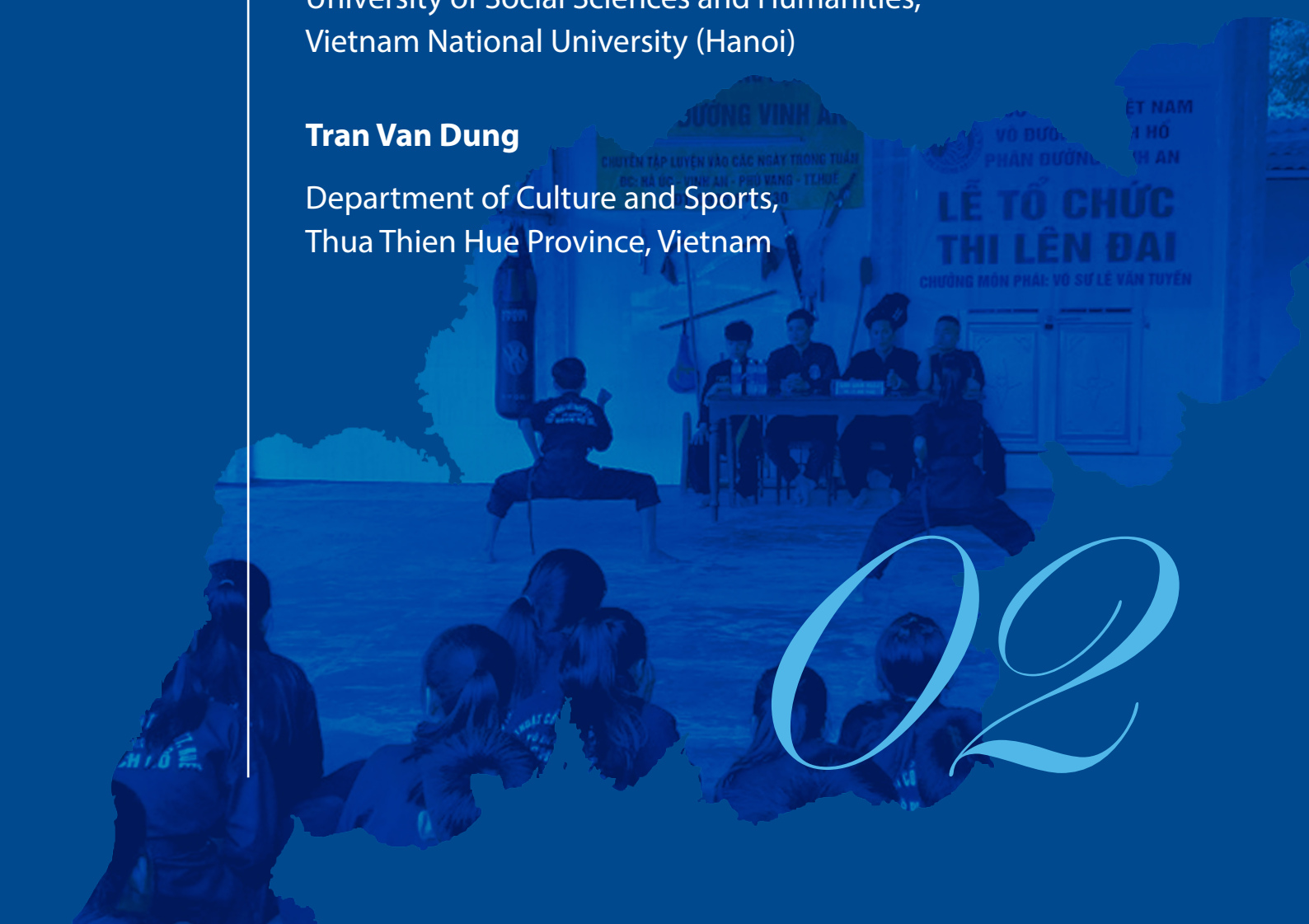

Q2

Research Setting

I arrived in Hue City by the Perfume River (*Sông Hương*) on a rainy afternoon in September 2019 to spend about a month gathering materials and data related to the preservation of the Hue Imperial Complex. One of my friends was waiting for me at a local bar together with his Bach Ho (White Tiger) master, a man in his sixties wearing a black martial arts shirt. After greeting one another, we began our conversation by taking about Hue's recent conservation projects and local landscapes, before my friend's master touched upon the history and the heyday of Bach Ho martial arts (the 1960s to the early 2000s). Indeed, Vietnamese people have created their own martial arts to boost their health and protect their homeland against aggressive and more powerful foreign invaders for a few thousand years. As Van Dung *et al.* highlight: "martial arts contributed glorious pages to the history, appeared as a proof for resolute spirit, inexhaustible struggle, fearless of death, difficulty or danger and as a creative mind of people" (2017, p. 27). The Vietnamese philosophy of martial arts is "the Truth—the Goodness—the Beauty"; it attempts to advance Vietnamese culture and characters by forging a sturdy body, enduring health, and a strong spirit that provides support in dealing with difficulties and hardship (Van Dung *et al*., 2017, p. 28). Viet Nam has some of its own styles of martial arts, but due to being located at a crossroads of civilizations, various martial arts from China, Korea, and Japan have been brought into and mixed with native ones, including kung fu, karate, judo, aikido, and taekwondo (Van Dung *et al.*, 2016, p. 69). With the tremendous growth of this industry, martial arts have become an integral part of sports and physical activity culture, conveying not only lifestyles but also educational value and entertainment (Ko *et al*., 2010, p. 3).

Hue became one of the biggest centers of martial arts in Viet Nam because it was home to the Nguyen dynasty, the final feudal society of Viet Nam (1802–45). The Nguyen dynasty fought against local rivals and also stood against Western colonialism, particularly the French invasion (Odell and Castillo, 2008, p. 82). Therefore, the practice of martial arts was very much encouraged and was stimulated through the organization of a number of nationwide martial arts competitions to select the best talents in the country (Le, 2020). Several temples were constructed, at which the masters' skills and teaching were honored by the carving of their names on the stone columns.

The Hue Association of Traditional Martial Arts confirms that there are around 15 types of martial art within Hue, including Viet Vo dao, Bach Ho, Nga My, Thien Muc Son, Thieu Bao, Nam Son, Hau Quyen dao, Thieu Lam Dai Tam, and Kinh Van An. Other Vietnamese martial arts had their origins elsewhere, as noted, in countries such as China, Japan, and Korea, but Bach Ho (a genuine Vietnamese martial art) remained one of the most prevalent types of martial art in Hue City. Unfortunately, the stature of Bach Ho is fading significantly in comparison with other martial arts. This study thus aims to explore the relevance of Bach Ho in contemporary contexts and the primary impediments to its transmission. It will then propose recommendations for safeguarding and promoting Bach Ho as intangible cultural heritage for future generations. These are the primary objectives behind the selection of Bach Ho as our research topic.

To conduct our study, we worked closely with representatives from the Association of Traditional Martial Arts of Thua Thien Hue and different groups from the martial arts. In

particular, we gradually developed relationships with both teachers and learners of Bach Ho. We spent six months observing, interacting with, and interviewing grand masters, senior masters, masters, and students of various age groups and levels of proficiency in martial arts, including spending several hours per day participating in martial arts training sessions and social activities. We also conducted interviews with participants from Hue Department of Culture and Sports, Hue Association of Traditional Martial Arts, Vietnamese Traditional Martial Arts Federation, and martial arts researchers to gain more insight into the research target. Some specific identifiers were removed, and efforts were made to guarantee the anonymity of the participants. Document review was utilized to acquire more information and to avoid duplicating what other researchers have done. We studied a plethora of materials about martial arts, from books, journal articles, and conference papers written by leading scholars and researchers, to publications in the nonacademic domain including magazines, websites, and pamphlets published by those who simply love Vietnamese traditional martial arts.

The practice of Bach Ho martial arts at Dieu De pagoda © Nguyen Ky Nam and Tran Van Dung

Bach Ho's Glorious Past Versus Its Gloomy Present

Nguyen Huu Canh (1650–1700), who was a general under Nguyen Phuc Chu Lord, is believed to be the creator of Bach Ho martial arts (Thua Thien Hue Online, 2016). It was taught to the masses in the 19th century and quickly caught on, especially during the next century when people were engaged in the resistance movement against French colonizers.

In a discussion with Master Nguyen Van Anh, Chairman of the Association of Traditional Martial Arts of Thua Thien Hue, he confirmed the imperial origins of Bach Ho martial arts:

> By considering the martial arts exams carried out under the Nguyen dynasty, some exams bear close resemblance to Bach Ho martial arts. It suggests that Bach Ho was very much utilized by the Nguyen kings to select the military mandarins for the court. Bach Ho can be named as the royal martial art since it offered theoretical and hands-on exams. (Master Nguyen Van Anh, 2019, interview)

Bach Ho was initially transmitted to people of the same family or other close relatives, and this remained the case for many years. Under French colonization, Vietnamese people were prohibited from engaging in this kind of martial art; however, proponents managed to practice it secretly and innovatively:

> Since the French deterred people from practicing Bach Ho martial arts, local people had to adapt to novel ways of practicing. They managed to practice it at night instead of daytime, for instance. In some special cases, people tried to remember various styles, postures, and movements of the martial arts by silently reading. (Bach Ho master, 45 years old, 2019, interview)

The practice of Thiet Xoa (special round tools made of bronze) martial art at the Tran Cao Van Primary School © Nguyen Ky Nam and Tran Van Dung

By the time of the 20th inheritor of the title of Grand Master, Bach Ho martial arts had been transmitted to members of the public and gained more popularity. Between the 1960s and the early 2000s, Bach Ho was one of the most successful and dominant types of martial art in Viet Nam, with several thousand students. One of the striking features is the diversity of Bach Ho martial arts, which include Ngoc Tran, Lao Mai, Thiet xoa, Sieu xung thien, Than Dong, Xam Xi, Song Dao, Thao Phap, and Hai Am Thao Phap. The style of Lao Mai (or "old apricot") captures the posture of the old apricot plant, which is firm but flexible; the combat movements of Lao Mai are simple but efficient. Sieu xung thien style is inspired by the large machetes used in battle by generals. This style helps students learn to use the machetes skillfully and properly, but with the inherent danger of the weapon it requires students to have a certain base skill level to practice it.

The principle of Bach Ho is to use your strengths to attack your opponent's weaknesses and the martial art style should be flexible to adapt to specific situations. Bach Ho is considered a genuine Vietnamese martial art because it is deemed an ideal fit with Vietnamese people, who are small but very quick in combat. As well as focusing attacks on an opponent's weaknesses, Bach Ho pays special attention to combat techniques and attacks that are aimed at the most vulnerable points of the opponent's body. The fighting technique makes great use of the hands, the movements of which simulate those of a

tiger's paws. Bach Ho also makes use of various kinds of weapons including swords, knives, machetes, long sticks, and so on. Bach Ho has two different types of training: single form with bare hands or with weapons, and dual form with two performers practicing blocks or strikes with weapons. The core values of Bach Ho have remained relatively unchanged over a long period of time.

Bach Ho remained one of the most popular Vietnamese martial arts from the 1960s until the early 2000s due to the perceived benefits for practitioners' mental and physical health. These values were described in the interviews with senior masters, masters, and students. One of the Bach Ho masters suggests:

> The practice of Bach Ho possesses diverse meanings. The first is to exercise attitude and morals. The second is to keep yourself safe as a form of self-defense and to unwind to study and work efficiently. The third impact is to make new friends with other practitioners and teachers as well. (Bach Ho master, 35 years old, 2019, interview)

A student described how he has made great improvements in physical and mental health thanks to Bach Ho martial arts:

> Before joining the martial art class, I was so thin and weak. Now I feel I have a better physical and mental level of health to study further. Besides, I think practicing Bach Ho martial arts helps impulse my determination to overcome obstacles in my study and my life. I plan to enroll in a military university, so learning and practicing the martial arts is essential. (Male practitioner, 16 years old, 2019, interview)

Another impact of Bach Ho is helping practitioners recover from injury. Sustaining injuries is an ordinary thing in the pursuit of martial arts, as noted by Bach Ho Grand Master Le Van Tuyen:

A performance of Bach Ho martial arts with long sticks and swords © Nguyen Ky Nam and Tran Van Dung

Bach Ho martial arts students fighting with bare hands © Nguyen Ky Nam and Tran Van Dung

Bach Ho students using swords at the Dieu De pagoda © Nguyen Ky Nam and Tran Van Dung

> While practicing the Bach Ho martial arts and other kinds of martial arts in general, it is common for practitioners to suffer from injury while learning. ... I have been struggling with it for most of my career. I have learned how to cure simple injuries like sprains, strains, and sore back by applying acupuncture. With regards to bone and joint injuries, traditional medicine originated from natural leaves, bark, and roots might be utilized to help cure the illness, although it takes a longer time to prove its effect. (Bach Ho Grand Master Le Van Tuyen, 2019, interview)

In contrast with its glorious past, the current situation faced by Bach Ho martial arts is markedly different. Since the millennium, the popularity of Bach Ho has plunged in Viet Nam. Today, there are roughly 200 Bach Ho practitioners at two training venues in Hue City: Dieu De pagoda and Tran Cao Van Primary School. Compared to the zenith of Bach Ho's popularity, this marks a sharp decline. Another negative phenomenon is that many people, particularly young practitioners, only practice for a short period of time before switching to study newer kinds of martial art. A similar scenario is seen in the decline in teacher numbers. These situations have created challenges and hurdles for the preservation of Bach Ho.

Transmission Hurdles

The interviews with Bach Ho grand masters, masters, students, and managers revealed that there are some primary hindrances that prevent Bach Ho martial arts from being transmitted to a large number of students in Hue and wider Viet Nam. Analyzing the research participants' responses, we identified three main reasons can be named, including daily burden, the impact of globalization, and outmoded thinking.

Daily Burden

The five Bach Ho masters we interviewed, who used to work full-time at the Dieu De pagoda, currently supplement their income by working as drivers, shoe-makers, and construction workers. In these cases, they noted that they have to support their families, making it impossible to work full-time as Bach Ho masters, receiving only small and symbolic financial earnings. In the meantime, many masters affirm that they are not able to transmit martial arts practice to young people as they do not receive assistance from the government, cultural groups, or community associations. As a result, many masters cannot pursue their dream of transmitting the martial arts to younger generations. This problem is described by one of the Bach Ho masters:

> I cannot make enough money from teaching Bach Ho martial arts. I am currently working as a bus driver on routes from the North to the South of Viet Nam. I must work almost every day and my job is hard and highly

> physical demanding. In return, I can earn more money to raise my family of five. When I am free, I practice the martial arts myself. I had no choice when I decided to stop teaching. (Senior master, 52 years old, 2019, interview)

Another senior master of Bach Ho, who had been teaching the martial art for more than 20 years, offered his views about his family matters:

> It was a difficult and tough choice for me when I decided not to be a teacher of Bach Ho martial arts any longer; that made me utterly sad. My daughter has been sick and I must earn money to help her and my family by working as a shoe-maker, particularly for tourists to Hue City. Not too long ago, some people came to my house and asked me to teach them Bach Ho martial arts. I still wanted to do it, but I cannot. I have no more time left, and I need money for my daughter and my family. (Senior master, 48 years old, 2019, interview)

Impact of Globalization

Globalization is a "managerial process of integrating worldwide activities into a single world strategy by managing a network of differentiated but integrated subsidiaries, affiliates, alliances, and associations" (Tallman and Fladmoe-Lindquist, 2002, p. 124). Globalization seems to treat the world as a single market requiring various elements of capability, strategy, and resources. In terms of martial arts, globalization has led to greater awareness as well as encouraging more participation at the recreational, amateur, and professional levels around the world (Ko, 2003, p. 11). Additionally, a transition from traditional fighting arts to competition-oriented sport is considered to have been a major catalyst behind the growth and popularity of modern martial arts styles. Globalization will also result in substantial changes in the business environment, which the future of martial arts will heavily rely on.

One of the most obvious drawbacks is that there is not so much interest in traditional Vietnamese martial arts, particularly the Bach Ho styles:

> On the one hand, globalization has opened up new opportunities for traditional martial arts to expand into nontraditional domains and geographies. For instance, there has been a strong demand for "authentic" traditional Vietnamese martial arts in Western countries recently. On the other hand, there has been a sharp decline in demand for such "authenticity" in Viet Nam itself. (Senior master from the Hue Association of Traditional Martial Arts, 2020, interview)

Regarding the younger generations' interest in modern martial arts, a heritage manager from the Hue Department of Culture and Sports who has been working in Hue intangible cultural heritage for around 15 years explained:

> Since the 1990s, wushu, karate, taekwondo, and other forms of modern martial arts have been introduced into Viet Nam. These new martial arts are recognized as sports in the Olympics, the Asian Games, and Southeast Asian Games, so they have received much support from the government. Besides, these games have been part of students' school curriculum, and they must learn to earn merits for it. As a result, many young people have learned new modern martial arts instead of old ones. (Heritage manager, 40 years old, 2019, interview).

Another senior Bach Ho master also offered a comparison of traditional martial arts with modern forms. He suggests:

> Unlike traditional Vietnamese martial arts, there are clear, predictable, and comparable indications of achievement in terms of wushu, karate, or taekwondo. It is apparent from the numbers of students practicing traditional karate and taekwondo, tradition is not the key variable turning people off from Bach Ho. Instead, the attributes considered attractive for karate and taekwondo are the rational structure, linear trajectory, and standardization, thus shaping characteristics of modernity. Traditional martial arts have hierarchies, considered one of the trademarks of modernity; however, they lack the rationality which allowed some other traditional fighting arts to continue and prosper. (Senior master, 48 years old, 2019, interview)

Outmoded Thinking

Many grand masters and senior masters are not willing to change the way that they teach. According to one senior master:

> I have a firm obligation to their ancestors to teach practitioners in certain ways and to uphold the core values of the Bach Ho martial arts. I suppose changes made to suit modernity can be a dilution of martial arts, thus having a negative impact on attempts to safeguard the traditional martial arts. Besides, the process of transmission is a form of inculcating values and cultivating character, without which there are no martial arts. (Senior Bach Ho master, 52 years old, 2020, interview)

The process of martial arts acquisition requires a large amount of time and great effort. Depending on various factors, it can take up to ten years to move from the lowest to the highest rank (from white through red, yellow, green, and finally black belts), with each step up requiring the practitioner to pass a promotion test. One master interviewed emphasizes:

> Among a hundred students, three or four can learn and practice the martial

> arts fully. It is really challenging and painstaking to master the arts and can take many years of dedication, determination, and sacrifice. We will not teach the practical use of martial arts to those who wish to learn for only 2–3 years. This is the traditional culture and Vietnamese traditional martial arts is like this. (Bach Ho master, 45 years old, 2020, interview)

Bach Ho martial arts belt promotion test © Nguyen Ky Nam and Tran Van Dung

Asked whether Bach Ho martial arts can be used to entertain tourists in Hue City, one of the senior masters replied frankly:

> If we use our traditional martial arts to serve the tourists or turn it into a tourist product, it will lead to the decline of the quality teaching overall. Students will not have practical skills if they are taught to perform on the stage. Besides, new elements might be cut or added which contradict with our philosophy of the arts. (Senior Bach Ho master, 55 years old, 2020, interview)

Recommendations and Conclusion

As presented in this chapter, the hurdles faced by martial arts in terms of transmission are undoubtedly obvious in Vietnamese traditional martial arts in general and Bach Ho in particular. To address these issues, the interviews with grand masters, representatives from the Hue Association of Traditional Martial Arts, and heritage managers produced various recommendations to protect martial arts as a kind of valuable intangible cultural

heritage. Grand Master Truong Quang Kim of the Kinh Van An martial art, who has been leading one of the most popular martial arts in Hue, and is also an executive member of the Hue Association of Traditional Martial Arts, highlighted the importance of martial arts marketing and promotion programs in Viet Nam. He confirmed that every time he travels to Europe, he is excited about seeing the performance of martial arts, and that closer to home China is a great example of how to make money from the traditional martial arts. However, according to Truong Quang Kim, "Viet Nam has not done it so far. In my opinion, we organize the Tay Son Traditional martial arts every two years, but this is not enough. We actually need more such big events to advertise and shape the Vietnamese traditional martial arts' image" (Truong Quang Kim, 2020, interview).

Truong Quang Kim also described his own experiences of utilizing tourism to advertise the Kinh Van An martial art to national and foreign visitors. For instance, he has collaborated with Hue Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism to create and showcase tourism products. More strikingly, he has let his martial arts serve the tourists: "A session of martial arts performance normally takes around 30–40 minutes with 20 activities and earns the team around VND 1.8–2 million [USD 75–83]." In addition, it is believed that participation in global martial arts events is essential, because "if we wish to turn Vietnamese traditional martial arts into a commodity, we need to take our fighters to take part in the international events. As a result, more people will understand and come to Viet Nam for a view. Another factor is that training venues need to be equipped with sufficient training tools and materials that requires a large sum of money" (Truong Quang Kim, 2019, interview).

There is a need for grand masters as well as masters of Bach Ho martial arts to adapt their minds to quickly changing contemporary society. A manager from the Viet Nam Federation of Traditional martial arts insisted that "Grand masters of the martial arts need to change with the times to keep the arts alive," which is consistent with Daly's (2012, p. 362) research. This will require a process of reworking of the core mechanism and theories of the Bach Ho martial arts to decide what should be retained, what should change, and what should be cut to meet the demands and wishes of the practitioners. The case of Vovinam could be a typical model for transmitting Vietnamese martial arts to both Vietnamese nationals and foreigners. Also, conservation of the martial arts needs supporting policies and measures from central and local governments, to make sure those grand masters and masters can earn a living from their career; this remains a seemingly unsolvable question in terms of Vietnamese traditional martial arts.

In short, the benefits and practical implications of Bach Ho martial arts are unquestionable, and they have proved to be able to exert profound influence on society for a long time. Unfortunately, various challenges are preventing Bach Ho from being transmitted to as many people as it used to be. This seems a prevalent trend in many types of Vietnamese traditional martial arts in comparison with modern styles of martial arts. Bach Ho must urgently adapt to changes and find new measures to keep it alive in the contemporary world.

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From Olympic Sport to UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage: Okinawa Karate Between Local, National, and International Identities in Contemporary Japan

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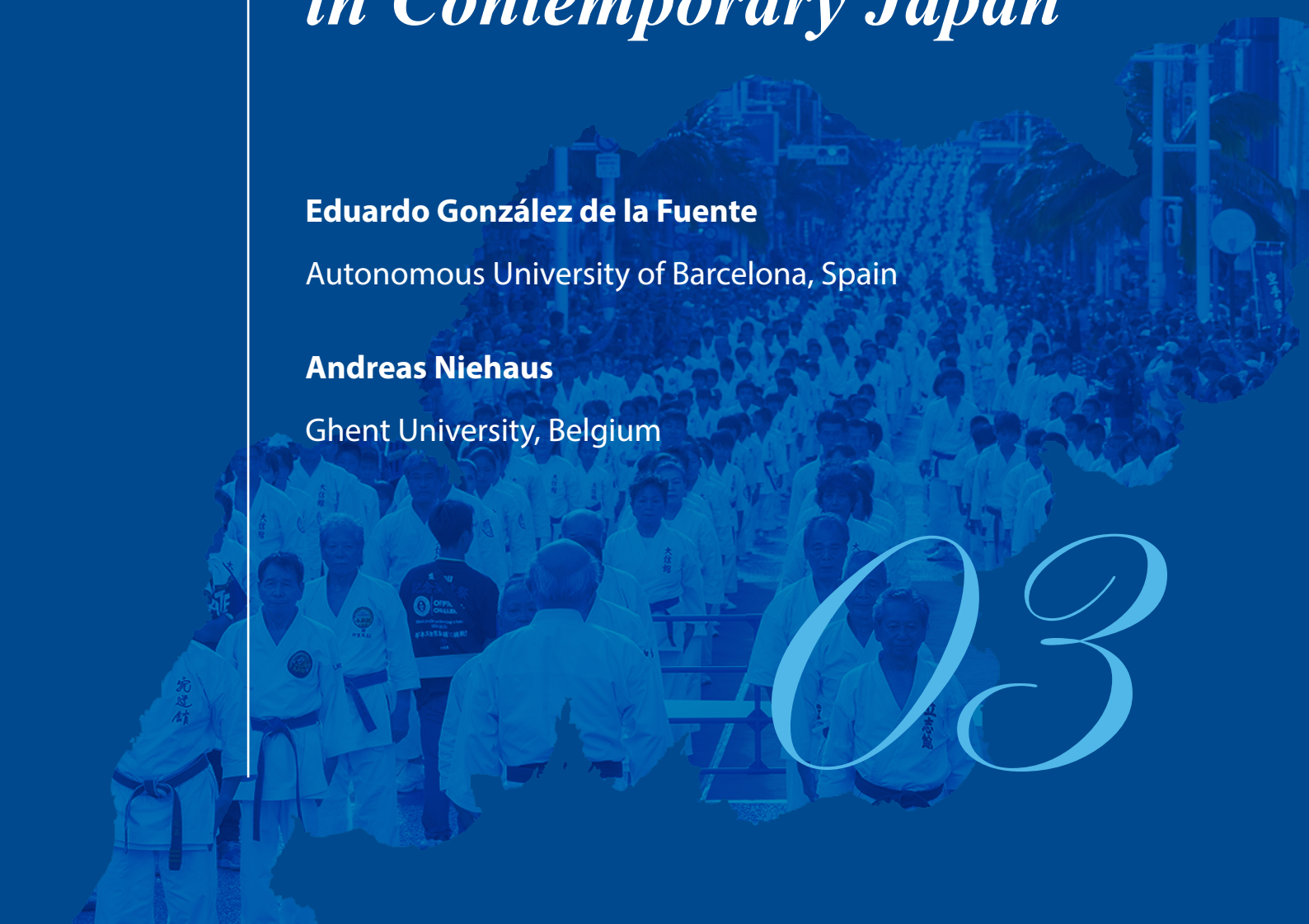

03

Introduction

Karate is commonly regarded as a traditional Japanese martial art, which was developed on the island of Okinawa. Okinawa belonged to the Ryūkyū Kingdom (1429–1879)—an independent state that held diplomatic, cultural, and economic relations with Japan, China, Korea, and other Asian countries. The Ryūkyū Kingdom had a highly transactional culture with a history of cultural exchange in East and Southeast Asia. Karate, generally known as *tī/te* (hand) or *tōdī/tōde* (China-hand), blended the indigenous fighting systems of Okinawa with influences from Chinese and most likely other Asian martial arts, worldviews, and folk spiritualities into a cultural practice that became rooted in Okinawan society. Today, karate is a weaponless martial art in which punches and kicks are utilized. Due to its history and social as well as cultural relevance, the prefectural government of Okinawa has, since the 1990s, been actively seeking to inscribe Okinawa karate on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity. However, karate will also make its debut as an exhibition sport at the rescheduled Olympic Games due to be held in Tokyo in 2021. According to the World Karate Federation (WKF), about 100 million people practice karate around the world (WKF, 2014). With a transcendence that goes far beyond its sportive side, karate, as a cultural icon both of modernity and "tradition," has become a Japanese cultural export incorporated into the global sporting culture.

Sportification and Militarization of Karate

During the early 20th century, karate was introduced to Japan from Okinawa, which became a Japanese prefecture in 1879, by Funakoshi Gichin (1868–1957), the founder of Shōtōkan-style karate. After Funakoshi had already presented karate at the Butokuden (Hall of Martial Virtues) in Kyoto 1916, he was invited to demonstrate the art at the first Physical Education Exhibition (*Daiichi taiiku tenrankai*) in Tokyo in 1922. In the following years Funakoshi succeeded in popularizing karate, especially in the schools and universities of mainland Japan (Bittmann, 1999, pp. 96–105). When imported to Japan, however, karate underwent a process of sportification and militarization—in line with other modernized and sportified Japanese martial arts, especially judo and kendo (Nakatani *et al.*, 2008). This process can also be described as Japanization, as the practice and philosophy of karate was acculturated into the political, cultural, and ideological frame of early 20th-century mainland Japan. Martial arts (*budō*) as well as sport and physical education during the late 1920s and 1930s were systematically appropriated by the state and utilized within the policy of a nationwide *Gleichschaltung*, and were redefined as tools to educate loyal and patriotic citizens, to develop fighting spirit, and prepare the male population for military service (Abe *et al.*, 1992; Bennett, 2013).

Karate practice, which formerly focused on *kata* (pattern exercise), increasingly focused on competitive sparring (*kumite*). The performance was ritualized and formalized by introducing a ranking and gradation system, meditation before practice, and a white training uniform that replaced daily clothes worn for practice in Okinawa. The reading of

dōjō rules before practice became common and individual exercise was replaced by group exercise in formation and on command (Nakatani *et al*., 2007; Johnson, 2012; Tan, 2004). Techniques were standardized and those deemed potentially harmful to the practitioners were eliminated to create a sport fit for physical education curricula in schools and universities. Karate was eventually introduced into the school curriculum in Okinawa in 1901.

In the late 1920s Funakoshi Gichin suggested a change to the characters for karate from "China-hand" (*tōde*, *karate* 唐手) to "empty hand" (*karate* 空手) and adding *dō* (道, "way"), although the term "empty hand" was most likely used for the first time by Hanashiro Chōmo in his *Karate kumite* (1905). This denomination further integrated karate into the reinvented modern Japanese martial art "traditions." It described the main technical characteristic of karate as a weaponless martial art, established a link with Buddhist philosophy, and connected karate to other Japanese art forms whose practice was defined as a "way" (*michi, dō*). At the same time, however, substituting the character for "China" 唐 speaks to the political and ideological Zeitgeist and is a reaction to the contemporary anti-China sentiments that hindered the popularization of karate among young Japanese both in Okinawa and on the mainland (*Ryūkyū Shimpō*, 1936; see also Bittmann, 2017). In 1933 the Dai Nippon Butokukai (Greater Japan Martial Virtue Society), which united all Japanese martial arts under its organization after 1895, recognized karate as a Japanese martial art (Gainty, 2013). The Japanization of karate was by no means limited to styles founded in mainland Japan (e.g., Shōtōkan), but in fact, it had a reverse effect and resulted in an acculturation of Okinawan styles; it was also decided in 1936 (the year before the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War) to adopt the term *karatedō*. The Japanization of karate then also served a political end as it helped to integrate an Okinawan cultural practice into the national and cultural framework of a "homogenous" Japanese nation.

A karate demonstration at Shuri Castle in 1937 by male and female students of the Shuri City Elementary School © Karate Dō Taikan- 空手道大観" (A Broad View of Karatedō), 1938. Nakasone Genwa

The Globalization of Karate

The globalization of karate to the West during the 20th century was initiated by Japanese immigrants to Hawaii and South America and driven after the Second World War mainly by American soldiers. Prior to the war, renowned Okinawan karate masters like Yabu Kentsū (1866–1937), Miyagi Chōjun (1888–1953), and Kyan Chōtoku (1870–1945) traveled overseas to perform demonstrations and provide instruction (Okinawan Prefectural Government, 2017, pp. 123, 147; Orr and Amae, 2016, p. 6). Nonetheless, the globalization of karate as an institutionalized practice occurred after the Second World War. In South Korea,

karate training had already begun in the 1940s thanks to returned nationals who had been studying at Japanese universities. Many schools appeared with karate being pronounced in Korean, *tangsoodo* ("the China-hand way") or *kongsoodo* ("the empty-hand way"), both direct predecessors of taekwondo ("the way of the foot and fist"), which was created in 1959 when the major karate organizations in the country decided to establish a non-Japanese name for Korean karate and formed the Korean Taekwondo Association (Madis, 2003, p. 202; Moenig and Kim, 2016). In Taiwan, karate had acquired significant popularity by the mid-1960s, and in 1973 the Chinese Taipei Karate-do Federation was established (Orr and Amae, 2016, p. 8). Karate was officially established in Australia also around the 1960s. Karate arrived in Africa and the Middle East in the late 1950s, with the first organization formed in 1965 by the Japan Karate Association (JKA). In Europe, karate proliferated mainly thanks to the efforts of Henry Plée (1923–2014) with his Le Karaté Club de France (1955), and the foundation of the European Karate Union in 1965. As for the American continent, the institutional spread of karate began equally during the 1960s, covering countries like Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, mainly with the Shitō-ryū and Shōtōkan styles.

For its part, the United States, via military personnel stationed in Okinawa and Japan, would go on to be the major force in the popularization of karate. In 1961 Nishiyama Hidetaka (1928–2008), co-founder of the JKA, after a few years of instructing American soldiers, settled in California and became one of the leading promoters of karate outside of Japan (Benesch, 2020, p. 18). Likewise, in Okinawa, under U.S. occupation, direct contact between military personnel and Okinawan masters encouraged the propagation of karate.

In Japan, after the war, martial arts "participation was banned for the most part by the Occupation authorities" (Bennett, 2013, p. 82), as such practices were seen as tools that, through their practice and ideology/philosophy, actively contributed to the spreading of a fascist ideology and the militarization of Japanese society. When training of martial arts, including karate, began again in the late 1940s, those martial arts renounced their militaristic past and reinvented themselves as sports. This reinvention formed the basis for the globalization of karate, which after the war picked up its prewar past and further developed along the lines of modern combat sports.

One effect of globalization on cultural practices like karate is homogenization: local or national structures are losing ownership and control of the definition and performance of a given cultural practice and being replaced by international institutions that will create global homogeneity in terms of performance, philosophy, grading, hierarchies, and so on. Nowadays, organizations like the WKF and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) globally define what knowledge and practice in karate are. Another effect of the described homogenization process is also simplification and exclusion. When the IOC executive board announced in 2016 that karate would be included as an Olympic discipline for the Tokyo 2020 Games, it accepted a form of karate practiced within the WKF. Exclusion is made evident by the fact that the WKF only recognizes *kata* from 4 styles—Gōjū-ryū, Shitō-ryū, Shōtōkan, and Wadō-ryū—while karate today counts over 20 different registered styles in Japan and Okinawa.

Processes of globalization, paradoxically, not only result in homogeneity, but also simultaneously lead to fragmentation and localization (Bowman, 2010). Globalization

provokes claims of ownership, belonging, and identity, and processes of acculturation, appropriation, and globalized cultural practices are often intertwined with economic interests on global, national, regional, and even local levels. While witnessing the development toward being an international sport that dissociated itself from earlier forms of karate, the advanced globalization, sportification, and commodification in the 1980s ultimately resulted in a counterreaction that prompted a turn toward a form of karate that could serve the modern longing and search for a spiritual and "authentic" experience, which was found in Okinawa. This movement is in essence nostalgic as it aims to reconstruct, find, and experience karate in a form that is perceived to be more authentic than modern versions.

Okinawa Karate as UNESCO ICH

National and local governments have long realized that cultural practices such as martial arts can function as sources of soft power to unite citizens behind the idea of a shared cultural heritage and to transmit a positive image of a nation and culture to the world. The government of Okinawa not only supports karate but even has a policy to get Okinawa karate registered with UNESCO as a unique example of ICH. These efforts are not a bottom-up movement of local (karate) communities, but a top-down political act to promote a unique Okinawan culture within the prefecture, both domestically in Japan and

The "100 kata for Karate Day," a privately organized yearly event, celebrating its 2016 edition in Churasun Beach, Tomigusuku, Okinawa © Chris Willson

internationally. At the national level the complex promotion plan in respect of Okinawa karate is administratively coordinated within the Japanese government by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and cabinet policies. Karate is also part of the "Cool Japan" branding strategy applied to Japanese intellectual property (Daliot-Bul, 2009; Valaskivi, 2013).

The national government and the prefecture realize the economic potential of karate and encourage Okinawa, with support of local businesses, to be recognized as the "holy land of karate" (*karate no seichi*) and as an attractive destination for Japanese as well as foreign karate tourists. According to data from 2016 there were a total of 1,188 karate tourists registered in Okinawa—38.2% American, 21.1% Australian, and 17.1% French. Among the Okinawa dōjōs, 31.5% have a branch outside of Japan and 37.4% foreign members (Okinawa-ken, 2019, p. 2). Karate is therefore also integrated into a broader tourism policy in which Okinawa heritage connects to the image of a subtropical island, a Hawaii-like beach resort (see Figal, 2010).

A first step toward having karate officially recognized as ICH was taken in 1997 when the prefecture recognized karate and *kobujutsu* as "intangible cultural property" (*mukei bunkazai*), in line with the Japanese law on national heritage. That year, three karate masters—Nagamine Shōshin (1907–97) of Matsubayashi-ryū, Yagi Meitoku (1912–2003) of Gōjū-ryū, and Itokazu Seiki (1915–2006) of Uechi-ryū—were appointed as the first "Intangible Cultural Properties in the Field of Karate and Kobudō." In 2000, when several assets of the Okinawan landscape like Shuri Castle or the Shikina-en Gardens, which are closely associated with karate history and the reconstruction of karate as Okinawan heritage, became UNESCO World Heritage Sites, six more masters were distinguished as intangible cultural properties.

A new Guinness World Record is established by 3973 *karateka* at Kokusai dori in Naha performing *kata*, October 23, 2016. The record has since been superseded
© Chris Willson

Since then, the government has supported the establishment of a centralized infrastructure by founding several organizations with the aim of preserving, promoting, and disseminating an official and authoritative vision of Okinawa karate. Thus, in 2005, October 25 was designated as "Karate Day" (*Karate no hi*); the date was chosen as on October 25, 1936, six renowned karate masters from Okinawa revealed that they would adopt the term *karatedō* (*Ryūkyū Shimpō*, 1936). Designating calendar days to special occasions in karate history draws public attention, creates awareness of a joint history and a sense of identity, while serving to popularize karate and attract tourists.

On Karate Day in 2014, the Okinawa government announced the intention to develop karate's candidature to UNESCO for formal recognition as ICH. With this goal in mind, two further institutions materialized in 2016: the Okinawa Prefecture Designated Intangible Cultural Asset

"Okinawa Karate and Kobujutsu" Preservation Society, and the Okinawa Prefecture Karate Promotion Division, a policy planning bureau that also coordinates the local karate network. The latter organization was given the task of "promoting Okinawa karate to be listed with UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage" (*Ryūkyū Shimpō*, 2016). The definitive emblem for karate candidature was going to be the Okinawa Karate Kaikan (Okinawa Karate Institute), an iconic site that opened its doors in 2017, incorporating a museum and the Okinawa Karate Information Center (OKIC). The institute—expected to attract the attention of the karate community worldwide and serving also as a "pilgrimage" center—describes its main function as: "to preserve, inherit and develop Okinawan Karate as a unique culture whilst informing people both in and outside Japan that 'Okinawa is the birthplace of Karate,' and to be a facility that can be used as a place to learn the essence of Karate" (Okinawa Karate Kaikan, n.d.). At the same time the Kaikan must drive "karate's listing as a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage" (*Ryūkyū Shimpō*, 2017).

A distinctively Okinawan *kameko-baka* ("turtle-back") tomb preserved at the Karate Kaikan grounds as a sign of the respect for families and ancestors prevalent in Okinawan culture

The prefectural institutional plan stresses the importance of local masters and traditions. It also aims to articulate and unify objectives within Okinawa karate, which is considerably divided into different schools and styles. Currently, the Okinawan Government acknowledges 3 major traditions of karate—the Shuri-Tomari-te system (*Shōrin-ryū*),

the Naha-te system (*Gōjū-ryū*), and the *Uechi-ryū* system—along with 11 other minor ones, plus the *kobudō* styles. From these main lines stem 105 *ryūha* and *kaiha* ("schools" and "branches") totaling between 350 and 400 dōjōs in Okinawa alone (OKIC, n.d., 2020). These numerous karate styles and schools have different rules, techniques, *kata*, and they compete among each other and with styles and schools from the Japanese mainland, in terms of legitimacy and authenticity. Yet in order to submit a successful UNESCO application, Okinawan and Japanese karate stakeholders must reach a consensus to define what "traditional" karate is and secure inscription for it on the Japanese government's national list of intangible heritage. Local definitions, understandings, and politics of karate to a certain degree differ with and are in conflict with those on the national level, where karate is promoted as part of a homogeneous Japanese tradition, in which Okinawa is culturally and historically identical with mainland Japan. The initiative by the prefecture, which is also supported by the JKA, clearly distinguishes between Okinawa and Japanese karate. Nakahara Nobuyuki, former chairman of the JKA, in his speech "Okinawa dentō karate no UNESCO tōroku ni mukete" ("Toward the registration of traditional Okinawa karate with UNESCO") at a conference held at the Kaikan in 2017, argued that while Okinawa karate developed in the specific cultural and historic context of Okinawa, traditional Japanese karate developed within the tradition of *bushidō* (OKIC, 2017). This approach to Japanese karate as rooted in the *bushidō* ideology mirrors tendencies on the national level to firmly base karate in the "martial art tradition" of Japan, not only in terms of practice but also in terms of ideology.

At the same conference, Matsuura Kōichirō, also former executive of the JKA and UNESCO's Director-General between 1999 and 2009, emphasized the necessity for Okinawan karate stakeholders to work together with the Japanese government and national experts in ICH for a successful application. Matsuura remembered that the 2003 ICH Convention was fostered and approved during his mandate, manifesting how Japan has largely influenced the UNESCO discourse on ICH (Akagawa, 2016). Regarding karate, Matsuura expressed the urgent necessity to: i) demonstrate how traditional Okinawa karate is different than sports karate and worldwide practices; and to ii) build verifiable historical evidence confirming that Okinawa is karate's place of origin.

Young *karateka* performing at an Okinawan street festival
© Miguel Ángel Regalado Expósito

Uniting the Okinawan and Japanese karate worlds and increasing the understanding of the Okinawan origins of karate in the public sphere are both crucial goals in successfully applying for official ICH recognition from UNESCO. According to the 2018 vision text produced by Okinawa Prefecture, only 34% of mainland Japanese recognize Okinawa as the birthplace of karate, in contrast to 96% of the residents of Okinawa Prefecture itself (Okinawa-ken, 2018, p. 14). Still, an article published in *Japan Times* (May 11, 2018) entitled "Okinawa citizens urged to get behind bid to put prefecture's style of karate on UNESCO map" suggests that while the people of the Okinawan prefecture have a clear cognizance of the

Okinawan origins of karate, they may not yet appreciate the necessity of preserving and promoting it.

The UNESCO convention states that ICH must be recognized by communities and groups "as part of their cultural heritage," providing "them with a sense of identity and continuity" (UNESCO, 2018). Hence, the struggle to secure the support of the Okinawan population regarding the official recognition of karate represents a significant issue, especially as the plan to have karate inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List is targeting the domain of "social practices, rituals and festive events," since there is currently no category covering specifically martial arts. Thus, a committee of karate experts, founded in 2019, announced "ritual" (*gishiki*) as the main keyword, and the phrase "The spirit of peace; tying the ritual of Okinawa Karate to the UNESCO ring" as the slogan for the candidature (*Ryūkyū Shimpō*, 2019). This "ritual karate" must be embedded very particularly into the Okinawan cultural sphere, expressing and disseminating it. From this perspective, the practice of reifying karate as an inextricable component of Okinawan traditional rituals and festivities will expand the reach of its intangible heritage. Performed often on the occasion of folk festivities such as the tug-of-war, boat races, and lion dances, and at spiritual spaces including tombs and monuments, karate capitalizes other sources of the Okinawan material and intangible culture beyond its specific subfield.

Traditional karate exhibition at the Naha Otsunahiki Matsuri (Naha Giant Tug-of-War Festival)
© Chris Willson

Conclusion

The modifications made to karate at the beginning of the 20th century are generally interpreted as Japanization. However, the described development also has to be described from the perspective of modernization. Karate underwent a process of sportification, militarization, and standardization, which meant that karate could be taught to large groups of students in schools, universities, and the military. This in turn had a reverse effect on how karate was trained and defined in Okinawa, a process that is often overlooked. The ideal of "traditional" karate as a self-defense system centered on *kata*—that is, as a kind of ritual performance—gave way to modern sports fighting (*kumite*).

The tension within karate in terms of it being a dual Japanese/Okinawan cultural asset persists at the center of a debate in which historical roots, ramifications, and implications are mobilized again by the application to UNESCO for formal recognition as ICH. Japan needs to acknowledge and support the Okinawa karate tradition to endorse the official strategy of branding the Japanese nation "cool" internationally. Hence, by this complex view, inside karate we find one origin (Okinawa), two "traditions" (Okinawa karate and Japanese karate), and one national heritage (karate as a whole).

International students of Sensei Seikichi Iha Intangible Cultural Asset Holder and 10th-dan Okinawa Shorin-ryu Karate, performing at Shuri Castle to celebrate the master's "Tōkachi", a typical Okinawan celebration of longevity for the occasion of the 88th birthday © Chris Willson

If karate wants to succeed in its UNESCO application, revitalization and re-ritualization—that is, strengthening its bond with other characteristic Okinawan rituals—seems to be the only possible way. Despite the ongoing discussions, there is only one possible path to success regarding the UNESCO candidature: acting by way of consensus.

Several actions, institutional, propagational, discursive, and so on have been developed in the last decade to build up the case for karate as ICH. These local activities have already profoundly changed the landscape of Okinawa karate and it remains to be seen how far the long-term vision of the prefectural government will further alter local karate communities, as well the understandings and performance of karate in the future.

Karate is in itself a site of heritage, expressing cultural diversity and circumscribing narratives that transverse temporal, geographical, and political boundaries. The Okinawan martial art still channels contemporary allegations about the past that can be consistent with or contradict normative discourses about the Okinawa–Japan relationship. Nevertheless, the drive for UNESCO acceptance is devised, at least at the governmental level, as an inflection point because of the tremendous symbolic significance for Okinawa that such legitimizing recognition would bring. In addition, the inclusion of cultural assets in the ICH list has been proven to be a factor in expanding support and appreciation on cultural diversity while increasing tourism-related revenue. In the context of globalization, intangible cultures harvest very tangible outcomes for the social and economic spheres. Many actors, both public and private, in Okinawa and Japan, are well aware of the potential karate is yet to develop.

Karate is part of an Okinawan local process of intangible heritage revitalization that at the same time derives from Japanese national policies. In spite of this top-down management, karate represents for Okinawa a valuable asset in maintaining and transmitting a wide communal sense of historical continuity, identity, moral values, self-awareness, and celebration of diversity. This cultural repository of knowledge and skills is manifested not only in the particular practices of Okinawa karate as a martial art, but more importantly by karate as part of a minority group, expressing an encompassing view of its own culture—a culture at the same time dialoguing with other territories through martial arts as ICH.

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Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei: Development of Jūdō in Brazil

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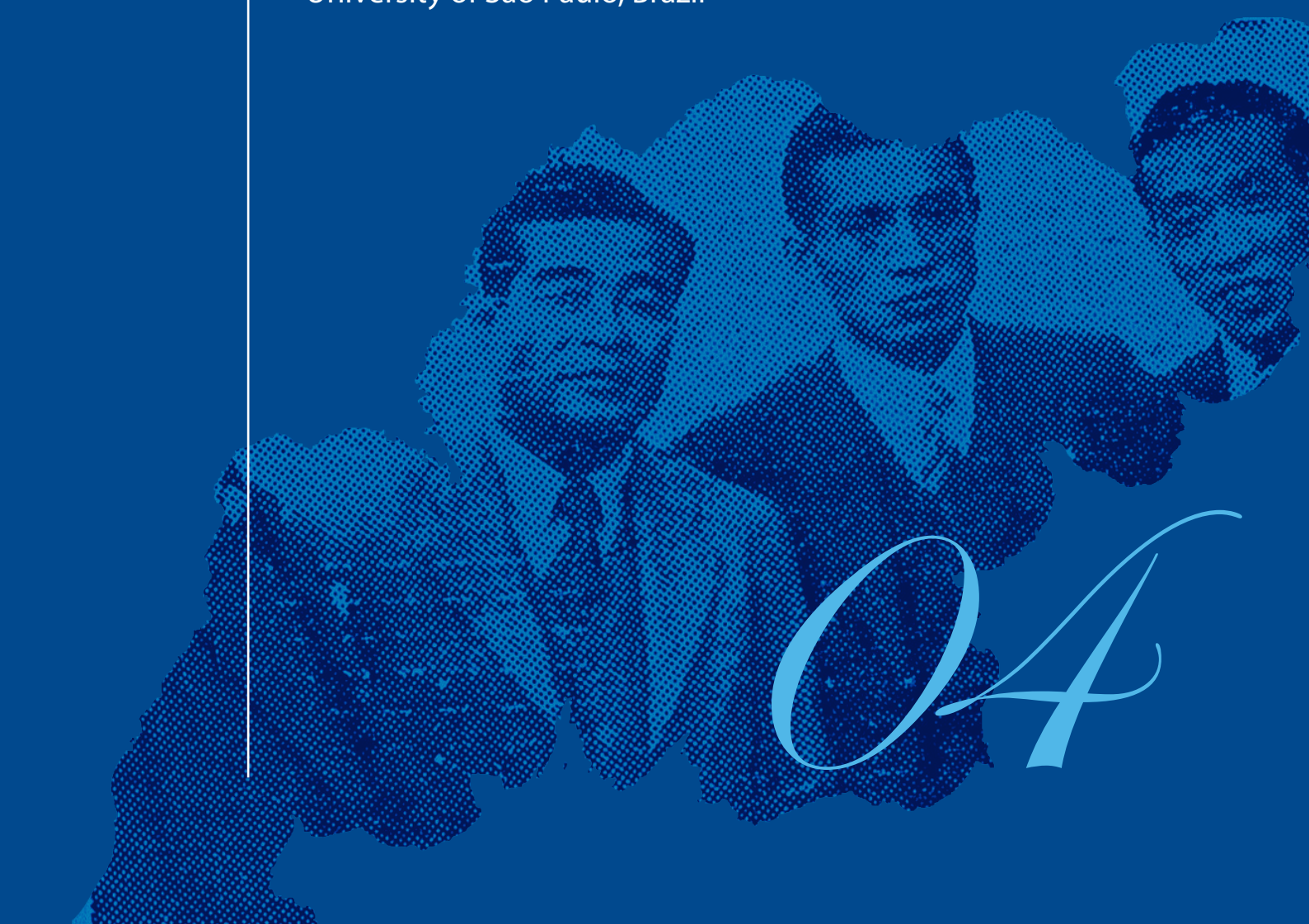

04

Introduction

With the arrival of the *Kasato Maru* at the port of Santos in 1908, a progressive process of Japanese immigration to Brazil began. Martial arts, an integral part of Japanese culture, were brought along with those first immigrants (Kobayashi, 2010). Brazil became the country with the largest number of Japanese immigrants, with São Paulo the biggest community of Japanese people outside Japan (Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa, 1992).

In the early 1930s, the Brazilian jūdō and kendō federation Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei, also known as the Jūkendō (Virgílio, 2002), was founded in São Paulo with the purpose of uniting, coordinating, and promoting jūdō and kendō in Brazil (Kobayashi, 2010; Virgílio, 2002; Lourenção, 2009). Previous studies mention masters Kobayashi, Murakami, and Kawai as founders of the aforementioned institution regarding the kendō group (Kobayashi, 2010); on the jūdō side, masters Okochi, Naito, and Sakata are cited as important proponents of this initiative (Nunes and Rubio, 2012; Virgílio, 2002). Founders and participants of this organization pioneered several initiatives during the introduction of jūdō in Brazil, such as the foundation of the São Paulo State Jūdō Federation; the foundation of the Kōdōkan Black Belt Association in Brazil; and in addition they played important roles in the visit of the Kōdōkan delegations from Japan in 1953 and 1958 (Virgílio, 2002). The late 1930s was the period when the tournaments of the Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei had their biggest growth. The eighth edition was one of the most successful at that time. However, on January 29, 1942, the State Department of Political and Social Order (DEOPS) closed the organization's activities due to the Second World War, when meetings with citizens from Brazil's enemy countries were prohibited (Kobayashi, 2010).

Although the general version of the history of this entity has been described in previous studies dealing with the theme of jūdō and kendō (Ishii, 2015; Kobayashi, 2010; Souza, 2010; Virgílio, 2002), there has not yet been any research using primary sources. In addition, there is conflict between some accounts from these investigations, indicating the need for more in-depth analysis of the development of this organization.

While some authors point to the year 1933 as the foundation of the institution (Virgílio, 2002), others report that it was founded in 1932 (Lourenção, 2009). The questions over the founding date of this federation raise new doubts. Can we find the names of the original founders using primary documentation? What is the founding date of the Jūkendō and how did this event come about? When and where were the championships organized by this federation? Who were the winners of these competitions? What information do we have about the state of jūdō at that time from the events held by that institution? Therefore, the objective of this study is to gather information from primary sources about Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei. This article intends to explore the development of the jūdō department and competitions during the existence of this institution until 1942. We seek to understand this attempt to organize Brazilian jūdō, and the importance of this institution for the formation of subsequent initiatives such as the foundation of the São Paulo State Jūdō Federation. Through primary source information, we aim to contribute to the research previously published, combining studies based on narrative testimony with documents

available from the time studied. Additionally, this study aims to contribute to the historical understanding of the institutional development of jūdō in Brazil.

Methods

This is a historical analytical study. It is a qualitative documentary and bibliographic study that aims to gather information about the context of the practice of jūdō by Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei (Jūkendō), the entity responsible for organizing jūdō in Brazil from 1933 to 1942. For that purpose, newspapers, documents, records, books, and articles are used to describe the main facts that guided the history of this organization. The annual competitions and the main characters involved in this process are described from its inception until its dissolution by DEOPS in 1942. The Digital Library of the Brazilian National Library provided digitalized versions of Brazilian newspapers. The following newspapers published by the Japanese community were also investigated: *Asahi Shimbun, Brasil Jiho (Notícias do Brasil), Nippak Shimbun, and Seishu Shinpo.*

Results

Foundation of Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei (1932/1933)

The oldest book found during this study with details regarding the establishment of the Jūkendō federation was published in 1942 under the title "History of Japanese Development in Brazil" (*Burajiru ni okeru nihonjin hatten-shi kankō iinkai,* 1942) in its second volume. According to this book, at that time the principal sports of the Japanese community were baseball and athletics, but tennis, sumo, golf, swimming, and jūdō and kendō were also popular. However, except for the Jūkendō, they were generally simple in matters of organization, often merely comprising a group of like-minded people. The federation was, then, named Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei (伯國柔劍道聯盟), or "Jūdō and Kendō Federation of Brazil."

The Jūkendō federation began in the residence of Ryusuke Murakami, who was working at the Japanese Imperial General Consulate in São Paulo at the time, in the middle of 1932. The establishment of the Jūkendō centered on Murakami (third dan kendōka), Teruo Sakata (fifth dan jūdōka), Zensaku Yoshida (fourth dan jūdōka), Midori Kobayashi (third dan kendōka), Shunji Hashimoto (second dan kendōka), and later Tatsuo Okouchi (fifth dan jūdōka), Katsutoshi Naito (third dan jūdōka), and Takeo Kawai of kendō. With the sympathetic approval of Deputy Consul Tetsuo Umimoto, they became the founders, indicating the establishment of the Jūkendō federation in September of the same year. Later, the Seishu Gijuku dōjō would become the Honbu dōjō (headquarters) of the federation.

Yasuichi Ono, 1936 © Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – BNDigital

Naoichi Ono, 1938 © Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – BNDigital

The documentary findings in newspapers resonate with the book's account: the oldest newspaper found depicting the foundation of the Jūkendō is from September 22, 1932, in an article titled "Attaining the national mission through the spirit of Bushido" (*Nippak Shimbun*, 1932). This is the oldest document found in which the original plan was exposed to the public. The article portrayed the plans to establish Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei and invited people to become members (membership of the Jūkendō was free of charge). *Notícias do Brasil* published a second advertisement, describing the newly formed federation in an article titled "Plans to establish the new Hakkoku Jūkendō federation." In this article, the plan for the federation to be part of the celebrations of 25 years of Japanese immigration, due to take place in 1933, was first presented. The document states that the founders of the federation jointly signed a document that established the "Prospectus of the Hakkoku Jūkendō Federation." Whoever wished to become a member had to fill out a form, and apply to Ryusuke Murakami at the Imperial General Consulate in São Paulo (*Notícias do Brasil*, 1932).

The plan was for the celebration of the foundation of the Jūdō and Kendō Federation of Brazil to be part of the celebrations in 1933 of the 25th anniversary of Japanese immigration, and members started to organize a tournament, known as a Budō Taikai, to be held the day of the anniversary. The first mention found regarding the federation in 1933 was in the *Nippak Shimbun* newspaper (*Nippak Shimbun*, 1933a). The article noted that the number of applicants for the tournament had, at that point, reached more than 50; it also contained the first mention of Seishu Gijuku as the Honbu dōjō, confirming what was written in the book of 1942. The festivities in honor of the 25th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Brazil took place on a Sunday, in the presence of the Japanese consul and his wife, representatives of the Brazilian government, and several people of the Japanese community. After the Brazilian National anthem and the Japanese Imperial anthem were performed, the Japanese consul made a speech about immigration to São Paulo and the results of the work Japanese immigrants had performed. That afternoon, the event of the foundation of the Jūkendō took place in the hall of the Athletic Association of the Working Classes, in the form of a tournament (*Nippak Shimbun*, 1933b), which *Notícias do Brasil* described as follows:

> The first tournament of the Judo and Kendo Federation and the first general meeting, which had been long-awaited since its inception, were brilliantly performed ... The Carmo Street 25th Labor Hall, which was dedicated to the meeting before and after 2:00 p.m. on time, was literally buried with crowds of people with no room for standing spectators. (*Notícias do Brasil*, 1933, p. 7)

The venue was already packed before the scheduled time, and the crowd was overflowing outside. The first Jūdō Taikai promoted by the jūdō department of the Jūkendō opened with

Chegou, dos portos da Asia, o "Buenos Aires Marú"

DOIS CAMPEÕES DE JIUDO QUE VÃO EXHIBIR-SE ENTRE NÓS — REGRESSOU AO BRASIL, APÓS APERFEIÇOAR-SE DURANTE DOIS ANNOS EM TOKIO, O ESTUDANTE BRASILEIRO, SR. MOZART VARELLA

Arrival of Sumiyuki Kotani and Chugo Sato, 1936 © Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – BNDigitall

demonstrations of Kōdōkan Kata. First, the Nage no Kata was performed, having the fourth dan Yoshida Zensaku as Tori and the third dan Naito Katsutoshi serving as Uke. It was followed by a demonstration of Kime no Kata, with the third dan Naito Katsutoshi as Tori and the third dan Tomikawa Tomiyo as Uke.

The first round of matches was in team competition format (Table 1). The competing teams were *kou* and *otsu.* As explained by Ishii (2015, p. 48), *kou* was the red team and the otsu team was the white (i.e., the colors of the Japanese flag). The team event was followed by individual matches. After that, the finals were conducted, divided into Yudansha (dan holders' group) and Dangaisha (group without dan grading) groups. The first Yudansha champion was Ishihara Sadai (*Notícias do Brasil*, 1933).

Fukaya, 1998 © Revista Kiai

Table 1. First round (team event).

Team Kou (甲軍)		Team Otsu (乙軍)
Fujii		○Fukuya
○Aoyagi		Yamaguchi
○Angelo (アンゼロ)		Ito
Michimoto	X	Iwamoto
Iwane		○Takabatake
○Fujii		Okagawa
Kajitani		○Shitani
○Ito		Oliveira
Hayashi		○Otsuishi
○Onoda		Yamaguchi
Nagasawa	X	Miyata
Kanno		○Tani
Kanayama		○Ishio

Note: ○ = winner, X = tied match. Table created from Noticias do Brasil (1933) records.

The captain of the *kou* team was Fukaya (second dan) and the vice-captain was Naito (third dan). The *otsu* captain was Ishihara (third dan) and the vice-captain was Sawada (second dan). The *otsu* team emerged as winners (*Notícias do Brasil*, 1933).

Table 2. Finals of the individual competition.

Dangaisha Final Match		
Aoyagi		○Miyata
Yudansha Finals, League Format		
Tani		○Fukaya
Fukaya		○Ishihara
Ishihara	X	Tani

Note: ○ = winner, X = tied match. Table created from Noticias do Brasil (1933) records.

Jūdō Department Tournament Results and Development (1934–41)

In 1934, the second Budō Taikai organized by the federation was at Teatro Colombo, located at Frontão do Braz in the city of São Paulo. The tournament schedule saw jūdō matches take place from 1 p.m. on September 15, with kendō matches from 8 a.m. the following

day, and the finals of jūdō and kendō from 1 p.m. that afternoon (*Semanário de São Paulo,* 1934). From that competition the Jūkendō federation started to use the term "Kohaku Shiai" (red and white contest) for the team competition as it was used by the Kōdōkan. The "red and white" contest took place in the tournaments from 1934 to 1936. As was customary in the competitions at the Kōdōkan in Japan, the Jūkendō federation would give standards or flags to the winning team. In 1934 this flag was donated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Colonies in Brazil (*Notícias do Brasil*, 1934a, 1934b).

Tatsuo Okochi, eighth dan (1892–1965) © Revista Kiai

The competition in 1935 was the first to be held in the gymnasium of Associação Athletica São Paulo (São Paulo Athletic Association). It became the most used venue for the Jūkendō competitions from 1933 to 1941 (Table 3), being the location of four of the tournaments.

> The Ju-Kendo Federation of Brazil, from the Japanese colony in our state, will hold today and tomorrow, in the gymnasium of the São Paulo Athletic Association, a sports competition, in which demonstrations will be made, by their representatives, of jiu-jitsu and Japanese fencing. (Correio Paulistano, 1935, p. 8)

It was noted that, at this point, while in Japanese newspapers the words jūdō and kendō were used for the activities practiced by Jūkendō members, in Brazilian newspapers jiu-jitsu and Japanese fencing were more commonly used (*A Noite*, 1933).

In 1936, as it can be understood from newspaper sources, the Honbu dōjō of the Jūkendō federation was still the Seishu Gijuku dōjō. In the Budō Taikai of that year, the fourth tournament, a new practice, Tankenjutsu (a competition with short swords) was introduced at the federation (*Notícias do Brasil*, 1936).

There was a change in team competitions from 1937. With the growth of the federation, the team event stopped being in the form of contests between red and white teams, and for the first time pitted the affiliated chapters of the Jūkendō from the Japanese community against each other. The competing teams were São Paulo, Marilia, and Mogi, with the Marilia team coming out on top (*Notícias do Brasil*, 1937).

The sixth Budō Taikai was held August 14 and 15, 1938. There were thousands of spectators in the venue and more than 200 subscriptions for this tournament in jūdō and kendō. This time, the Yudansha matches were run as a team competition, with the entrants divided into two teams. As there were too many Yudansha athletes who came from the city of Bastos, the Kodansha (high-ranking jūdō practitioners) match was also made a team competition, the two teams being a team representing Bastos against a team comprised of Yudansha from the other regions. The team from Bastos won by four wins to two, and there were two ties (*Nippak Shimbun*, 1938a).

Even though there was a Budō Taikai in 1939, the big event for the Jūkendō federation that year was the arrival of a mission sent from the Kōdōkan in Japan to Brazil. The two Japanese representatives, Sumiyuki Kotani and Chugo Sato, gave demonstrations of jūdō in Brazilian governmental agencies and clubs, and the Jūkendō sent their own representatives (Shojiro Higuchi, Fukaya Seisetsu, and Tokuzo Terazaki) to those demonstrations (*Jornal*

do Brasil, 1939). Sato and Kotani also participated in the Budō Taikai of that year, giving demonstrations and doing *randori* (free practice, match simulation in this context) with members of the Jūkendō federation during the seventh Budō Taikai (*Correio Paulistano*, 1939).

Before it was shut down by the Brazilian government, the number of participants in the Budō Taikai had grown, and in 1940 there were already more than 120 athletes competing in the event (*Brasil Asahi*, 1940). The number of affiliated chapters from within the Japanese community grew as well (*Brasil Asahi*, 1941a, 1941b, 1941c, 1941d). While in previous years the Yudansha individual competition titles had been shared among Fukaya Seisetsu, Ono Yasuichi, and Ishihara Sadai, the last two years brought two new athletes to the top of the division: Wasai in 1940, and Endō Shirō in 1941 (Table 4). The year 1941 also marked the last event of the Jūkendō, as in 1942 it was closed before what would have been the tenth edition of its tournament could be held.

Table 3. Budō Taikai competition information and jūdō winning teams (1934–41).

Tournament	Date	City	Venue	Winning team
Second Budō Taikai	09/15/1934 09/16/1934	São Paulo	Teatro Colombo	Haku Gun
Third Budō Taikai	08/31/1935 09/01/1935	São Paulo	Associação Athletica São Paulo	Haku Gun
Fourth Budō Taikai	08/29/1936 08/30/1936	São Paulo	Associação Athletica São Paulo	Haku Gun
Fifth Budō Taikai	08/28/1937 08/29/1937	São Paulo	Lira Club	Marilia
Sixth Budō Taikai	08/14/1938 08/15/1938	São Paulo	Associação Athletica São Paulo	Mogi Yudansha Bastos
Seventh Budō Taikai	08/13/1939	São Paulo	Associação Athletica São Paulo	Doradense
Eight Budō Taikai	09/01/1940	São Paulo	Ginásio do Pacaembu	São Paulo
Ninth Budō Taikai	08/24/1941	São Paulo	Esporte Clube São Paulo	Shonenbu Central Line Station (Chuseneki) Seinenbu São Paulo

Sources: Nippon Shimbun (1934); Notícias do Brasil (1935, 1937, 1940); Notícias de São Paulo (1936, 1939); Nippak Shimbun (1938a, 1938b); Brasil Asahi (1940); Nambei Shimpo (1941).

Table 4. Budō Taikai jūdō group individual competition champions (1934–41).

Tournament	Yonengumi	Shonengumi	Seinengumi Dangaisha	Yudansha
Second Budō Taikai	Ōtama	Ishida	Okabe	Ishihara
Third Budō Taikai	Sato	Seo	Gozen Saburō	Ono Yasuichi
Fourth Budō Taikai	Fujimura	Sato	Ono	Fukaya
Fifth Budō Taikai	Miyazato Kiyoharu	Tomikawa Akio	Ono Naoichi	Ono Yasuichi
Sixth Budō Taikai	Tomikawa Eishin	Tomikawa Akio	Inoue	N.A.*
Seventh Budō Taikai	N.A.*	N.A.*	*4th kyu and under* Abe *3rd kyu and above* Saotome	*Shodan group* Sato *2nd dan and above* Fukaya
Eighth Budō Taikai	N.A.*	N.A.*	N.A.*	Wasai
Ninth Budō Taikai	N.A.*	N.A.*	N.A.*	Endō Shirō

** Information on the individual competition event not available.*
Sources: Nippon Shimbun (1934); Notícias do Brasil (1935, 1937, 1940); Notícias de São Paulo (1936, 1939); Nippak Shimbun (1938a, 1938b); Brasil Asahi (1940); Nambei Shimpo (1941).

Discussion

According to Sakurai (2007), of all the Japanese immigrants who came to Brazil the biggest portion arrived between 1925 and 1942. When the United States of America banned the entry of Japanese people in 1924, Brazil became the main destination for these immigrants. Associations among immigrants centered around sport, collective work, and leisure. The meetings promoted by these associations created opportunities for socialization and a way to meet other Japanese people with whom one could establish ties.

Being part of this context, in addition to providing this social network among immigrants, the Jūkendō sought to promote a "national spirit," or *ethnos* of "being Japanese." In fact, both Bushidō and Yamato Damashi were terms used to explain the reason for founding the Jūkendō. Shibata (2011) explains that, through Yamato Damashi, a concept of hierarchy was built and reinforced within the context of Japanese social dynamics, promoted by the Japanese State. This state policy promoted norms of "obligations" for citizens centered on the idea of preserving honor and filial piety. The Emperor, as a divine figure, the family, the government, the army, and religion became

central figures in this sense. Bushidō, the samurai code of ethics, was also used as a form of promotion for these ideals, and served as theoretical basis for these beliefs (Shibata, 2011). A sense of national identity was built and the Jūkendō seems to have been used, at least at first, to promote these ideas and ideals.

Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei was founded in 1932, even though the official celebration of its foundation took place at the 1933 celebrations of the 25th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Brazil. The Jūkendō started in the home of Ryusuke Murakami and, although only for a short time, this was its headquarters before it transferred to the Seishi Gijuku dōjō. Seishu Gijuku was a school founded in 1922 by Kobayashi Midori, one of the founders of the Jūkendō and part of its kendō department (Fuchigami, 2014). From the names of those responsible for the foundation of the Jūkendō and its first Honbu dōjō, it can be assumed that some of these individuals already knew each other.

Tatsuo Okochi, the first director of the Jūkendō jūdō department, and one of its founders, was part of the Seishu Gijuku Supporters Association in 1927, six years before the Jūkendō was founded (Negawa, 2013). According to Ishii (2015), Okochi could be called the "Jigoro Kano of Brasil." Okochi was a great promoter of initiatives within the Japanese community and, in addition to assuming the position of first director of the Jūkendō jūdō department, collaborated in arranging the visit of the Kōdōkan mission of Kotani and Sato from Japan. According to Ishii (2015), Okochi was able to bring together other pioneers of jūdō in Brazil, having Fukaya Seisetsu as one of his main assistants in the task of promoting jūdō.

Fukaya, Ishihara Sadai, and Tani Sobei were the first three finalists in the Jūkendō's individual Yudansha competition. Fukaya and Ishihara became the main winners of the Jūkendō jūdō group until 1939, together with Yasuichi Ono, who would arrive in Brazil in the year of the second championship promoted by the Jūkendō. Ishihara later moved to Paraná, where he became a central figure in the development of jūdō in that state. Ono and Fukaya became important characters in the development of jūdō in the state of São Paulo. While Fukaya occupied himself with the organization of jūdō, helping Okochi with the foundation of the Kōdōkan Black Belt Association, Ono became a professional fighter, promoting jūdō in the fighting circuit of Brazil (Ishii, 2015).

Conclusion

Through this study it was possible to identify the main circumstances related to the foundation and development of the Jūkendō. This initiative created a social network in the Japanese community of Brazil, as well as promoted the gathering of jūdō practitioners, creating an important environment for the growth of jūdō in Brazil. The federation also used jūdō as a means to promote Japanese culture.

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Intangible Cultural Heritage of Traditional Wrestling Styles in Central Asia

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05

This article contains a brief summary of the major traditional wrestling styles that have been preserved by local populations in Central Asia, namely Turkmen goresh; Tajik gushtingiri; Uzbek kurash; Kazakh kuresi, and Balban kurosh. Each of these sports are considered as traditional wrestling styles, recognized at national level, while some of them have gained popularity at international level. Promotion of such national sports provides an opportunity to share national values and highlight national identity through intangible cultural heritage (ICH).

Introduction

Traditional martial arts in Central Asia have deep roots, determined by various internal and external factors. Each country in the region has its own traditional sports, the most popular among which are related to wrestling, horse riding, and archery. The widespread popularity of combat sports in Central Asia can be explained by historical events going back several centuries. For instance, the well-known Mongolian–Tatar invasion left an indelible mark on the development and transformation of social and cultural norms in the majority of Asian countries.

Currently, Central Asian countries maintain their traditions by preserving national sports, which include wrestling styles. Traditions and special ceremonies related to the organization of wrestling events in the past were passed from generation to generation. Such knowledge transfer ensures the preservation of ICH.

The Central Asia region, as any other region in the world, has its distinctive traditions, which are conditioned by historical events, geographical features, climate, and regional economic development. Central Asia is famous for its boundless steppe, which necessitated a nomadic lifestyle for the people of the region. Such lifestyle required constant relocation between pasturelands, during which tribes engaged in various feuds. In order to defend themselves or attack others successfully, excellent physical preparation and combat skills were essential attributes. Traditional sports and games were heavily used for the development of combat and other skills over a long period of time. Moreover, traditional sports were also used as a tool for education of spiritual values. National values were associated with the dignity of the nation and its people, history, lifestyle, future, its generations, social layers, spirituality, and enlightenment. The processes of mutual cultural communication had a great influence on the nature of the games themselves as one of the important means of people's spiritual development. It should be noted that each nation had its own sports, competitions, and events, and hereinafter they are referred to as "national games." At the present stage of societal development, as noted, three kinds of sports prevail in the culture among the population of Central Asia—national wrestling, archery, and horse racing. This reflects the strong association with a nomadic way of life. "Three games of men" personify the spirit of the versatility, strength, and dexterity that were necessary for labor, military, and economic activity.

National Games

It is wrong to assume that national sports are associated solely with one specific nation or ethnic group, since some sports display varieties in accordance with more precise geographical locations or even based on affiliation to subethnic groups. Such derivative sports or styles of sport had clear distinctive elements: ceremonies, rites, rules, and other traditions that belonged to specific group of people. Some of these sports are described in more detail below.

Goresh

Goresh is national wrestling style that has several derivations in different geographical locations of current Turkmenistan. It is worth mentioning that traditional goresh was founded by *truchmen*, members of the Turkmen population who were relocated from their traditional homeland to the north. Regardless, culture and ethnic traits were preserved and at the same time mixed with the culture of their new neighbors, the Kalmycks.

Based on field research by several scholars, it was found that goresh wrestling events occurred predominantly during the holiday season or at functions. Such events could feature horse racing at the beginning and goresh wrestling at the end as a culmination. Turkmen wrestling was popular among youth, and participants at some competitions were categorized by age. Wrestling for the younger generation had a distinctive name, "bekyo guresh tru," which is still in use today. Wrestling was the most prestigious activity among boys; it could potentially bring fame and fortune, so understandably saw high rates of participation. However, goresh wrestling and horse racing were founded and prioritized mostly for reasons of ensuring combat readiness, due to the potential tensions with other nomadic groups. Such activities kept men's skills and physical shape in tune, and at the same time allowed boys to grow and develop physically and mentally.

Goresh events were organized on open ground, where the audience created a semicircle to observe battles between representatives from different tribes. The seating arrangement for each group followed specific conventions. Normally, honored guests, clerics, and the organizers of the celebration sat on the southern part of the circle, while spectators and supporters from the different tribes were seated beside them on the southeastern and southwestern parts, accordingly. Prior to a battle, the organizers prepared a table of food for the wrestlers and *effendi* (referees). Traditionally, a bowl of roasted lamb and melted fat was served. This element was an essential part of goresh wrestling competitions and was served as a symbol of peace and nonaggressive behavior. Such rite highlights the importance of having friendly relations between tribes, which demanded that the wrestlers compete fairly. Prior to fighting, wrestlers were wrapped up in white tissue, and they wrestled in loincloths. Commonly, winners received a prize, which was usually a lamb or tea bar (piece of pressed tea). Financial rewards, however, were rare.

Gushtingiri

Gushtingiri is a well-known traditional wrestling style with its origins in Tajikistan. Similar to Turkmen goresh, gushtingiri has numerous derivatives, which are also conditioned by ethnographic and geographical aspects. As an example, Gushtini Buchoroi or "Buhar wrestling" is also recognized as one of the traditional wrestling styles among Tajiks, including those who lived in Buhara (current Uzbekistan). The main difference between original gushtingiri and Gushtini Buchoroi was the ability to apply lower-body attacks during bouts of the latter form. Moreover, different ethnic groups developed different rules and conditions to win a match. The most common way to gain a victory in gushtingiri is to execute a throw and put your opponent onto their back. Some regions practiced different rules, such as requiring wrestlers to throw their opponent onto their shoulder blades; sit on their back; or even to push their competitor to the ground with a knee on their chest. It is obvious that such rules were determined by the needs of each tribe to develop the most effective mechanisms of defense against potential foes. In the past, special gushtingiri schools were founded by skillful teachers, who were selected based on their previous performance and passing special tests.

Normally, traditional gushtingiri competitions were organized between villages in order to identify the strongest wrestlers (*pahlavon*). Such system also allowed villages to create a team consisting of their strongest wrestlers. The winners of each bout would gain points toward the total ranking among villages. There was a rite that required winners to jump on one foot in a full circle in front of the audience (Toropov, 1992). In addition, sometimes winners were tossed up in the middle of circle. Afterwards, each winner would offer to fight any other opponent from another village.

A diverse arsenal of technical actions was used prior to the establishment of official rules and a classification system in 1938. It was found that, besides grappling techniques, gushtingiri wrestlers were able to apply punching, painful, and suffocating techniques, which have been lost over the years. Such techniques were developed primarily for combat purposes (Gylyzhov, 1992). Gushtingiri wrestling competitions were traditionally organized during major holidays, celebrations, and spiritual functions, with the bouts taking place on a specifically built platform or randomly selected areas on the ground. In the 1940s, cultural heritage posed a challenge for the organization of republican events due to the fixed traditions, which often contradicted contemporary regulations. Wrestlers from the same village or region declined to wrestle against each other, because traditional wrestling was originally established for people to compete against different entities. As a result, several national gushtingiri events failed.

Several researchers claim that Eastern martial arts today have gained tremendous popularity among the younger population in Central Asian countries, but at the same time they believe that if gushtingiri were to keep its original traditions, there would be no need to learn and develop new combat sports. Unfortunately, knowledge about gushtingiri wrestling was not thoroughly passed on from previous generations; therefore, there is a certain need for in-depth research to reinvigorate this historical sport of current Tajikistan. It is still possible to preserve gushtingiri by interviewing local populations in remote, mountainous localities, where traditions are still being kept and passed down to new generations.

Kurash

Another good example of the preservation of a traditional wrestling style that has a long history of evolution is Uzbek kurash. This style of traditional wrestling, as with other Central Asian grappling martial arts, is subdivided into several derivations with major distinctive features. Such distinctions are primarily related to the rules of competitions, rites, and ceremonies. The main characteristic of the Belbogli kurash style is the presence of belts. Prior to the beginning of any bout, wrestlers must ensure they have a mutual grip of each other's belt. In order to gain a victory, the wrestler must toss their opponent to the ground on their back. Belbogli rules allow wrestlers to use their legs to attack, while Bellashuv competitions target upper-body attacks, which require better physical preparation.

Kurash in Uzbekistan was traditionally organized on the occasion of various celebrations: national, regional, local, and even family. Wealthy people would normally invite famous wrestlers to entertain guests. Such events highlighted the significance of the celebration and demonstrated the wealth of the organizers. Prestigious prizes were awarded to the winners of any kurash competition, but in addition there were several traditional items provided to winners: robe, skullcap, boots, and waist scarves (Khakimova and Kholieva, 2018). Traditional wrestling among Uzbeks was habitually organized during wedding celebrations, when in the evening all guests gathered around a fire and formed a circle (*keng davra*). The wrestler walked around the circle and offered to compete against anyone by saying *talab-talab* ("request-request"). When someone accepted the challenge, the competitors walked around the circle three times to greet the audience. As well as other traditional wrestling styles in Central Asia, kurash did not have any classification system or divisions (age and weight), but referees attempted to bring together equal rivals. Traditionally, kurash events were organized either in local village squares, or at a "power house" (*zurhon* or *pirhon*). Depending on seasonal conditions, the ground at wrestling places was loosened and covered with sand or sawdust. Wealthy people were able to cover the wrestling place with a carpet with traditional ornamentation.

Fight of two athletes Asian Kurash fight on the mat © Shutterstock

Several traditional kurash elements became established, which are still being applied during contemporary traditional kurash events. Normally, two elders (*aksakals*) would start an exhibition match to excite the public, and afterwards there would be a kurash competition for children. At the end of the day, famous kurash wrestlers stepped into the wrestling circle, and such moments served as a culmination of the celebration or function (Gylyzhov, 1992). In comparison to other traditional wrestling styles, kurash wrestling bouts were accompanied by traditional Uzbek music. The Uzbek population carefully preserves the traditions of their ancestors today by organizing kurash wrestling events at local and regional level. Moreover, kurash wrestling is considered as an emerging sport that is being promoted internationally. The International Kurash Association was founded in 1998, with

the aim of preserving kurash at national level and simultaneously promoting it worldwide (Mandzyak, 2010).

Kuresi

Kazakh kuresi is a well-known traditional style of Kazakh wrestling, which has been recently recognized as an international sport. There are a lot of variations of Kazakh kuresi: topless wrestling, barefoot wrestling, wrestling in boots, fist fighting, and others. Due to their nomadic lifestyle on the boundless steppe of Central Asia, populations developed or adopted traditions and rites from neighboring tribes, which included physical activity and the advancement of combat skills (Matushyak, 1978). There is a wealth of evidence proving the establishment of several types of traditional wrestling by Kazakhs—in fairytales, legends, historical and fiction books, and archeological findings. Marco Polo, in his notes during his travels around Central Asia, mentioned martial arts as one of the strategies for a warrior's preparation (Kuznetsov, 2018). He clearly indicated that belts were used during training and competitions. Moreover, when children wrestled, girls grappled against boys without any discrimination, which underlines the importance of skill advancement for combat purposes. Further evidence of the existence of belt wrestling is provided by the notes of another traveler, Rey Klavdicho, who visited the Central Asian steppe and witnessed kuresi events at the beginning of the 15th century. There are many historical manuscripts that contain information about national Kazakh sports, including kuresi. The current population keeps memories about combat arts in their hearts, which also gives them pride. The existence of various eposes about *paluan* (wrestlers) proves that people treat martial arts as a valuable heritage.

Kazaksha kyres (national wrestling in Kazakhstan) competitions during national festival © Shutterstock

Special belted jackets (*chapan* or *shapan*) were used by Kazakh kuresi competitors, and this uniform is still used by modern wrestlers. Any belt and upper-body holds are permitted in current Kazakh kuresi rules. Various techniques related to leg traps and hooks are popular for the execution of spectacular throws. The aim of any Kazakh kuresi bout is to throw your opponent on their back from a standing position, while any actions are allowed on the ground. Many researchers believe that victory can be gained only by combination of excellent physical qualities, mastering technique, and adroitness.

Prior to the modern era there were no weight class divisions in Kazakh kuresi; therefore, all competitions were organized under the slogan "Strongest is the winner" (Kuznetsov, 2018). In the 1930s, the traditional wrestling style started to be transformed by the inclusion of weight and age divisions. Today, Kazakh kuresi, along with the preservation of elements of national identity, takes into account progressive trends in the world of wrestling art, which will have a positive impact on its further development.

Traditional Kazakh wrestling today is carefully preserved with its ancient rites and traditions. As an example, the international event Qazaq-Barysy, known worldwide, offers an opportunity for a general audience to witness open national combat competition, while demonstrating famous customs and artifacts: wolfskin, yurts, traditional music, and other rites. Kazakh kuresi has its own international federation with headquarters in Aktobe, which heavily promotes the national sport of Kazakhstan with its traditions worldwide.

Balban Kurosh

Another traditional style of wrestling, which was practiced in the territory of current Kyrgyzstan, is Balban kurosh. This type of wrestling was practiced from ancient times and was subdivided into two main streams in accordance with geographical features—north and south. The styles had several things in common: wearing a belt was mandatory; the wrestling was supposed to be conducted in standing position only. However, clear distinctions between the northern and southern styles of Balban kurosh can be observed. The northern style targeted full-body contact, including traps and leg attacks, while wrestlers from the south applied techniques related to upper-body attacks, which required better physical preparation.

Balban kurosh events were organized during any ceremonies and holidays. Similar to the people of other Central Asian countries, Kyrgyz men engaged in three main sports practices: archery, horse riding, and wrestling. In comparison to Turkmen goresh or Tajik gushtingiri, Balban kurosh was perceived by general audiences as a form of entertainment, rather than serious competition between men. The herald, or public speaker, would go around guests and offer to wrestle against one of the strongest men in village. He used jokes and anecdotes during his speech to make people laugh and rejoice. When an opponent was found, people created a small circle, which determined the start of the kurosh battle. Despite its entertaining nature, wrestlers possessed skills and knowledge in Balban kurosh, which classified them in different groups based on their performance.

Interestingly, different ethnic groups in Central Asia had distinctive clothing elements for wrestlers. As mentioned earlier, Tajik gushtingiri wrestlers wore a robe, while Turkmen only a loincloth. In contrast, Kyrgyz nomads wore *kandagay* (leather pants) for wrestling competitions, which were extremely wide, sometimes as much as 59 inches (150 cm). The waist was covered by a belt made from deer leather, which was used for gripping purposes. The wide pants were also heavily used to execute throwing techniques, since wrestlers could grab their opponent in different positions. Sometimes, wrestlers wore casual clothes, which emphasized a lower performance level or often economic status.

Balban kurosh is known to have a limited technical arsenal, and wrestlers relied mostly on their power and endurance. There were no time limits, but the winner was determined in any case by executing a clear throw onto the back. As well as no time limits, there were also no weight or age classifications, which often led to serious injuries or accidents. It is worth mentioning that Balban kurosh was practiced not only by men but among women as well. It was normal for women to challenge wrestlers of the opposite sex. Women wore similar uniform for competition purposes, which included the leather pants, but also boots,

which were not used by men.

Wrestlers were presented by their tutors or mentors, who brought them into the circle and took their special robes away. It was mandatory to shake your opponent's hand prior to a bout to show respect and peaceful intentions (Bymbygydenova, 2014). In addition, each wrestler had to walk a whole circle to greet the audience before and after the match. Another distinctive element of Balban kurosh was the compulsory handshake by the winner, who was supposed to help the loser up from ground. Any negative intentions could be potentially perceived as an offense and sometimes gestures could raise a conflict between tribes and mass fighting among them.

Traditional wrestling in Kyrgyzstan may have slightly changed, but the major traditional elements have been preserved. Currently, Balban kurosh has been largely replaced by the modern national wrestling style called Alysh, which is being promoted internationally.

Conclusion

Traditional wrestling styles in Central Asia served as an effective tool for the development of combat skills and enhancement of physical preparation. Moreover, traditional wrestling preserved major elements of the cultural identity of several ethnic groups. After careful study of the most popular traditional wrestling styles of Central Asia, similarities and clear distinctions were found. There is no doubt that ICH in Central Asia partially depends on traditional sports and games, including traditional wrestling styles, which have been preserved by many generations.

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Kalaripayat: Indigenous Martial Art Tradition of Kerala

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06

Introduction

Kalaripayat is considered one of the earlier martial art systems in Asia. Even though it had a larger geographic range at the time of its origin in South India, it is now restricted to the state of Kerala.

Many terms are used in the literature to refer to Kalari including "Kalarippayattu," "Kalaripayattu," "Kalaripayat," and so on. The term "Kalaripayat" will be used in this chapter. There are different theories regarding the origin of the word *kalari*. It is variously said to originate from the Sanskrit word *khaloorika* ("training ground"), the Tamil word *kalam* ("storage place for paddy"), or the Malayalam word *kalari* ("place where Kalaripayat is practiced"). *Payatt* or *Payat* may have originated from the Tamil word *payil* ("to become trained, accustomed, practice") or the Malayalam words *payiluka* ("to learn, speak"), *payttuka* ("to exercise in arms, practice"), or *payattu* ("fencing exercise, a trick"). It may be noted that the original name of the martial style was "Payattu Kalari" and that the word "Kalaripayat" has only been used since the 20th century.

Origin

Regarding the origin of Kalaripayat, there are two theories: mythological and historical. The mythological theory traces the northern style of Kalaripayat to Lord Parasuraman and the southern style to Sage Agastya. According to the legend found in *Keralolpathy* (1600 CE), Lord Parasuraman founded Kerala, reclaiming the land from the sea by throwing his battle ax; he then established many *kalaris* (gymnasiums) and entrusted the land among the Namboodiri Brahmins along with all the secrets of divine warfare, practicing tactics which in time became Kalaripayat (Vijayakumar, 2000). Sage Agastya is regarded as the father of Tamil grammar, and founder of the southern styles of Kalaripayat, Silambam, and Varmam (Marma sasthram), as well as Siddha-vaidyam.

The historical theory rejects the mythological one based on the references to Kalaripayat in Sangam literature (*c*.300 BCE–300 CE) centuries before the Aryan (Brahmin) migration to Kerala or the mention of Parasuraman as the founder of Kalaripayat.

Development

The development of Kalaripayat from its earliest primordial form mentioned in Sangam literature to the modern form as prevalent today, is described below.

300 BCE–300 CE: Earliest Reference to the Primordial Form of Kalaripayat

In the Sangam period, named after the famous Sangam academies of poets, Tamilakam (Tamil-speaking area) in South India (the present states of Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil

Nadu) was ruled by the notable dynasties of Chera, Chola, and Pandya. There is no unanimity regarding the exact years the period covers, other than them being near to the point of transition to the Common Era, but the period 300 BCE–300 CE is used in this paper.

In the Sangam literature there were references to warfare and weapons as well as the first use of the word *kalari* to describe both a battlefield and combat arena (Pillai, 1970). The Sangam period is generally considered to have followed a system of Dravidian society. The form of Kalaripayat predominating during the period is considered primordial. The observation of similarities between the oral traditions associated with the martial practices of Kalaripayat (*vaithary*) and the hunting practices of local tribes in the region (Vijayakumar, 2000; Prasad, 2018) also points in this direction.

Kerala during this period was under the rule of the first Chera dynasty with Karur/Vanchi as its capital. Society here was similar to that of other regions of Tamilakam.

300–800 CE: Brahminical Influence on the Early Form of Kalaripayat

During the latter stages of this period, society in Kerala slowly began to change with the first wave of Brahmin migration to Kerala (in the seventh century CE). This led to the establishment of religious learning centers called *salai* (Vedas, Sanskrit, etc.). A sect of Brahmins called "chattar" or "chathira" also provided training in martial arts in these *salai*. These *salai* may have influenced Kalaripayat techniques by incorporating Brahminical aspects of *dhanurvidya* (ritual practices, yoga, meditation, etc.) so that the practitioner might ideally achieve a superior degree of self-control, mental calm, and single-point concentration (Zarrilli, 2001). Another influence may be found in the similarities between Kalaripayat and a few Indian performing arts in the region that follow the Indian Sanskrit treatise on performing arts called *Nāṭyaśāstra* (attributed to sage Bharath Muni), with respect to physical body movements and martial art techniques. These performing arts include Kutiyattam, Kathakali, Mudiyet, and Yakshagana.

Mudiyet, a ritual dance drama inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity © B. Venugopal

There are records of Kalaripayat being introduced to Southeast Asia through Bodhidharman, an Indian Buddhist monk who is said to have lived in the sixth century CE in Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu, where he learned the form of Kalaripayat in use at the time (Vinodan and Meera, 2018). He traveled to China and other countries, and is considered instrumental in developing Chan (in China) or Zen (in Japan) Buddhism, as well as Shaolin martial arts in China. His training in both Buddhism and Kalaripayat may have facilitated this (Gangadharan, 2017).

800–1200 CE: Establishment of Kalaripayat

The period 800–1200 CE included the rein of the second Chera dynasty, which used Mahodayapuram as its capital. Keralan society slowly became differentiated from the other societies of the Tamilakam region. The 11th century also saw the century-long great Chera–Chola war, during which Kalaripayat became established in a big way (Pillai, 1970). The final victory for Chera was mainly thanks to the special warriors called Chavers who were trained in Kalaripayat. However, at the end of the war (1102 CE) the region's resources were drained and the Chera dynasty collapsed with the abdication of the last Perumal Rama Varma Kulasekhara, signaling the end of the first centrally controlled rule in Kerala.

1200–1700 CE: Progress of Kalaripayat

The end of the Chera dynasty saw the formation of a larger number of *Swaroopams* (smaller, independent units based on the local geography and ruled by a local chieftain), for whom there was essential need to keep law and order under their control as well as symbolic demonstrations of power against neighboring areas. Since resources were limited, keeping regular armies was not possible or practical. In this situation, local martial arts such as Kalaripayat became useful tools, leading to their progress and development as mechanisms in the maintenance of law and order as well as dispute redressal through *angams* (Vijayakumar, 2000). Remarkable feats of *angams-vets* (Kalaripayat combat duels) by Kalaripayat warriors (both men and women), especially from the two families of Puthooram and Manikkoth, are documented in "Vadakkan Pattukal" (northern ballads). The Brahminical influence of the period also saw the emergence of the mythological origin of Kalaripayat (northern style) and its founding by Lord Parasuraman.

Temple of the Thacholi Manikkoth family © B. Venugopal

1700–1800 CE: The Decline of Kalaripayat

A form of martial art called Thalimb, prevalent in Tulunad, used to be practiced in *kalaris*, known locally as *garadis*. The period 1700–1800 CE saw the extinction of Thalimb due to attacks by Naikkans, Mysore Sultans (Hyderali and Tippu), and finally the British, which ultimately forced the *garadis* to be restricted to local temples. However, the British ban on martial arts, enacted in 1804 principally to destroy local resistance led by Pazhassi Raja (1753–1805), did not destroy Kalaripayat in Kerala.

1800–1947 CE: The Survival of Kalaripayat

As mentioned above, Kalaripayat in Kerala survived the British ban on martial arts thanks to the secretive efforts of local chieftains and landlords, Kalari Gurukkals (Kottakkal Kanaran Gurukkal, C. V. Narayanan Nair, Chirakkal T. Sreedharan Nair, and others), and the freedom movement led by congressional stalwarts such as Kelappan. Another Kalaripayat veteran, Keeleri Kunjikannan (1855–1939), incorporated Kalaripayat body movement techniques into circus performances, popularizing both the martial art and circus throughout India.

1947–2000: The Revival of Kalaripayat

After India secured independence, Kalaripayat became prominent in Kerala. Generally, three styles are distinguished in Kerala based on regional differences: Vadakkan (northern), Thekkan (southern), and Madhyam (central).

The northern style (Vadakkan Kalari), prevalent in the northern part of Kerala (the erstwhile British Malabar), places more emphasis on weapons than on bare hands and considers Lord Parasuraman as its founder. There are a few sub-styles based on the dominant use of legs or hands, such as Arappukai, Pillathangi, and Vatten-thirippan.

The southern style (Thekkan Kalari), prevalent in the southern part of Kerala (the erstwhile Travancore) and Tamil Nadu (Kanyakumari district) and practiced largely by the Nadars, is associated with Sage Agastya. Its distinguishing features include *varma ati* (the law of hitting) and *marma ati* (hitting the vital spots).

Finally, the central style (Madhyam Kalari), prevalent in the central part of Kerala (the erstwhile Cochin), does not have any special features of note.

Other less-popular styles include Chavakadan, Kozhikodan, Kadathanadan, Valluvanadan, Tulunadan, Dronampalli, Vallabhatta, and Otimurisseri. While the Dronampalli style (which was practiced in South Kerala by the Chembakassery kings) has become extinct, the Tulunadan style has been absorbed into the northern style.

2000–present: Professional Growth of Kalaripayat

The efforts to popularize Kalaripayat continued apace, with the formation of several professional associations (Kerala Kalaripayat Association and Indian Kalaripayat Federation) helping the martial art to become popular in the major cities of India.

Training

Kalari Space

Kalaripayat training is traditionally carried out in a space or enclosure called a *kalari*, which is considered as a place of worship. It houses a few auspicious raised platforms (*thara* or *peetams*) such as *Poo-thara*, *Ganapathi-thara*, and *Guru-thara*, representing the presence of Bhagavati (the Goddess), Ganapathi (the God of auspicious occasions), and Guru lineage, respectively (Gangadharan, 2017). Training generally starts as early as 7 years of age. There are five levels of daily practice: basic, intermediate, advanced, senior, and instructor.

An inside view of a Kalari space © B. Venugopal

Dina-charya

The tradition of *kalari* recognizes the importance of daily practice (*dina-charya*). Prior to all physical exercise, the practitioners wear a cotton garment called a *katccha*, which is worn tightly above the loin cloth as protection for the genital area, the navel region, and the tailbone. *Dina-charya* may include various stages such as *Vandanam* (salutation), *Abhyanga* (oil massage and oil bath), *Vyayama* (physical exercise), *Mardana* (application of pressure by the Gurukkal on the student), and *Udvartana* (dry massage). The *Vyayama* part includes the stages of *Prarambha-vyayama* (initial exercises), *Kalukal* (leg exercises), *Chuvatukal* (steps), *Amarcha* (low-lying body position), *Vativukal* (postures/stances), *Chattangal* (jumps), and *Karanangal* (somersaults). While *Chuvatukal* (lit. "steps") represent the basic steps of Kalaripayat, *Vativukal* (lit. "postures" or "stances") represent the basic characteristics. Named after animals and birds, there are generally eight *Vativukal* (*Ashta-vativus*): *Gaja* (elephant), *Simha* (lion), *Aswa* (horse), *Marjara* (cat), *Varaha* (wild boar), *Kukuda* (cock), *Sarpa* (snake), and *Matsya* (fish) or *Mayura* (peacock).

Vai-thari

Kalari training involves two major aspects of theory and practice called *Vai-thari* (oral commands) and *Payat* (also referred to as "mur" or "prayoganga"), respectively. According

to *Vai-thari*, each *Payat* is divided into three stages within the training syllabus: *adavu*, *arappu*, and *thozil*.

Payat

The combat training (*Payat*) may involve four major categories or threads (*thari*), ranging from simple to complex in stages: *Mai-thari*, *Kol-thari*, *Anka-thari*, and *Kai-thari. Mai-thari* ("mai" meaning "body") consists of physical exercises to develop strength, flexibility, balance, and stamina. It provides a foundation for the movements and processes of the self-defense sequences that are taught at later stages. *Kol-thari*, meanwhile, refers to the use of wooden stick (*kol*) weapons such as *Cheru-vadi* (small stick), *Otta* (curved stick), and *Gadha* (mace). *Anka-thari* refers to the use of metal weapons. These weapons were used historically for actual combat (*ankam*); however, today they are merely symbolic and are used in training for demonstration or in self-defense. These include *Katara* (dagger), *Udaval* (personal sword), *Kuntham* (spear), *Marapidicha Kuntham* (sword and shield to be used against spears), *Urumi* (long, double-edged, flexible sword), *Churika* (short, double-edged sword), *Venmazhu* (ax), *Soolam* (trident), *Kaduthala* (small sword with curved shape like that of an *Otta*). Finally, *Kai-thari* (or *Verum-kai prayogam*) involves predominantly the use of bare hands (*kai*) for fights in which attacks are directed to various parts of the body (especially the nervous system) using blows and kicks.

Among the Kalaripayat weapons mentioned above, *Urumi* is unique. It has a long, thin blade that can be concealed by folding or tying around the waist. These weapons are highly dangerous and were used in the past by warriors during mass battles. In Kalaripayat, the majority of the combat techniques (i.e., *payat*) are based on *Vai-thari* (oral commands passed on through generations) and found in old records or manuscripts. However, no *Vai-thari* has been found for *Urumi*. Archeometallurgical works in South India uncovered a possible early type of *Urumi* made from wootz steel in the Sangam period, centuries before steel became popular in the West (Srinivasan, 2013). Wootz steel is a type of steel with high carbon content, which is said to have originated in South India. It may also be useful to note that the word *Urumi* in Malayalam has been traced to the Arabic word *rumi* meaning "Damascus sword" (Prasad, 2018), while "wootz" possibly originated in the Malayalam/Tamil words *urukku/ukku* (Srinivasan, 2013). This may add further evidence to the possibility of Kalaripayat's early origins in the BCE period.

Kalari-vidya

The different types of *vidya* (learning) associated with Kalaripayat, such as *vaidyam* (healing systems), art, sports, tourism, and so on are grouped together under Kalari-vidya.

Healing Systems ("Vaidyam")

Kalari-vaidyam was originally developed by Kalari Gurukkals in order to heal battle-related injuries as well as to improve their students' fighting abilities, but it is now applied to help a wider range of people achieve good health. It relies on the knowledge of the body's *nadis* (nervous system), *pesi* (muscular system), *marma* (vital spots), as well as the specialized home-made *marunnu* (medicines). Among the Indian System of Medicine involving *Ayurveda*, yoga and naturopathy, *Unani*, *Siddha*, and homeopathy (for which the Indian government has established a separate ministry, AYUSH), Kalari-vaidyam has relationship with Ayurveda, Siddha, and yoga, along with other local healing systems such as *Marma*, *Panchakarma*, and "bone-setting."

Ayurveda, meaning "the science of life," is considered the oldest system of healing prevalent all over India, with a few specialized additions in Kerala. The ayurvedic preparation of medicine using local herbs has given rise to the specialized medicines used by Gurukkals in Kalari-vaidyam. Siddha-vaidyam, taken from the Tamil language, is prevalent in Tamil Nadu and the southern part of Kerala and is associated with the Thekkan style of Kalaripayat. A recent modification to meet the needs of foreign tourists is a combination of Kalari and yoga called Kalari-Yoga, which combines the most beneficial aspects of the physical fitness of Kalaripayat and the mental fitness of Yoga.

Panchakarma (*pancha* and *karma* mean "five" and "works"/"actions," respectively) is a cleansing and rejuvenation program involving five methods of detoxification purgation/elimination: *Vamanam* (therapeutic emesis), *Virechanam* (purgation), *Anuvasana* (enema using medicated oil), *Nasyam* (nasal), and *Astapana Vasti* (therapeutic decoction enema). The complete process of Panchakarma consists of three steps: *Poorva karma* (preparatory action), *Pradhan karma* (the main action), and *Paschaat karma* (post-therapy action) (Arya Vaidya Sala, 2015).

Marma-vaidyam involves marma, which are the vital points of the human body. Study of the *marma* points is the most advanced stage of Kalari training, especially at the *Kaithari* stage of combat training. Out of the 107 *marma* points identified in Susruta Samhita, Kalari-vaidyam identifies 64 points as *abhyasa marma* (vital points that are useful to target during the physical practice aspect of Kalaripayat), of which 32 can be targeted during combat and the other 32 when the opponent is already immobilized. Kalaripayat students also learn *Adangal* or *Marukkai*, which involve treatment of the damaged *marma* without the use of medicine (Shaji, 2011).

Art/Culture

Kalaripayat is said to have influenced many art forms such as other martial arts (Ochira-kali, Vela-kali, Kongan-pada, Ona-thallu, etc.), ritualistic art forms (Theyyam, Yathra-kali, Mudiyet, Padeni, etc.), classical art forms (Krishnattam, Kutiyattam, etc.), and folk forms (Kol-kali, Paricha-muttu kali, Chavittunatakam, etc.). While noting the influence of Kalaripayat on various art forms, in the majority of cases it may be observed that these are related generally only to body movements. However, in a few forms such as Theyyam,

legendary Kalaripayat veterans of the past were glorified later as "gods" (i.e., they were deified).

Sports/Fitness

Kalaripayat shares similarities with a large number of systems within other fields such as arts, culture, healing, physical fitness, sports, and so on. However, the official agencies of the governments of the state (Kerala) and the nation (India) have not yet accepted its role other than as a category of sports. Kalaripayat is thus unable to develop or obtain state funding other than that targeted at sports.

Tourism

Kalari tradition has added to the attraction of Kerala as a tourist destination, especially for foreign visitors. The increasing demand for medication and therapy without side effects, as well as specialized proven services like Marma-vaidyam and massage, are the biggest draws of Kalari-vaidyam in terms of tourism (Sujatha, 2013). In Kerala, Kalaripayat has become an essential part of the "God's Own Country" campaign, which aims to popularize even various weapons as souvenirs and mementos.

Chavittunatakam, a Keralan folk performance art © B. Venugopal

A Kerali product aimed at tourists: Kalaripayat weapons as a memento © B. Venugopal

Indigenous Knowledge Systems/Intangible Heritage

Kalari-vidya along with other similar indigenous healing and knowledge systems (such as Panchakarma, Visha-vaidyam, Siddha-vaidyam, Ottamooli-vaidyam, Marma-vaidyam, Bala-vaidyam, Netra-vaidyam, Chintamani-vaidyam, and "bone-setting") were earlier grouped under the general term of *Nattuvaidyam*. While many of these systems were incorporated into the Sanskritized pan-Indian *Ayurveda*, Panchakarma was absorbed into Keraleeya Ayurveda, Marma-vaidyam into the Tamil Siddha-vaidyam, while "bone-setting" continued as part of Kalari-vaidyam (Girija, 2016). All these indigenous knowledge systems come under the recently introduced term "intangible heritage," which is the focus of the Centre for Intangible Heritage Studies at the Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, in Kerala.

The Indian government included Kalaripayat in the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in 2020. In order to raise its status further by having it inscribed as an entry from India on the UNESCO Representative List of the ICH of Humanity, it is important to work on the safeguarding aspect involving "living heritage." The intergenerational

transfer of this indigenous knowledge system through the Indian tradition of *Guru-shishya parampara* (teacher–pupil tradition), the secular nature of the "living traditions" of the Kalari teachers, its importance as a healing system, and so on are positive factors, as is the award in 2017 of Padma Sree, the fourth-highest civilian award that the Indian government can bestow, to Meenakshi Amma, a 76-year-old Kalari Gurukkal.

Conclusion

Kalaripayat, considered one of the oldest martial arts in the word, represents one of the more notable indigenous knowledge systems in India. As it shares a relationship with many other fields, such systems of healing, art, sports/fitness, yoga, tourism, and so on, it has the potential to help people in the overall development of mind and body. It also has the potential to be inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the ICH of Humanity.

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Lucha Leonesa (Leonese Wrestling)

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07

Introduction

Leonese wrestling, *aluches* or *luches*, is a traditional wrestling style practiced in the province of León (Autonomous Community of Castile and León, Spain). With an area of 6,016 square miles (15,581 km^2) and a population of around 460,000, León is located in the northwest interior of the country and has a great diversity of landscapes. This includes the Cantabrian Mountains, the Galician Massif, the lowland of El Bierzo, and a plateau or Meseta Central. It was part of the Kingdom of León (910–1230), where in 1188 the first parliamentary system in Europe was established (UNESCO, 2013). Two main, historical paths cross the province, the Ruta de la Plata (Silver Way), from north to south, and the Camino de Santiago – Camino Francés (Way of St. James – French Way), from east to west. These pilgrimage and trade routes were important elements for the transmission of cultural practices, ideas, or artifacts, from which Leonese culture benefited.

Capital (13th century) depicting wrestling at the Basílica de San Isidoro, León city © José Antonio Robles-Tascón

Leonese wrestling, in particular, is rooted in the northeast of the province. It includes two mountainous areas (Central Mountain and Eastern Mountain, both part of the Cantabrian Mountains) and the adjacent flat lands, comprising several districts and the provincial capital—the city of León. In total, this represents approximately 35% of the territory of the province. However, only two zones are mentioned with regard to Leonese wrestling: Montaña (Mountain), which includes all the territory to the north of the León–Bilbao railroad, and Ribera (Bank), to the south of said railroad. Traditionally, bouts between the most prominent Montaña and Rivera wrestlers were followed by the spectators with great interest and enthusiasm (Robles-Tascón and Álvarez-del-Palacio, 2001).

In 2017, Leonese wrestling was officially declared as an Intangible Asset of Cultural Interest by the Castile and León regional government (Junta de Castilla y León), thus recognizing its great heritage value:

> The *aluche* or Leonese wrestling is a traditional indigenous sport, a custom and a tradition orally transmitted from generation to generation, maintained through the centuries until today, which has been adapted to the forms and conventions of modern sport without losing its own essence, becoming a practice governed by a federation, with regular competitions, which is part of the historical and cultural heritage of the Community of Castile and León. (Junta de Castilla y León, 2017)

This contribution will describe the evolution and current state of Leonese wrestling, including both its formal aspects and, especially, its social and cultural dimension. For those interested in further study on the topic, there exists a growing specific literature, mainly in Spanish (see, e.g., monographs in Robles-Tascón and García-Robles, 2017).

Basic Features

The main features of Leonese wrestling are the circular shape of the combat area (*corro*, a term that is also used to refer to the wrestling competitions) and the leather belt each wrestler wears around the waist. During the contests, which are disputed barefoot, each wrestler firmly grasps the opponent's belt with both hands and tries to throw him down using a wide variety of leg, hip, and arm techniques (*mañas*). According to current regulations, the contest period varies between one and a half and three minutes. The highest score, two points, is awarded when the opponent is thrown on any part of their back (full fall: *caída entera*), including the neck and the buttocks. A half fall (*media caída*), worth one point, is awarded when the wrestler releases the opponent's belt or touches the floor with any part of the body above the legs except the back. Four points are needed to win a match. If this is not achieved, the wrestler who scores more points, receives fewer penalties, or gains any advantage in an overtime period of 30 seconds wins the match.

Corbel (13th century) depicting wrestling at the Santa María de Gradefes church, Gradefes, province of León © José Antonio Robles-Tascón

Leonese wrestling today operates with two gender, seven age, and four weight categories, and there are individual and team competitions. The *corros* are mainly disputed in those towns with the longest tradition, especially between July and September, when around 30 *corros* take place every season. Singular tournaments include the Provincial Championship, *Montaña* vs. *Ribera*, and Champion of Champions, in which only those who have won at least one *corro* in the current season are allowed to participate. It is common for spectators to be charged an entry fee to attend Leonese wrestling tournaments, and wrestlers usually receive a cash prize depending on their classification in the *corro*.

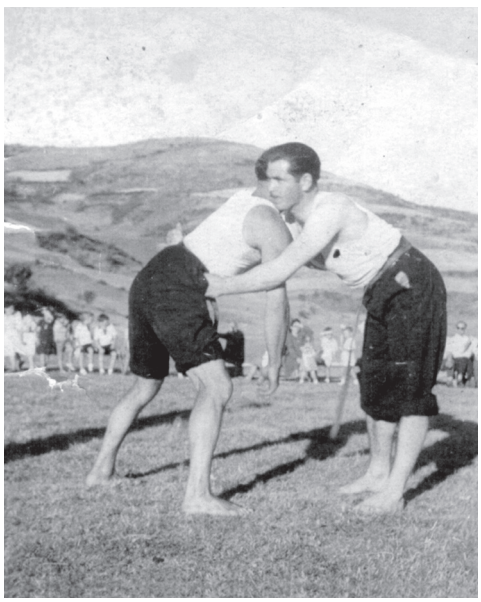
Traditional Aluches

Traditionally, *aluches* were a pastime typical of local summer festivals and pilgrimages, in which the worth of the fighter, his home town, region, or the profession he represented were put on the line. It was practiced by males and there were no age, weight, or time limits in the contests, which usually finished at night. In the same vein, different types of grips, scoring actions, or techniques existed, according to local unwritten regulations and customs (Robles-Tascón, 2002, 2003; Robles-Tascón and Fernández-Fernández, 2002).

Commemorative stamp depicting Leonese wrestling © Correos España

It all started with a wrestler or a local representative launching a challenge: "Who will wrestle? Or should I put on my shoes?", or asserting their people's willingness to compete: "Campohermoso [a Leonese town] runs and wrestles against all." Once the *corro* was formed, the competition system was very simple: the wrestler who won the bout stayed in the *corro*, waiting for the next representative of the other side to enter. Each wrestler

***Corro* in the municipality of Riaño, province of León © Andrés de la Torre**



***Montaña* Leonese wrestlers © José Antonio Robles-Tascón & Fulgencio Fernández**

was allowed to participate only once in the *corro*. Authority was usually represented by charismatic local people, who guided its development:

> The Mayor of Cisnarios, in the midst of the groups, raised his voice, and said: – Cisnarios against everyone; we are few; but, if the young people were defeated, the married ones will wrestle, then ... the young women. Judges are, on our side, Don Luis; on the opponents, Don Juan from Pedregales, and to decide, the priest of Ankiles. Let there be justice and peace. In Cisnarios, there is ram meat for everyone.
>
> A large, tight, perfectly circular circle formed. Those in the front rows sat down, the heads of the children appeared, between the legs of the elders, biting an apple or sucking on a caramel. Raising a hawthorn stick, a broad-shouldered, little, very funny man was unanimously appointed to keep order in the *corro*. The judges had a preferential seat, and Mariluz, as president of the young women of my town, had a huge round cake in her hand to give as a prize to the winner of the *corro*. (Mancebo, 1936, p. 83)

The wrestler who remained undefeated when the contest ended received a prize in kind (e.g., a typical round cake, a cock, or a lamb) or in cash, and was named the "cock" of the *corro*. A prize and special consideration were also awarded to the wrestler who threw down the most rivals. As these wrestlers represented their communities, which would win if their wrestlers won, or would lose if their wrestlers lost, the *corros* were vibrant meetings where tensions and passions were quick to emerge.

***Corro* in the town of Manzaneda de Torío, municipality of Garrafe de Torío, province of León © José Antonio Robles-Tascón**

***Corro* in the municipality of Riaño, province of León © Andrés de la Torre**

> The most spectacular contest I have ever attended was that of the five brothers, who wrestled one after the other, defeating the best opponents in the entire region. When the last and best of the five brothers was defeated (the best rivals on both sides always used to wrestle by the end of the competition), their father came into the *corro* like a lion to defend his cubs. The meadow trembled with enthusiasm and excitement. The stones shuddered and the crowd witnessing the scene held their breath. All people in the meadow held their breath: all were watching for that wrestlers who, in the middle of the *corro*, were fighting like two lions defending the same prey. (Gonzalez-Largo, n.d.)

In those traditional societies, where wrestling epitomized masculinity, the role of women was that of spectators, as the mothers, sisters, girlfriends, or neighbors of the fighters. The importance of the women's support lay in the fact that the wrestler was defending the pride of his home town; in this sense, the presence of women, and especially the girls (*mozas*) at the *aluches*, was a great incentive:

> And Nieves [*a moza*], realizing that the boy was still sweating copiously, wiped his forehead with his handkerchief, exclaiming: "Boy, how well you behaved!"

The *mozo*, filled with pride, radiant, immensely happy, said: "Wow! For this alone, I would wrestle everyone again." (Goy, [1940] 2002, p. 80)

Belt buckle—Leonese wrestling lightweight category champion award, Boñar, 1940 © Angel Alonso Robles-Tascón

***Corro* in the town of Campohermoso, municipality of La Vecilla, province of León, with traditional Leon Kingdom *pendones* (banners) displayed in the background**
© Andrés de la Torre

***Corro* in the municipality of Prioro, province of León**
© Angel Alonso Robles-Tascón

From a Traditional Game to an Institutionalized Sport

From the first third of the 20th century, the *aluches* began a process of sportivization. In 1920, the first Wrestling Provincial Commission was created and started to standardize Leonese wrestling combat regulations. The Provincial Championships, disputed in early October during the festival of San Froilán, the patron saint of León, were held in 1931 for the first time (Fernández, 2004; Rodríguez and Gallego, 1985). November 22 that same year, thousands of spectators at the soccer match at Chamartín Stadium, Madrid, between Real Madrid and Athletic Bilbao were given a demonstration of "Leonese wrestlings." This was the first attempt to promote Leonese wrestling in a nonlocal, sporting context, but it had very limited success (Robles-Tascón, 2000).

Liborio Llorente, from Mansilla Mayor, province of León, practicing Leonese wrestling in Canfranc, province of Huesca, in 1938 during the Spanish Civil War
© José Antonio Robles-Tascón

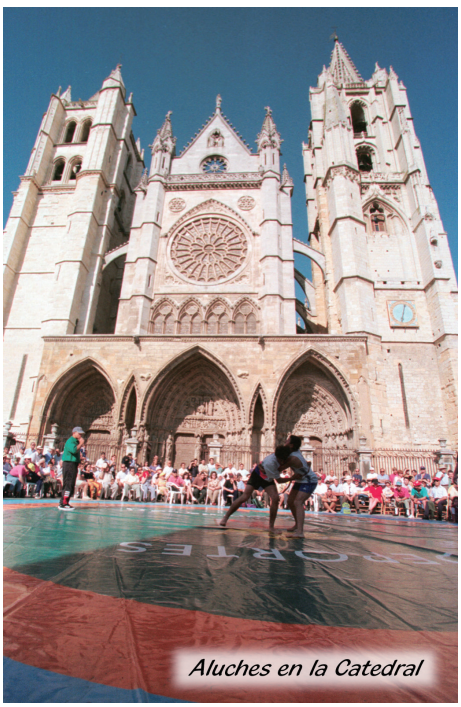
From that time to the present, and due to both external and internal factors, Leonese wrestling has developed irregularly. It suffered from the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) and the subsequent repression, emigration, and rural depopulation, abandonment of traditional forms of life, infighting between Leonese wrestling representatives, and lack of clear guidance, leadership, or financial support, to name some key issues. Surviving on a knife-edge, it has tried to keep its authenticity while evolving by following the "sporting model." This evolution has been described in terms of losses (mainly in the scope of its diversity) and gains (fundamentally, its own survival), and even today is an object of dispute between Leonese wrestling traditionalists and modernizers (Gutiérrez-García *et al.*, 2001; Robles-Tascón and Álvarez-del-Palacio, 2001; Robles-Tascón and Fernández-Fernández, 2002).

A first, significant change was the substitution of the term *aluches*, a generic term meaning "wrestling," to *lucha leonesa*, which specifically refers to a wrestling style representing the province of León. This

happened by the first decades of the 20th century, in the context of Cultural Leonesism, as will be explained below. Indeed, *aluches* were not practiced throughout the whole province of León, and could also be found in some nearby geographical areas outside León. Nevertheless, although "Leonese wrestling" has become the official term for this wrestling style, most of its aficionados still use the traditional *aluches* or *luches*.

Another relevant change was the transition from a traditional game, where oral transmission and traditional authority had a central role, to an institutionalized sport, where a sports federation elaborates rules, establishes competition categories, organizes competition calendars, trains Leonese wrestling trainers and referees, and, in synthesis, leads the development of the sport in a modern way (see, e.g., López, 1999, 2000). Obviously, this affected the wide diversity of the unwritten regulations of *aluches*, which depended on local traditions, as they were substituted for official written competition rules. Material aspects, such as wrestlers' equipment or the *corro* features also changed, including the construction of specific facilities for Leonese wrestling competitions in some locations, such as Gradefes, Mansilla de las Mulas, Riaño, Villafañe, or León.

Nowadays, around 400 Leonese wrestlers have federation licenses. There exist about 15 Leonese wrestling schools and 8 clubs where



***Corro* in the city of León, with Leon Cathedral in the background © Andrés de la Torre**

***Corro* in the municipality of Prioro, province of León © Angel Alonso Robles - Tascón**

Leonese wrestler Tino, *el cojo* (the lame man), from Paradilla de la Sobarriba, municipality of Valdefresno, province of León © José Antonio Robles-Tascón & Fulgencio Fernández

Belt buckle—Leonese wrestling provincial champion award, 1933 © José Antonio Robles-Tascón

children and youth learn the game and adults can also train (López, 1999, 2000; Robles-Tascón, 2007; Robles-Tascón and Álvarez-del-Palacio, 2002). Women's participation in Leonese wrestling competitions was anecdotal until the year 2007, when the women's category was created, and it is still scarce—about 30 women hold licenses (Cagide *et al*., 2019; Fernández, 2013). Attempts are being made to ensure Leonese wrestling is regularly offered as a sports and recreational activity at the University of León, and it is also an object of study at the Faculty of Physical Activity and Sport Sciences, where future physical education teachers and professionals in the field of physical activity and sports are educated. And most importantly, around 30,000 people in total attend the *aluches* during the season (with usually between 500 and 1,000 spectators at each *corro*). This is relevant data, considering that many towns where the *corros* are held have fewer than 200 residents.

Leonese wrestling scene in stained glass (1929) at Casona de los Pérez, León city © Antonio Barreñada & José Antonio Robles-Tascón

Representation of old-style *aluches*, with both wrestlers gripping the opponent's pants © Antonio Barreñada & José Antonio Robles-Tascón

Leonese Wrestling and Collective Identities

The *aluches* were closely linked to local identities. They manifested people's respect for ancient traditions and love for the land. They were also outstanding exhibitions of participants' courage, ability, and strength, performed in key moments—festivals and pilgrimages—of collective cultural life. As the participants were mainly young men (*mozos*), they embodied the vigor and values of their communities (e.g., family, home town, region), not only in the past but also the present and indeed looking to the future.

> At two o'clock in the afternoon, an hour before the *aluche*, the three roads that reach the capital of the mountain [Riaño] were three endless rows of cars that went to the *aluches* meeting. … One hour later, at three, the parade to the meadow began.

> The first were those of Riosol, strong *mozos* that drink water in the sacred fountains of the divine Esla river. They followed those of Valdeburón, the wide valley famous for its meadows and dairy cows. Then those of Corniero, the town of crystalline fountains and medicinal waters, and those of Portilla, rich in mountain goats and woolly sheep. ...
>
> Suddenly, a great clatter was heard. Shouting cheers and applause flooded the sky. The tower bells rang powerful and majestic. The fighters from La Ribera were entering Riaño. (Goy, [1940] 2002, pp. 136–137)

In those traditional societies, the *aluches* had a social function of valuing some individuals and towns over others. There was strong rivalry among groups of fighters who challenged each other from one *corro* to the next. This high level of personal and collective involvement was closely related to the very short window in the harsh annual cycle of life in the region in which, thanks to festivals and pilgrimages, people could find a rare moment to have fun and join others with whom they had few relations during the rest of the year—in short, to get out of the hard working routine that required significant levels of personal sacrifice (Robles-Tascón and Álvarez-del-Palacio, 2001).

Gripping the belt (hand in the opponent's back) © Angel Alonso Robles-Tascón

From the last decades of the 19th century, a movement later called Cultural Leonesism started to arise. This movement promoted the recovery, maintenance, and enhancement of Leonese cultural assets, such as Leonese symbols, history, language, arts, customs, and traditions. By these means, it also tried to strengthen people's sense of belonging and commitment to León (Salgado, 2016). It is in this context that the first Wrestling Provincial Commission was created:

> It was precisely in 1920 when one day, in a gathering at "Victoria" café in our capital city, some Leonese wrestling aficionados, who had great cultural prestige, economic solvency and enthusiasm for the beautiful traditions of this land, decided to pay attention to vernacular games or sports such as the cake race, skittles and *aluches*. ...
>
> These aficionados formed the first Wrestling Provincial Commission. Olegario Llamazares del Olmo, a prestigious doctor and an excellent wrestler in his early years ... was appointed president. The members of this commission were: Plácido Herrero, alcohol inspector and chemist, who was a great enthusiast of *corros* and especially those of Prioro, his hometown. Filemón de la Cuesta, professor at the Seminary and director of the newspaper *Diario de León,* where he liked to reflect traditions, and Enrique R. Guisasola, doctor of the municipality of Valdefresno and highly estimated throughout the Sobarriba region. The latter, who had a wide experience, would collaborate as referee, then breaking the custom

First *Aluches* Provincial Championship, 1931. They were diputed in a mobile bullring arena in León city © José Antonio Robles-Tascón

***Aluches* in 1931 in Pedrosa de Rey, an old municipality (now disappeared) of the province of León © José Antonio Robles-Tascón**

for this delicate task being carried out by spectators, or a kind of council made up of three elders from the town where the *corro* was disputed, as was the custom until then. (Rodríguez and Gallego, 1985, p. 33)

Once the institution representing Leonese wrestling was founded, and following the wave of Cultural Leonesism, the vernacular sport progressively became an integral part of Leonese culture and identity. It is constantly included in the official discourse of Leonesism as a significant element of differentiation—not without reason is Leonese wrestling the only wrestling style that remains alive in the Iberian Peninsula among all that existed until the first third of the 20th century. It receives support from public institutions, such as the León Provincial Council, León City Council, and other local councils, local companies, and other firms working in León, or many prominent figures linked to the province, such as Leonese writer Julio Llamazares:

> However, this should not make us forget that Leonese wrestling, like all ancient wrestling styles, is more than just a sport. Leonese wrestling, whatever its origin and place of birth, carries with it such a historical and costumbrist background that is part of our identity and our culture. As a legendary competition, it has filled the memory of this land with feats and mythical names and, as a simple image, it has become part of the lands of León. (Llamazares, 2002, p. 7)

Finally, it is worth saying that, despite Leonese wrestling being considered an intangible asset of cultural interest and a vernacular sport in the Autonomous Community of Castile and León, from where it also receives support, it has remained local and has not spread to other territories. Even so, it has been able to achieve some degree of internationalization by joining, in 1996, the International Federation of Celtic Wrestling (FILC/IFCW), in which small federations of several Western European traditional wrestling styles (e.g., gouren, backhold, Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling, glima) participate. Hosting and participating in FILC/IFCW events also contribute to enhancing the identity value of Leonese wrestling:

> The president of the Provincial Council stressed the "pride" that "is for the province what you have done in Iceland representing Spain and León" … "We, as representatives of the province, are tremendously proud of what you have done in Iceland representing Spain and León". … Juan Martínez Majo stressed, once again, the relevance of Leonese wrestling as "one of the most proper, genuine manifestations of the province of León, a true hallmark" for which he reiterated the strong support of the provincial institution to this sport. (León Provincial Council, 2019)

***Corro* in the town of Tendal de la Sobarriba, municipality of Valdefresno province of León © José Antonio Robles-Tascón**

Detail of poster celebrating the reopening of León Cathedral for worship, 1901 © Andrés de la Torre & Angel Alonso Robles-Tascón

Conclusion

Leonese wrestling is a deeply rooted traditional sport. It evolved from the ancient *aluches*, which were disputed during the summer local festivals and pilgrimages. In today's Leonese wrestling there are categories based on gender, age, and weight, as well as sports clubs and schools in which it is possible to learn this beautiful sport. Anyone who would like to experience the social dimension of this sport should attend the *corros* that are held during the summer season in Leonese Montaña and Ribera towns. Authenticity, love for the land, respect for traditions, chivalry, and courage are seen as characteristics of Leonese people and Leonese wrestling, as the *Hymn to Leonese wrestling* (Arredondo, 1999) declares:

... Since ancient times our wrestling
has attracted popular fervor
and today in the towns
young people can be heard challenging each other to fight.
Leonese fury and breed
have made this sport immortal
to the pride of the people
who gave it its identity.
Brave wrestler made of nobility
always your courage will spark great passion.
We form a *corro* to witness the feats
that one day will be legends of León.
FIGHT *LEONÉS!!*

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Local Diffusion of Xinyi/ Xingyiquan in Shanxi Province, China: A Living Heritage Shaped by Ancient Merchant Culture

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08

Introduction

The traditional martial art concerned here is divided into two currents belonging to the same founding lineage: *xinyiquan* 心意拳 (lit. Intention Fist [boxing]) and *xingyiquan* 形意拳 (lit. Form [and] Intention Fist). It saw significant development in northern China, especially in Shanxi Province, during the middle of the 18th century, and in Hebei Province at the beginning of the 19th century. Today, both styles are practiced well beyond China and are presented in various traditional or sporting forms. The traditional practice is composed of ritual initiations, alchemical, curative, and psychophysics exercises closely linked to the ancient Chinese concepts of cosmological thought and folk religions. The combat techniques (bare hands and traditional weapons) embody popular warlike traditions hypothetically attributed to the handling of a military spear dating back to the 12th century in Henan Province.

What is historically certain, however, is that this art was deeply influenced by the merchant culture of Shanxi Province from the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century (Liu and Qiao, 2014). Thanks to migratory movement along ancient Eurasian trade routes in late imperial China, it has progressively become an inherent part of the local knowledge of trade caravan organizations called *biaoju* 鏢局. The mutual influences between martial art and merchant culture have brought about the emergence of new social category, *biaoshi* 鏢师. They shaped local knowledge that comes in a variety of forms and contextual applications: communicative competence and jargon for cooperation (Chircop-Reyes, forthcoming), trade and veterinary sciences, handcrafts, visual capacity, hearing ability, olfactory sensitivity, and defensive skills.

This chapter aims to describe the contemporary lineages of *xinyi/xingyiquan*, striving to highlight the diachronic processes of its local diffusion. The ethnographic data (2017–18) exposed in the first section tend to assess the continuity of the chain of transmission, while the second section presents a rarely investigated weapon and its current diffusion. More broadly, this interdisciplinary approach combining history and anthropology will help to assess the current heritage of the traditions and the intangible culture related to this martial art, especially in a context of the geopolitics of heritage and the emerging patrimonialization awareness that has been taking form recently in China under the abbreviation *"feiyi"* 非遗 (Bodolec, 2012, 2014). Indeed, until 1990 just a few hundred sites benefited from heritage practices (Fresnais, 2001), but since then this field has grown continuously and now includes a wide variety of ancient local knowledge, rituals, arts, and skills, some of which are in danger of falling into disuse. Therefore, it is hoped that, despite its limitations, this chapter can serve as a preliminary study that may generate further research and contributions to the International Centre of Martial Arts for Youth Development and Engagement under the auspices of UNESCO on the project of patrimonialization and renewal of traditions in China.

Merchant Culture and Martial Art: Past and Current Main Chains of Transmission

During the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), *xinyi/xingyiquan* was one of the main martial arts practiced by the escort-masters who were in close relation with intellectual circles on the one hand and the trading world on the other. Over time, and before the influence of merchant culture took hold, martial knowledge of *xinyi/xingyiquan* was progressively shaped through Daoist alchemy techniques, ethical codes, and rituals that once gave its practitioners social recognition. Indeed, important merchant families sought the protection of local escort-masters for their caravan expeditions, during which they were frequently attacked by brigands in the steppe and isolated areas that were poorly controlled by the State in northern China. The reputation of the art's defensive efficiency, and also the ancestral cult of veneration shared by martial arts practitioners and traders were factors that fostered interaction and professional cooperation between the two groups.

Liu Fuzhong 刘富中 (left) and Wang Jianzhu 王建筑 (right) © Guo Jinhua 郭进华

Traditional Chinese martial practices are structured around a logic that is essentially that of orality. Texts exist, but they are sometimes incomplete or do not allow us to investigate further, given the confidentiality of the transmission that is specific to the initiatory and ritual aspect of the exercises taught. Faced with this silence of textual sources, ethnographic interviews have therefore proved to be indispensable for this survey. The current descendants of the escort-masters are linked to their past through knowledge and narratives that they present as continuous over several generations. Making the

history of the *xinyi/xingyiquan* therefore involved investigating the current inheritors of Qing dynasty escort-masters, who continue to transmit their traditions in Shanxi Province.

The fieldwork data presented here were collected between March 2017 and June 2018 at Qixian, Taiyuan, Taigu, Yuci, and Pingyao, located in the central region of Shanxi Province. In the course of my survey, I was able to collect a number of narratives about the escort occupation in relation to martial arts knowledge. The practices concerned included rituals of initiation and acceptance within a lineage (*baishi yishi* 拜师仪式), apprenticeship of combat techniques (bare hands and sticks, swords, sabres, spears), as well as Daoist alchemy techniques (*neidan* 内丹).

I first visited the village of Xiaohan 小韩, in Qixian. Situated in the heart of a rural landscape of terraced slopes and cornfields, Xiaohan is a grid village of about ten old lanes separated by walls of bricks colored by loess clay and yellow earth, where at the western end of its dwellings stands the imposing old house of Dai Longbang 戴隆邦 (1713–1803).

Dai Longbang was a descendant of a line of anti-Qing official scholars who had served the Ming (1368–1644). He was a caravaneer appreciated by merchants and renowned among them for his mastery of warfare techniques (Chircop-Reyes, 2018). Narratives have made him a local hero, and he is still ritually revered not only by his descendants but also by the heirs of his lineage and their disciples. The house has retained its old architecture of square courtyard houses, and at the time of my visit a number of artifacts were on display and presented as having been used in caravan expeditions. These artifacts, such as one-wheeled carts or chests in which silver ingots were transported, are also found in the museums of the escort companies in Pingyao.

The Dai transmitted *xinyiquan*, which was familiarly known in Shanxi Province as "Dai's boxing," *Daijiaquan* 戴家拳. They were locally renowned as conservative, and knowledge of the family art did not, or at least would rarely, cross the walls of the residential compound, at least not until the late 19th century. Dai Longbang is said to have passed on only to his son, Dai Erlü 戴二闾 (1778-1873), and his great nephews. Exceptionally, and according to the oral tradition, the latter have passed their familial art to a martial artist from Hebei, Li Luoneng 李洛能 (1808-1890), who would have been the first non-Dai disciple. This first extra-lineage diffusion of Dai knowledge led to the parallel creation of a new style, *xingyiquan*, the name of which is close to the previous one, except that the character *xin* 心 (heart) is changed to the character *xing* 形 (form). The change of name from *xinyiquan* to *xingyiquan* is the subject of several hypothesis, but the particularly interesting one here is that it would have allowed the first school to keep its particularity related to the Dai family's mode of transmission. As for the second school, it was later widely developed in Hebei Province. *Xinyi/xingyiquan* is commonly recognized in Chinese martial arts classification as one of the three main currents of Chinese "internal [art of] of boxing," *neijiaquan* 内家拳.

The Dai eventually reformed their conservative rules of transmission: a second extra-lineage diffusion of the Dai family art occurred with Dai Kui 戴奎 (1874–1951), part of the fourth generation. Indeed, the current heir of the Dai family house, Dai Chuanzeng 戴传曾, the sixth generation since Dai Longbang, does not possess the martial knowledge of these ancestors. The Dai family no longer practices nor transmits their art: "Before, it was a family tradition, but today the Dai have almost nothing to do with martial art. In the region,

the transmission of *xinyiquan* is now mainly done by the Wang" (Dai Chuanzeng, March 2017, interview). Wang Xicheng 王喜成 is today part of the seventh generation of the Dai by affiliation. He is the grandson of Wang Yinghai 王映海 (1926–2012), a disciple of Dai Kui, and presents himself as a "conservative" and a link in a chain of transmission "faithful to the founding principles" of the Dai family.

In Jinzhong, a prefecture town in the center of Shanxi Province, *xingyiquan* is today essentially represented by the descendants of the lineage of Che Yizhai 车毅斋 (1833–1914), disciple of Li Luoneng. Bu Binquan 布秉全, son of Bu Xuekuan 布学宽 (1876–1971), is currently one of the main representatives of this lineage in Taigu District and continues to maintain the heritage of Che Yizhai, his father's master. The second great Taigu current is the *xingyiquan* of Song Guanghua 宋光华, descendant of Song Tieling 宋铁麟 (1885–1978). The Song lineage has been uninterrupted since the second half of the 19th century and the descendants still occupy the family house in Taigu. However, the Song had only a relatively weak and brief link with the escort occupation; they specialized in the watchmaking trade very early on.

Contemporary practice of xingyiquan. Pictured is Wang Jianzhu 王建筑 © Wang Tianyi 王天暘

In Yuci lives Wang Jianzhu 王建筑, one of the contemporary *xingyiquan* representatives of the Li Luoneng lineage. Wang Jianzhu was also one of my closest informants. He is a collector of ancient martial arts documents, an amateur historian of local martial traditions, and a descendant, among others, of Wang Jiwu 王继武 (1892–1992), formerly an escort-master in Renyi 仁义, a transport company operating in Shijiazhuang (Hebei). Finally, I would also mention the *xingyiquan* transmission made by Zhang Yuren 张育人 and his disciples in Pingyao. Zhang Yuren is a disciple by direct transmission of the escort-master Cao Tiyuan 曹体元 (1888–1977), and direct heir (fourth generation) of the Wang clan, Wangshi 王氏, from Pingyao, through Wang Zhengqing 王正清 (卿) (1801–77, first generation), Wang Shumao 王树茂 (1852–1937, second generation), and Wang (Yun) Yi 王芸 (n.d., third generation).

Wang Jianmin 王建民 (left) and Wang Jianzhu 王建筑 (right). practicing spear and sabre © Wang Tianyi 王天暘

Wang Jianzhu 王建筑 practicing spear technique © Wang Tianyi 王天暘

The lineages of Shanxi claim the same *shizu* 始祖—that is, the same founding master—Ji Jike 姬际可 (1602–83), a famous general known in particular for his resistance during the Manchu invasion. They thus advocate a certain conservatism concerning the rules and principles that govern them. For example, the ritual ceremonies of enthronement in a lineage (*baishi*), the rigorous respect of Confucian principles that take place within the master–disciple relationship, as well as the physiological concepts drawn from the currents of ancient cosmological thought applied to the martial art, constitute the three main invariants that can be found in the transmission implemented by the current representatives. This respect for tradition, however, does not exclude the idea, as one of the informants mentioned above told me, of "making the martial art evolve and adapt to our present time and to the needs of the new generations."

Currently, the art of *xinyi/xingyiquan* is considered a living intangible cultural heritage, part of an important project of patrimonialization. Indeed, at the time of my investigation it was the subject of attention from the local authorities in that as a tradition it occupied 798th place in the National List of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage. I had this information in winter 2017 from the Center for the Protection of Intangible Culture of Shanxi, Shanxi feiwuzhi wenhua yichan baohu zhongxin 山西非物质文化遗产保护中心, located in Taiyuan.

When Martial Tradition Meets Ancient Caravan Trade Culture: The Whip Stick for Camels and Mules as a Defensive Weapon

A martial tradition related to merchant culture that has been little investigated is that of *biangan* 鞭杆, also called *tuoluobian* 驼骡鞭, the whip stick for camels and mules. The art of *biangan* is composed of local *xinyi/xinyiquan* techniques, but also of other martial arts from different regions such as *baguazhang* 八卦掌, *taijiquan* 太极拳, or even styles that are related to Shaolin martial traditions. Mao Mingchun 毛明春, who gave me an interview for

my research in February 2017 in Taiyuan, is one of the current representatives of *biangan* transmission. He is a direct disciple of Cheng Shengfu 陈盛甫 (1902–96) from Wucheng District (Shandong). Cheng Shengfu was taught *biangan* by Zhang Hanzhi 张含之 (n.d.) from Shanxi. Mao Mingchun is also a professor in the Department of Sports and Physical Culture Research at Shanxi University and a representative of the fifth generation of the *xingyiquan* of the Song family of Taigu, mentioned above. He is part of the lineage of Song Huchen 宋虎臣 (1881–1947, second generation), of Dong Xiusheng 董秀升 (1882–?, third generation) from Dong Village (Taigu), and of Li Guichang 李桂昌 (1913–2000, fourth generation) from Yuci.

The *biangan* was originally a dense but flexible whip made of twisted beef tendons, about 39 inches (100 cm) long (three *chi* 尺). Nowadays, in their *biangan* training, practitioners use half a wooden stick of equal length as a traditional whip. As such, the transmission by Guo Guizhi 郭贵志 in Datong emphasizes its defensive use, the technical characteristics of which were mainly influenced by his master Yao Zongxun 姚宗勋 (1885–1917), successor of Wang Xiangzhai 王芗斋 (1885/86–1963), the founder of *yiquan* 意拳 (Intention Fist). The whip formerly used by caravaneers, however, was somewhat different and had to be thick enough to be handled like a stick. In the beginning of the Qing dynasty the *biangan* was first a tool used by merchants to make animals (camels, mules) move forward during trade caravan expeditions. Then, according to oral narratives, it progressively became a practical weapon to carry for protection against brigands' attacks. Merchants who had no escort services were logistically not able to carry swords, spears, and other weapons, which were heavy and would also likely arouse suspicion and provocation. In addition, using swords and spears required skills that merchants generally did not possess; the handling of the *baingan*, however, appeared to be easier for non-practitioners.

Wang Jianzhu 王建筑 demonstrating the standing position called santishi 三体势 © Wang Tianyi 王天暘

Once integrated by local martial artists into their equipment, the *biangan* was subject to a process of standardization—that is to say, the elaboration of codified attacking and defensive moves—as well as becoming an object of dissemination among escort circles in a number of Shanxi towns, villages, and cities. This technical evolution in the handling and use of a caravan instrument as a defensive weapon led to the development of the fencing element of Shanxi fighting arts, *Shanxi quanxie* 山西拳械. Prof. Mao Mingchun conducted a study on the different currents of its transmission in Shanxi Province (Table 1; see also Liu and Qiao, 2014, p. 96).

Table 1. Contemporary development of stick practice in Shanxi Province. Data collected during the winter of 2017 in Taiyuan (Shanxi) from a survey led by Prof. Mao Mingchun.

Areas (cities, districts)	Names of the Shanxi arts of fighting with sticks
Fanshi 繁峙(Xinzhou 忻州)	Baxianbian 八仙鞭 (“Stick of the Eight Immortals”) ; sanshi’er shou tanglangbian 三十二手螳螂鞭 (“Stick of the 32 Hands of the Praying Mantis”) ; meihua shizi bian 梅花十字鞭 (“Stick of the Ten Characters of the Plum Blossom”)
Linqiu 临邱 (Datong)	Sancaibian 三才鞭 (“Stick of the Triad Sky–Earth–Man”)
Dai 代 (Xinzhou)	Shi’ershoubian 十二手鞭 (“Stick of the 12 Hands”)
Ying 应 (Shuozhou)	Shiwushoubian 十五手鞭 (“Stick of the 15 Hands”)
Huairen 怀仁(Shuozhou)	Ershisibian 二十四鞭 (the “24 Sticks”)
Dingxiang 定襄 (Xinzhou)	Chibabian 尺八鞭 (“Stick of Eight Chi Long”) ; sanshiliubian 三十六鞭 (the “36 Sticks”)
Taiyuan 太原	Tuoluobian 驼骡鞭 (“Stick for Camels and Mules”) ; shisanbian 十三鞭 (the “13 sticks”) ; wuhuabian 舞花鞭 (“[Moves] of Dancing Stick”)
Yuci 榆次 (Jinzhong)	Panlongbian 盘龙鞭 (“Dragon Stick”)
Shouyang 寿阳 (Jinzhong)	Liushisanbian 六十三鞭 (the “63 Sticks”)
Pingyao 平遥	Bahebian 八合鞭 (“Stick of the Eight Harmonies”)
Lingshi 灵石(Jinzhong)	Luanma jueliutang 乱马撅六趟 (“Rebel Horse Prancing Six Times”)
Hongdong 洪洞 (Linfen)	Zimu shunshoubian 子母顺手鞭 (“Stick Mother–Son”)
Yuncheng 运城	Niusibian 纽丝鞭 (“Stick of the Entwined Silk”)
Qin 沁 (Changzhi)	Qimeibian 齐眉鞭 (“Stick [of] Respect Between Spouses”) ; jiulianhuanbian 九连环鞭 (the “Nine Routines of Stick”) ; tuoluobian 驼骡鞭 (“Stick for Camels and Mules”) ; qixingbian 七星鞭 (“Seven-Stars Stick”)

Conclusion

The contemporaneity of the local transmission of Shanxi's traditional martial techniques is meant to be an example of what we could consider a living heritage. In other words, the loss of its use due to social transformations has not been able to affect the cultural value attributed to it since its creation. The current masters of Shanxi maintain this relationship to the past through active dissemination and media coverage of those techniques, whose form is constantly being improved and readapted to the modern context. The main purpose of this chapter was to provide original ethnographic data that would help measure the extent of the current local diffusion of *xinyiquan/xingyiquan* and related practices.

This brief study thus provides an opportunity to address the effects of the emergence of heritage awareness in China from the direct perspective of those involved in knowledge transmission. These groups of inherited practitioners together, but also in their individuality, form a bridge that allows us privileged access to the knowledge of yesteryear. Therefore, more closely exploring the social organization of their lineage and the way they live through it will, I believe, open up new lines of investigation concerning aspects closely related to heritage issues.

The revival of interest in traditional cultural practices in China is, for example, one such aspect. Among the Chinese traditions that are the subject of heritage projects, or are likely to be so, are a set of cultural elements such as religious, artisanal, medical, artistic (theater, song, dance, painting), scriptural, and martial practices, among others. Especially in the Chinese context, studies on heritage cannot be considered separately from those on masters (*shifu* 师父) and new generations of disciples of ancient practices today. This aspect is indeed an indispensable gateway to (re)define the current Chinese social diversity, and to understand the silent transformations that are taking place, which are difficult to grasp from observation due to the intrinsic logic of the confidential rules of transmission "from master to disciple" (*shi-tu guanxi* 师徒关系). By questioning what has become of such ancient knowledge today, we will be better able to grasp the continuities or ruptures in the transmission of a given practice, and to determine its social coherence and effects on groups who live through these practices or who seek to revive them.

Finally, as the "sense of the past" has a longer history in China than the modern notion of heritage (Wu, 2010), it would be interesting to open the way for a reflection on inheritors' relationship to their history in order to deepen understanding of the past, but also to understand how the past "weighs on the present" (Noiriel, 2006, p. 4).

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Maintenance of Cultural Identity in a Shared Context: Kırkpınar Traditional Oil Wrestling

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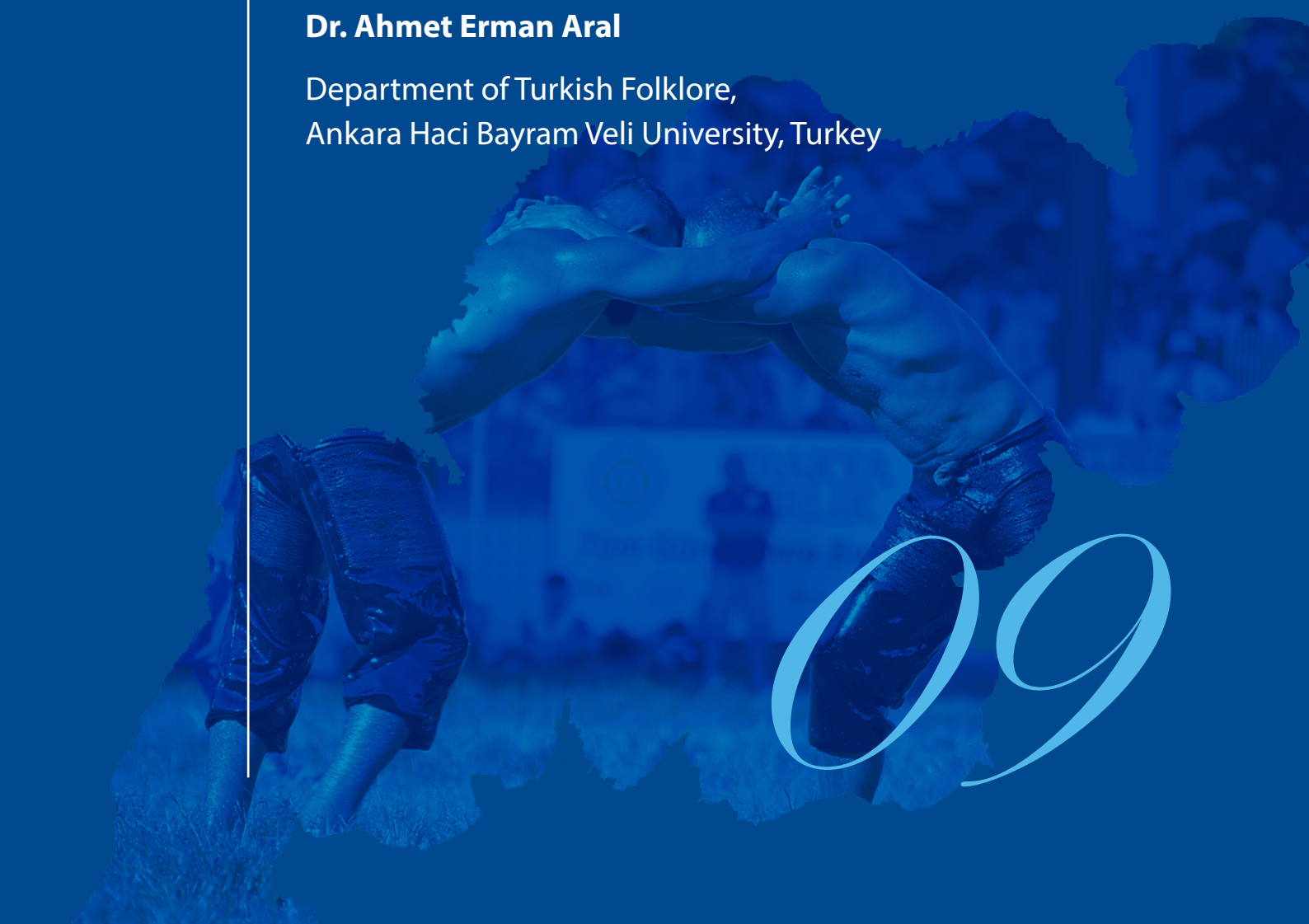

09

Wrestling is an intense struggle between two people based on strength, endurance, and patience. In addition to power and physical capacity, this contest also requires mental strength and control of the body with the mind. Wrestling has some characteristics that reflect people's physical struggle with nature under various circumstances. As a consequence of these two complementary aspects, this activity has long been part of relations, competitions, and some kinds of claims of superiority among human beings. Wrestling, for all these reasons, is one of the oldest sports in the history of humanity. At the same time, this means that rich traditions, rituals, and practices have formed and evolved around wrestling in different parts of the world. Therefore, it is possible to say that this sport, in a way, represents one of the aspects of the cultural accumulation of humanity, the knowledge, practices, and rituals transmitted from one generation to the next. This fact also leads us to think of the regional, national, and local forms of wrestling that may be regarded in the context of diversity of cultural expressions. Within this perspective and the focus of this paper, traditional oil wrestling embodies a living heritage with various cultural characteristics. It might be helpful to provide some information on the history and main elements of traditional oil wrestling before elaborating upon its value from the perspective of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) identity, transmission, and safeguarding efforts.

Traditional oil wrestling is performed on a grass field by wrestlers called *pehlivan* who are doused in olive oil and wear a type of hand-stitched, tight-fitting, knee-covering leather pants called *kispet*. The roots of the relation between Turks and wrestling may be traced back long before its presence in Anatolia and the Republic of Turkey, to Central Asia in the lives of nomadic tribes as narrated in the *Book of Dede Korkut,* around which Turkish cultural identity has been built. Through this book, it becomes apparent that wrestling was an activity that was also enjoyed by women. As a matter of fact, a woman would agree to marry a man only if the man managed to defeat her in a wrestling bout. This source, considering its significance for wrestling and Turkish culture, also provides the basis to understand and analyze the social and cultural characteristics of Turkish people; it is the main source of inspiration for the heritage of Dede Qorqud/Korkyt Ata/Dede Korkut, epic culture, folk tales, and music, which is inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan). The Seljuks of Anatolia had a remarkable influence on the expansion and evolvement of the sport in Anatolia, building lodges for wrestlers and introducing to wrestling some Islamic elements such as prayers. Hereafter, the Ottomans inherited this heritage from the Seljuks. In the Ottoman period, rulers such as Mehmet the Conqueror, Selim the Resolute (Selim I), were fine wrestlers; in addition, Mehmet the Conqueror built one major lodge in Istanbul that served as a training facility for hundreds of wrestlers. The "Welfare Wrestling Match," part of the ceremony organized on particular days in the presence of the ruler in Ottoman times, is another indication of the meaning attributed to wrestling by the Ottoman palace (Kahraman, 1995, cited in Çevik, 2011, pp. 30, 48).

First of all, it is important to point out that oil wrestling is not the only form of traditional Turkish wrestling, although it is the most popular. The beginning of traditional Kırkpınar oil wrestling in Edirne dates back to the passing of the Ottomans to Rumelia from the lands of Anatolia in the second half of the 14th century. Although it is not possible to definitively name the exact year, due to the lack of written resources, some sources

The wrestler's salute © The Municipality of Edirne

on the history of Kırkpınar oil wrestling agree that the year 1361 marks the beginning of regular Kırkpınar wrestling tournaments, coinciding with the taking of the city of Edirne by the Ottomans (Delibalta, 2002). Certainly, it is better to exercise caution while speaking of years and place names. The home of the Kırkpınar oil wrestling festival is located in the city of Edirne, in the northwestern part of Turkey, close to the border with Greece. Even though there are other Turkish cities with their own oil wrestling festivals, the fact that Kırkpınar is the center and symbol of this kind of wrestling makes it essential to speak of the legend that is believed to be the root of the festival. As stated in the book *Pehlivan*, edited by Doğanay Çelik using various sources from historians such as Halil İnalcık, during the Ottoman military expeditions to take Rumelia in 1357 several corps stopped over in the village of Samona (today within the borders of Greece). While the group took a rest, 40 strong wrestlers were selected to start a wrestling competition as the activity was seen as a way to celebrate the success of the expedition and also an exercise to improve combat readiness. At the end of the day, according to one narrative, two of the wrestlers, willing to go to any lengths and never give up, were unable to defeat each other and eventually they died of exhaustion (Çevik, 2011, p. 56; Özcan, 1996, p. 319). According to legend, these two wrestlers were buried right where they died, under a fig tree. After many years, their friends visited the burial place and found a *pınar*. (spring) flowing strongly, over their graves. Thereafter, in commemoration of these wrestlers and other wrestlers who fought that day, people started to call the place Kırkpınar ("Kırk" means "forty", referencing the total number of wrestlers mentioned at the beginning of the legend). In a sense, this legend nourishes the competitive soul of wrestlers by providing a basis for "wrestler-like" cultural identity.

Victory © The Municipality of Edirne

At this point, it is also important to underline the relationship between traditional oil wrestling and Hıdrellez, the spring celebration that was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List in 2017 by Turkey and North Macedonia. In the memory of the wrestlers mentioned in the legend, Ottoman ruler Murad I ordered that a wrestling competition be organized on May 6, 1361, which coincided with the day of Hıdrellez. This was not an unusual situation since wrestling was one of the most popular pastime activities for children and young people during the rituals of transitional events such as birth and marriage, or seasonal celebrations like Nevruz and Hıdrellez. Even though the oil wrestling festival is not organized on Hıdrellez now, it is necessary to be reminded of the once-close connection between these two UNESCO-listed heritages, because considering their gradual separation in terms of time of celebration also helps us understand the dynamic nature of cultural practices and recognize the changes that occur with the flow of time. As a side note, it should also be noted that the oil wrestling festivals were interrupted at one time or another because of wars (the First World War, the Balkan Wars, etc.). Additionally, in parallel with wars and political developments (border changes), the venue occasionally changed. However, the current venue of the festival has been Sarayiçi, Edirne, since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.

There are some key elements of the Kırkpınar oil wrestling festival that enrich the festival with regard to values and meaning. Rituals such as *peshrev* (the wrestlers' warmup right before the bout, intended to intensify their moral status and enliven the audience), the oiling of the wrestlers following the proper order, *salavat* (verses and prayers sung by a traditional announcer called a *cazgır*), processions, singing of the Kırkpınar anthem, and visits to the cemetery of wrestlers all contribute to forming and consolidating cultural identity through the use of oral performances and bodily gestures. However, it is not

just through rituals that meaning and value are attributed to the festival—some objects surrounding these rituals also play a part. Such items include the golden belt (the award for those who win the championship at Kırkpınar three times consecutively) and the red-bottomed candle (the symbol of invitation to the festival). In addition, the basic outfit of wrestlers, the *kispet* leather pants, is another important factor of the tradition. *Kispet* pants are tailored specifically considering the body size of the individual, because a wrestler's success is directly related to the close fitting of the *kispet* to his body. İrfan Şahin, the *kispet* master, was declared a Living Human Treasure by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2009; this is an example that demonstrates Turkey's focus on the safeguarding of tradition with all its related elements. The last object to mention here is the *zembil*, a kind of handled basket used for carrying relevant objects (like *kispet*). It is made of materials such as reed, lace, thin tree branches, and so on. The use of these materials makes the *zembil* a nature-friendly product that in a way is linked to the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 12 that addresses sustainable consumption and production.

It is of course necessary to mention the agents of the festival, among which the wrestlers are the central figures. Traditionally, receiving the title *pehlivan* (wrestler) required physical and mental maturation. The process used to involve a master–apprentice relationship based on oral instruction, tradition, custom, and observation. However, wrestlers of all ages, with various physical capacities and diverse backgrounds, are generally called *pehlivan* today. This may be considered a reflection of the change in tradition but it should be emphasized that the word *pehlivan* used to be used to describe courageous, heavyset, honest, and trustworthy gentlemen as well. Therefore, today it seems that *pehlivan* reflects an example of semantic extension. Kırkpınar *ağası* (the main sponsor and symbolic leader of the festival), the *cazgır* announcers, shawm and drum players, and *yağcı* (the men who apply the oil on wrestlers' bodies) are other important actors of traditional oil wrestling. As noted by Köse, oil is a crucial factor because it requires the wrestlers to consider "body balance" and not just physical and mental power, making the sport more difficult (Köse, 1990, cited in Dervişoğlu, 2012, p. 52). On the other hand, the work of the *cazgır* traditional announcers (improvisational poems and prayers) and *kispet* masters are good examples of human creativity. All these characteristics distinguish the Kırkpınar oil wrestling festival from other wrestling festivals.

A *yağcı* (oil man) applies oil to a wrestler
© The Municipality of Edirne

The Kırkpınar oil wrestling festival was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010 with the cooperation of diverse stakeholders including the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Municipality of Edirne, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and Trakya University. As ten years have passed since the inscription, it is important to mention and analyze some of the safeguarding efforts. First of all, a partnership of several agents at local level and the effectiveness of this cooperation are among the most significant aspects of the

Shawm and drum players © The Municipality of Edirne

safeguarding approaches to oil wrestling. The fact that the Municipality of Edirne is the body responsible for the organization and execution of the Kırkpınar oil wrestling festival is consistent with articles 15 and 109 of the Operational Directives of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which put emphasis on the development and implementation of local policies aimed at promoting awareness and participatory systems for local development. Besides, the involvement of other local agents such as relevant NGOs, Kırkpınar *ağası,* Trakya University, and a number of masters, former chief wrestlers, and sports clubs from other parts of Turkey help maintain the tradition around oil wrestling in Kırkpınar. In this sense, oil wrestling in Kırkpınar may be considered a meeting point of diverse local agents (not just those of Kırkpınar, Edirne) in a common context. This is, in a way, an indication of the uniting power of oil wrestling in Kırkpınar, which provides a shared cultural identity, locality, spirit, and historical background blended with legends for those involved, no matter where they come from.

The safeguarding efforts specific to Kırkpınar oil wrestling may be evaluated mainly in terms of raising awareness, education, and digitization. While that certainly does not mean that there are no other initiatives for safeguarding, these three categories represent the primary topics for the sake of clarity and the limits of this paper. Being a very well-known event, the festival attracts thousands of wrestlers and spectators. In addition, Turkish national and local television stations carry live broadcasts of the opening ceremony and the final bouts of the festival. The Ministry of Youth and Sports and Turkish Wrestling Federation organize regular contests and training courses that directly or indirectly support the visibility of the Kırkpınar traditional oil wrestling festival, and in a wider sense oil wrestling as a branch of sports. In addition, the Turkish Radio and Television Association and the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism have shot or supported documentary films

The struggle ©The Municipality of Edirne

on Kırkpınar oil wrestling and created some productions focused on wrestlers' success stories. Apart from these initiatives, one of the focal points of the symposiums supported by Trakya University's School of Physical Education and Sports include topics on traditional oil wrestling. This school has organized symposiums such as the International Balkan Symposium in Sport Sciences in collaboration with the Turkish Olympic Committee, and oil wrestling was among the main topics in these symposiums, particularly in 2013. This suggests these symposiums may have contributed to the applications and academic research on the tradition. Also, two photography contests organized by the Municipality of Edirne in 1999 and 2011 also contributed to the visibility of the tradition and festival. In brief, while there have been a variety of activities aimed at raising awareness, the role of media stands out among others.

Two wrestlers test each other © The Municipality of Edirne

Education is another important dimension of the safeguarding work in this case. The Research and Application Center for Kırkpınar Values at Trakya University, Edirne, is valuable in terms of academic publications and applications. Additionally, six master's theses and two doctoral theses have been prepared on the subject to date, two of which deal with the cultural aspects of oil wrestling (Dervişoğlu, 2012; Kalaycı, 2018). These studies are remarkable in terms of encouraging new research on the tradition in Turkey. Additionally, athlete training centers

operating under the authority of the Turkish Wrestling Federation help the transmission of the tradition with 27 centers all around Turkey that welcome almost 400 students annually. Likewise, sports clubs supported and administered by local municipalities and chief wrestlers provide the necessary conditions to train young wrestlers. Oil wrestlers who receive training in these clubs represent the majority of those participating in the Kırkpınar oil wrestling festival, and many of the chief wrestlers came through these clubs. Although some of these wrestling clubs face financial problems today, local initiatives are still influential on the transmission of the tradition. Compared to the past, the transmission of oil wrestling tradition today mostly relies on the activities of sports clubs and not just intimate, noninstitutional master–apprentice relationships. In the past, the economic sustainability of the wrestling festival was not an issue; however, the economic problems the festival currently faces and the lack of intergenerational transmission pose a threat for the maintenance of the festival and tradition. Third and lastly, digitization may be seen as another fundamental aspect of safeguarding approaches here. The Municipality of Edirne created the Information and Documentation Center for Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling and transferred all printed, verbal, visual, and audio data located in libraries, archives, and local newspapers into digital media. Serving as an open archive in six languages with 43,000 electronic resources and interviews with 450 masters, wrestlers, and symbolic leaders (*ağa*), this center also helps reinforce the involvement of communities, which has been at the core of UNESCO's safeguarding efforts in recent years.

Before the concluding remarks, it is essential to analyze the oil wrestling tradition from the perspective of *İrfan* Şahin, the *kispet* master. One of the most prominent figures in Turkish oil wrestling, Şahin was declared a Living Human Treasure by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2012. As a master with 65 years of experience, he has sewn *kispet* for three generations of wrestlers, including many chief wrestlers and their grandchildren. Consequently, his experience and observations provide some important insights to help us understand the changes from a broader perspective. In an interview with the author, Şahin stated that he used to sew the leather by hand until the 1960s but later had to change the way he worked under the influence of mechanization in the production process (Şahin, 2020, interview). Machines help process the leather quickly today, but this may have diminished craftsmen's creativity and made it more difficult to maintain the distinctive qualities of handwork. It is also necessary to mention the effect of more complicated wrestling techniques and competition rules on the making of *kispet* today, as this allows us to interpret the changes in tradition. Şahin had to adapt his work to new requirements of oil wrestling in the late 1960s with the increase in the number of match rules, shortening of match time, introduction of more sophisticated wrestling techniques, and accordingly, the required reduction in the weight of *kispet* from 26.5 to just 4.4 lb (12 to 2 kg). Besides, the numerical increase of wrestlers attending the oil wrestling festival from 350 in the 1970s to 2,300 today is, in his opinion, another factor that necessitated a change in his way of *kispet* making (Şahin, 2020, interview). From this point of view, it is possible to assert that new elements such as rules and sophisticated techniques that appeared in Kırkpınar oil wrestling seem to have forced other agents and pieces of tradition (such as the *kispet* master) to adapt to current trends. On the flipside, this may be seen as a good example of the tradition bearers' ability and dynamism to adapt to new circumstances.

In terms of transmission, it is also important to examine Şahin's thoughts on training new apprentices, which seem striking. Based on his observation, *kispet* masters (just four or five people in total) have great difficulty in paying the necessary amount of money to apprentices—with no oil wrestling festivals in half of the year, demand for more (or new) apprentices is limited. With this in mind, he says the "current number of *kispet* masters is enough to satisfy requirements, and even if we train new apprentices, they will not make money at all" (Şahin, 2020, interview). This situation reminds us that the transmission of some skills under some particular conditions is not always beneficial or necessary.

In conclusion, it is clear Kırkpınar oil wrestling has been at the center of the ICH safeguarding activities of the relevant municipality, communities, and universities, particularly since the inscription in 2010 on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This may be seen as a significant aspect of the element since the leading agents of safeguarding work (municipality, communities, and universities) represent the bottom-up approach to heritage management. Another thing to highlight here is that Kırkpınar oil wrestling may be considered a common cultural expression of many local agents from all around Turkey, gathering various communities under the roof of a shared context. In addition, the harmony of local safeguarding activities with national initiatives is another dimension that reinforces the spirit of oil wrestling in a sustainable manner. This harmony is also the proof that Kırkpınar oil wrestling has, for a long time, had the necessary means to unite people around it and provide them with a cultural identity shaped by rituals, practices, places, objects, and oral tradition.

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Martial Arts: Fundamental Values for Encounter and Reconciliation

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Introduction

Capoeira *roda*, a Brazilian martial art (MA) expression, was in 2014 inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity for its fundamental values and characteristics, transmitted from one generation to another (Vianna, 2016; UNESCO, 2020). The *roda* is a circle formed by capoeiristas, musicians, and the audience, in the center of which capoeira matches take place.

A capoeira *roda* © Nzinga

Such recognition is particularly notable since capoeira had at one point been criminalized for more than a century by the Brazilian elite. Capoeira was a prohibited practice until 1930; up to that point it had been considered subversive and violent, linked to a practice from the colonial slavery period. In this sense, it is important to note that capoeira appears in the heart of a very specific Brazilian context.

Capoeira emerged when Brazil was a Portuguese colony, in which time, over the course of 300 years, the Portuguese brought about 5 million enslaved people from Africa. No other place in the world received as many enslaved Africans as Brazil, resulting in the South American country having the second-highest Black population in the world today. By comparison, the United States received 400,000 Africans slaves (Toplin, 1981). This slave labor was used nationwide for three centuries on sugar and coffee farms, in construction, in gold and diamond mines, and all kinds of extractive work, the riches from which went directly to Portugal and other related nations at the time. It is possible to imagine the

efforts of the Portuguese crown to control its slaves in Brazil, which in some parts of the country represented up to 75% of the local population (Marquese, 2006). Slavery was indeed a process of extreme violence, and slave owners forbade the practice or training of any kind of fighting art. To relieve work-related stress and maintain physical health, they allowed dances and some other manifestations from the slaves' African culture. Although there are no material records of its existence prior to the 19th century, which is natural since it was a depreciated culture at the time, oral tradition bequeathed a founding narrative of capoeira quite compatible with its historical context. Enslaved Africans used the rhythm and movements of their dances, adapting them to a type of struggle. Thus came capoeira, an MA disguised as a dance or a game. It was and still is an important instrument of cultural and physical resistance. Unlike other aggressive and overt forms of opposition to the system of slavery, capoeira developed as a practice of discreet resistance, made up of cultural manifestation: it involved instruments, singing, dancing, and joy. But what the slaves were actually engaged in was an intense physical and tactical training for the struggle for freedom. The enslaved people who managed to escape from farms created communities in the forest, the so-called *quilombos*, which today are still important references for this population's culture and tradition.

So, while capoeira may look to be merely a fun game, or a dance, it is also in fact a combat art. For this primary characteristic, capoeira is considered an MA (Martinková and Parry, 2016). Capoeira is a *sui generis* MA due to the plasticity with which the intentional lived experiences of self-defense, dueling, corporal fighting, and play-fighting coexist (Barreira, 2017).

From that previous marginalized status and specific context, capoeira is now internationally recognized. We are talking about one of the strongest expressions of Afro-Brazilian culture today—it has approximately 6 million practitioners in Brazil (Rocha *et al*., 2015), and is present in over 70 countries. How, from this very particular situation in which it originated, did capoeira become a worldwide phenomenon? How, as an ICH practice, may it enable mutual understanding and the creation of a culture of peace and reconciliation, bringing people together?

The purpose of this chapter is to explore in depth the experience of capoeira in its most traditional form, as it is one that dialogues with ICH in a very deep structure. Capoeira is also a traditional sport and game expression (Saura and Zimmermann, 2015). In this sense, capoeira dialogues with traditional MA in its roots. Capoeira has been qualified as play, a struggle, a game, sport, an MA, a dance, a ritual, a musical performance, theater, drama, philosophy, and life. Actually, capoeira is all of that. But at the same time, it is not (Merrell, 2003). Frontier territory par excellence, capoeira defies its definitions, adjectives, and framing, being only capoeira, in eternal beautiful movements.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

According to UNESCO, ICH represents the wealth of knowledge and skills transmitted from one generation to the next. Within an ICH perspective, cultural diversity reveals expressions

that are traditional, contemporary, and living. They are inclusive, representative, and community-based. "An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life" (UNESCO, 2020). Therefore, ICH may help us to reflect and enrich different perspectives of living together.

Capoeira training © Nzinga

We seek to highlight the essential elements of capoeira practice through a phenomenological perspective on physical education and sports. Moreover, such discussion supports thinking on how ICH fosters mutual understanding and a culture of peace and reconciliation, bringing people together. The source of field research was two different capoeira groups in São Paulo, Brazil, named Nzinga Capoeira Angola Group and Angoleiro Sim Sinhô Center. The phenomenological approach observes gestures in movement in capoeira *rodas*, and from this experience we propose a discussion about tradition, care, and sustainability.

A Fight for Freedom

We can say that the most emblematic moment of capoeira practice, which includes training and meetings up to three times a week, is the *roda*. Usually, the *roda* happens in open and public spaces. The circle is formed by musicians with their instruments. Capoeira masters

command the game and the orchestra, and organize the ritual. It starts in respectful silence. The berimbau, a single-stringed percussion instrument with a wooden bow about 5 ft (1.5 m) long, cries a sad, lazy, and slow melody. Crouching before the musicians are two players. More than waiting to start, they are being blessed; they are asking for protection. The fight begins in a slow rhythm. It is beautiful to see how they appear to complete one another through continuous movements, without touching each other. The players move elegantly, seeming to pretend to fight. Soon, the berimbau's ringing changes and the pace accelerates—players increase their speed of movement with fascinating, acrobatic gestures. The contest can become aggressive, dangerous. Playfully, it becomes more a fight, then more a game again, and so on. For those who do not know capoeira, it is not easy to decode the fight in the midst of the contest, with players who barely touch each other. At the same time, the kicks and their potential impacts stand out amid movements within the rhythm of the music.

Capoeira musicians © Nzinga

Musicians playing berimbaus © Nzinga

Capoeira is one of the MAs that actually broadly avoid violence (Channon and Matthews, 2018). As a communitarian practice that refers to violence in the intertwining of imaginary and gestures, capoeira consolidates itself outside and against such violence (Barreira, 2017; Valério and Barreira, 2016). The *roda* is thus a space for bodily dialogue, where, through the game, participants seek to elude actions that, if landed, could eventually hurt the recipient. It is also a place to demonstrate skills, in accordance with the game, surprising the opponent. The incredible, powerful movements pay tribute to the aesthetics of the struggle. The frontiers of violence point to an existential tension within all MAs (Barreira, 2017), but even if rivalries and pride can occasionally emerge in a tough match, prompting disruptive behaviors in capoeira (Melo and Barreira, 2015), violence and real struggle are preferentially avoided, not used unless necessary, as in times of slavery or in situations of self-defense.

Training the inversion of the world © Nzinga

In capoeira, the ground is usually the reference point for the participants; hands are firmly fixed on the ground and the feet seek the air—that is, the players usually use their feet as hands. This way, body movement in capoeira provokes the inversion of the world. These movements show a different point of view than usually is established. The world is upside down (Reis, 2000). The arms raise the whole body like they were legs. The legs swing in the air, and the feet advance toward each other like hands. Players jump in the air. It's trickery, fun, joyful. The head turns to one side as the eyes sneak in the opposite direction, the goal being to fool the other as to the next move. Some body movements show camaraderie: symmetrical and exact. The beauty of the game requires fellowship. During a capoeira *roda* there are pauses, breaths, and returns, always ritualized. The return is increasingly tricky because the players come back worse, wiser and faster. They get off the ground, they spin, they jump, and they threaten. The wind blows. Freedom arises.

A capoeira *roda* seduces any and everyone for its simple and elementary components in order and harmony. If the instrumental use of capoeira gave enslaved people important victories in their fight against injustice, throughout history, their victory has expanded, becoming existential and social, with the recognition and pride of their cultural value. Dignity is what this culture builds in its struggle for freedom, remembering that the "sense of justice inscribed in the martial arts is that of what is worth fighting for" (Barreira, 2018, p. 44). Fighting teaches, through the body in its artistic and communitarian experiences, the recognition of elementary values that cross us all. Differences are worked through together, memories of the recent past are relieved—prejudice repression, brutality, but also malice, elegance, courage, honor. Maybe here we find the clue as to why and how capoeira dialogues with so many different cultures: realizing through the body, this conversation that is reached with no words.

In the capoeira *roda*, the past receives new orientations, and humanity is given an update, as freedom, dignity, and autonomy are dear to everyone.

Tradition and Care

From traditional roots, two modern forms of capoeira flourished: Angola and regional. This beginning is emblematic of the historical moment when, as with other modern MAs, its institutionalization has seen capoeira become less a means, a tool, and more like a constitutive experience as an end in itself, since fighting has a humanly formative sense. The profiles of both styles are long-established, which means that both are deeply rooted in Afro-Brazilian culture, the Angola capoeira with more ground movements and closer to the floor, and the regional capoeira with more aerial and acrobatic elements.

It is important to note that the idea of the traditional is recurrently associated with "preservation" and "old." But the swirling movement of capoeira shows that this heritage is not to be "preserved" as something immobilized or petrified. Contrary to the idea of immobility, capoeira shows a dynamic and active universe with recreation, resignification, and transformation, maintaining its main structures. That is maybe how capoeira is "saved." Capoeira persists to this day, giving meaning to our existence through the body; in this way, it also saves us (Saura and Zimmermann, 2015). This has direct resonance with the experience, the culture, and the metaphors of the essence of MAs.

When the play happens, it knows no gender, or age, or social barrier. The *Ginga*, the most basic of capoeira moves, is a specific movement of the body, but it is also a political and philosophical movement, a practical action of transgression (Araújo, 2004). Capoeira also chooses the occupation of public spaces as event space; it marks its presence with *rodas* in the streets and squares. For this character of resistance, capoeira develops in grounds of simplicity and affection. We are talking about groups that are communities, with indivisible values, as we see in other traditional MAs.

A child in a capoeira *roda* © Nzinga

As an example, we can mention the fundamental respect toward elders. MAs usually promote this value in their oral traditions, passing it on generation to generation in rituals, gestures, songs, and music. This unfettered respect for elders—who are usually the capoeira masters—shows that they are considered the true guardians of the knowledge accumulated by many generations, repositories of the memory of these populations, linking

Doing together © Nzinga

Defining care actions together © Nzinga

the learning of the past to future prognosis. In this model, the young person rarely has priority over their elder counterpart. The notion of care (Held, 2006) and the common good is widely developed. Another very traditional action that includes care is how these capoeira groups include children. Children do not play separately from the adults—they are present in every situation, able to play and participate according to the abilities they have at the time. In fact, children are to be found in every capoeira circle, under the care of the entire community.

Carried out more by gestures than by words, capoeira reveals a learning process that necessarily passes through the body and the senses. Masters of traditional knowledge often respond, when asked how they teach: "I do not teach, I *do together*" (Saura, 2008). This existential *doing together* dialogues with these perceptual traditional knowledges, with no need for words. It emphasizes the primacy of the senses in the production of knowledge (Santos, 2019). *Doing together* is also seen in many task forces implemented by the groups, for example, in construction, teaching, attending to the needs of a community, and so on. This has been exemplified in the way capoeira groups responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, forming care networks aimed at their members with special attention paid to the elderly, checking how the most needy members of the group are in health, mobilizing resources for the purchase and distribution of food, and so on. This care also extends to the most vulnerable communities with which the groups have a relationship. All of this is part of a system that seeks to take care of the body and mind of all members, with remote training, online classes, and so on utilized to keep people in contact.

Regarding academic culture, the notions of an ethics of care have been raised above all in feminist studies, as these take into account not only the principles of equality and individuality but also the interdependent relationships between people (DesAutels and Waugh, 2001). However, an ethics of care is part of many traditional expressions. The Nzinga Capoeira Angola Group, which lends its foundations to this study, is led by Master Janja, a professor at the Federal University of Bahia. Among her studies and contributions to capoeira itself, there are themes such as racism, sexism, and children's rights, revealing

the inclination toward community and political care. The commitment of Janja and other capoeira masters shows us the place care has taken in ICH, as well as in capoeira and in other ancient corporal expressions such as MAs.

Tradition and Sustainability

Traditional cultural expressions like capoeira demonstrate prominence in the ethical and aesthetic dimensions. Unlike individualism and meritocracy, which are currently valued and encouraged in multiple and complex ways, ICH operates with principles of collectivity, bringing generations together. ICH fosters respect for diversity, integration, and environment.

Doing together shows our shared embodiment (Merleau-Ponty, 1982). This corporeal perspective appears in different possibilities of being with others, helping to develop new meanings for our daily practices (Irobi, 2012). It is not necessarily about presenting something new. Tião Carvalho, a capoeira master, says: "These are new values, which are actually old. They are new for some eyes" (Saura, 2008).

These ancient values derived from traditional expressions reflect a way of life that we are invited to look at. It is, therefore, our high civilizations that are exceptions as a reference of a possible human existence (Lévi-Strauss, 2013). The notion of traditional community refers to indigenous populations, Afro-descendant communities (the *quilombos*), and others in an intense relationship with the environment. In the case of Brazil specifically, about 700 *quilombos* practice capoeira regularly, as an expression that reflects the group's identity. It is worth mentioning the environmental protection that these populations exert on their habitat, due to their complete interdependence with it, close observation, nonpredatory relations, and the way they prevent external factors from acting in their areas (Brasil, 2000). The recognition of interdependent relationships is one of the strengths of the ethics of care. In this case, we would like to move the debate from an anthropocentric position to a more ecocentric premise (Breivik, 2019) in light of traditional communities' way of living. This reveals the wisdom contained in gestures and movements, such as those capoeira presents us.

A child at a capoeira training session © Nzinga

Being close to nature is being close to the fundamental images and values that constitute ICH practices (Bachelard, 2008). So, understanding any traditional practice as an MA requires approximation with a full universe of knowledge, techniques, and values. In this way, it is clear how capoeira and other expressions of ICH are related to space, nature, history, and political struggles for recognition and dignity. These practices, made up of simple elements and complex human technology, show us a path to intercultural

dialogue, which can happen when we take into account the simplicity of the structure of care, tradition, and sustainability.

Final Considerations

Starting from the particular experience of capoeira to a broader context of MA, this work sought to highlight how the fundamental values of tradition, care, and sustainability in ICH are especially shared. There is, in fact, a common way of functioning that facilitates encounter, dialogue, and reconciliation, due to intergenerational and inclusive characteristics. We are invited to take a step back and find our roots in the traditional. Capoeira and MAs support these actions. Through the methodology of *doing together* and the ethics of care, ICH practices happen as embodied supportive relationships as well as being transmitted bodily. The primacy of the senses in the production of knowledge is part of our bodily symbolic process that unites us all and promotes approaches beyond discursive rationality.

Capoeira is a dynamic and in-movement tradition. It shows itself as having an open plasticity to update, through the body, changes in social, cultural, and environmental challenges. This way, ICH promotes more than an encounter among people—it promotes reconciliation between cultures and environments, being sustainable by its main traditional characteristics.

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Mexican Xilam as a Gateway to (In)tangible Pre-Hispanic Cultural Heritage

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The Recently Invented Mexican Martial Activities

The opening ritual of a Xilam class. (2009)
© Marisela Ugalde

As in other countries in Spanish-speaking Latin America (Ryan, 2011), and former Spanish colonies such as the Philippines (Gonzales, 2015), there are both longstanding indigenous fighting systems as well as more recently created warrior arts and combat sports in what is now known as Mexico. Since the early 1990s, there has been inception and steady dissemination of several invented martial arts developed in the central, Gulf, and northern regions of Mexico by Mexican martial arts veterans with decades of experience in combat sports and Asian martial arts. New martial arts are often created by experienced martial artists experiencing personal troubles within broader social crises (Jennings, 2019). In the case of the Mexican pioneers, their combative experience is aided by their research into native forms of fighting and their vision to create a unique martial art to suit moments of crisis for human beings and their nation: for self-defense, elevated national pride, and the restoration of cultural heritage.

Within a postcolonial and post-revolutionary Mexico with heightened ideals of national identity and *Mexicanidad*—the quintessential aspects of being Mexican (see Jennings, 2017)—these fighting arts, broadly conceived as "martial activities" (Martinková and Parry, 2016), range from full-contact martial sports to aesthetic martial dances. They are designed for a new generation of young, physically able Mexican citizens who are open to exploring their indigenous cultural heritage in terms of native languages, philosophical ideas, ceremonies, and even technical movements. This equates the indigenous ideals of *Mexicanidad* of these martial activities to forms of ritualistic and symbolic "pre-Hispanic" dance such as in the *concheros* in Mexico City (Rostas, 2002, 2009). As with many martial arts around the world, these martial activities are also tied to the venerated archetype of the skilled and noble warrior as an ideal human being, with the prototype being the eagle and jaguar knight orders of the Aztec (Mexica) Empire. Pak-at-Tok, SUCEM, and Lima Lama are notable examples of the newly created Mexican martial arts, although none of them are clearly as devoted to different forms of (in)tangible cultural heritage as Xilam.

This chapter provides an overview of Xilam based on a five-year qualitative case study involving ethnographic fieldwork, a life history of the founder, interviews with instructors, and online netnographic research of official and unofficial media coverage of the art (see Jennings, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b). Drawing on new debates on the connections between tangible and intangible heritage (Lo Iacono and Brown, 2016), the chapter charts how Xilam operates as a gateway to pre-Hispanic culture for a new generation of Mexicans living in the swarming metropolis of Mexico City and its surrounding territories. My analysis identifies and outlines specific, interconnected elements of the Xilam pedagogy that stimulate this, which will be discussed in detail later.

Studying and Theorizing Xilam

Xilam takes its name from the Mayan term *Dzilam*, which means "to remove the skin." This is not in a literal violent sense, but is taken as a metaphor for the development and revelation of its practitioners' inner selves. Xilam is thus an exemplar of a philosophically informed warrior art and human development system (Jennings, 2016). A rarity among the history of fighting systems, Xilam was formally developed in 1992 by a woman, the martial arts pioneer Marisela Ugalde Velázquez de León, after decades spent in various Asian martial arts and her later research into the Zapotec wrestling style of Xhupa Porrazo (Jennings, 2015). Now in her late sixties, Ugalde continues to teach Xilam in a concerted effort to "rescue, defend and diffuse the traditions of and the investigation on indigenous fighting systems" (www.xilam.org). Through this life project, Ugalde and her followers seek to preserve Mexican pre-Hispanic cultural heritage and to restore the seemingly lost identity of Mexicans as warriors through an embodied philosophical practice. Xilam is chiefly inspired by the martial cultures and warrior orders of the Mexica (Aztec), Maya, and Zapotec peoples of Mesoamerica, and the connecting holistic, antidualist Nahua philosophy of ancient central Mesoamerica (see León Portilla, 1990), which forms another aspect of Mexican cultural heritage that is arguably still alive today through the Nahuatl-speaking communities (Maffie, 2014).

The Xilam logo that utilizes the image of Ometeotl (dual energy) and the four directions © Marisela Ugalde

The study of Xilam began as a conventional ethnography, but became "messy" as the object of study (the art, philosophy, and organization of Xilam) and the subject (me, my identities, and abilities) changed over time (see Jennings, 2018b). It was Nahuatl that inadvertently brought me to find Xilam in a local community center in Mexico City in 2011. I approached the art as an apprentice, learning it from the fundamentals to a lower-intermediate level until the closure of the branch school near my home. As a consequence, I continued my studies online through the strategy of netnography, engaging with the written and audiovisual material of the official Xilam website, Facebook, and YouTube channel (Jennings, 2016), before engaging with a life history of the art's founder (Jennings, 2015) and interviewing numerous instructors and black belts in the art. More recently, I have examined archive video footage and social media commentary on the art in order to study the Mexican public's reception of the art and explore its continued dissemination and presentation to an increasingly international audience. Some of this newer data is presented in this contribution.

The multimodal study has opened up numerous avenues for interdisciplinary theorizing on this new Mexican martial art and its potential as a transmitter of and gateway to heritage. As a postcolonial and perhaps, as Bowman (2019) suggests, postmodern martial art, Xilam must be understood in relation to the past, present, and future of Mesoamerica and the country now known as Mexico. Local theories and concepts might, therefore, be very useful tools in understanding the ethos and practice of the art in its local context (Jennings and Cynarski, 2019). The study of Xilam represents an interdisciplinary approach to the new field of martial arts studies (see Bowman, 2015) that is closely related

to burgeoning fields such as Latinx studies (Mize, 2019). I began my analysis of Xilam with such local theories on Mexican national identity, *Mexicanidad*, and Mesoamerican civilization.

As Bonfil Batalla (1994, 1996) contended after decades of collaborative anthropological research, ancient pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican culture is the basis of Mexican culture as a whole. Work by Magazine (2009) supports the continued existence of Mesoamerican civilization in today's supposedly "Mestizo" (culturally and ethnically mixed indigenous and Spanish) Mexican rural communities. For city dwellers, the influence might be more obvious in the basis of the Mexican diet. Mesoamerican heritage can be appreciated through visits to the numerous archeological sites, such as the famous pyramids, as well as through admiring the giant calendars and elaborate headdresses held in museums in Mexico City and other metropoles around the world. The ideas of directions, seasons, epochs, and concepts of deities have been taken from the Aztec calendar to form the basis of the fundamental sequences or *formas* (forms) of Xilam, which follow the four cardinal points in clockwise and counterclockwise directions as accompanied by a variety of methods including oral mantra and counting in indigenous languages such as Nahuatl (see Jennings, 2018a). The core principles from the very tangible element of heritage that is a giant stone calendar is thereby embodied through the ritualist form-based pedagogy seen in Xilam as it is in many Budo and Chinese martial arts (Dodd and Brown, 2016; Jennings, Dodd and Brown, forthcoming).

According to UNESCO, there are two forms of cultural heritage: tangible (e.g. monuments, buildings, and sites) and intangible, which includes objects, artifacts, cultural spaces, and practices (see UNESCO, 2020a). For Lo Iacono and Brown (2016), the binary opposition of tangible/intangible creates a false dichotomy. For these scholars, this dichotomy "is problematic for activities such as dance given its complex, multidimensional nature in which intangible and tangible elements are indissolubly linked" (p. 84). Instead, Lo Iacono and Brown introduce the notion of "living cultural heritage" as an alternative perspective for an inclusive and more fluid model. They define this as follows:

> "Living cultural heritage" is embodied by individuals in connection with the artefacts they produce and use and the environment they interact with, and it is expressed through practices, activities and performances. Living cultural heritage is also constituted by socially and culturally influenced traditions and conventions, as well as by the feelings and emotions of people and the way they relate to this heritage, including taste and perceptions. Heritage and human beings are indissolubly connected and continuously shape each other in an open ended fluid dialogue. (Lo Iacono and Brown, 2016, p. 95)

This structured yet fluid framework posits several key features of living cultural heritage in dance: the cultural, the embodied, the practical, the spatial, the temporal, and the artifactual. With the similar embodied nature to dance, such a framework could be useful to explore a culturally rich art such as Xilam. Like dance, martial arts are centered around very tangible things such as objects and weapons, and involve a continuation of practices and technique.

The Transmission of Living Cultural Heritage through Xilam

Xilam possesses many elements of indigenous Mexican and pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican cultural heritage, from the native languages used to count and call out the formulaic sequences during the weekly classes, to the headdresses and *conchas* (shells) used in the ceremonies and public demonstrations. Although closely related to dance, Xilam does have distinct elements that have led me to identify five specific characteristics of the art that are tied to essential elements of a culture that continues to live on in Mexico but is overshadowed by the modernity and Westernization project. These five aspects of the Xilam philosophy, pedagogy, and subculture are: 1) the movements and forms based on Mesoamerican animals; 2) the four-part philosophy based on the antidualist Aztec cosmology; 3) the oral mantra and indigenous terminology expressing this philosophy; 4) the materials (such as shields and obsidian swords) used to correspond to the movements; and, 5) the dialogue among the students within the "council of warriors" on the connection between the movements, materials, and the underlying philosophy.

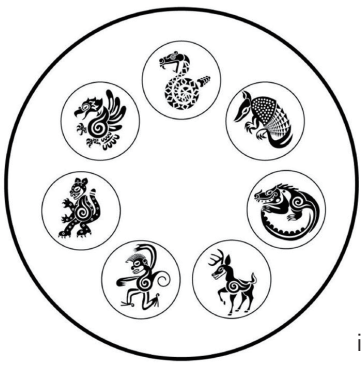
ESTRUCTURA XILAM

PARA FINES DE APRENDIZAJE Y EVALUACIÓN, XILAM ARTE MARCIAL MEXICANO, ESTA ESTRUCTURADO EN UN SISTEMA QUE ESTÁ DIVIDIDO EN 7 NIVELES Y UNA INTRODUCCION, CADA NIVEL SE DIVIDE EN 4 BLOQUES.

NOMBRE				
NIVEL	ESPAÑOL	MEXICA O ZAPOTECA	BLOQUES	COLOR DE LA CINTA
INTRODUCCION	MERECEDOR	MACEHUAL	LAQUITE	BLANCO
NIVEL I	SERPIENTE	VENDA	LAQUITE CHUYITE CHUYA	AMARILLO
NIVEL II	AGUILA	BIFIA	LAQUITE CHUYITE CHUYA	MORADO
NIVEL III	OCELOTE	PEYE	LAQUITE CHUYITE CHUYA	NARANJA
NIVEL IV	MONO	MIGÚ	LAQUITE CHUYITE CHUYA	AZUL
NIVEL V	VENADO	BIGÜIÑA	LAQUITE CHUYITE CHUYA LAGUIDE	VERDE
NIVEL VI	IGUANA	BUSHASHI	LAQUITE CHUYITE CHUYA LAGUIDE	CAFÉ
NIVEL VII	ARMADILLO	NGUPI	LAQUITE CHUYITE CHUYA LAGUIDE	NEGRO

LAQUITE:	MOVIMIENTOS BÁSICOS.
CHUYITE:	DANZA CORTA MOVIMIENTOS DE PREPARACIÓN.
CHUYA:	DANZA LARGA FORMA DEL NIVEL RESPECTIVO.
LAGUIDE:	APLICACIÓN DE LOS MOVIMIENTOS EN PELEA.

The structure of the Xilam martial arts system © Marisela Ugalde



The seven animals of Xilam © Marisela Ugalde

One dimension of living heritage is that of ecology—namely, animals indigenous to Mesoamerica. Like many Chinese martial arts, Xilam presents an opportunity to "become animal" through specific techniques (Farrer, 2013). The ecological heritage of today's Mexicans is foregrounded by the structure of the Xilam system, as it is composed of seven step-by-step levels taken from seven animals indigenous to the region: the snake, the eagle, the ocelot, the deer, the monkey, the iguana, and the armadillo. Each stage is explored through three empty-hand formulaic sequences along with a self-defense stage of learning. Movements combine qualities taken from these seven animals, which are also important in pre-Hispanic and native traditional philosophy. The systematic and progressive development of the practitioners is understood through the following explanation from Marisela Ugalde, given during a public demonstration:

> The snake, in the pre-Hispanic world, represents energy. Then we have the eagle—the spirit of each person. Everyone has different ranges and motives, the internal force or spirit that they can apply. After that, we have the jaguar, which is the force, the confidence. And not just the physical force. Mental force. Emotional force. Spiritual force. The fourth level is the monkey. As a student, you have the facility and ease to move around. After that, the deer, one has to define perfectly one's center, one's heart. And this heart determined who you are, what you want, and how you are going to achieve it. The iguana takes the force from your ancestors. You find your lineage. The last level is the armadillo. The *concheros* used Catholic symbolism. It is to create and recreate yourself.

Although the pre-Hispanic times are now centuries past, Xilam unifies the cosmological ideals of the Mexica in a modern martial art intended for education, cultural expression, and human development rather than conquest, violence, and warfare—thereby striving to cultivate modern warriors in a Mexico now troubled by the coloniality of power, violent crime, and discrimination against its first peoples. The animal-inspired movements are understood and theorized according to the Nahua philosophy of the Mexica, along with other local native concepts. The iguana, for instance, is an animal important to the Zapotec people of Tehuantepec in Southern Mexico.

Movements from the monkey level analyzed in relation to pre-Hispanic sculptures © Marisela Ugalde

The underlying idea is from *ometeotl* (dual energy), a dual concept much like the duality of yin-yang in Daoist cosmology. This concept is seen in the world-famous Day of the Dead, where life and death are expressed as being symbolically linked through the *calaveras* (skulls) with their colorful, floral designs. Xilam develops its exponents according to four manifestations of *ometeotl*: Huitzilopochtli, Quetzalcoatl, Tezcatlipoca, and Xipetote. These manifestations are ordinarily seen as deities or gods in contemporary anthropology and Mexican history; however, the

Xilam group refute such a claim, instead insisting that these are concepts reflecting the four mind–body aspects that they are striving to cultivate: willpower, emotions, awareness, and intellect (Jennings, Dodd, and Brown, forthcoming).

To the surprise of many outsiders, Mexico actually has no official religion or language. It is a predominantly Roman Catholic nation, although many of these traditions are infused with pre-Hispanic symbols and rituals. Meanwhile, there are over 64 language groups spoken across this vast country, although Spanish is the most common form of parlance. Alongside the Spanish spoken in the Xilam classes, the indigenous languages of Nahuatl, Mayan, and Zapotec (of the three warrior cultures that inspired the inception of the art) are used for the seven animals, philosophical concepts, and forms. Counting 1 through 20 is also performed in both Spanish and Nahuatl, and students are sometimes given handouts to learn the basic numbers and vocabulary as homework, including the numbers 1 through 10 in Mayan. Such native languages are highly sought after by Mexican citizens wishing to learn more about their ancestral culture.

A traditional offering connecting to Mexican ancestral culture © Marisela Ugalde

Xilam can therefore act as a gateway to other forms of learning. For instance, the Xilam association has close bonds with specific "body cultures" (Eichberg, 1998) such as several pre-Hispanic *conchero* dance groups, and through the movements using the shoulders and hips it is partially inspired by the ancient Mesoamerican ball game commonly known in modern Mexico as *pok-ta-pok* or *juego de pelota mesoamericano.* The aforementioned Mexican martial art Pak-at-Tok is also inspired by the Mesoamerican ball game, as its slightly different name derives from that Mayan term. In terms of Mexican and Mesoamerican materials, Xilam also incorporates weapons training using replica weapons that would have been used by Mexica warriors. The clubs are not the ultra-sharp obsidian swords of the eagle and jaguar knights, but safe implements to work in more cooperative partner drills and dances.

The array of Mesoamerican weapons learned in Xilam © Marisela Ugalde

The council of warriors at the close of the Xilam class © Marisela Ugalde

For demonstrations, Xilam is often involved in cultural and community events celebrating Mexico's native traditions such as the intergenerational Festivo de los Abuelos (Festival of the Grandparents). During such celebrations, the Xilam students would call their oral mantra, as Marisela Ugalde explains:

> We have the mantra "to respect the earth, respect those around us, no matter their nationality, respect the rules of the environment, and be ready to work." If you follow that, you won't have a problem anywhere. The new human being needs to be concerned with respect and harmony. (Marisela Ugalde, interview)

Andrés Segura Granados, dancer, shaman, and spiritual mentor to Marisela Ugalde © Marisela Ugalde

All of the above aspects of living heritage demonstrate the idea that Mesoamerican civilization is not extinct, but rather is living and thriving in today's internationally connected, multicultural Mexico, and is expressed through embodied movements in the Xilam ritualistic forms, drills, and demonstrations.

At the end of each class, the Xilam practitioners exchange thoughts, experiences, feelings, and reflections on their learning, and receive oral examinations on their knowledge of the terms, philosophical concepts, and values of the martial art. This "council of warriors" allows them to leave the studio to reenter regular, urbanized, and modern Mexican society knowing more about their indigenous roots and connecting with a sense of shared ancestry. This council, held in a seated circle, reflects some of the surviving indigenous approaches to shared knowledge through the oral tradition, which is the key method that Ugalde learned from her spiritual mentor, the late Andrés Segura Granados—a "teacher, guide and guardian" who transmitted "the philosophy, theory and ritual that is called Mexicanidad" (www.xilam.org) to her as a disciple. This adds an ethos and tradition to the specifically developed techniques, forms, and practices of Xilam, and allows the unification of both tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage in a fluid dialogue. Xilam is therefore a key example

of what Lo Iacono and Brown (2016) term living cultural heritage, bridging artifacts, bodies, performance, and space with feelings, movement, and technique.

Conclusions

Mexico is a nation rich in cultural heritage, with many archeological sites recognized by UNESCO (2020b), including famous lost cities and pyramids understood as tangible elements of this cultural heritage. Yet there are physical cultures that represent the autochthonous traditions of the first peoples of this land and thereby enact living heritage in motion. Several Mexican martial arts have been inspired by the warriors of the "Aztecs" (Mexica) and other cultures such as the Maya and Zapotec, although there has been no academic research on them to date aside from this particular project. One notable example of these recently reinvented warrior arts is Xilam, which was deliberately created in order to reeducate Mexicans about their pre-Hispanic cultural heritage that, following the Spanish Conquest, has often been overshadowed by the colonization and settlement of Europeans and other cultures. It thus aims to restore pride for its Mexican students' ancestral roots and equip them with the tools to deal with a challenging modern society where the environment is under threat, as black belt instructor Andrea expressed:

> There is a link to nature. Each level of Xilam has to do with an animal. On another level, what it teaches you is about one's ancestors. Xilam is Maya, Aztec, and Zapotecan, your grandparents and ancestors way before them. This care and respect for the environment. Respect and care and learn starting from there. Everything. To be kinder with the atmosphere. (Andrea, interview)

This chapter has outlined the five key aspects of the philosophy, pedagogy, and subculture of Xilam that not only make it a distinct martial art but a living gateway to Mexican and Mesoamerican cultural heritage. I contend that the intangible cultural heritage of the ancient philosophy and native wisdom is interconnected with more tangible aspects of physical movement and materials the expression of a revived Mesoamerican civilization (what Bonfil Batalla [1994, 1996] calls a deep Mexico or *México profundo*) buried beneath years of a Westernization project in the country as a whole. The chapter has provided an analysis of the tangible and intangible aspects of Mexican heritage that it engages with, stimulates, and evokes. The key argument to be made is for a recognition that pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican culture, which forms the basis of the surviving indigenous Mexican culture, is alive, and through Xilam it is combined and transmitted to a new generation of Mexicans living in urban centers, removed from their indigenous ancestors. This is living cultural heritage: heritage that exists in movement, through speech, and with the help of artifacts such as *concha* shells blown during demonstrations as Xilam practitioners move to incarnate the four energies of Tezcatlipoca, Quetzalcoatl, Xipetote, and Huitzilopochtli. The philosophy is, quite literally, in the flesh and is transmitted through an oral and tactile

pedagogy. This reminds us of the question that Spatz (2015) raised in his theoretical treatise: what can a body do? Through techniques of the body, "Aztec" philosophy, replica materials, and mixed languages, a body can transmit living cultural heritage to fellow Xilam practitioners and onlookers alike.

There are numerous martial activities in contemporary Mexico, which add to its rich heritage in boxing and Lucha Libre, which are relatively well accounted for (Allen, 2017; Levi, 2008). Xilam is a notable exemplar of a new martial art purposefully created to transmit seemingly lost aspects of Mexicans' cultural heritage as taught in a very different manner to their earlier schooling. In an age of rapid reinvention (Elliot, 2013), Xilam is thereby a reinvented martial tradition that permits the gradual, concerted self-reinvention of its practitioners through new identities tied to their ancestral, ethnic, and national heritage.

I trust this chapter has made a useful addition to this rich collection on the cultural heritage of traditional (and traditionalist) martial arts from other regions of the world. Scholars, lineage holders, leaders, and guardians of martial traditions might find the notion of living cultural heritage and related antidualistic theoretical approaches useful for their own projects, and I hope they are able to explore its rich potential for the specific philosophies, pedagogies, and subcultures that transcend the tangible and intangible aspects of universal and culturally specific human heritage—what is known in Spanish as *el patrimonio humano.*

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Myanmar Thaing

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Introduction

Most countries or ethnic groups have a traditional martial art distinct in style and technique. In Myanmar, the traditional martial art is called Thaing, which is used to classify the indigenous martial systems of ancient Myanmar. Myanmar traditional martial arts have been well established for centuries and handed down through generations. The word "Thaing" in translation refers to the act of moving around in a circle, which also means "total fighting." Thaing is not only an intangible cultural heritage of Myanmar but also a technique for self-defense, combat, and a traditional sport. More importantly, it is an art that demonstrates a strong nationalistic spirit, bravery, and holistic fitness. As a knowledge system, Thaing is protected and safeguarded by its masters.

Myanmar Thaing © U Ba Mya Thein, Grand Master of Thaing

Thaing was used in ancient Myanmar for the purpose of national defense; at that time, warriors used knives, spears, and bows. Thaing was practiced both by males and females so the skills were learned historically by every adult in the nation. Practicing Thaing does not have the goal of oppression, aggression, or physical attack; rather, it is for self-defense and for the protection of the nation and religion, while following rules and regulations. Thaing has different categories: Bando, or the unarmed martial arts, and Banshay, which uses weapons.

In Myanmar, various ethnic groups have different and distinct methods of traditional martial arts. This variation is evidenced by differences in language, culture, geography, and religion. That diversity within traditional martial arts came from three main routes:

- Inn Thaing, derived from the Innwa kingdom, Kongbaung dynasty (1752–1885)
- Kambawza Thaing, originating from Shan State
- Ramanya Thaing, originating from Mon State.

These three different sources of Thaing knowledge were eventually combined (Min Yekha, 1985, pp. 146–149).

Although varieties of Thaing are practiced by different ethnic groups, the types developed during the Kongbaung dynasty are regarded by experts as the most superior forms. Another variant known as Danyawaddy was developed by the Rakhine separately, and a simple but irregular form of Thaing evolved from the Shan style and is known as Thaing Byaung Byan, or "Reverse Thaing."

Background

According to research, the earliest form of Thaing was practiced in the 12th century before the advent of Theravada Buddhism during the Bangan dynasty, which had training schools run by the masters of ascetic Buddhism, known as Ayee Gyi (monks). These techniques

were transmitted by the Ayee Gyi from generation to generation until today; they have become a fundamental part of the Bando system and the martial arts of Myanmar. After the Bagan dynasty, the tradition of Thaing was transmitted to the royal family and soldiers, and this continued to the 16th century (Ba Mya Thein, 1992).

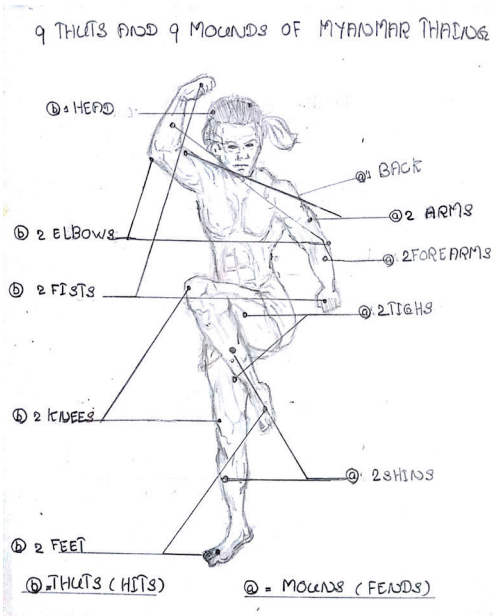
During the colonial period, the British prohibited training with swords and spears in Myanmar because they were afraid that the young practitioners and masters of Thaing would use their combat skills in revolt and rebellion. The colonial administration took draconian measures to eradicate all forms of fighting: anyone found to be a Thaing practitioner or teacher was labeled a rebel, and insurgent affiliates were relentlessly prosecuted. The practice and demonstrations of Thaing were prohibited during the colonial times.

However, unexpectedly, in 1933 the Military Athletic Club was formed by the British-supervised Gurkha Rifles, who attempted to rejuvenate unarmed systems of Myanmar traditional fighting. The club included Chin, Myanmar, Kachin, and Karen army officers, giving them the opportunity to exchange their traditional martial arts. In 1946, the Youth Thaing Group was formed under the umbrella of the Burma Youth League. After independence, Thaing was revived by patriotic Thaing masters and the government. The first national Thaing competition was held in 1948 and the second was celebrated in 1951 ("Bando," Wikipedia, 2020).

In November 1964, the leaders of the different Thaing groups formed a committee in Yangon, with the aim of documenting the techniques and attributes of the various sects and training available to young people. After that, the Myanmar Thaing Federation (MTF) was formed in 1966 with the motto "Every person of Myanmar must know Myanmar Thaing." The federation still uses the motto today. Myanmar Thaing had, of course, already existed as a traditional defensive martial art long before the formation of the federation. However, the federation united and organized the spread of all Myanmar's martial art forms under one identifiable umbrella. The federation's coaches trained practitioners until 1988, but it was then shut down by the military government. However, Myanmar Thaing was taught as a form of combat training to members of the Tatmadaw (armed forces of Myanmar) and the Myanmar police force in 1990 (MTF, n.d.).

Fighting Techniques and Categories of Myanmar Thaing

In the human body, nine hard parts and nine soft parts are identified as the main weapons for the movements of preventing, blocking, defending, and attacking in self-defense. In Myanmar Thaing, the hard parts are called the "nine killers" (*Thut Koe Thut*); they are the right fist, left fist, right elbow, left elbow, right knee, left knee, right foot, left foot, and head, which are used for offensive purposes. The soft parts are referred to as the "nine preventions" (*Moun Koe Moun*); they are used in methods of securing victory through evasion and self-protection. The right forearm, left forearm, right and left arms, right and left thighs, right and left calves, and the back are the parts of the body used in swaying, bending, avoiding, hacking, clamping, shrinking, twisting, and jumping in martial



The nine thuts and nine mouns © Illustrated by Moon Moon Sai Sai

arts practice (Sai Kyaw Htay, interview). The six characteristics of defense, which include swaying, avoiding, and resisting, are considered the highest level of martial arts practice. The two offensive actions are considered the behavior of the ungodly, and so Thaing masters avoid using them as much as possible.

The variety of combat types in Myanmar martial tradition have been systematized as Bando, Banshay, Lethwei, Naban, Letpan, and Letpwe, but each of these can be further subcategorized. There are two ways of practicing the Thaing traditional martial arts—as a form of aesthetics and as a form of fighting or combat techniques.

Myanmar martial arts tend to be very aggressive. While they are adaptable for ring-based sports, their basis is the concept of a life-and-death struggle. They include techniques for stalking and attacking from behind, biting, and other techniques that would not be acceptable in the sports arena. But sports fighting is also encouraged as it allows the practitioner the opportunity to use the techniques at full speed and to get used to the conditioning required for combat and prepares them for the stress and punishment one needs to deal with (MTF, n.d.).

Bando

Bando is the basis of the traditional fighting style of Myanmar and is an unarmed martial art. Bando teaches self-defense against attacking measures without weapons. There are two kinds of Bando: hard and soft. Hard Bando, or Lethwei (boxing), is referred to as "exterior-focused Bando"; meanwhile, soft Bando is the method of evading attack and reacting (Roebuck and Manandhar, 2016). Bando is trained individually, in pairs, and in group form. Myanmar Bando has nine ways or positions to adopt at the beginning of a fight, and nine fields of point of balance and movements for both fighting and evasion, comprising eight compass points and the upward direction. There are 63 techniques of basic Bando, and the preliminary stage of training takes several months. According to the laws of Thaing, defense comes first, then attack, and finally offense. The defensive approach is meant to discourage violence and students are taught to apply their skills with that in mind. Offensive moves are taught in the final stage (MTF, n.d.)

The basic Bando techniques are trained as methods of *Aka* (dance), which most Thaing masters use to demonstrate their skills. *Aka* is first practiced solo and then with two or more partners. After that, the techniques are applied in contests like open fighting.

The fighting style of Bando utilizes zoomorphism—that is, techniques are based on the movements of animals, likely through the influence of animal styles from India and China. Bando uses animal behavior not only in gestures but especially in the exploitation of strategic behavior including defensive solutions from the intimidation of the aggressor, offensive, and deterrence techniques, to aggressive maneuvers and stratagems of all kinds. The following movements and attitudes in each pattern are characteristic of the animals

they imitate:

- Rushing attacks, especially with the elbows and knees, in the style of the boar
- Charging strikes and tackling, in the forms of the bull
- Attacks to the upper vital points, inspired by the cobra
- Short leaps used to jump away from an attacker, like a deer
- Striking and blocking with both hands is characteristic of the eagle style
- Agile movements, like those of a monkey
- Fast arm movements and short jumps are the forms of the heron
- Circling around, leaping at, and tearing at opponents are copied from the leopard
- Chokes and locks are techniques modeled on the python
- Pinching and seizing nerve centers mirrors the style of the scorpion
- Clawing attacks are movements characteristic of the tiger
- Attacks to the lower vital points like those performed by the viper.

A combination of all the animal forms is taught by some teachers as Black Panther ("Bando," Wikipedia, 2020). These varied and specific behaviors from one animal to another allow different ways of approaching combat, and above all, give each a different style.

Bando fighting in a pair © Sai Lung

Banshay

Banshay is a system of martial arts comparable to Bando but that uses weapons like swords, spears, wooden (bamboo) batons, and so on. The Banshay system in general uses the sword (*dha* in the local language) in pairs. Sword training is initially undertaken with wooden/bamboo batons, before trainees begin to practice with swords at the intermediate level. When the master presents the student with the sword, the scabbard is fixed so that the student is discouraged from killing opponents. When the student has the required fortitude and willpower, the traditional weapons such as the bladed *dha*, together with various sticks, staffs, spears, shields, and other weapons including projectiles and flexible weapons are introduced.

Banshay with spear © U Ba Mya Thein, Grand Master of Thaing

Banshay has 37 sword forms divided among four categories: bird, umbrella, necklace, and sash. These four styles are separated into male and female positions, so in total there are eight sword categories. In the male sword style, the blade of the sword is prostrated and faces downward when striking; in the female style, the blade direction is the reverse of the male style. The *dha* can of course be used in aggressive actions, but it is used more for preventing enemy attacks (Chit Than, n.d.).

Practicing the Banshay style increases the danger and decreases the margin for error in conflict. In situations where an unarmed martial art can be applied, the use of a sword or other weapon would be too easy. If a practitioner wishes to use a weapon in practicing a martial art, they must first learn the skills of unarmed combat. After Banshay training, a student should be able to use almost any object as a weapon.

Banshay technique © Sai lung

Banshay using a sword © Sai lung

Leppan

Leppan is a system of traditional martial art in which practitioners extract themselves from holds; it is thus defensive in nature. Leppan is practiced in folk games.

Lepwei

Lepwei is a grappling system. It is also a defensive martial art and victory is achieved by maneuvering one's opponent to the floor. Lepwei bares some similarity to jiu-jitsu.

Naban

Naban is a system that uses palm and foot attacks along with grappling techniques (including joint locks, pressure points, and chokes) to control and to force the opponent into submission. Commentators have characterized Naban as practical in its method and strategies because it stresses compliance and eventual submission. Attacks are allowed to any part of the body, and there are no illegal targets. This martial art is practiced among the Chin, Rakhine, Kachin, and other ethnic groups of Myanmar as their own forms. Among the Rakhine it is known as *Kyin* and is a famous sport (*Myanmar Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, 1964).

Rakhine Kyin © Thein Htun Aung

Rakhine Kyin © Thein Htun Aung

Lethwei

Lethwei is a boxing system based on the Bando technique. Lethwei has been practiced over several centuries and still remains a favorite traditional game of the people of Myanmar. It includes all manner of unarmed techniques, including use of elbow, foot, leg, and knee blows and head butts; this has resulted in Lethwei coming to be known as "The Art of The Nine Limbs." Lethwei practitioners wrap their hands with bandages and tape instead of wearing boxing gloves, and competitors can fight with their fists, elbows, knees, feet, and even their heads. In Myanmar Lethwei, basically, the target is any part of the opponent's head or body. However, it has rules to protect competitors from more unpleasant accidents—scratching, biting, hair pulling, and hitting or kicking the groin of the opponent are all prohibited (Mya Win, 1980).

Lat Kha Moung © Illustrated by Sai Lung

Myanmar traditional Lethwei competitions are often associated with festivals and generally are accompanied by traditional music. Before the matches in such traditional folk settings, competitors slap their open palms against their elbows, imitating the wings of a fighting cock as if attempting to summon its spirit. It is a ritual known as Lat Kha Moung, which originated in a folk game. Lat Kha Moung is significant for Myanmar Lethwei fighters as they use it to challenge their opponents with courage and respect. Lat Kha Moung is used at the beginning of the Lethwei *yay* (fight dance). It is performed before the competition as a demonstration of the fighter's skill, and it is also danced after the fight to celebrate victory.

Traditionally, these boxing matches lasted until one fighter was left standing. But in recent times, Myanmar Lethwei organizations have attempted to change some of the traditional aspects to make Lethwei suitable for the international combat sports scene. At present, Lethwei is becoming popular internationally because of the action-packed style of fighting and the fact it is open to anyone of any background. The first Golden Belt Lethwei Championship was organized by the Myanmar Traditional Boxing Federation with a set of modern rules (Mya Win, 1980).

Lethwei practitioners are known as some of the world's toughest competitors, but at the same time, the kindest. Today, Lethwei is practiced not just by Myanmar people but also by combatants from around the world who recognize Lethwei as an interesting fighting style. According to promotion by the leading Lethwei organizations, Myanmar Lethwei is now well known all over the world.

Thaing Byaung Byan

Thaing Byaung Byan originated in Shan State and is also known as "Line-Khu-Kha-Chant" in the Shan language. Thaing Byaung Byan includes both Bando and Banshay techniques, but the moves, training patterns, and techniques are markedly different from other martial

arts within the Thaing family. This accounts for the name, Thaing Byaung Byan, which translates as "reversed form of Thaing" (or counter martial art) (Aung Thein, 1981).

Myanmar Thaing and Spirituality

Myanmar Thaing was used for the protection of the nation, its customs, and the State. Customs and religion required Thaing practitioners to be restrained and not to be hostile and inimical. While Myanmar is a multi-religion country, the dominant religion is Theravada Buddhism, upon which traditional practices and customs are based. In the same way, Myanmar Thaing has been transmitted along with the customs of Buddhism since ancient times. When trainees arrive at the training field, they must give salute to the field with respect to the five infinite venerables, which are the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, parents, and teachers, along with the promise to keep the five precepts of Buddhism.

Saluting the training field © Sai lung

Before practicing Thaing, every practitioner has to recite the following:

- We have a responsibility to respect and safeguard the knowledge and traditions of the Thaing system
- We have the duty of guarding and protecting national security
- We must firmly regard ourselves as guardians of the religion and our country, from the time we begin to learn and believe in Thaing
- We must pay respect to our instructors any time and any place we encounter them.

Furthermore, Thaing practitioners must follow traditional rules, including directives that they:

- Should not be disrespectful to the five infinite venerables, who are the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, parents, and teachers
- Should not use Thaing to attack anyone who has not caused them to weep and wail in grief
- Should keep two precepts among the five precepts of Buddhism (MTF, n.d.).

In ancient times, students had to pay homage as a fee for training with the Thaing master through an offertory consisting of hands of bananas, coconuts, and other donations such as candles, rice, white cotton fabric, red cotton fabric, a cup of water, and one coin (Ba Mya Thein, interview).

Today, Thaing training is considered a sport, and most trainees do not have to perform the above-mentioned rituals; but traditionally, most students pay homage to the master with donations on days of religious significance, such as the Thingyan (water) festival and Thadingyut (light) festival. Even if the students are not adherents to Buddhism, they must understand and show deep respect to these traditions when they practice Thaing.

Intangible Cultural Heritage Value Attachment System

Myanmar Thaing is the cultural heritage of ancestors and traditions of the people of Myanmar; it is inherited from the ancestors as a means of national defense and a traditional sport. Beyond the practice of the Thaing traditional martial arts, practitioners are trained to incorporate ethical principles such as humility, patience, tolerance, honesty, faithfulness, bravery, knowledge, physical and spiritual strength, and love of family and country, which were used for the protection of nationalism.

During the period in which Myanmar was a monarchy, Thaing consisted of 18 skills learned by the royal family, and the soldiers of the King of Myanmar had to show ability in both Bando and Banshay. Since ancient times, Thaing has been practiced by both men and women. Although Thaing was prohibited in colonial times, transmission and safeguarding were continued by the Thaing masters. After independence, Thaing and Lethwei survived as cultural practices.

In recent times, Thaing masters and instructors have struggled to earn enough income from their practice to support their livelihoods. But despite the lack of remuneration, they continue to provide training courses to safeguard and make sustainable their cultural heritage—they are focused on transmission, not money. Myanmar Thaing was transmitted from our ancestors with historical records and documents, and the contemporary masters believe that they have the responsibility to safeguard the sustainability of this living heritage.

The Institution and Policy for Safeguarding and Promoting

The customs and traditions of Myanmar Thaing are safeguarded as intangible cultural heritage by the Thaing masters. In days of old, Thaing was transmitted as a traditional mode of defense from masters to students through close training. Today Thaing training takes place as a form of sports practice under the auspices of the Ministry of Sport and Health. However, Thaing masters still transmit their knowledge in more traditional form in private classes and to organized associations. The best practices of traditional martial arts in modern times are through multicultural programs and youth education. Thaing instructors teach the martial art in standard primary and secondary schools, and incorporate training with youth activities.

The MTF was formed in 1966 for the purpose of safeguarding the traditional Thaing. The objectives of the federation are to preserve and promote the methods, techniques,

A new generation of Thaing practitioners
© Sai Lung

Myanmar Thaing in a sports context
© Shwe Win, Thaing Master, Taunggyi

and characteristics of Myanmar Thaing as a living tradition. The federation aims to provide training to the younger generations for defending themselves and their country, and to boost the self-confidence and good health of all individuals. The MTF gets involved in the training of members of the Myanmar police force, the armed forces, as well as students in standard education high schools. The MTF also undertakes the organization of Thaing competitions within the framework of the Ministry of Health and Sports at the level of the divisions (regions), as well as at the national level. As noted above, the policy of MTF is that "Every person of Myanmar must know Myanmar Thaing" (MTF, n.d.).

Even though national-level competitions of Myanmar Thaing have been held, it has not yet been introduced as a competitive sport in the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games. Myanmar Thaing practitioners can only compete at the SEA Games in the training presentation sessions for the Pencak Silat and Vovinam martial arts from Indonesia and Vietnam; they must study those martial arts as extra training. The MTF hopes that this experience will expose Myanmar Thaing practitioners to the other martial arts of Southeast Asia, creating greater understanding and developing connections with other martial arts organizations in the region. In addition, it will help introduce Myanmar Thaing to the SEA Games. While Thaing has yet to be included in the SEA Games, international Lethwei tournaments have already been held.

Thaing Bando was separated and transmitted to the international community via the American Bando Association (https://americanbandoassociation.com/, formed by Dr. Maung Gyi, a Thaing grand master from Myanmar) and the International Thaing Bando Association (formed in 2009), international organizations based in the United States and Switzerland, respectively.

Conclusion

Myanmar Thaing is an example of intangible cultural heritage that has been practiced throughout history in Myanmar as a method of national defense. Thaing martial arts are attached to historic events, customs, and traditions. The Thaing community continues to transmit their heritage through various safeguarding mechanisms. Today, the purpose of Bando combat is not just for self-defense; it has also been transformed into a competition sport and cultural expression. As an addition to Myanmar traditional culture, Thaing culture has constantly absorbed many traditional cultural ideas and concepts such as philosophy, ethics, health science, military law, and aesthetics. For the continuity of this living heritage, the various Thaing associations and masters should organize and draw up a curriculum of Thaing training, and then transmit it to the younger generations.

Thaing training with the younger generation © Sai Lung

A young Thaing practitioner © Shwe Win, Thaing Master, Taunggyi

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Nillaikalakki Silambam

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Introduction

Silambam, a martial art originating from Tamil Nadu, South India, that focuses on stick twirling is one of many Indian traditional arts that have survived through the periods of Ancient India, Medieval India, and Modern India, including the British colonial era. It remained alive in other countries as well, including Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Malaysia, and Singapore. Silambam is an ancient Tamil martial art that carries many Tamil cultural values in its training and also during the transmission of the art from master to students.

Ancient Silambam's cultural heritage and knowledge survived thousands of years through transmission to many generations, but the art is currently facing extinction. This drastic change is due to contemporary Silambam practitioners forgoing the values of the art and adopting elements of other martial art cultures, introducing new traditions such as belt grading systems, becoming more competition focused, and so on. The martial art with these newly adapted elements has been categorized as Sports Silambam. Many new Silambam organizations have been registered and even masters who have coached traditional Silambam are adopting these changes to train students toward success in competitions. Meanwhile, competition organizers offer handsome rewards to the winners in order to entice many young students to learn Sports Silambam. By focusing on the new approach geared toward competition, Sports Silambam masters fail to preserve the original combat techniques and cultural heritage values of authentic Silambam arts. While Sports Silambam is heavily and widely promoted, authentic Silambam masters and practitioners are struggling and facing hurdles to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of this particular ancient Silambam. Adding to the obstacles is the issue of finding the right disciples to ensure the knowledge is transferred to the next generations in the current era of mushrooming globalization.

There are seven authentic ancient Silambam schools practiced in India: *Karunadagam*, *Panaiyerimallan*, *Kallapatthu*, *Pooligal Adi*, *Kuravanji*, *Thulukku*, and *Nillaikalakki*. Some of these Silambam schools, techniques, or cultures are still practiced by minority communities, while others have become extinct in Tamil Nadu but survived in other countries. These ancient martial arts are under threat, and if their ICH is not nurtured, they are at huge risk of totally vanishing as a traditional ancient practice.

One of the seven ancient martial arts that has survived and been well preserved outside of India is Nillaikalakki Silambam, one of the ancient Silambam disciplines that maintains its authenticity. Nillaikalakki Silambam focuses on stick-twirling methods, footwork, animated animal movements, and various tricky attacking maneuvers. The art, which originated in the Krunji Mountains of India thousands of years ago, became extinct in India but found a new home in George Town City, Penang, Malaysia, after the 14th Nillaikalakki descendant migrated from Madurai, Tamil Nadu, to Penang in 1936 during the British colonial era.

Nillaikalakki Silambam

The Nillaikalakki art is an ancient staff-based martial art. It has a master–disciple lineage system and is practiced by natives from the Krunji Mountains of South India, known as Narikuravar. These natives formed weapons from bamboo found in the hills to defend themselves against wild animals and to show off their skills during religious festivals. Nillaikalakki is an advanced Silambam art that the Narikuravar developed utilizing aspects from other older Silambam techniques such as Karunadagam, Panaiyerimallan, Kallapatthu, Pooligal Adi, Kuravanji, and Thulukku, each of which has its own intangible characteristics.

Master Thulasedass performing Bumi Vanakkam, a salutation dedicated to Mother Earth before beginning of a Nillaikalakki activity, while Master Amuthan and Master Sukukumaran stand behind © Nillaikalakki

Tamil scholars and yogis who went to the Krunji Mountains to meditate were attracted by displays of the highly skilled staff techniques of Nillaikalakki. The Narikuravar taught these scholars the necessary skills, and they immediately became a part of these scholars' training. Since the art has been practiced by yogis and herbal medicine practitioners, Nillaikalakki training and classes have been conducted in a close community group in ashrams under the supervision of Tamil educators.

The Nillaikalakki school has a very sophisticated syllabus that takes at least seven consecutive years of study to master. Unlike the other older versions of Silambam, Nillaikalakki places emphasis on leg training and movement skills as major techniques in striking the opponent. These leg movement techniques act as camouflage in confusing the

opponent during sparring. *Nilai* has the meaning "posture," and *kalakki* is to "disturb" or "disarrange"; thus, "Nillaikalakki" simply carries the connotation of disturbing the posture of an opponent. Nillaikalakki is a tactical art to gain victory over an opponent or group by using revolutionary staff and leg techniques.

Lineage of Nillaikalakki

Gurukkal Mariapakiam, 14th Descendant of Nillaikalakki

Gurukkal Mariapakiam, who was born in Paramakudi, Tamil Nadu, in 1906, was exposed to Silambam from as early as 5 years old. His first Silambam master was Veerapathiran Padayachi, who coached Karunaadagam Silambam techniques.

In 1928, Guru Mariapakiam met an old Gurukkal Yogi Krunji Naadu Sanyasi, the 13th descendant of the Nillaikalakki lineage. The young Mariapakiam, who had knowledge and skills in various Silambam techniques, had an argument with Yogi Krunji and challenged him to a Silambam sparring contest. Mariapakiam, who initially thought he would easily defeat the old master, surrendered to Yogi Krunji after being badly injured; he simply could not keep up with the agility and swift footwork of his older adversary. Guru Mariapakiam confessed to Yogi Krunji that he had never in his entire life come across the Silambam art demonstrated by the Yogi, and the old master told him that the art was known as Nillaikalakki.

Guru Mariapakiam thereafter sought to master and acquire the skills of *Nillaikalakki Suthram* (Secret of Nillaikalakki) for three years from 1928 to 1931 from the old master. Yogi Krunji transmitted all the technical and cultural knowledge of Nillaikalakki, and Guru Mariapakiam was chosen as the 14th descendant of Nillaikalakki. Guru Mariapakiam was advised that he must go on to transmit the knowledge of Nillaikalakki to eligible students.

Grand Master Anbananthan and Grand Master Mariapakkiam attending prayers in 1983 in George Town, Penang © Nillaikalakki

Aasan Anbananthan, 15th Descendant of Nillaikalakki

In 1936, Guru Mariapakiam was brought over as a laborer from India to Penang, Malaysia, during the British colonial era. In 1962, Master Aasan Anbananthan joined Guru Mariapakiam as a student and was chosen as the 15th descendant of Nillaikalakki. After the former master's death on August 12, 1986, Master Anbananthan became the leading authority on Silambam in Malaysia; he played a vital role in maintaining the lineage of Nillaikalakki and is also regarded as one of the few living masters teaching the traditional and ancient heritage Silambam in Malaysia.

Grand Master Anbananthan established the Nillaikalakki Silambam Association, which was registered on February 25, 1975 under the Malaysia Registrar of Society, and became its pioneer chairman. The organization was the first registered Silambam association in Malaysia and eventually became the art's leading establishment in the world for preserving Nillaikalakki as well as promoting the ancient Silambam training system.

Grand Master Anbananthan and his students preserve and safeguard the ancient

Nillaikalakki's ICH through the Nillaikalakki Silambam Association using oral recordings, publications, documenting Nillaikalakki rituals, and transmitting Nillaikalakki knowledge to upcoming promising generations by keeping the martial art schools open and available to the public.

The ICH of Nillaikalakki

Nillaikalakki Silambam's ICH is an existing reflection of ancient Silambam as the art still carries the past knowledge and values of traditional Tamil customs that have been extinct in many cultural rituals. The Nillaikalakki Silambam Association is currently preserving three main Nillaikalakki heritage elements: the training syllabus, competitions, and rituals.

To safeguard Nillaikalakki Silambam's cultural heritage values, the association conducts various activities including collaborating with state government-linked organizations such as George Town World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI, http://gtwhi.com.my). This initiative is carried out with the assistance of the stakeholders. In 2019 the Nillaikalakki Silambam Association, together with other community-based organizations, worked closely for the Community Based Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventorying Project in George Town, which was carried out with the cooperation of GTWHI and UNESCO (Ang and Ng, 2019).

Master Munieswaran of Nillaikalakki receiving a plaque from YB Yeoh Soon Hin, Penang State Executive Councilor for Tourism, Arts, Culture and Heritage, for being one of the 30 local facilitators trained by UNESCO as part of the project Intangible Heritage and Creativity for Sustainable Cities in 2019. Standing (from left) Suzanne Ogge (Head of Heritage Projects, StudioMilou Singapore), Moe Chiba (Head of Cultural Unit, UNESCO, Jakarta office), Sharmila (Nillaikalakki Silambam Association), and Dr. Ang Ming Chee (General Manager, GTWHI)
© Nillaikalakki

Nillaikalakki Training Syllabus

The Nillaikalakki school has ten sophisticated stages in its ancient syllabus, which takes roughly seven consecutive years to master. Nillaikalakki training begins with the staff-twirling method and ends in an advanced stage that includes various animal attacking maneuvers. Below are the ten different stages of Nillaikalakki that are compulsory for students to learn in seeking to become Nillaikalakki masters.

Otthai Vitchi

Otthai Vitchi is the first stage of the Nillaikalakki syllabus, in which students learn the basic spinning techniques. Its purpose is to loosen and strengthen muscles and nerves. Otthai Vitchi consists of Kil Otthai Vitchi and Mhel Otthai Vitchi. There are six training subelements categorized under each of them.

Yiretthai Vitchi

This second stage is about staff-spinning techniques on both sides of the body, achieved by turning the body forward and backward, incorporating rotating movements using both arms. This lesson builds up the student's coordination skills while also developing their breathing control. Besides enhancing the twirling method of the staff, this exercise improves the balancing of the body. Students will definitely need this particular exercise in progressing toward the advanced levels.

96 Silatgu Varusai

Silatgu Varusai is a difficult training stage in which students need to use the right breathing method to spin a staff at 96 angles. This staff spinning uses various patterns of rotation that will take about 90 minutes to complete. This spinning technique consists of all the methods learned in Otthai Vitchi and Retthai Vitchi. It can be achieved after two years of continuous training.

Sandai Maarutham

Sandai Marutham uses various patterns of striking movements based on 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, and 96 sets of attacking options. The spinning methods previously taught in Silatgu Varusai will now be applied in striking motions. This training is specially crafted for group attacks.

Othukkal Murai

After the students are exposed to staff spinning patterns and attacking methods, defensive techniques in evading attacks in rotating staff movement will be introduced in the following step. Unlike other Silambam arts that engage static stick blocking methods, Nillaikalakki is all about continuous stick rotating and twirling movements in both self-protection and striking an opponent.

· 36 Piruvu Adi Kambugal

At this next stage, Piruvu Adi Kambugal, 36 sets of striking motions, each consisting of

12 attacking movements with a particular sequence of footwork, are taught: 20 sets in "Thulukku" style, 10 sets in "Kanthan," and 6 sets in "Narikuru" are introduced.

Kurivaithu Adipethu

The seventh stage of the Nillaikalakki syllabus is training on striking of opponents' vital points, and is known as Kurivaithu Adipethu (targeted striking). Only senior and selected masters will reach and learn this stage, as these techniques can be dangerous to others if misused by irresponsible individuals.

Kanthan

The next stage is the Kanthan, named after Lord Muruga, which teaches the tactical and tricky rhythmic staff and footwork movements and their skillful application to outsmart opponents.

Narikuru

Narikuru, also known as Vel Kambu art, is performed with a spear fixed at the end of the staff. In this stage, animated animal movements and various tricky attacking maneuvers are taught. These movements are the most difficult yet the most beautiful element in all of Nillaikalakki. The fox movement in the ninth stage, in particular, is unique and extremely difficult to execute without years of training.

Utchekattha Nilai

On gaining mastery of the ninth stage, the student is ready for the tenth and final stage, which is known as Utchekattha Nillai, where all the earlier skills are tested by the grand master. As this final stage can be extremely intense, during sparring between master and student, all the tricks, patience, and wisdom must be applied to successfully get through this extreme and hazardous environment.

Nillaikalakki Matches

Silatgu Varusai

The solo match form Silatgu Varusai sees the application of nonstop twirling skills using both hands with a bamboo staff directed toward the 96 angles mentioned above. The clockwise and counterclockwise agile rhythmic rotation techniques that are synchronized with leg formations are important factors in the competition. In these matches students are able to present their physical abilities in the art of stick twirling while controlling their breathing.

Sandai Maarutham

A Sandai Maarutham match is a solo performance of detailed patterns executed as a specified series of moves, consisting of striking, evading, and blocking using the bamboo

staff as a weapon. It displays the transition and flow from one posture and movement to another by visualizing different group attacking scenarios. Sandai Maarutham is often described as a sequence of stick movements in a prearranged group fight against imaginary opponents. This stick movement sequence is further enhanced by various footwork and advanced approaches that include Kanthan and Narikuru techniques.

Thodu Murai

Thodu Murai is a combat-style sparring match between two competitors, where a competitor must touch his opponent in an approved target zone of the body to register a point, and will be given a foul for hitting any area outside of these zones. The opponents start the match by displaying various rhythmic and animal step movements together with static and twirling styles of stick maneuvering. Points will be awarded for these value-added techniques. While exhibiting these various Nillaikalakki ways of stick twirling and footwork, the competitor must evade their opponent's attacks and strike using the correct attacking methods.

Korvai

Korvai is a self-skilled freestyle sparring match between two opponents. Those who are selected to join a Korvai competition should have already participated in Silatguvarusai, Sandhai Marutham, and Thodumurai competitions. Since it is a freestyle competition, the combat between participants is real and potentially deadly if the student is incapable of tackling his opponent. Furthermore, each round of this competition lasts approximately two hours daily. Until a winner is identified, the competition will continue for at least a month, or both participants will be classified as winners if no outright winner can be established. The winner of the competition will be known as Silambadeeran, Silambachatriyan, or Maravar Kulam, and will be elected by the Royal Council to serve as part of a Royal Guard.

Nillaikalakki Heritage Rituals

Nillaikalakki rituals and the ancient training syllabus are important assets to be preserved for future generations. These rituals have become extinct in many Silambam disciplines as a number of martial arts have been converted to Sports Silambam, but in Nillaikalakki these rituals are well preserved. Below are some of the Nillaikalakki rituals that have been practiced for thousands of years, and are well safeguarded by Nillaikalakki guardians.

Nillaikalakki Koodam Aranggetram

Koodam Aranggetram is a cleansing activity conducted at every new Silambam training center to purify the area before martial arts training officially begins. This ritual is a way to request permission from unseen energies (e.g., spirits) to use the area for Silambam training. Another reason is to cleanse the particular area to get rid of any negative spirit presence, which it is believed might attract negative energy that will disrupt any spiritual activities.

As Nillaikalakki Silambam is an art that teaches respect for Mother Earth, the cleansing ritual is one of the important ceremonies, teaching the students ways to admire and appreciate nature. The seeking of permission from Mother Earth to utilize the area as a training center teaches Nillaikalakki students to respect all five elements of nature, but mainly the earth. It is also a way of seeking approval from invisible or negative elements in the area.

Master Anba leading the Nillaikalakki Koodam Aranggetram ritual prayer © Nillaikalakki

Ritual for New Nillaikalakki Students

There is a ritual conducted for students who want to enroll as Nillaikalakki practitioners. It is one of the basic traditions that have been followed by the descendants of Nillaikalakki since the very beginning. The ritual enshrines a promise that the student will complete the required seven years of Nillaikalakki Silambam training. It also means that the student pledges to abide by everything that is given or said by the master.

Training Salutations Ritual

Nillaikalakki has a system that differentiates the way salutations are conducted by students from three different levels: Mudhal Nilai (basic level), Idhai Nilai (intermediate), and Kadhai Nilai (advanced). These salutations are ways of expressing respect and gratitude both to nature and to the grand master.

Nillaikalakki is an art that engages the teaching of respect toward Mother Earth and elders, mainly the grand masters. During the basic-level training, a student will be taught to conduct a simple salutation to Mother Earth, but the intermediate level sees the introduction of a salutation for the four remaining classical elements—fire, wind, water, and space—which symbolizes the balance of the elements of nature.

Nillaikalakki Aranggetram

This ritual involves students demonstrating all the techniques that they have learned throughout their training with the grand master. In order to impress and show off their talents to the grand master as well as other senior masters, students will attempt to perform Nillaikalakki skills that basically are not taught in class.

After the completion of Nillaikalakki syllabus, students will be honored with red and yellow sashes that symbolize that they are guardians of the Nillaikalakki art. This ritual also serves as a reminder or a call for the Nillaikalakki students to start searching for the spiritual elements of Nillaikalakki; as the ten Nillaikalakki syllabus elements represent the technical part of the art, the Aranggetram ritual signifies the end of technical journey and beginning of the spiritual journey. Thus, this element is vitally important because it reminds the Nillaikalakki practitioners that the learning of the art does not stop after Aranggetram, but continues among the students who wants to go deeper into the spiritual journey of self-realization through Nillaikalakki.

Conclusion

Nillaikalakki's struggle to stay alive and to be preserved in the contemporary world of technology and globalization is a reflection of many traditional arts that are making tremendous efforts to prevent their values and cultural heritage becoming extinct forever. The main reason for the continued existence of Nillaikalakki since its arrival in George Town, Penang, in 1936, is the commitment to safeguarding the art by dedicated students such as Master Anba and his disciples, and the support from local community leaders as well as from state organization such as GTWHI.

It is very important for state or national organizations and ministries to distinguish and differentiate between sports-based and pure heritage-based martial arts, so that the deserved support and aid can be given to these different categories. Just as sports-based activities and competitions are important for the economy and national global recognition, cultural heritage-based traditional martial arts are similarly and equally important, as these arts carry the historical value of a community and nation. The importance of ICH refers to the wealth of knowledge and skills that are transmitted from one generation to the next. Safeguarding ICH is a valuable source of revenue for the economy, because experiencing the global wealth of traditions is a major motivation for travel, with tourists seeking to learn about new cultures and see first-hand different performing arts, handcrafts, rituals, and also cuisines (Tudorache, 2016). The Nillaikalakki art, which has

Group of Nillaikalakki students after a martial art performance in George Town, Penang
© Nillaikalakki

become a part of Penang heritage art and culture, has been growing and expanding from a state-based art to a practice well known among international martial arts practitioners.

In conclusion, the ICH of Nillaikalakki Silambam creates bridges between past, present, and future within the communities in which it is practiced. Transmission and knowledge transfer between masters and students is, of course, the core element of ICH preservation, and it is thus vital that all efforts are made to keep this transmission alive to preserve the value for communities in the future.

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Old Polish Sabre Fencing

Zbigniew Sawicki, PhD

Signum Polonicum, Poland

14

Introduction

Old Polish sabre fencing fits within the limits of broadly understood Polish martial art, which in addition to sabre fencing includes fighting on war horses with a hussar lance, pickax (horseman's pick), scythe, or Polish lance. The basis for the claim that Poland has its own sabre fencing pattern is the fact that it developed its own type of sabre pattern called the hussar sabre (Kwaśniewicz, 1988, p. 66) and the existence of Old Polish fencing with *palcaty* (short sticks) (Kwaśniewicz, 2017, p. 473)—an important element in the preparation of noblemen and courtiers for fencing with this weapon known as "cross art" (Jezierski, 1791, p. 213), and in the case of short sticks, "striking the clubs (*palcaty*)" (Kitowicz, 1985, p. 113). This had its origins in the 16th century and its tradition was cultivated until 1939. It was resurrected as a Polish martial art in 1986 under the name Signum Polonicum, functioning as a contribution of Polish national heritage to the world family of national sports and martial arts.

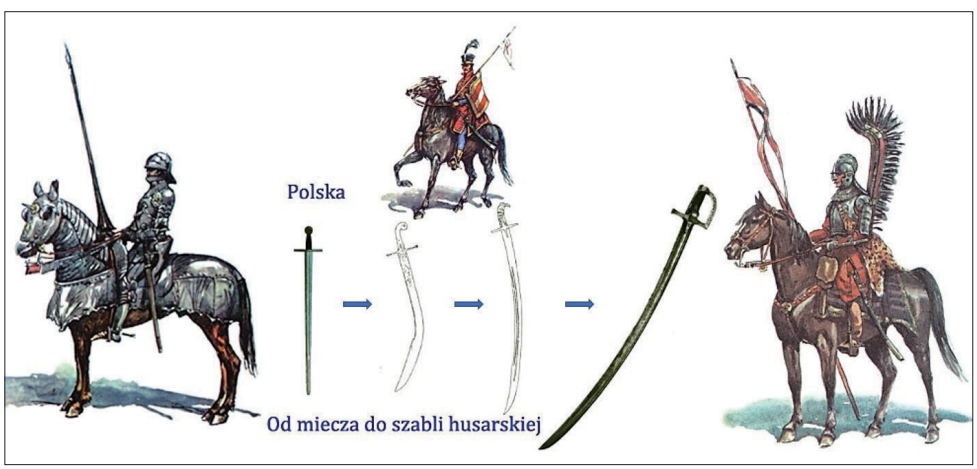
Polish Sabre Fencing

From the dawn of the Polish state, the Polish military showed its own distinctiveness, which was noted by Professor Eugeniusz Piasecki of Jagiellonian University: "With the adoption of the Christian faith and entering the family of civilized nations, Poles will also apply the Western division into states, and jointly many knightly habits. However, they never completely copy the ceremony of French knights adopted throughout the West, partly maintaining their own traditions" (Piasecki, 1925, p. 2).

As well as Piasecki, other Polish historians also pointed out that Poland had its own martial art even before the Old Polish period, in which Old Polish sabre fencing was created. Professor Stefan Kuczyński noted that: "A characteristic feature of earlier scholars writing on the art of war in Poland until the end of the 15th century was rather seeking foreign influence, from the West or the East, on the Polish military rather than finding native elements of it. The existence of Old Polish martial art was noticed only from the beginning of the 16th century. ... Therefore, despite a smaller number of source testimonies than for later centuries, there is no doubt that in every age of the Middle Ages there was Polish martial art which—regardless of foreign influences and borrowings—had its own face" (Kuczyński, 1965, p. 5). When the Old Polish period arrived, bringing various changes, Poland already had some "fencing patterns and experiences of its own" from which it could draw knowledge and experience in this martial art.

The time frame in which Old Polish sabre fencing was created can be determined as between the beginning of the 16th and the end of the 17th century. As Old Polish sabre fencing falls under the broad concept of martial art, the starting point for determining such a time frame can be the definition of Otto Laskowski: "Under the term Old Polish martial art I understand our martial art of the period in which our military, having gained a solid foundation for development in the form of colloquial defense, reaches its peak and also exhibits the most original features, that is, Polish martial art from the beginning of the 16th to the end of the 17th century" (Laskowski, 1935, p. 375).

The key element in the creation of the Old Polish sabre fencing was the choice of sabres by the nobility in place of the medieval sword. When, between the late 15th and early 16th centuries, the nobility began gaining importance and the knightly state rejected the sword in favor of a weapon with a curved blade—the sabre—it became clear that the development of fencing science with this weapon had to take place, resulting in the necessity to create new fencing patterns for it. In Western Europe, after the rejection of the sword, the rapier was adopted, which in construction resembled a sword; the style of fencing with it was thus a direct result of sword fencing, or at least it drew a lot from it.



Graphic (simplified) representation of the transition from sword to hussar sabre (Sawicki, 2010, p. 5).

Moreover, as the Poles fought on horseback, sabre fencing had to be primarily created for that purpose. It began, however, with fencing on the ground, which was dictated by technical and practical considerations—it was easier to learn the basics on foot than on horseback. Each nobleman was prepared for the loss of his horse in combat and the necessity to continue fighting on foot.

The requirement to fight resulted from social status: a Polish nobleman coming from a knightly state and tasked with defending the country and people had to constantly train in the art of war. Various knightly exercises, including sabre fencing, formed part of this education. Łukasz Górnicki, a writer of the period, described such requirements for a courtier-nobleman:

> Now, I want him to be well trained in everything that a soldier should be able to know, as well as to advance, that he should be able to handle well any weapon, both on foot and on horseback, and know all their tricks, especially the weapons they use most at the court. ... Skill and various weapons will suit him not only in need, but also for play; there are foot tournaments, horse tournaments, sometimes there is fencing, races in front of the master

> and the eyes of all people where the courtier, to do a good job must exceed what's designed for him, must be a good rider, know the horse, lead and sit beautifully and formably on it. (Górnicki, 1639, pp. 30–31)

Górnicki explicitly mentions fencing as one of the forms of knightly preparation that a nobleman should know. That notwithstanding, Górnicki also demanded exercises in Poland be better than those of others:

> And so that the Italians have this fame, as if they were good riders when it comes to shaping the horse according to measure and time, as if to *quintane*, supposedly the best ring runners; let my courtier in all this before Italy be forerunner. We also give it to the Germans that in chainmail no one's better over the not-so-large seat, as well as forts, let a courtier not give in to any German. Yet Hungarians, to whom it is a natural thing to sit with the shield well and chase courageously: let my courtier also meet Hungary with such a bold stumble as a good struggle. (Górnicki, 1639, pp. 33–34)

This type of greater efficiency in the sabre fight was confirmed by Jan III Sobieski's courtier Françoise Paulin Dalerac: "The only thing Poles have now is a Sabre, a little longer than Turkish, and heavier: but far better chopping. Is it because there is good iron in it; so also that the hand cuts well. That's why Poles are accustomed to heaviness, by constant wearing iron heads in Hand; one can see them daily they let their hand, fist, inure to sabre. In addition, to learn how to duel well, they make exercises by frequent beating with sticks, where the young people constantly make experiments" (quoted in Sikora, 2012, p. 119).

Such training was not conducted in knightly schools or academies, which were absent in Poland, but at home, as described by Szymon Starowolski: "That's why noble Polish Crown ... and always by the grace of God K.H.M. Our Gracious Lord has a soldier with his need by not borrowing him from his neighbors, but yes, by adding to foreign nations: he always has the grace of practicing his school at home, a trained soldier with a need, he has ... and as has been shown more than once against Moscow, Turkish power" (Starowolski, 1634, p. 32).

As mentioned above, the Poles fought on horseback, not on foot within city walls, according to the prevailing maxim: "Rider—the Pole has got in his nature—to Fight in the field, not in the wall" (Czarnecki, 2016), and the best weapon for this type of fight was one with a curved blade, such as a sabre. Tadeusz Czacki, an preeminent Polish scholar, justified it this way: "riding a horse, ... such a sabre, apart from a stronger cut, offers a greater veil over their head than a straight sabre or sword. Kovaciovius, Stefan Batory's Chancellor in the Transylvania duchy receives a simple description in a letter from Bekie of 1578 praising such a sabre" (Czacki, 1800, p. 217). Zygmunt Gloger also confirmed the usefulness of the sabre: "The sabre curvature, in addition to a stronger cut, gives a better head parry than a straight épée and sword" (Gloger, 1978, vol. 4, p. 296). Poland fought both with the Western knight armed with a sword or heavy rapier, and with the Eastern opponent armed with a curved sabre. It was this curved sabre that turned out to be the most useful for a Polish rider-nobleman fighting on horseback. In contrast, the West gave up cavalry in

favor of infantry development, and used a straight-bladed weapon, better suited for thrusts (rapier) than cuts (sabre).

Karol Bernolak, a notable fencing instructor of the 19th century, attributed this importance to the sabre:

> Without a sabre at his side [he] never left the house; he wore it as an emblem of his knightly calling. He also appeared with it at all ceremonies, weddings, funerals, name days, relocations, royal rooms, the first visit, etc. By respecting the host, he did not suit it until he was asked. The national costume and sabre were inseparable. One without the other was unthinkable. Hence the proverbs: "Without carabel, probably in bedclothes," and the poor nobility were told: "Walk barefoot by the cord." To "cling to the cord" meant to start a knightly profession. The sabre hung over the bed of each nobleman, passed from father to son, from son to grandson, as the most expensive family jewel, which was always associated with some memory or historical event. They were baptized on sabres, given to them as chrism and at the lad age they were taught to wield a weapon. (Bernolak, 1898, p. 9)

Zygmunt Gloger also wrote: "The sabre belonged to the so-called melee, that is cutting weapon. Poles achieved many victories with it. Thus, it became the nation's beloved weapon, which the Polish knight gave up fighting, along with his life. The relationship between a Pole and his sabre is not repeated in other nations" (Gloger, 1978, vol. 4, p. 296).

The sabre was a sign not only of dignity but also of honor, as evidenced by the inscriptions found on Polish sabre blades, for example "Do not drag me without honor, do not get me out without reason" (Łepkowski, 1857, p. 42). It was a symbol of nobleman's social position, strength, and spiritual power; it never failed him and he never betrayed it. He entrusted his personal and national security to the sabre, and perfected wielding it to such an extent that in the 17th century the Polish national sabre model, a hussar sabre, was developed.

Development of the Hussar Sabre

Through a series of evolution from around 1576 to 1630, the Poles developed a new model of battle sabre, improving the pattern of the Hungarian sabre known in Poland as "Batorówka." First, a pattern referred to as the Hungarian–Polish sabre was created, then this pattern was refined by adding a thumb ring to the handguard and modifying the sabre blade (adapted for cutting and thrusting), which resulted in the hussar sabre pattern. According to Włodzimierz Kwaśniewicz: "Around 1630 a new evolution begins in the field of sabre shapes. In addition to the current eastern sabre, with an always open handle, the handle of which is gradually changing, transforming from a cylindrical shaft into a characteristic 'carabel' handle, which resembles the neck and beak of a bird, there is a 'hussar broadsword'—a professional heavy-cavalry soldier's weapon" (Kwaśniewicz, 1988, p. 66).

According to Czesław Jarnuszkiewicz, it is the hussars that should be considered the cavalry formation to which we owe the adoption of the sabre in Poland: "What influenced the discarding of the sword so quickly in favor of the sabre in Polish cavalry armament? In all likelihood, this impact was exerted by the emergence of a new type of cavalry, which fought in 1506 near Kleck with the Tatars, and in 1514 contributed to the victory at Orsha. It was a mercenary rider, called 'raca,' or Serbs—hussars. It came from Hungary and already around 1500 hussar troops, partly armed with sabres, began to appear in Poland" (Jarnuszkiewicz, 1973, p. 56).

Hussar sabre (Cynarski, 2009, p. 50).

This initiation of sabre takeover by the hussars had further consequences: in the second half of the 16th century this weapon won the hearts of noble brothers to become their weapon of choice. The Poles adopted the sabre in several designs. There were Hungarian sabres, Turkish sabres called scimitar, there were carabelas, and finally hussars, also referred to as black sabres. Each type of sabre demanded a slightly different type of fencing. However, it is the hussar sabre that is structurally original in Poland: "[the hussar] deserves the most detailed discussion, as it represents the peak of excellence in cutting weapons and is a purely Polish product" (Kwaśniewicz, 1988, p. 66).

The Polish battle sabre became a kind of *Signum Polonicum*—a Polish symbol informing all and sundry that Poland and the Polish nation possess their own weapon and developed their own martial art with this weapon. An Old Polish sabre fencing style called "cross art" was created for it. In 1971 Professor Wojciech Zabłocki, a well-known Polish fencer and team world champion in sabre (1962 and 1963), as a recognized authority in this field assessed the combat qualities of the Polish hussar sabre and described them (their combat suitability), confirming the conducted research of its excellent effectiveness and usefulness in battle, both on foot and on horseback, while at the same time emphasizing its Polish pattern and construction ideals: "The hussar broadsword is a specific type of sabre, appropriate for direct reflective, sweep-cutting cuts from the elbow or shoulder, and arched from the shoulder—it is therefore the most universal weapon" (Zabłocki, 1971, p. 83).

The bishop of Kiev, Józef Wereszczyński, who is considered to have laid the first solid foundations for building the Polish ideal of the Christian knight at the end of the 16th century, also considered the war experience as a source of combat knowledge. In 1594, he came up with the idea of establishing a knightly school in Ukraine, stating that martial art cannot be learned "in Krakow on the cobblestones," but only "in the fields of wild *subdio*, under the roof of heavens" (Wereszczyński, 1858, p. 3). Moreover, in the sabre Wereszczyński sees the most appropriate weapon with which the young nobleman should save himself from oppression—that is, defend himself and his homeland against the enemy. He felt the creation of such a school would ensure the correct education of the future defenders of Poland (Wereszczyński, 1858, p. 4).

Polish Fencing Style

The undeniable fact is that in addition to our own type of combat sabre, in Poland we have also created our own fencing style, of which there are numerous confirmations in our history. Fencing philosophy notes that a swordsman who wants to inflict a cut must take into account the possibility of opening himself up to a counterattack, and the one executing a thrust is more covered. In other words, a thrust can be a parry in itself whereas a cut cannot. Considering the merits of the sabre, Hetman Jan Tarnowski gives the following recommendation in this regard: "Better to have a well-tempered weapon, not a Lansknecht's Kotspergal, which will do nothing" (Tarnowski, 1987, p. 5). A similar "instruction" as to the technique of using the sabre is given to us by Stanisław Łaski, who advises on card 105 in item 11: "Whoever wants to make a cut wound must put himself down, who thrusted or stabbed one, hides himself harmfully, better have a weapon of fair quality, not as Landsknecht's Kotspergal, which does nothing" (Łaski, 1599, p. 105, original spelling). Elsewhere, he advises: "Strike with the point and not with the flat I advocate, because one thrust stands for two cuts; the Italians, the Spaniards, the French know it, the Germans themselves see it, albeit late, and there are the Turks, and no one mounts a horse without a sabre under his foot at the saddle and a sabre at his side" (Łaski, 1599, p. 92).

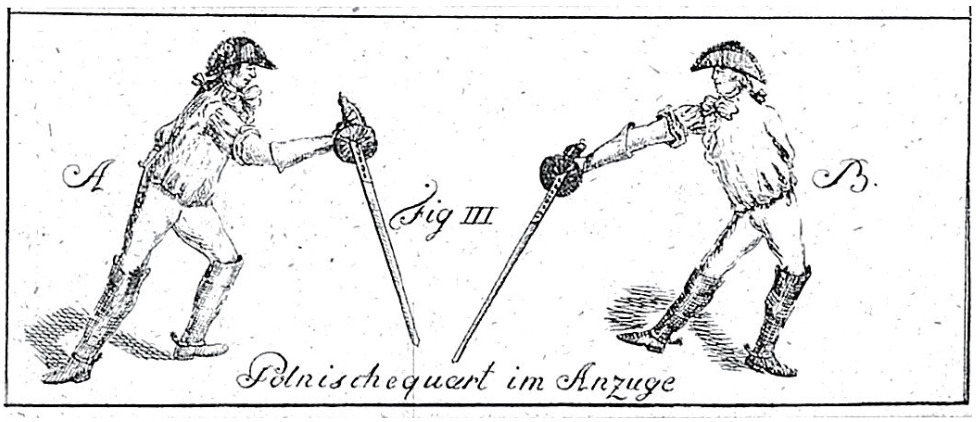
Here are some other examples:

1) Father Franciszek Salezy Jezierski: "It seems that the movement of cheerfulness has its superficial signs, which are the characters of the Nations in their dances, and the movement of anger has its own possession in iron wielding; a Muscovite cuts from above, a Hungarian from the left, a Turk toward himself, and a Pole makes a cross with his sabre" (Jezierski, 1792, p.113).

2) Józef Łepkowski: "Polish wielding a sabre is completely different from the methods known in the rest of Europe. It has its own characteristics and special terminology—cross art, Rejowskie, Referendary etc., have different rules from the German and French fencing school" (Łepkowski, 1857, p.57).

3) Zygmunt Gloger: "After the spread of sabre curves in Poland, we have developed the most famous in the world art of fighting with them. Poles have reached such extraordinary skill in wielding a curved sabre that no other nation has managed to meet them in this art" (Gloger, 1978, p. 148).

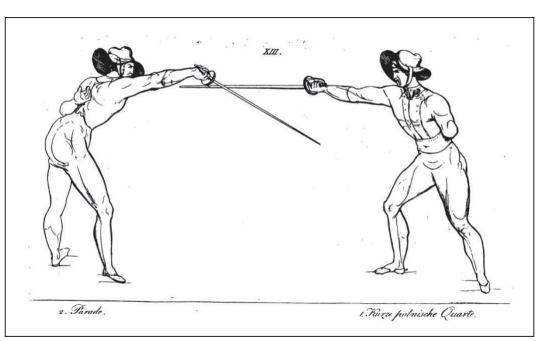
Traces of this fencing art survived until the 18th century and were still reproduced in the 19th, in the form of the most famous Polish cut called "Polish fourth" or "Polish quarte." It was shown in fencing textbooks, especially German ones. As early as 1791 we have an example of such a cut, which the author names *Polnischequart* (Behr, 1791, pp. 27–28). This cut is called the *nyżek* (low cut) or "hellish Polish fourth."



The cut called "Polnischequart," described by Behr (1791, p. 25).

A great description and presentation of this cut is given in a German textbook from 1824:

> Also on the same line there is a cut, which is called e. Polish or Hellish (?) Quart ... This cut is opposed to the high third and therefore follows the same line as the half-second or internal second, only with the difference that the cut in the quart movement runs from right to left, from the bottom up. This cut is almost the hardest of all because the same cut requires the most uncomfortable turn of the fist. To be used primarily on opponents who have the habit of moving their torso back, which usually gives the weak side to the intended cut. It is unfavorable if cut poorly, which reveals the inside of the swordsman in all its weakness. (Werner, 1824, p. 21)

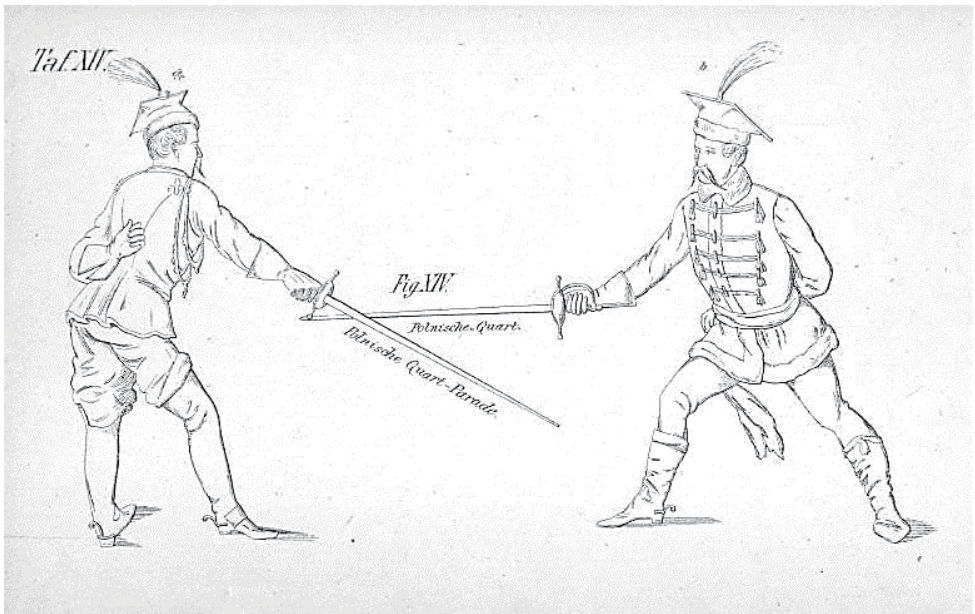


The "Polnische Quarte," described by Werner (1824, p. 89).

A similar description of the same cut was perfectly shown in a fencing textbook from 1868. Almost 100 years since the publication of the Behr textbook from 1791, the author also gives us a pattern of the Polish cut also called *Polnische Quart* (Montag, 1868, p. 160). This time the author clearly emphasizes the origin of this cut by drawing silhouettes of swordsmen in Polish national historical costumes. This is clear evidence—not only written, but graphic—for the existence of the Polish cut known as the "devilish or hellish Polish fourth," and thus for the existence of Old Polish sabre fencing. In the fencing literature known to me I have not encountered such a clear "national" assignment of a sabre cut as in case of Poland.

The proof of the existence of Polish sabre fencing and Polish fighting technique was also the extraordinary efficiency of Polish fencers, such as in the following examples:

1)"The Modliszewski family from Gniezno, it was an ancient and powerful



"Polnische Quart," described by Montag (1868, p. 83).

house ... Andrzej was a writer [who served in the court of] the Hungarian queen, Gabryel, a bailiff, he was a great man and an uncommon swordsman, hand so measured that when he cut a little coin from the boy's head, no hair was touched" (Paprocki, 1584, p. 51).

2)Ambroży Grabowski, an outstanding researcher of Polish antiquities, writes about similar skills: "Prokop from Granowo Sieniawski, court marshal for Sigismund III, stopped the six-horse carriage at a trot. With a single sabre cut he chopped a horse or an ox through the center of the body into two halves ... Tomasz Olędzki, the castellan of Zakroczym, cut five minted thalers, placed one on another, chopped with the sabre" (Grabowski, 1852, p. 448).

Prof. Józef Łepkowski believes that the sabre "cut a liber of paper, tallow candle in a candlestick, etc." (Łepkowski, 1857, p. 66).

Another interesting example of masterful sabre wielding is given to us by Michał Starzewski himself, describing the advantages of the most famous Polish cut, the *nyżek* cut: "The cut is so-called Turkish with us, for we used it to cleave Turks' stomachs" (Starzewski, 1932, pp. 130–131). Starzewski describes how a swordsman of poor pedigree demonstrated his exceptional skill by making this cut at the height of the belt of his opponent, a Mr. Voivode, with such a great dexterity that the belt or sash was cut but there was no damage to the skin of his stomach. According to Starzewski, this "meant: 'With respect, but you were cut, m'lord!'" (ibid.).

To conclude the description of fencing arts, it is worth knowing how they were perceived and presented by people outside of Poland. Mary Barton wrote in 1846:

> Dueling with pistols was a rarity in Poland at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In personal clashes, the main weapon used was a sabre. It was an indispensable prop in educating young people so that they would be trained in sabre art from the age of thirteen; students were used to fencing with sticks to practice for the sabre. ... Perfection in the art of wielding a sabre consisted of rotating it with such a violence that a small stone thrown from a medium distance should always bounce off the blade and couldn't reach the body. There was also another test, equally unchallenged, which consisted in the fact that during a duel the swordsman, having mentioned a word, should write it on the body of his adversary with the point of his weapon. This second proof required more skill than the previous one. (quoted in Sawicki, 2012, pp. 151–153).

These few examples above perfectly illustrate the extraordinary level of fencing skills our ancestors possessed and confirm the fact that we reached mastery in fencing crafts and sabres in particular, while becoming the best teachers in this field.

The basic sources of knowledge necessary to create Old Polish sabre fencing were experience gained in combat and traditions passed from grandfather to father, from father to son, which is confirmed by Józef Teodor Głębocki, who wrote in the 19th century about knight schools: "our ancestors, rather emotional than contemplative, more self-sacrificing than methodical, were convinced that one can only improve in War by experience, in the face of the enemy, in the midst of the turmoil of war, and not on the school bench" (Głębocki, 1866, p. 8).

Conclusion

It is a confirmed fact that after adopting the curved blade, Poland created its own type of this weapon, called the hussar sabre, and its own type of Old Polish sabre fencing known as cross art, and that fencing with sticks was created as a basic exercise for young noblemen to prepare for future use of sabres, and was practiced back in the 18th century. The historical name of this sabre fencing was not left to us (for centuries the name "brandishing" was used), so when in 1986 it was resurrected, it was decided to give it the name "Signum Polonicum" (Sign of Polish Arts) to emphasize that in the martial arts Poland has its own national traditions.

Emblem of Signum Polonicum (Statut, 1994, p. 18).

Today, this tradition is cultivated as a form of national heritage by the Polish Association of Polish Martial Arts Signum Polonicum, based on the knowledge that Michał Starzewski left us, dating back to at least the victorious Battle of Vienna (1683), studies and research, practice gained during over 40 years of exercises and training classes, as well as the knowledge passed on to Zbigniew Sawicki by the emigration circles of the Second Polish Republic in Great Britain (Sokol, Circle of Generals of the Second Polish Republic, etc.) which took place during the 1980s and 1990s, and is still cultivated today as an organized and complete system (style) of martial arts, known as Signum Polonicum, bringing significant national and cultural values to Polish and European heritage.

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Preserving Korean Body Culture in Traditional Dance and Martial Arts

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Introduction

> Dance is not the creation of a single individual but an entire culture developed by many people through the ages, gradually changing and being polished over time. As such, it is a valuable cultural heritage that embodies the character and emotions of a people and reflects the spirit of the times. Each movement and each step in dance, therefore, impart a sense of the history and lives of people of the past. (File, 2013, pp. 9–10)

Movement disciplines like dance and martial arts embody the cultural heritage in which they developed. This chapter aims to map part of Korea's cultural heritage by identifying certain movement characteristics shared by both traditional Korean dance and some traditional Korean martial arts. This chapter will also show how adaptations to fit with modern trends, such as K-pop music, can cause a martial art to lose its traditional character.

This study employed ethnographic descriptive research, cross-referenced with written work. My findings are based on the first-hand experience of practicing Korean martial arts, dance, and percussion (hourglass drum), and are further enhanced by years of observing Korean movement disciplines such as dance performances and informal interviews with traditional choreographers, dancers, and martial artists. Through this, I have identified specific movement characteristics that are present in both Korean traditional dance and many Korean martial arts. It is important to note that there are many types of Korean traditional dance, ranging from court dances, folk dances, and religious or ritual dances. My focus has been on those movement characteristics shared by most of these dance forms, thereafter identifying similar movement characteristics found in several Korean martial arts. These characteristics are not always present in every movement; however, most of them are usually perceivable and it is their synergy that gives a Korean "flavor" to these traditional movement disciplines.

Korean Body Culture as Manifested in Traditional Dance and Martial Arts

Traditional Korean Body Culture

Traditional Korean dance and martial arts share several movement characteristics. These characteristics are often interdependent; their synergy gives these disciplines a recognizable "Koreanness."

Korean dancers performing a sword dance © ShareAlike 2.0 Generic License

Erect Posture

Traditional Korean dance and martial arts tend to keep a straight spine with the head, shoulders, and hips naturally aligned. This does not mean that the spine is stiff or rigidly erect, but simply naturally upright. Because "gyrating hips are generally seen as sexually suggestive," such movements are avoided in Korean traditional dance, except when used for comic effect in mask dances (File, 2013, p. 19). Some dance movements may require the dancer to bend at the hips or lean somewhat, but even so the spine is generally kept straight.

This is also the case for the martial arts, where an erect posture is related to good balance. Consider the folk martial art taekkyeon (택견): the primary goal is to topple one's opponent through foot sweeps and throws. A posture that is not erect, and hence unbalanced, will result in the combatant being toppled more easily. Although practitioners of some branches of taekkyeon may push their hips sideways and forward in exaggerated ways during basic training for the purpose of joint mobility training, in actual combat such exaggerated leaning is usually avoided. As for the more modern Korean martial arts, such as taekwondo and hapkido (합기도), an erect posture is also emphasized, although some specific techniques such as throwing, break-falling, and rolling may require a momentary respite from the erect posture principle. In traditional Korean wrestling, known as ssireum (씨름) the posture is not upright because the fighters are physically connected to each other, bearing their weight into one

Ssireum players keep their core muscles engaged and their backs straight during combat © Sanko Lewis

another; however, while the body may be bend at the hips, the ssireum combatants engage their core muscles and keep their spines straight, rather than rounded.

Danjeon Breathing

Proper breathing is key to effective physical activity and is based on good posture. Hence, Korean traditional dance equates the 호흡선 (*hoheup*-seon, breath line) with the 척추선 (*cheokchu-seon*, backbone line) (Lim, 2003). Similarly, posture and breathing go together in martial arts practice (Pearlman, 2006, p. 80). Not only does a slouched posture adversely affect balance, it also inhibits proper breathing, which leads to unnecessary muscular tension, premature exhaustion, and unfocused technique.

Korean dance and martial arts emphasize 단전호흡 (*danjeon-hoheup*, *danjeon* breathing), a type of abdominal breathing focused on the *danjeon* area, which is the sacral chakra in the lower abdomen, below and behind the navel. With *danjeon* breathing, the abdominal and thoracic cavities expand three-dimensionally so the body visibly "grows" and "shrinks" with each inhalation and exhalation. An important notion in *danjeon* breathing is that breathing happens from the *danjeon* rather than the lungs. Therefore, inhalation is sometimes described as 숨을 올리다 (*sumeul ollida*, "raising the breath") and exhalation is described as 숨을 내리다 (*sumeul naerida*, "descending the breath") (Van Zile, 2018, p. 96); inhalation is visualized as breath expanding upward from the *danjeon* and exhalation is visualized as the level of breath sinking or retracting back to the *danjeon.*

Movement, in Korean dance, occurs through and due to the breath:

> in the subtle court dances (*kungjung muyong*), an inhalation gently lifts the bent knees and lengthens the spine upward. This, in turn, delicately pushes the relaxed shoulders up just a little, which causes the sideward extended arms to lift, and leaves the hands to trail softly behind. As the dancer exhales the process reverses; the spine shortens downward, taking with it the shoulders and causing the knees to bend. The arms drop slightly and the wrist contracts, again allowing the hand to trail slightly behind. (Van Zile, 2008, p. 84)

The author doing a gihap while kicking © VSC

In Korean traditional dance, movements usually commence with inhalation, starting on the first rhythmic beat; this initial inhalation also tends to coincide with the preparation stage of the movement (Kim, 2009). So too martial arts movements usually commence with inhalation and conclude with exhalation. In both Korean dance and martial arts, the inhalation is usually longer than the relatively short exhalation.

Exhalation in martial arts often takes the form of a 기합 [氣合] (*gihap*, energy harmonized), which occurs at the apex of the technique when body, mind, and breath are all focused on impact with the target. The *gihap* may be verbalized as a loud

shout at the moment of impact, or simply an unvoiced but focused exhalation, such as the "sharp exhaling of breath" (Choi, 2019, p. 57) often used in the style of taekwondo practiced by the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF). In taekkyeon, the *gihap* manifests as a verbalized "익크" ("*igke*") or "에이크" ("*egke*") (Kim, 2012, p. 220), where the first syllable is voiced and the body is slightly tensed, and the second syllable unvoiced, indicating a release of muscular tension. In Korean dance, the audience may perceive this as a "moment of suspension" and seeming "dynamic tension" followed by a "sigh of relief" (Van Zile, 2001, p. 13).

Although traditional Korean body culture always seem to move from or with the breath, breathing is seldom overly restrictive, and the practitioner is often admonished to do 편안한 호흡 (*pyeonanhan hoheup*, comfortable breathing) (Do, 2007, p. 70).

Finally, *danjeon* breathing is usually the preferred breathing method found in meditation practices in Korean martial arts.

***Danjeon* breathing is often part of meditation practice in Korean martial arts © VSC**

Gulshin and Vertical Vacillation

A very noticeable characteristic of Korean traditional body culture is vertical vacillation—that is, up-and-down motions that give traditional Korean movement a wave-like or bouncy quality.

According to Van Zile: "Throughout most traditional Korean dance there is a persistent alternation between up and down actions" (2001, p. 13). This is most notably "manifest in a continual bending and extending of the knees," sometimes called a knee dance (오금 춤, *ogeum chum*) but may also manifest as a shoulder dance (어깨 춤, *eokkae chum*) (Van Zile, 2018, p. 100). This bouncing of the shoulders is reminiscent of "the way warriors used to move while riding their horses across the plains" (File, 2013, p. 18).

A core characteristic of Korean body culture is 굴신 (*gulshin*, extension and contraction), which occurs both subtly and overtly. The subtle expression of *gulshin* occurs through *danjeon* breathing that causes the body to expand and the spine to lengthen with each in-breath (Van Zile, 2018, p. 100). The overt expression occurs in the limbs. The extension and contraction of joints is known as 오금질 (*ogeumjil*, the bending motion of the inside of the joint, such as the back of the knee). This results in 물결질 (*mulgyeoljil*, a wave-like movement) when stepping, which is noticeable in Korean dance as well as martial arts such as taekkyeon and taekwondo.

Stepping in Korean traditional dance may be characterized by a bounciness, described as 반동 (*bandong*), which is a rebound effect where the foot seems to bounce off the floor while stepping. In taekkyeon's basic stepping, known as 품밟기 (*pumbalbgi*), practitioners conspicuously extend and contract the knees with each step. The result is akin to *bandong* in dance. In ITF-style taekwondo, stepping is also accomplished through a knee-spring motion (Choi, 2019, p. 42) that results in a wave-like step described in Korean as 활등파도 (*hwaldeungpado*, a wave like the back of a bow) (Choi, 1990, p. 195) and in English as

"sine-wave motion" (Choi, 2019, p. 42); Kukki/Olympic taekwondo also uses *ogeumjil* while "bouncing on the balls of the feet" (Kil, 2006, p. 54). Korean martial arts historian Kimm He-Young concurs, saying that the wave motions in ITF taekwondo and the hopping motions in Kukki/Olympic taekwondo "come from the same type of traditional Korean body culture" (2013, p. 81).

Although *ogeumjil* and *gulshin* are not specifically discussed in grappling martial arts such as ssireum and hapkido, the *gulshin* principle of expanding and contracting is relevant during the pushing and pulling movements that are characteristic of grappling and throwing movements.

Three-beat Rhythm

Korean traditional music generally follows a triple rhythm with a downbeat start and upbeat cadence (Sheen, 2013). This is echoed in Korean traditional dance:

> Movement phrases are choreographed in three-beat units, and underlying musical pulses are typically further subdivided into three units of three. This triple-meter emphasis frequently ties in with the verticality [i.e., vertical vacillation] and suspension: the rising action that leads to a brief suspension on the first two pulses and a slight accent at the end of the second pulse just before the downward release on the third pulse. (Van Zile, 2001, p. 14)

The basic movements in some Korean traditional martial arts are also practiced on this three-beat rhythm. For instance, one can notice a three-beat rhythm in the sine-wave motion of ITF taekwondo techniques: an initial relaxation, followed by the rising of the body that corresponds to the "brief suspension" referred to by Van Zile, then dropping of the body mass into the technique—in other words, a "downward release." Taekkyeon's basic movements also follow a three-beat pattern. The *pumbalbgi* consists of a triangular stepping pattern (정삼각형 품밟기, *jeongsamgakhyeong pumbalbgi*) where the practitioner steps alternately on the three corners of the triangle, keeping to the rhythm of traditional Korean music.

Taekkyeon is often performed to the accompaniment of Korean percussion music. Note the drummer at the bottom left of the photo
© Hwang In-mu

While three-beat rhythms are used during basic technique training, during actual sparring there is usually no strict adherence to a particular rhythm as this will inevitably telegraph one's intentions to one's opponent.

Kinetic Chaining

Kinetic chaining refers to the "sequential flow of movement from one body part to an adjacent body part, and it is most often initiated visibly with the breath" (Van Zile, 2018, pp. 308–307). This applies to Korean dance:

> Even when there is a small movement in a peripheral body part, such as a subtle, almost pulsing action in

> the wrist, the movement does not occur in isolation. It is initiated with an inhalation originating in the torso that vertically lengthens the spine, lifts the shoulders, and propels energy and movement through the entire length of the arm before "resulting" in the wrist action. (Van Zile, 2018, p. 307)

In Korean dance, "movement begins centrally and progresses sequentially to peripheral body parts," and according to Van Zile, "the sequential passing of movement from the center of the body outward … *needs* to occur in order to perform these actions in a Korean way" (2018, p. 307). This is different from, for example, Japanese *noh* (能) dance, where the entire torso and limb often move as a single unit (Van Zile, 2008, p. 85).

Korean dancers extending their arms by means of kinetic chaining © ShareAlike 2.0 Generic License

Kinetic chaining is also part of the power generation in many Korean martial art techniques, where proper technique often uncoils in a whip-like fashion either from the floor or the body center (i.e., *danjeon*) to the peripheral body parts—and the accumulated kinetic energy is transferred into the target as an impulse. The term 채찍질 (*chaejjikjil*, whip motion) is sometimes used to describe this; in some circles the term 발경 (*balgyeong*, an emanation of power) is used, a concept also found in Chinese internal martial arts (cf. 發勁, *fājìn*).

Beautiful Curves

An aesthetic feature of Korean dance and many Korean martial arts is curved lines, rather than specifically circular motions on the one hand or obligatory straight lines on the other. That the motions follow a curved trajectory rather than a rigidly straight trajectory is in part the result of kinetic chaining. However, it is also due to a Korean aesthetic sentiment that favors curves. The Korean term 곡선미 [曲線美] (*gokseonmi*, curved beauty) exemplifies this notion. Not only is a curved line considered beautiful, but Koreans also view curved lines as "natural."

The author performs a twisting kick—a technique mostly found in Korean martial arts. The twisting kick follows a curved trajectory toward its target © VSC

In Korean traditional dance the shoulders may be somewhat rounded and the chest slightly concave and when the arms are extended sideways, combined with the long sleeves that are typical of traditional dance costume, a quality reminiscent of a crane with its wings open is achieved. Not surprisingly, cranes—with their long curvaceous necks and wings—are a favorite subject in traditional Korean art and they also inspire Korean traditional movement disciplines.

As a result of *gumshil* and *ogeumjil*, natural curved lines are also noticeable in the wave-like stepping motions (물결질, *mulgyeoljil*) in Korean dance and martial arts. Furthermore, the use of kinetic chaining in Korean traditional dance results in

the coiling and uncoiling of arms into naturally curved motions. Similarly, Korean martial arts tend to utilize whip-like movements (채찍질, *chaejjikjil*) with kicks and strikes uncoiling in a snappy kinetic chain, rather than parts of the body moving as a single unit. Movements may also be characterized as arcs and spirals.

Counterbalanced Motions

Korean traditional dance movements express in a balanced, or rather counterbalanced, way. For example, one of the most foundational movements in Korean dance is a motion of the arms called 허리감기사위 (*heorigamgisawi*, waist coiling). At the start of the movement, one hand is at the front of the body with the palm facing up as if cradling the *danjeon*, while the opposite hand is at the same height at the back of the body. The knees are together and they bend slightly in preparation for *gumshil.* The movement commences with inhalation from the *danjeon* and the synchronized flexing of the knees and uncoiling of the arms to the sides; sequentially with the outbreath, the knees start to bend again (*ogeumjil*) and the arms fold up again so that the hand that was in front is now at the back, and vice versa. Such a counterbalance need not be a symmetrical inversion as in the example above, but could involve different parts of the body, visualized asymmetrically, for instance the raising of the left foot counterbalanced with the extension of the right arm. Similar counterbalanced motions are also noticeable in traditional Korean martial arts. Taekkyeon's *pumbalbgi* is often performed while doing 활개 흔들기 (*hwalgae heundeulgi*, waving the "wings," i.e., arms) from side to side. Another iconic technique that features such counterbalance is called 활개 돌리기 (*hwalgae dolligi*, rotating the wings), where the arms alternately rotate in outward circles so that when the one hand is in a high position, the other hand is in a low position. Another common example in many martial arts is the "pulling hand" while punching or striking. As one arm extends toward the target, the other arm is pulled back, often to the hip.

A taekkyeon practitioner performs a leg grab and shoulder push technique on an opponent—a practical application of the counterbalance principle © Hwang In-mu

In martial arts, these counterbalanced motions often have a practical function. First, as a literal counterbalance. For instance, in kicking, the arms are frequently brought in the opposite direction than the trajectory of the kick to serve as a counterweight so the momentum of the kick does not throw the practitioner off balance. Second, counterbalanced motions may also have tactical application, for instance the "pulling hand," referred to above, may be used as an actual grab and pull of the opponent while attacking with the opposite hand. An example in taekkyeon is a toppling technique known as 발회목잡고 어깨잽이 (*balhoemokjabgo eokkaejaebi*, leg grab and shoulder push); as the name suggests, the practitioner pushes the opponent's shoulder with one hand, while pulling their opposite leg with the other hand in order to make them fall. Many ssireum techniques work in a similar fashion, for instance the 뒷무릎치기 (*dwitmureup chigi*, back of the knee attack), where the ssireum fighter pulls the back of the knee of his opponent while pushing the opponent's upper body to cause them to fall.

In both the martial arts and Korean dance, these counterbalanced motions are often interpreted philosophically as a manifestation of 음양 (*eumyang*, *yin-yang*) (Yoo, 2007, pp. 77, 80), a concept derived from Daoist cosmology.

Modern Taekwondo's Evolution Away from Traditional Korean Body Culture

Taekwondo is a Korean martial art with strong links to Japanese karate (Moenig and Kim, 2016). However, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s within Kukki/Olympic style and in the 1970s and 1980s within ITF style, taekwondo underwent important changes to its movement characteristics, making it characteristically significantly different than karate and undeniably Korean (Kimm, 2013; Moenig, 2017; Uhm, 2017). Ethnographically, it would be appropriate to say that taekwondo is a Korean martial art that embodies the movement characteristics associated with traditional Korean body culture. Taekwondo emphasizes an upright posture and *danjeon* breathing, including *gihap.* Taekwondo's stepping and sparring footwork demonstrates noticeable vertical vacillation due to *gulshin* and *ogeumjil.* Many of taekwondo's movements, and especially its kicks, are streamlined according to open kinetic chain methodology resulting in curved trajectories, with increased acceleration and force generation. Counterbalanced motions are also inherent to taekwondo 품새 (*pumsae*, forms) and used functionally as counterweight motions to maintain dynamic balance during sparring or tactically as grabs during combat.

However, over the last few years taekwondo's movement characteristics have started to change. This is especially the case for Kukki/Olympic style taekwondo. First, competition sparring rules and the incorporation of new technology have changed the way taekwondo techniques are performed. Previously, points were awarded for techniques that were properly executed and had significant power (Moenig, 2017, p. 101). Of course, this required a subjective quality judgment by officials (Moenig, 2017, p. 102). To reduce the problem of judge subjectivity and "to meet certain IOC demands for scoring accuracy and transparency" (Moenig, 2017, p. 103), an electronic body protector that functions as an automatic scoring system, known as the Protector Scoring System (PPS), was introduced. While the PPS makes registering contact with the opponent for scoring purposes more objective, it also allows for much lighter impact techniques to score points and does not differentiate between "proper" taekwondo technique and simply any movement that triggers the PPS. In the past, the competitor had to accelerate their movement appropriately by means of an open kinetic chain in order deliver a powerful technique. Now, competitors can merely extend their leg toward the electronic target area, with little concern for producing much power. Thus, the earlier movement characteristics of a kinetic chain and resulted curved lines are disappearing from many of the new techniques in competition sparring. Since the introduction of the PSS, competition taekwondo has changed dramatically, resulting in a taekwondo that is distinctly different from what was practiced before (Capener, 2019).

Second, it has become popular to incorporate pop music (e.g., K-pop) and urban dance into taekwondo demonstrations, which may result in even greater changes to taekwondo's

kinetic characteristics. Traditional Korean body culture echoes the traditional Korean music that follows a pentatonic scale and triple meter. However, contemporary Korean pop culture incorporates "rap music and hip-hop sensibilities to South Korean popular music" (Lie, 2012, p. 349). Some of the kinetic characteristics of hip-hop dance include physical tension or tightness and "movements that startle the viewer with angularity and asymmetry," "sensual energy in a refined form or raw expressiveness," accents of popping of isolated body parts or making parts of the body "'work' in a fragmented manner," "intimations of complex meter," and so on (West, 1992; Defrantz, 2004), all of which are antithetical to many of the movement characteristics associated with traditional Korean body culture. Not surprisingly, the intrinsic character of the taekwondo techniques displayed in demonstrations that incorporate K-pop are often altered to fit with the music, resulting in some movements that are without any practical combative value (Capener, 2019). Even the *gihap*, which used to have a practical function to tense the body at the moment of impact with the opponent, has become simply a theatrical feature. Taekwondo performers now regularly shout (*gihap*) before performing a technique or well after a technique has finished, rather than it being functionally synchronized with the technique.

Conclusion

Ethnographic notation is one way to preserve an intangible cultural heritage. Toward this goal, this chapter mapped seven movement characteristics that seem to give traditional Korean movement disciplines—dance and martial arts—a uniquely Korean flavor. The identified characteristics are an erect posture or straight spine, *danjeon* breathing, *gulshin* and vertical vacillation, the Korean three-beat rhythm, kinetic chaining, naturally curved lines and motions, and counterbalanced motions. These characteristics are clearly visible in traditional Korean dance and several Korean martial arts such as taekkyeon and taekwondo.

In a globalized world, cultural heritages are increasingly facing the threat of extinction. It may be tempting to look to popular culture to promote these traditions. For instance, traditional Korean martial arts may hope to become more appealing to a younger audience by changing training practices and competition rules and incorporating K-pop music and dance. While such changes may provide exposure to a bigger (and younger) audience, it comes at a cost. In attempts to stay popular, modern taekwondo is in the process of changing its movement characteristics. The result is an evolution away from traditional Korean body culture to something wholly different. While this may be a strategy appropriate for taekwondo, which brands itself as an evolving martial art, martial arts that want to keep their traditional essence should be far more cautious of making changes for the sake of popularity, lest in their attempt at popularization they lose the very characteristics that exemplify their traditional identity.

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Religious and Martial Practice in Chinese Villages: Ritual Aspect of Traditional Chinese Martial Arts

Dr. Ernest Kozin

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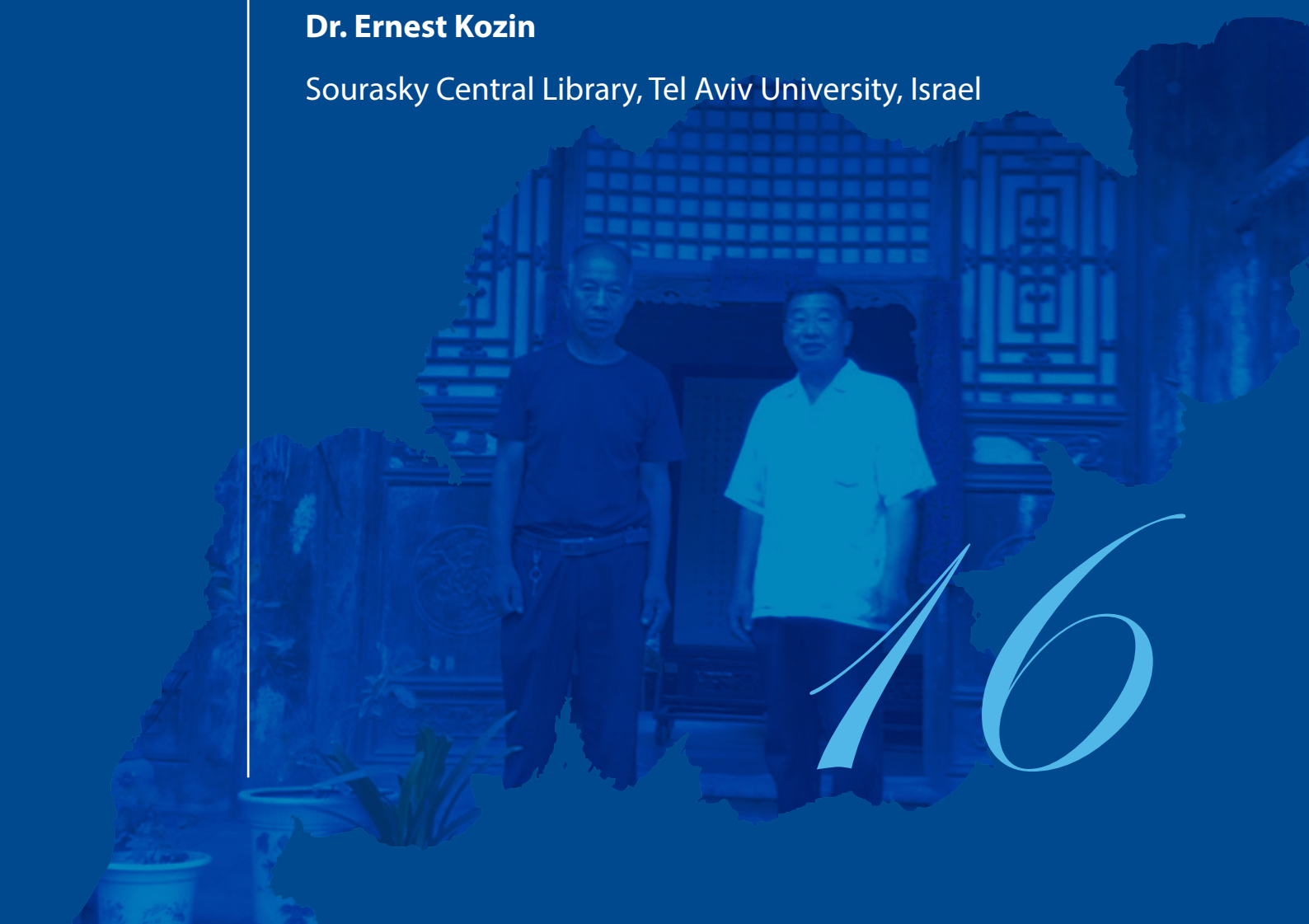

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Introduction

Chinese martial arts present a unique combination of bare-handed and armed fighting with calisthenics, breathing exercises, meditation techniques, and elements of traditional Chinese medicine. It was in the late imperial period of Chinese history (the Ming and Qing dynasties, 1368–1912) that folk hand combat became a multifaceted system with features that go beyond the narrow framework of mere fighting. The surviving textual sources attest that during the Ming–Qing transition period, martial arts were perceived by many practitioners as a religious practice. Daoists and Buddhists alike often turned to hand-combat training in striving to achieve various religious goals, be it spiritual enlightenment or immortality. However, as recently discovered textual evidence suggests, it was Chinese local religion that disclosed the most intimate relations to martial arts practice.

An inseparable part of Chinese culture, the Chinese hand-combat tradition was (and still is) deeply rooted in rural life, and manifested itself in a particularly vivid way in the religious customs and ritualistic activities of the Chinese village. Chinese local religion, a highly intricate system in its own right, contains an evident martial element. For example, it is strongly believed that the employment of direct physical force against malevolent supernatural powers is not only possible but is sometimes as effective as any other ritual protective means, such as *zhou* (spells) and *fu* (talismans). The folk belief that humans can best evil spirits with their bare hands is reflected in literary sources as early as the fourth century CE. A story included in *Soushen ji (In Search of the Supernatural)*, compiled by Gan Bao (280?–336), is one example. According to the tale, while staying overnight in a haunted pavilion, a certain Song Daxian was challenged by an evil spirit to a hand-combat match, and managed to kill the ghost using a grappling technique:

> The ghost departed, only to return sometime later. "Shall we now engage in hand-combat?" it said. "Very good," replied Daxian, and ere these words were uttered, the ghost stood before him, but was grasped so tightly about the loins that it only could cry in distress "I am dying!" Daxian proceeded, eventually killing it. The next morning, he saw that it was an old fox. (slightly modified after De Groot, [1910] 1964: 595–596)

Gan Bao's story can be considered an early example of exorcism performed by means of martial arts. Even today, religious ceremonies and celebrations are accompanied by groups of martial artists who demonstrate various hand-combat routines in temple courtyards, purifying the sacred ground from evil spirits. Martial deities such as Xuanwu (Dark Warrior), Sun Wukong, Guan Yu, Jingang Shen (Diamond God), Li Nezha, and many others are regarded by villagers as particularly powerful when invoked in the course of exorcizing rituals; these rituals include various kinds of traditional weaponry, such as swords, halberds, spears, and so on. Local temples often serve as popular training grounds for martial arts instructors and their disciples.

The relationship between local religion and martial practice during the late imperial era (i.e., in the time period when the traditional martial arts took their present shape),

deserves particular attention, as the problem of violence in premodern China is becoming an important subject of research in the fields of historical, anthropological, and religious studies. An increasing number of scholarly publications (see, e.g., Naquin, 1981; Esherick, 1987; Katz, 1995; Ter Haar, 1998; Shahar, 2008; Boretz, 2011; Meulenbeld, 2015) show growing scientific interest in the interactions of martial (which is violent by definition) and religious (which at times can look warlike and bloody) practice in late imperial China.

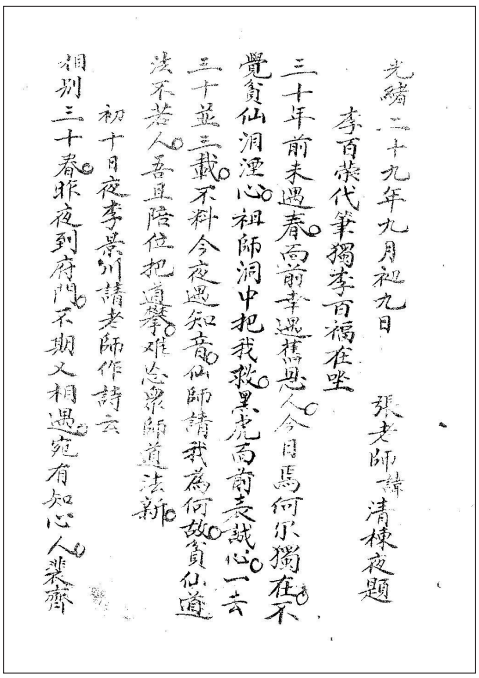
Henan Manuscript and Its Author

In addressing topics like that mentioned above, scholars are often impeded by a major methodological problem—namely, the lack of reliable documentary evidence. The hand-combat techniques evolved among the illiterate strata of the population and rarely came in sight of the Chinese educated elite as a subject worthy of reference. Hence, in light of such insufficiency of original data, the recently discovered manuscript discussed in this essay may shed light on the interrelations between Chinese martial arts and local religion in rural North China.

Dating from the late Qing period (1644–1912), the manuscript originated in one of the villages that surround the Shaolin monastery, the renowned Buddhist martial arts center in Henan Province. As preliminary textual analysis shows, the discovered manuscript is a fragment of a martial arts encyclopedic guidebook that, presumably, is no longer extant. Due to the references scattered through the text, it can be suggested that the book's title was *Hand Combat Methods of Combined Lineages: Pugilistic Manual* (*Quanfa tongzong pu*). It is hard to date the *Manual* with precision: the dates in the surviving fragment cover the period from 1885 to 1907.

A major portion of the Henan manuscript includes a table of contents to the lost *Manual* and a series of prefaces to it. According to this part of the text, the *Manual* contained detailed information on various martial art styles, most of which were and still are widely known and practiced in northern China. The book was illustrated with depictions of fist and weapon techniques, as well as with anatomical and acupuncture diagrams. It also featured rhymed formulas, poems, theoretical discourses on the traditional philosophical categories such as *qi*-energy, *yin yang*, and *wu xing* (Five Phases). Thus, as new textual evidence, the Henan manuscript provides unique primary material for in-depth investigation of martial training in late imperial northern China.

Even more significantly, the manuscript reveals the intimate relationship between martial and religious practice in Chinese villages. Chinese martial arts have evolved within a unique cultural frame and in constant counteraction with folk ritualistic activities. Cursory examination of the structure of the manuscript gives a good indication of this. The opening part of the text presents a collection of spirit-writing accounts, incantations, and meticulous descriptions of violent exorcism ceremonies coupled with images of protective magic charms. Similar charms were employed by the Boxers (Yihetuan) in invulnerability rituals during the late 19th-century uprising. Furthermore, the principal martial arts teacher and protagonist of the entire work also functions as an active participant of spirit-



The title page of the Henan manuscript © The Shaolin Monastery

Two of the four talismans attached to the manuscript © The Shaolin Monastery

writing séances, possibly as a spirit medium. This singular phenomenon demonstrates another type of link between popular beliefs and traditional martial arts.

The entire manuscript revolves around the figure of Li Jingchuan (1835–?), a native of Xiaoxiang village, Gongyi County, Henan Province. The text tells us that Li was an experienced martial artist who studied hand combat under the tutelage of three masters, two of whom were members of a local sect named Huanglian Jiao (Yellow Lotus Teaching). Later in life Li Jingchuan engaged in collecting the old martial art treatises and, eventually, compiled the voluminous *Pugilistic Manual.*

During the summer and autumn of 2016, I made several trips to the rural districts of Henan Province, aiming to find the descendants of the people mentioned in the manuscript and learn about the martial tradition and religious life of the area. My principal informant in Xiaoxiang village was Mr. Li, vice-chair of the *Li Family Genealogy* (*Lishi jiapu,* 2009) editorial board and, by a fortunate coincidence, a direct descendant of Li Jingchuan. According to Mr. Li, in the past decade the local Li family has put much effort into restoring the old family buildings and studying the history of the clan. This communal activity is likely what has made the name of Li Jingchuan known to the present-day villagers: Mr. Li easily found it in the *Genealogy* among the representatives of the 14th generation, and he guided me to the house where the master once lived. Among various family relics that were shown to me, the only extant object from Li Jingchuan's training utensils was a 110 lb (50 kg) lifting stone weight used for developing physical strength and stamina.

Li Jingchuan's lifting stone weight © Gili Kozin-Ulmer

Two direct descendants of Li Jingchuan at the entrance to his house © Gili Kozin-Ulmer

According to my informants, from the late Ming and through the Qing times the representatives of the wealthy Li clan maintained a reputation for local philanthropy and were active promoters of traditional Confucian education. As one of the elderly Li clan members recalled, referring to his parents' words, at the end of the Qing and throughout the Republican period the Li family ran a local school for village children and a yard for martial arts training. Li Jingchuan, who, according to his followers' accounts, "from his youth learned Confucian books … but was constantly worried about the meaningless writings that are devoid of practical usage," probably had only a limited education.

Vestiges of Li Jingchuan's training yard © Gili Kozin-Ulmer

Martial Rituals and Martial Arts

A unique feature of the Henan manuscript is that it provides a singular example of religious and martial writings blended together in a hand-combat manual. The manuscript includes accounts of three spirit-writing séances that took place in 1903 and 1904 in a village in the northeastern part of Henan Province. The practice of spirit-writing, which can be traced back to the Song dynasty (960–1279), occupies a central place in Chinese popular religion. It originated as a folk divination ritual and gradually gained popularity in literati circles. During the séance, the spirit of a divine being (god, immortal, deified folk hero, etc.) is believed to possess the medium, who then speaks or writes for the purposes of healing, prediction, or moral instruction. Additionally, the séance requires the presence of a reader who reads and calls out the characters traced by the medium on a surface covered with sand or flour, and a scribe who records the revealed text on paper (Jordan and Overmyer, 1986, p. 37).

As it follows from the text of the manuscript, Li Jingchuan was an active participant in spirit-writing séances, possibly in the capacity of a medium. In the course of each séance, the ritual attendees, most of whom were licentiates—representatives of the lowest rank in the elite literati class—invoked the spirit of Zhang Qingdong, the deceased boxing mentor of Li Jingchuan. One of the spells described in the Henan manuscript that was "bestowed by the immortal teacher Zhang" during the séance reads:

> The Four Great Celestial Generals, the Eight Great Vajrapani, the Five Auspicious Sacred Spirits, the Thirteen Great Kings, the Iron-bodied Li Cunxiao, come together to protect me so that ghosts will not invade my body. On behalf of the Most High Lord Lao, carry out my order immediately, in accordance with the law!

Most of the divinities mentioned in the spell are warrior gods or deified martial folk heroes. "Four Great Celestial Generals" may refer to the four main Thunder Gods, whereas "Five Auspicious Sacred Spirits" probably corresponds to the Divine Kings of the Five Quarters. Both groups are venerated as commanders of the spiritual armies that are summoned in protective rituals (Meulenbeld, 2015, pp. 68–69). Vajrapāṇi (Chinese: Jingang shen) is a Buddhist martial deity. He is portrayed as a mighty, ferocious-looking warrior, wielding a *vajra* (*jingang*) or thunderbolt. Vajrapāṇi appears alone or as two guardian spirits standing on each side of temple entrance. At the Shaolin monastery, this god had been worshipped as provider of physical might (Shahar, 2008 pp. 37–42). "Thirteen Great Kings" most likely refers to the heroic Thirteen Grand Guardians (*Shisan Tai Bao*). These were thirteen valiant warriors who served the warlord Li Keyong in the capacity of adopted sons. Li Keyong (856–908) was the military governor in northern Shanxi during the late Tang dynasty (618–907) and the father of Emperor Zhuangzong of Later Tang (923–937).

Li Cunxiao (fl. 894) was one of the Thirteen Grand Guardians, an adopted son of Li Keyong. Following intrigues and rivalry between another adopted son of Li Keyong, Li Cunxiao joined his father's enemies, but having been defeated by Li Keyong he was imprisoned and executed as a rebel. It is remarkable that a man who openly violated the

fundamental principles of filial piety and loyalty turned into a folk hero and a deity invoked by Confucian literati. Apparently, it was Li Cunxiao's martial prowess and his reputation for being a ruthless fighter that appealed to martial arts practitioners. His challenge during a siege exemplifies this:

> [After] having arrived, Li Cunxiao with five hundred chosen horsemen surrounded the Bian encampment and shouted: "We ... are come to get some wounds. We shall eat the flesh of your plump soldiers; command, then, the fattest ones to come out and fight." (Sima [1084] 2001, p. 258:6)

Such bravado was not only intended to frighten the enemy into submission. As Meir Shahar has shown, ritual cannibalism was actually practiced in early China as a sanctioned form of political violence, when Zhou warriors dismembered and ate their defeated enemies. Throughout Chinese history, including the relatively recent Cultural Revolution period, eating the flesh of rivals would serve to humiliate the prostrate adversaries, and at the same time to solidify the victory and strengthen the ties of brotherhood between the warriors (Shahar, 2015, pp. 9–12).

Li Cunxiao's epithet "iron-bodied" (*tieti*) is also significant, for it might indicate that the incantation was a part of the invulnerability technique known as the Iron-Cloth Shirt (*tiebu shan*). Incorporated into martial arts practice during the late imperial period, this technique is still widespread in modern hand-combat schools under the generic name "hard *qi*-cultivation" (*ying qigong*). The method involves pounding the body with gradually increasing intensity with implements of varying hardness (wooden pestles, baked bricks, metal rods, etc.), accompanied by breathing exercises. It was traditionally believed that certain results could be achieved after several years of uninterrupted training.

In the second half of the late imperial period, the Iron-Cloth Shirt technique was adopted by members of various rebellious millenarian groups, such as the Boxers. The sectarians enhanced their Iron-Cloth Shirt practice with an appeal to the supernatural powers for assistance. Martial deities and deified folk heroes invoked by means of the talismans and incantations were believed to descend unto the person, possessing his body and making it impenetrable to swords, spears, and even bullets. As a result, the desired effect was expected to manifest after a much shorter period of training, sometimes only two or three days after the initiation ritual. In such cases, beating the body with hard and sharp objects became, in essence, a test of religious devotion rather than a routine strengthening exercise (Esherick, 1987, p. 106).

In the text of the Henan manuscript, Li Jingchuan is extolled as a skillful martial artist and an indefatigable tutor. The 26 hand-combat styles mentioned in the text illustrate the extensive fighting expertise of Li Jingchuan, and at the same time reflect the diversity of martial arts practice in rural North China in the late imperial era. Taking into consideration the time frame given by the *Manual*, one notes that the Guanxu reign (1875–1908) witnessed a conspicuous proliferation of bare-handed combat styles. In the current essay, due to the format limitations, I refer only to the styles most relevant for the main topic of this discussion.

Fuzi Quan (Father-and-Son Fist)

This technique, commonly known today as Meihua Quan (Plum Flower Fist) is still widely practiced in rural North China. The name "Plum Flower" refers to the style's core characteristic—a training routine that unfolds along five straight lines radiating outward from a center point. The style received its name from the flower-like footwork trajectory and the five basic stances that correspond to the flower's five petals.

With regard to the epithet *fuzi* (Father and Son), according Meihua Quan lore it was added in order to emphasize the way of transmitting hand-combat skills exclusively via parental lineage within a single family. Meihua Quan was practiced in Henan Province as early as the 17th century, as it follows from a surviving manual titled *Introduction to Martial Practice* (*Xiwu xu,* 1742), authored by Yang Bing (b. 1672). By the 19th century, Meihua Quan appeared in Qing official documents not only as a hand-combat school but also as a religious society with its own doctrine and distinct spiritual practice. While some members of this association, called the Meihua Quan Jiao (Plum Flower Fist Teaching), engaged in martial arts, others functioned as healers and rituals masters specializing in incense-burning rituals (Zhou, 2015, p. 12). On a field-research trip in October 2016 to the rural areas of Guangzong County, Hebei, I had the opportunity to observe one such ceremony, which took place in the ancestral temple of a local branch of the Plum Flower Society. The temple itself was a tiny, dark room in the private house of the chief master of the Meihua Quan hand-combat school. On the antique altar, several incense burners were placed in front of a row of tablets featuring the names of the Meihua patriarchs. The incense ash piled up in the burners; as I came to understand later, the ash was intentionally left there for ritual use. Alongside the chief master, an elderly person participated in the ceremony, which looked rather simple: incense was lit and the two men kneeled before the altar, chanting in low voices.

After the ceremony, when I produced some cash from my pocket to make a symbolic donation (which was a rather small amount of money, but, as my Chinese guide told me afterwards, by local standards seemed an oddly broad gesture), the elderly man informed me that there was no need for charity. However, he added, if I wished, he would be glad to perform a healing ritual for my family as a token of gratitude for my generosity. He then asked the age of the eldest person in my household. I told him that this was my mother-in-law, who at that time was nearly 80 years old. Picking up and lighting a bundle of thin incense sticks, the old man performed *kow-tow* before the altar, holding the incense in both hands, and briefly recited mantras. When the chanting was over, he stood up and examined the smoldering incense stub from all sides. Pointing to a number of glowing sticks, he informed me that my mother-in-law had recently been experiencing problems with her stomach, knees, and cervical spine—symptoms which, taking into consideration her age were quite predictable, but still, surprisingly accurate. If I understood correctly his further explanation, the incense sticks represented the internal organs and various parts of the human body. The ritual master estimated the functions of the

The altar in the Meihua Quan Society's old temple © Gili Kozin-Ulmer

organs in accordance with the characteristics of the corresponding incense sticks.

As the ritual was over, I prepared to leave the temple—at which point the elderly sectarian approached me and said: "I can tell that currently you are having a problem as well; namely, financial difficulties. Is this true?" This was, obviously, true. "Stop spending money carelessly and wealth will come to you." And with this, he handed me a tiny envelope of yellow paper with hand-written characters that read "the holy medicine" (聖藥). "This is the remedy for your mother-in-law. Let her put a thimbleful of this into her tea every morning for ten days, and she will surely get better!" The envelope apparently contained the ashes of incense taken from the altar.

One of the altars in the Meihua Quan Society's new temple © Gili Kozin-Ulmer

Erlang Danshan Quan (Erlang Carrying Mountain Fist)

The name of the next technique mentioned in the manuscript, *Erlang danshan quan* (Erlang Carrying Mountain Fist), is derived from the popular story "Erlang Carries Mountains and Chases the Sun." The myth tells how a hero named Erlang, carrying mountains on a shoulder pole, chased superfluous suns that had been scorching the Earth. Having caught the suns, Erlang subdued them by pressing down on them with the mountains. Evidently inspired by the impressive iconographic image of this feat of strength, martial arts adepts used it for the description of a hand-combat technique. The strike with both hands stretched horizontally in opposite directions recalled in the practitioner's imagination the unbreakable shoulder pole of the mighty hero Erlang. Such a powerful mental picture, quite aside from its mnemonic function, might impart additional psychological charge to the performance of the technique, increasing its efficacy. One might speculate that this is an element of the visualization techniques adopted from Tantric Buddhism practices. Self-identification with a deity, in any case, was a part of the Daoist meditation techniques designed for fighting evil spirits in exorcizing rituals. This method conceptually differs from the spirit-possession ceremony, which implies that a deity descends from the outside upon the person, replacing the human self and taking control of the body.

Ritual and Martial Legitimacy

In the course of my work on the Henan manuscript, the question arose as to the role of the spirit-writing séances recorded in their entirety in this martial arts manual. In order to answer this question, let us return to the ceremony once again. It seems that Li Jingchuan, an accomplished martial arts teacher, and, possibly, medium, "invites" the spirit of his late, now immortal, teacher Zhang Qingdong. In the course of the séance(s), the late tutor, at the request of his disciple Jingchuan, passes the doctrines, talismans, and spells for bodily protection to the narrow circle of attendees. Significantly, at the beginning of the first séance, the immortal recalls *his own* patriarch-teacher, authorizing by this the linage of succession: the Patriarch – immortal teacher Zhang – Li Jingchuan. Such lineage might have served as incontrovertible proof of the authenticity of the teachings, transmitted by Li Jingchuan to his own students. By virtue of its inclusion in a martial arts manual, the revelations received in the spirit-writing séances went from being instructional to invaluable, sanctified by an immortal teacher: a letter of credence. The *Manual*, handed over to the closest student of master Li, spiritually legitimized and consecrated his right to pass on the teaching. Thus, the spirit-writing records function in the book as documents that certify the genuineness of the lineage of Li Jingchuan. Moreover, hypothetically, these accounts might represent a "genuine transmission" ceremony, documented *in situ*: the spirit, as it seems, in the course of the séance chooses and announces the worthy one.

Conclusion

The amalgam of religion and pugilism became a unique characteristic of Chinese late imperial martial arts. Traditional Chinese hand fighting has been regarded by practitioners as powerful ritual means used for achieving various religious goals. As recently discovered textual evidence suggests, Chinese local religion discloses the most intimate relations to martial arts practice. Hand-combat tradition intersected with rural life, with elements of each borrowed and then incorporated within the other. Surviving textual data and contemporary ethnographic materials suggest that since at least the late imperial era until today, traditional martial arts and Chinese local religion have been entwined practices.

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Safeguarding the History and Culture of Pencak Silat in Singapore: An Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Malays in Singapore

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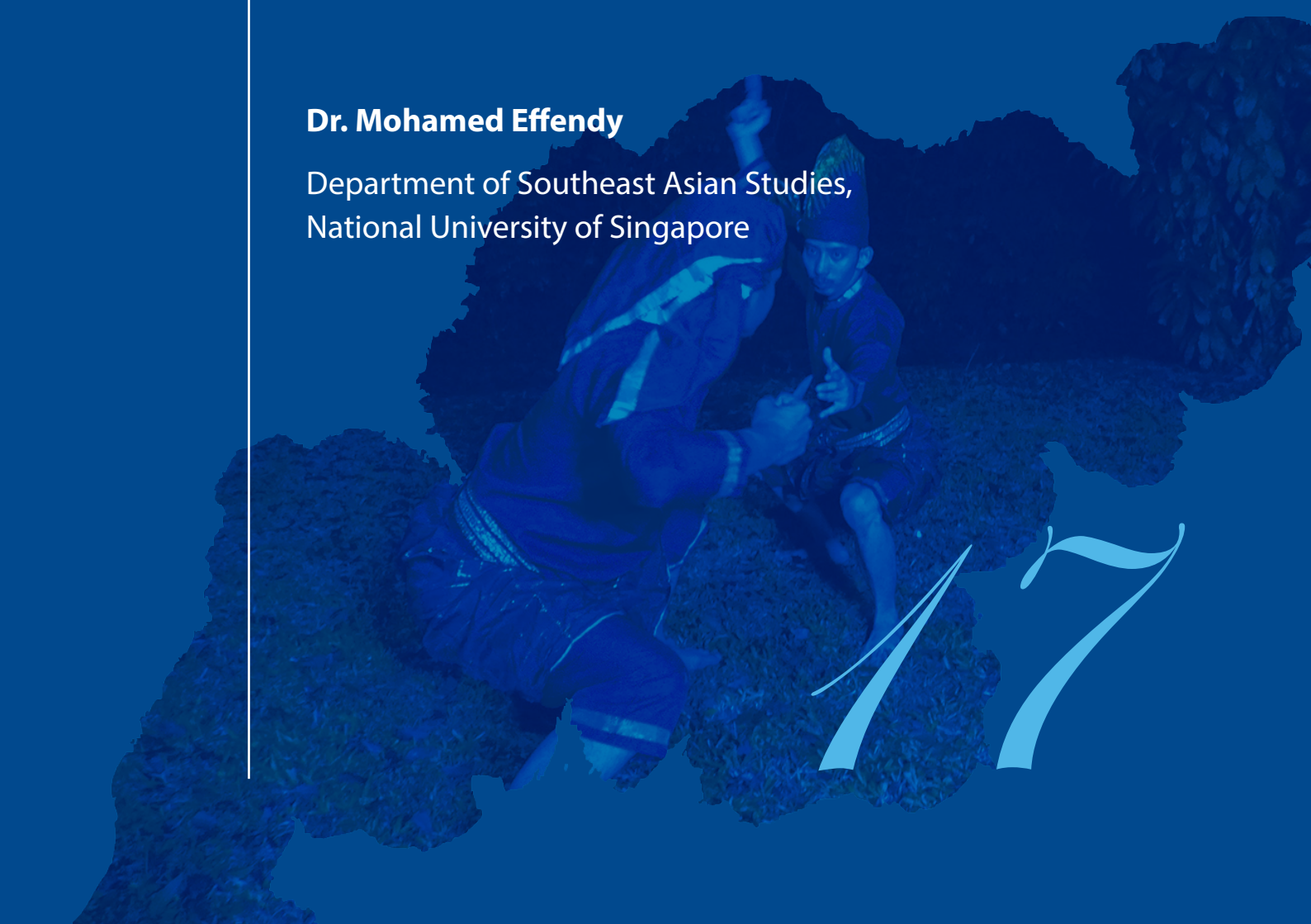

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Introduction

Pencak Silat is an intangible cultural heritage that allows a community to express its culture and, more importantly, is a vehicle that allows practitioners to manifest the best values passed to them by their teachers for the benefit of all in society. It is practiced in countries in Southeast Asia, including Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. However, not much research has been done on the history and culture of Pencak Silat in Singapore. The project entitled "Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage: Documenting and Recording the History, Culture and Memory of Malay Martial Arts Groups in Singapore," led by Dr. Mohamed Effendy from the Department of Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, and sponsored by the National Heritage Board of Singapore, is therefore a timely one. It aims to safeguard the history and culture of Malay martial groups of Singapore by documenting and recording their past and cultural activities. Thus, the project provides the inspiration and backdrop for this paper, which will describe how Pencak Silat connects communities in Singapore to their historical origins. The paper will also analyze how Pencak Silat has contributed to the social and cultural success of the Singapore Malay community today, and lastly, it will examine to what extent Pencak Silat values can be used to further enhance the development of a community.

Maridul Hani bin Hasim showing respect to the badik before entering battle © National Heritage Board (NHB)

Abdul Muiz bin Roslan (standing) disarming and immobilizing Maridul Hani bin Hasim © NHB

Pencak Silat Communities in Singapore: Historical Origins

Traditional Malay stories contain many tales about individuals of great physical and magical prowess. This can be seen in the legend of Badang, a fisherman who gained superhuman strength after he swallowed the vomit of a demon who was stealing his fish (Winstedt, 1938, p. 66). Another legend centers on Hang Nadim, who saved Singapore from attacks by swordfish by placing the trunks of banana trees on the beach (Winstedt, 1938, p. 80). The swordfish were easily killed. These myths also mention that Singapore attracted a powerful prince named Sang Nila Utama from Sumatra, Palembang, who established the royal

court of Singapura (Singapore) (Winstedt, 1938, pp. 54–61). This pattern of attracting men of prowess continued in when Sir Stamford Raffles claimed it as a British trading outpost in 1819 (Skott, 2010, p. 156). Thereafter, many migrants came from throughout the region, especially from Sulawesi, Java, the Sunda Islands, Sumatra, Bawean island, and the Malay Peninsula (Chew, 2013, pp. 37–51). Many of these migrants also happened to be skilled martial artists—*pendekars* or "warriors," a term used to describe a high-level exponent of the art of Pencak Silat. Researchers note that the word *pendekar* is derived from a combination of *pandai* (clever, able) and *akal* (mind) (Wilson, 2015, p. 33n12). The reasons many *pendekars* in the 19th and early 20th centuries came to Singapore from around the region fit an established historical pattern of "men of prowess" coming to Singapore to establish their fame and power, and to acquire followers (Wolters, 1999, pp. 18–23). This makes the work of reconstructing the history of many Pencak Silat groups of Singapore an exciting one; like Badang, Hang Nadim, and Sang Nila Utama, *pendekars* became famous, established a powerful cultural presence, and had many followers.

Upon arriving in Singapore, *pendekars* formed communities and villages, and taught Pencak Silat to many students. It was in these villages that many of the earliest Pencak Silat groups of Singapore took root and expanded, laying the foundations for many of today's groups. Malay villages like Kampong Fernhill (which is now the location of the Shangri-La Hotel near Orchard Road) were locations where training of the silat style of the Seligi Tunggal school, a Baweanese and Bugis form, took place (*Berita Harian*, 1963). In the villages of Bukit Timah was found the Macan Pasrah silat school, which practiced a Sundanese form of the martial art (*Berita Harian*, 1988). Many Bugis silat teachers have resided in the villages of Pasir Panjang since the early 20th century (Guru Andi Mohammad Faisal bin Nordin, August 2018, interview).

By practicing Pencak Silat, many groups connect to their historical and cultural origins and embody the values of their founders. This can be seen in the Amanca Tumasek group, which practices a Bugis silat style that came from the region of Bone, Sulawesi, Indonesia. It was first taught in Singapore by a Bugis named La Singkerru Rukka Karaeng Abdullah in the 19th century. He was an ancestor of Guru Andi Mohammad Faisal bin Nordin, and the descendants that inherited this silat style teach it to students in Singapore to this day. What is often communicated by the head teacher of the group, Guru Andi Faisal, is that practicing it allows the students, many of whom are descendants of Bugis migrants to Singapore, to reconnect to their Bugis heritage and culture and the heritage of the founder of their school.

The students of Amanca Tumasek are encouraged to fight like the founder, who was a brave and fearless *Sulewatang* (meaning "the Regent of the Bugis King" in the Bugis language). More importantly, they are reminded to exemplify the qualities, embodied by the historical founder, of humility, honesty, and fearlessness. In 2019, there were 77 students enrolled in the school (Guru Andi Faisal, August 2019, interview). Looking further into the historical role played by the Sulewatang, Guru Andi Faisal noted:

> In Singapore's history, the Sulewatang assumes a different role. They have to defend their people. As a Sulewatang you must know how to fight, think,

Abdul Muizbin Roslan on the ground deflecting Maridul Hani bin Hasim's badik strike while kicking his throat to immobilize him © NHB

Abdul Muiz bin Roslan showing respect to the badik before entering battle © NHB

> and deal with things. They are the most fearsome people even in Sulawesi. I hope that more research can be done about this and maybe one day we can uncover new things about the Bugis in Singapore that can be useful to further understand Singapore's past. (Guru Andi Faisal, August 2019, interview)

What Guru Andi Faisal says about the Sulewatang resonates in the historical sources. A British report dated June 17, 1826 mentions an encounter the crew of a British ship had with a Chinese individual who asked them for help after his brother had been murdered. There is very little else mentioned in the source about this man, why he approached the crew, and what exactly had happened before he encountered them. Nevertheless, the crew told him to go to Singapore and meet the Resident. However, the Chinese individual said that he felt quite safe as he was accompanied by men belonging to the Chief of the Bugis at Singapore. This led to the crew inferring that the Sulewatang of Singapore had authority over the Bugis in Johore as well (Moor, 1837, p. 264).

The above tale is an important clue as to the role that the Sulewatang played in early 19th-century Singapore. It is probable that the Sulewatang were the main authority that maintained justice in the area. The Chinese individual who encountered the British sailors was probably on his way to see the Sulewatang of Singapore to seek justice. The Sulewatang also played an important role in Sulawesi. According to John Crawfurd, the Sulewatang would become the Bugis king's viceroy when the king went on an expedition or to war (Crawfurd, 1820, p. 13). This level of trust afforded by the regent reflects the powerful position that the Sulewatang was in. Hence, it is no wonder that Guru Andi Faisal found the Sulewatang to be a very good role model for the students.

Apart from the Bugis, as noted above, Baweanese migrants from the island of Bawean, Indonesia, also came to Singapore and established communities in the 19th century (Rahim, 2016; Vredenbregt, 1964). Baweanese silat groups in Singapore trace their origins to Kampong Fernhill where the Seligi Tunggal style was taught. According to Muhamad Irwan bin Muhamad Arsek, the Guru Utama of Bandangan Asli (Malay: "The Original

Dance"), the Seligi style was brought to Singapore by Daeng Omar Daeng Ahmad (a Bugis from Bone) in the early 1920s. Ifi bin Suhoor, his student in the late 1930s, had previously learned Baweanese silat styles on Bawean before coming to Singapore. Because of his abilities, bin Suhoor then became the teacher of the Pencak Silat style of Daeng Omar. He very quickly became famous for his skills and attracted many students in the 1940s, especially after the Second World War. In those post-war years, the social situation in Singapore was very unstable and many people felt unsafe. There was significant unrest and violence as the British Military Administration attempted to bring some form of order (Ng, 2012, pp. 146–170). This resulted in an increase in the popularity of learning martial arts such as Pencak Silat, as this was seen to be a very attractive endeavor for self-defense. At that time, the Seligi style was taught in various locations (*Berita Harian*, 1985). Today it has become the basis of several Baweanese silat schools, such as Seligi Tunggal Angkatan, Benderang Persada, Seligi Tunggal Singapura, Pencak Bawean Dheun, and Bandangan Jati.

Similar to the Bugis silat school, practicing the Baweanese form of Pencak Silat allowed many groups to feel more connected to their historical and cultural origins and embody the values of their founders. This is most apparent in the Pencak Bawean Dheun silat group, whose members practice the silat style to reconnect to their Baweanese historical and cultural origins. Baweanese terms are used and, more importantly, the students are encouraged to "think and move like a Baweanese." This is mentioned by Abdullah Bari bin Makli, the Guru Utama of Pencak Bawean Dheun, in whose view the students who practice Baweanese silat should learn much about Baweanese mannerisms, culture, and customs. He brings students to practice with other Bawean *pendekars* and their students in Johor, Malaysia, and Bawean island; this is a very powerful experience as it solidifies the students' understanding of Baweanese identity and culture. Students also understand the essence of the Bawean silat style through these activities. According to bin Makli, the major characteristic of the Baweanese silat style is that it aims to confuse the opponent: "We don't look at the opponent and we don't initiate the strike. Silat Bawean—its moves, from the head, eyes, legs, hands … they are all involved. The observer may think that we are just dancing but this very deceiving" (Abdullah Bari bin Makli, 2018, interview).

Many of the silat teachers of other schools based on the Seligi style, such as Seligi Tunggal Angkatan, Benderang Persada, Seligi Tunggal Singapura, also strive to emulate the historical example of how the founders of the Seligi style taught their students and embody their values, especially when it comes to training the students. The teachers promote values of discipline, courage, and steadfastness, values that Daeng Omar Daeng Ahmad and Ifi bin Suhoor embodied when they first taught their silat art in Singapore.

For other schools in Singapore, music is used to connect to their historical and cultural origins and embody the values of their founders. This can be seen in the Sunda Pajajaran silat group that practices a Sundanese form of Pencak Silat. Founded by Lek Mokti in the 1950s, the group uses Sundanese gamelan music as a means to reconnect to their historical and cultural origins (*Straits Times*, 1987). Various gurus of the school mentioned in interviews that Sundanese culture is preserved through silat practice and performance. The late Lek Mokti taught that the silat style of Sunda Pajajaran must always be performed

with gamelan music or "jaipongan." When asked why this is so, his son Moksin bin Mokti answered: "We move as one with the music, we display not just the silat but the totality of Sundanese culture. Silat is just one part of it" (Moksin bin Mokti, 2019, interview).

How Pencak Silat Has Contributed to the Social and Cultural Success of the Singapore Malay Community Today

In this section, I will analyze how certain silat groups have contributed to the social and cultural success of the community by crafting solutions to issues such as low-income families and high divorce and drug abuse rates (AMP, 2012, p. 68).

Dealing with Unstable Family Relations

In an interview with Ustaz Bahrul Ulum, the Guru Utama of the Si Rumpun Padi silat group, it was noted that Pencak Silat training is used to teach young students important values such as being respectful to parents and being responsible people. Students also learn ethics and morals, and even receive basic instruction in Islamic prayers and religious ablutions. Parents are also involved in the training, and according to Ustaz Bahrul,

> before the end of training I will give a little lecture on ethics and the prayers to honor their parents. This makes the parents happy as they can see that their children are getting good religious education as well as good silat training. Sometimes the parents also join us in training. I tell them instead of waiting for their children for two hours, it's better to join the training as well. My silat school is open to all ages. (Ustaz Bahrul Ulum, 2019, interview)

Hence, for this silat group, the solution to address the problem of unstable family relations is to have the students train with their parents. In this way, all learn the fundamental values of respect, collaborative learning, and the importance of faith in order to strengthen family bonds and promote understanding between parents and children.

Dealing with Drug Abuse

Other silat schools aim for direct intervention in social problems, particularly the problem of drug abuse in the Malay community. This can be seen in the efforts of the Silat Bunga, a silat group formed in 1989 and led by Guru Abdul Rashid bin Muslim. According to bin Muslim, who used to volunteer at drug rehabilitation facilities in Singapore, his students were mostly former drug addicts. Using silat to rehabilitate drug addicts was difficult, as sometimes the students were not really interested to begin with; however, the training caught on and many managed to stay away from drugs as the training made them much

more responsible individuals, and even gave them the physical and emotional strength to break their habit.

Another example of a silat group with the aim of rehabilitating drug addicts can be found in the activities of the Macan Pasrah silat group and their founder, Hamzah Kassim (also known as Pak Amjah). Pak Amjah cared for the community and used his knowledge of silat to help rehabilitate drug addicts and former gangsters in the 1970s.

Muhammad Zaifirrean bin Zainudin (right) disarming Abdul Muiz bin Roslan's keris (left) with his teeth © NHB

Responding to Cultural Loss and Regaining Cultural Pride

Some schools responded to the rapid urbanization of the 1960s to the 1980s in Singapore, by focusing on performing plays in which Malay culture, particularly Malay martial culture, could be demonstrated. This is especially true of the Silat Seni Gayong Pasak silat group, who organized such performances. The leader of the group, the late Haji Hussain Kaslan, aimed to connect his young students to important traditional values associated with the *pendekar*, who embodies qualities such as courage and loyalty, and traditional culture through performing historical forms of Malay opera such as Bangsawan and Sandiwara. The group's work in using Pencak Silat to stem the tide of cultural loss made them a natural choice to showcase Malay culture in several National Day parades in Singapore in the 1960s and 1970s (*Straits Times*, 1971). The group attained and regained much cultural pride as they demonstrated traditional Malay martial arts to local, regional, and international audiences, performing as a state-recognized Pencak Silat group on one of the nation's most important days.

The Extent to Which Pencak Silat Values Can Be Used to Further Enhance the Development of a Community

Enhancing Cultural and Social Values

It can clearly be seen that Pencak Silat is an intangible cultural heritage of the Malays in Singapore, and thus its history and culture must be protected. It is highly culturally diverse; in the face of growing globalization, which often dilutes the strength of local cultures, this unique legacy must be protected. As can be seen in the role that Pencak Silat groups in Singapore play in the transmission and protection of unique histories and cultures, their efforts must be complemented and given greater support.

Many of the Pencak Silat groups have a wealth of knowledge and skills that are transmitted from one generation to the next. This is especially true of Mr. Razali, the Guru Utama of the Kembang Wali silat school. His late father taught him the Central Javanese silat style, and Mr. Razali still remembers what his father said to him about what makes a good *pesilat* (practitioner of Pencak Silat): "To be a good *pesilat*, we must help others first. When we do that, we build our inner strength. If you want to be a good *pesilat*, you must be good and kind to others first" (Razali bin Hassan, 2019, interview). The values that were passed down to Mr. Razali could explain why his predecessors, especially his great grandfather and grandfather, were fearless. According to Mr. Razali, his great grandfather had fought against the Dutch in Java and his grandfather participated in a battle with Japanese forces that took place at Watten Estate. To Mr. Razali, Pencak Silat practice is a powerful medium of transmission of not just culture but also values and characteristics, fearlessness in particular, that must be emulated by descendants. I believe that this is internalized by the community, and could be used to further enhance the social, economic, and cultural development of the community as a whole. In my opinion, once fear of failure is diminished, it can lead to more entrepreneurs, intellectuals, and leaders emerging from the community and contributing to its further development. This can be seen in the case of various successful individuals with backgrounds in Pencak Silat that have achieved success in Singapore as entrepreneurs, medical doctors, and investment specialists. One such example is Sheik Alau'ddin Yaacob Marican, CEO of the Silat Federation of Singapore, who established the Mixed Martial Arts Federation of Singapore (Channel News Asia, 2013). Marican started learning Pencak Silat when he was 15 years old (Sheik Alau'ddin Yaacob Marican, 2019, interview).

Other examples of success are Dr. Saiful Nizam bin Subari, a medical doctor and former president of Silat Seni Gayong PASAK Singapura (Kuchit, 2014), who started learning Pencak Silat when he was 17 years old, and Mr. Sumarleki Amjah, Head of Business Development for a major international food company who also serves as president of the Macan Association, an umbrella organization for six other silat groups in Singapore. Amjah is also the son of Hamzah Kassim (or Pak Amjah) the founder of the Pencak Silat style of Macan Pasrah. He learned silat from his father when he was 10 years old.

Pencak Silat training has made these successful individuals in the community shining examples of what the community can do when the best values of Pencak Silat are internalized. Their tenacity, grit, and discipline are a natural product and outcome of a lifetime of being trained as a *pendekar*.

Enhancing Cultural Development

The Singapore Malay community can also use Pencak Silat to enhance its cultural development. More research could be done by the Pencak Silat groups in the Singapore Malay community to trace the origins of their form of silat and to establish a more comprehensive account of how these forms arrived in Singapore and how, when, and why they have evolved differently here. Professor John Norman Miksic, Emeritus Professor in the Department of Southeast Asian Studies of the National University of Singapore, also

believes that there is something more to silat than meets the eye. According to Miksic, a worthwhile research project would be a comparative study of the many versions of silat in the Malay-Indonesian world, comparing the forms and identifying the original root form. This could be done by studying the different postures, tracing their possible origins and how and why they have been distributed across Southeast Asia (Miksic, 2018, interview).

Conclusion

The paper has described how Pencak Silat connects communities in Singapore to their historical origins. It has also analyzed how Pencak Silat has contributed to the social and cultural success of the Singapore Malay community today, and lastly, it has examined to what extent Pencak Silat values can be used to further enhance the development of a community. More findings await the team as it progresses into the next stage of development as the project expands further into exploring Singapore–Sulawesi historical relations in the 19th and 20th centuries. More research is also needed to analyze how Pencak Silat today has transformed communities in Singapore and beyond. There has been a recent upsurge of interest in the traditional Pencak Silat forms of Southeast Asia among local and international audiences due to the box office success of action movies such as *John Wick*, *The Raid*, and *The Raid 2*, and the increasing popularity of mixed martial arts (MMA). These developments have led to changes in how teachers of traditional martial arts view their styles. The use of locks and ground fighting, and the emphasis on getting a submission are key elements of MMA fights, and this is exciting many teachers of traditional Pencak Silat, who view MMA as an opportunity to resurrect ancient battlefield arts. This could be the basis of future exciting research.

Silat Seni Gayong Pasak silat group on the National Day of Singapore © NHB

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Taekwondo and Peace Studies: A Reconceptualization of the Conflict between Taekwondo's Governing Bodies

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18

Taekwondo's Martial Art and Combat Sport Battle

How taekwondo became a beloved global martial art and Olympic combat sport is a fascinatingly complex story. While it encompasses numerous people, we may better understand it by focusing on two of taekwondo's organizing bodies and their international relations efforts. On one side we have the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF), which was headed by a Republic of Korea (ROK; South Korea) army general who fought ardently for the unification of his divided homeland and wished to preserve its history and culture by propagating it via the martial art he named. Opposite the ITF is the organization now known as World Taekwondo (WT), which was responsible for much of the sport's global popularity and for propelling it to Olympic status.

These groups' differing pedagogies and philosophies have caused practitioners to perform taekwondo distinctively depending on their affiliation, and today we can distinguish the two major styles with little difficulty. The two organizations and their leaders opposed each other for a myriad of reasons, which led to decades of bitter rivalry. Both organizations saw taekwondo as a means by which Korea could rise from the ashes of Japanese occupation and a brutal civil war to forge a new national identity (Johnson, 2018). Both sides loved taekwondo but argued and fought against each other for decades. Now considered the old guard, both have passed on taekwondo's future to a new generation of leaders who sit on either side of the Korean border.

This chapter conceptualizes the ITF–WT conflict anew within a peace studies perspective. For this multidisciplinary, qualitative study, an extensive literature review of ITF and WT styles of taekwondo, both academic and lay, was undertaken to understand the nature of the conflict. Literature for the academic field of peace studies were also reviewed, and the United States Institute of Peace's (USIP) Cycle of Conflict (USIP, n.d.) was used to reframe the ITF–WT conflict. Significant to this research is the fact that until recently the history of taekwondo has been written predominately by WT scholars who have ignored the ITF and its leaders' impact on the international development of taekwondo as a martial art and sport. The ITF–WT conflict has hitherto been framed historically (Moenig, 2017), and little has been said about the soft diplomacy efforts the ROK and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK; North Korea) have undertaken via taekwondo events (Johnson, 2018; Johnson and Vitale, 2018; Johnson and Lewis, 2020). This chapter therefore attempts to provide a counterargument for taekwondo's development by understanding the cantankerous relationship between the ITF and WT. To do so, it offers a new perspective on the conflict that may possibly lay an improved groundwork for taekwondo soft diplomacy efforts between the ROK and DPRK. A peace

Dr. Ron Dziwenka (right) and Dr. John A. Johnson (left) at the first International Academic Conference for Taekwondo (iACT) in Los Cruces, NM in 2015. Dr. Dziwenka and Dr. Johnson are the iACT President and Vice President, respectively © Jason Lopez

studies framework is therefore appropriate as the ITF and WT wish to move toward rapprochement with each other and the two Koreas.

To avoid confusion, 태권도 (McCune–Reischauer: *t'aegwŏndo*) is romanized as "taekwondo," and this spelling will refer to taekwondo both as a martial art and a combat sport—in other words, taekwondo as a whole. For the sake of clarity, the style of taekwondo advocated by the ITF is called "Chang-hon taekwondo" hereafter, while the more sport-oriented style promoted by WT and other ROK-based organizations shall be referenced as "Kukki taekwondo." Korean names are presented with the surname first and written in either the person's preferred spelling or in their most common romanization.

Dr. Ron Dziwenka at the practical session of the International Academic Conference for Taekwondo (iACT) in Los Cruces, NM in 2015 © Jason Lopez

A Brief Introduction to Taekwondo's Governing Bodies and Styles

ROK Major (two-star) General Choi, Hong Hi began creating Chang-hon taekwondo around 1945, but it was not until he coined the word "taekwondo" in 1955 that his practice began to leave its Japanese-inspired roots (Moenig and Kim, 2019). Capener (2016), however, argues convincingly that it was not until the late 1970s when taekwondo began to become distinct from its Japanese progenitors. General Choi nevertheless saw taekwondo as a means to develop Korea's esprit de corps, provide practical hand-to-hand training for his soldiers, and as a source for cultural diplomacy (Choi, 2000).

General Choi would later bring Chang-hon taekwondo, named after his pseudonym, to the DPRK in 1980, a fact that increased the friction between him and taekwondo proponents in the ROK, but ultimately provided means for soft diplomacy (Johnson, 2018). After General Choi's death in 2002, the ITF splintered and by 2020 nearly two dozen Chang-hon taekwondo organizations were in existence. The ITF discussed in this chapter is now headquartered in Vienna, Austria, and operated by DPRK citizens, but it must be emphasized that this organization does not represent all ITF organizations and practitioners.

Chang-hon taekwondo is often referenced erroneously as "North Korean taekwondo," because it is the style of taekwondo practiced in that country. However, General Choi established the ITF in Seoul, ROK, in 1966. Hoping to avoid the eradication of Korean history and culture that nearly occurred during the Japanese

Master Kim, Je-kyoung teaching during the practical session of the 2015 International Academic Conference for Taekwondo (iACT) in 2015. Master Kim was the 1992 Summer Olympic gold medalist in taekwondo in the heavyweight division © Jason Lopez

Master Kim, Byung Chul teaching during the practical session of the 2015 International Academic Conference for Taekwondo (iACT) in 2015. Master Kim was the 1992 Summer Olympic gold medalist in taekwondo in the featherweight division © Jason Lopez

Front row: Master William Howard (ITF world champion; left), Master Kim Je-kyoung (WT; center), and Master Kim, Byung Chul (WT; right). Back row: Grandmaster Greg Jump (Hapkido) and unknown woman. Picture taken during the practical session of the 2015 International Academic Conference for Taekwondo (iACT) in 2015. This event was the first time that ITF and WT masters and world champions taught alongside each other © Jason Lopez

occupation of the Korean Peninsula (1905–45) and the decimation of his beloved country during the Korean War (1950–53), General Choi imbued his martial art with uniquely Korean concepts, thus helping to divorce it initially from its Japanese and Chinese progenitors. For instance, he altered many of the fundamental movements taken from Shotokan karate and created dozens of others, instructed that the techniques should be executed using a type of motion unique to Korean body culture (Lewis, 2017, 2019), and named his forms (codified routines of offensive and defensive movements) after famous Korean people, events, or concepts. In fairness though, much of what he taught physically and philosophically was based upon the Shotokan karate-do he learned as a student in Japan, and a good deal of others assisted him and others in the creation of Chang-hon taekwondo (Capener, 2016; Gillis, 2016; Moenig, 2017).

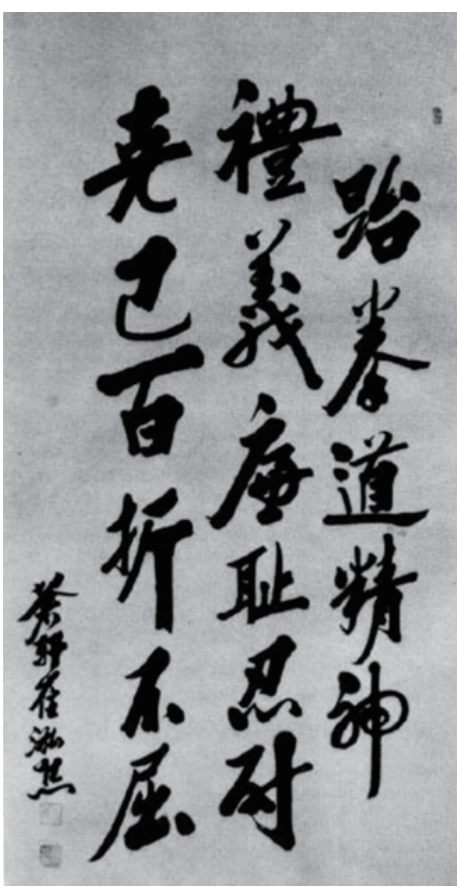
Taekwondo in the ROK today developed very differently and may be best identified as Kukki (national) taekwondo (Moenig and Kim, 2017). The ROK's taekwondo organizations and their leaders, who can be understood as General Choi's ROK opponents, were likeminded in their promotion of Korea but forsook the martial aspects of taekwondo to create a combat sport with Olympic aspirations (Son and Seo, 2017). This style of taekwondo is now an Olympic combat sport and has several governing bodies. The Kukkiwon (national hall), also known as the World Taekwondo Headquarters, is the Kukki taekwondo educational and testing center (i.e., it establishes the testing requirements for Kukki taekwondo black belts and administers black-belt exams). Kukki taekwondo is so named because the Kukkiwon is the association that studies and mandates the practice of this style of taekwondo, as well as being the name of the building in Seoul where that association is headquartered. The Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA) now oversees taekwondo tournaments within the ROK as a Member National Association of WT, but it

was once the world's preeminent taekwondo organization. WT, which was known as the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) until 2017, is a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and oversees numerous types of international taekwondo competitions.

General Choi was an early taekwondo leader in ROK, and it can be said that taekwondo split pedagogically and philosophically in 1965 when he suffered a vote of no confidence in his role as KTA president. He continued developing his military-inspired Chang-hon taekwondo as a martial art while his KTA successors sought to establish a civilian-focused sport. With the assistance of his juniors, General Choi developed his own forms, which he eventually called *tul*; established a new sparring style and rules; and created a taekwondo pedagogy intended to be a means of self-cultivation (Johnson, 2018). His art grew to be fundamentally different from what became Kukki taekwondo. For example, Kukki taekwondo forms (called *poomsae* today) and the two organization's competition rules are radically different.

Of special note here is Dr. Kim, Un-Yong, a former Korean Central Intelligence Agency officer and the first WTF president. He was also president of all three of the aforementioned Kukki taekwondo organizations and is credited for being the architect of Olympic taekwondo. As the president of the WTF, KTA, and Kukkiwon, he helped unify Korean martial artists and groups under the taekwondo name. New Kukki taekwondo forms were created and international competitions established under his direction. However, it would be improper to view the ITF–WT conflict as between only its two leaders, Choi and Kim, as has previously been painted by Gillis (2016), since numerous actors played significant roles in creating taekwondo and the schism between its rival organizations. For brevity's sake, these two men are named only as figureheads of their organizations with their primary differences being General Choi was a martial artist and the heart of Chang-hon taekwondo whereas Dr. Kim was an administrator and the leader of the Olympic (Kukki) taekwondo movement.

Taekwondo diplomacy, which is played out with the ITF associated with the DPRK and WT representing the ROK, has had limited success (Johnson and Lewis, 2020), but success nonetheless where little else has helped ease tension between the warring Koreas. WT seems only interested in engaging in soft diplomacy events with the ITF headquartered in Vienna, which alienates the other ITF organizations, such as the one presided over by General Choi's son, Grand Master Choi, Jung Hwa. While isolating their cooperation with the ITF headquartered in Vienna and staffed by DPRK citizens may benefit taekwondo's role in Korean rapprochement, WT precludes other ITF members' voices from being heard, particularly the individuals General Choi handpicked to preserve the Chang-hon legacy.

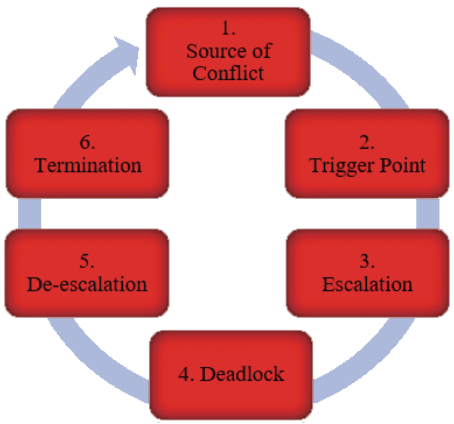


The tenets of taekwondo (courtesy, integrity, perseverance, indomitable spirit, and self-control) written in Hanja (Chinese characters used in written Korean) by General Choi, Hong Hi © Choi, Hong Hi

The Cycle of Conflict

USIP's Cycle of Conflict has six stages: source of conflict, trigger point, escalation, deadlock, de-escalation, and termination. As shown in the right figure conflict is procedural.

By envisioning the ITF–WT conflict within the Cycle of Conflict, a novel pattern in which to understand and approach it emerges. By correlating the ITF and WT relationship with the Cycle of Conflict, the discussion on taekwondo can be reshaped within a peace studies framework. In doing so, this study hopes to likewise reframe taekwondo's soft diplomacy efforts in a similar light. What follows are the definitions of the six stages of the Cycle of Conflict and how taekwondo could be understood to fit within them historically.



The Cycle of Conflict according to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). The diagram depicts a continuation of a conflict, which is likely to continue endlessly unless a sustainable and iterative peace is established (i.e., the termination stage) (USIP n.d.).

A Reconceptualization of the ITF–WT Conflict

The first stage of the Cycle of Conflict is the *source of conflict* (USIP, n.d.). The source of the conflict between the ITF and WT possibly began in the 1940s, decades before either taekwondo organization was formed, when various Korean martial arts leaders were vying for power. However, the source of the ITF–WT conflict is more likely pinpointed to when General Choi sought to maintain taekwondo's martial arts culture (Choi, 2000), while other Korean martial artists wished to develop it into a combat sport with Olympic aspirations starting in the 1950s (Moenig, 2017).

General Choi became the first president of the first KTA in 1959 (Kim, 2013), when "due to his power as a military general and his good relationship with the Rhee Syngman administration (first South Korean president, in office 1948 to 1960), Choi was able to secure the support of the Ministry of Education and the Korea Amateur Sports Association" (Moenig and Kim, 2017, p. 1326). However, this version of the KTA "was collapsing in April 1960" (KTA, 2018). This was not the end of taekwondo's ties to ROK national and international politics, however.

General Choi's loathing of the ROK regime of President Park, Chung-hee (1961–79), who succeeded Rhee, Syngman in a *coup d'état*, probably stemmed from when Choi served on a military court that condemned President Park to death in 1948 for his role in the

Yosu-Sunch'on Rebellion (Nahm and Hoare, 2004, p. 23; Kimm, 2013, p. 157); Choi was conceivably exasperated by Park's dictatorship (Choi, 2000). After being forced to resign from the ROK army, General Choi was given the first ROK ambassadorship to Malaysia (Kimm, 2013, pp. 157–158). Upon returning to Korea at the end of 1964, he learned the martial arts leaders in Korea had renamed taekwondo as "taesoodo" and had created the Korea Taesoodo Association, a different organization than the KTA begun by Choi in 1959.

Using his political clout, General Choi was elected as the third president of this group in 1965 (KTA, 2015). However, he was given a vote of no confidence and forced to step down within a year of his election (Moenig and Kim, 2019) because he was "perceived as authoritarian and arrogant" (Moenig and Kim 2017, p. 1327), but not before he changed the official name of the organization and the martial art to "taekwondo" on August 5, 1965. Choi subsequently created the ITF on March 22, 1966 (Kimm, 2013), which was headquartered in Seoul at the time. Interestingly, the KTA and subsequent organizations probably retained the name taekwondo thereafter since Choi had already written international taekwondo publications and established at least three national taekwondo associations outside of Korea.

The removal of General Choi from his second KTA presidency in 1965 is a significant point in the ITF–WT conflict. Since Choi no longer held control over the KTA and its testing and educational policies, his vision of taekwondo as a martial art developed independently under the ITF banner. The KTA (and later the Kukkiwon and WTF) conversely sought to develop taekwondo as a combat sport with Olympic aspirations (Son and Seo, 2017). These opposing goals affected taekwondo dramatically: Chang-hon and Kukki taekwondo were then developed according to different theories of body mechanics to the extent that today they follow dissimilar curriculums and adhere to different competition rules. Thus, General Choi's 1965 removal from the KTA can be thought of as the *trigger point*, or the catalyst of the conflict (USIP, n.d.), since it is most likely when taekwondo became divided with conflicting pedagogies and goals.

Dr. John A. Johnson (ITF; Dept. of Taekwondo, Keimyung University) and Dr. Leo Chung (WT) at the Taekwondowon in Muju, Korea © World Taekwondo United News

This conflict likely intensified, or *escalated* (USIP, n.d.), when the WTF sought Olympic status for their sport and General Choi openly fought and insulted the WTF and Kim, Un-Yong for doing so. In 1972, Choi fled the ROK, which weakened his influence on taekwondo there, most likely because he feared the Park junta (Choi, 2000). He felt Kukki taekwondo was an imitation of his Chang-hon taekwondo and that its leaders were using the name taekwondo unjustly (Choi, 1985, 2000). Supported by the financial and political backing of the ROK government, Kukki taekwondo leaders believed themselves to be the rightful taekwondo voice. This idea possibly became fact in the hearts and minds of Kukki practitioners when President Park, Chung-hee officially named taekwondo as the national sport and even more so when the IOC recognized the

Dr. John A. Johnson at the Taekwondowon in Muju, Korea © World Taekwondo United News

Dr. Sanko Lewis (ITF; Faculty of Humanities, Sahmyook University) and Dr. John A. Johnson at the Taekwondowon in Muju, Korea © World Taekwondo United News

WTF as the governing body for taekwondo in 1980, an action Choi openly fought (Kimm, 2013).

General Choi almost certainly further escalated the conflict by introducing taekwondo to socialist countries and the DPRK. He believed in teaching anyone, regardless of race, religion, or political background, an ideal mirrored in the IOC Charter (IOC, 2017, p. 12). It also provided Choi's ROK detractors ammunition to further subjugate him in the global taekwondo community (Choi, 2000). Decades later this decision would enable ROK and DPRK joint WTF/WT and ITF demonstrations (i.e., cultural diplomacy). Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, Korean culture has evolved to a point where the two countries have little in common other than taekwondo, which has permitted "taekwondo diplomacy" to be a central factor in Korean rapprochement (Johnson, 2018).

The conflict can be said to have escalated even more when the ROK government began harassing ITF members, coercing them to leave the ITF for the WTF; adding to General Choi's woes was the large number of instructors who left the ITF when he was branded a traitor (Gillis 2016). While his pedagogical philosophy freed him of political bias and allowed him to introduce taekwondo to socialist nations like his former enemies the DPRK and the Soviet Union (Choi, 1985; Johnson, 2018), a counterargument can also be made that he did so out of financial necessity. Nevertheless, no evidence exists that indicates General Choi was himself a communist (Johnson and Lewis, 2020), and accusations to that end were probably extremely detrimental to the ITF's development and undoubtedly deepened his and ITF practitioners' ire regarding the WTF.

Deadlock, which occurs when each party is unable to defeat the other despite their best efforts (USIP, n.d.), most probably began within the ITF–WT conflict in 1990. By this time, the WTF had achieved Olympic status, and the ITF had begun building strong support in socialist countries, including the DPRK. The ITF–WT conflict could be seen to continue at this point in time, since the war of words that began with WTF and ITF leaders soon passed on old prejudges and unfounded accusations to subsequent generations of taekwondo masters and leaders on both sides. During this time, the ROK and DPRK used taekwondo

for soft diplomacy means to demonstrate the physical superiority of their peoples and cultures (Johnson and Vitale, 2018). In fact, a merger agreement was signed between the ITF and WTF in 1982 (Kim, 2017), but nothing came of it, further indicating a stagnant relationship.

The cessation of the conflict, or its *de-escalation* (USIP, n.d.), began with the signing of the Protocol of Accord in 2014 between the ITF and WTF. IOC president Thomas Bach oversaw the ceremony, indicating the IOC's desire to negotiate a truce between the two taekwondo groups and possibly to use taekwondo as a symbol of Korean rapprochement. Since that historic agreement, the ITF and the WTF (now WT) have held numerous joint demonstrations around the globe, including one during the opening ceremony of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games (the so-called Peace Olympics) in PyeongChang, ROK. Demonstrations such as these have been "an axis of taekwondo diplomacy" (Choi, 2017, p. 135) since the 1950s when General Choi first took a group of soldiers abroad to promote the ROK's cultural and physical strength (Johnson, 2018). While this has been called sports diplomacy, it is better referred to as cultural diplomacy since no actual competition has been held between ROK and DPRK teams (Johnson and Lewis, 2020).

Because the ITF and WT styles of taekwondo vary so widely and no one has yet proposed a means of joint competition that is amenable to both sides, the dream of using taekwondo as a true form of sports diplomacy cannot move forward despite the lack of open animosity toward one another today. Hence, the conflict between the WT and ITF has stalled indefinitely. Forward movement toward a sustainable peace, what USIP calls the *termination* of a conflict (USIP, n.d.), is impossible because both sides are predisposed, and rightfully so, not to enter into an agreement where either side loses. The ITF promotes an Eastern martial art and therefore may not wish to lose its identity or pedagogy to become a Western sport. WT, the unmistakably larger of the two organizations, probably does not want to risk losing its Olympic status after decades and estimated billions of state-funded dollars spent promoting the sport. Although WT and the ITF are no longer outwardly hostile toward one another, a conflict—albeit ironically not one of violence—persists.

Conclusion

The conflict between the ITF and WT is a synecdoche for the state of war between the ROK and DPRK (Johnson and Vitale, 2018). As one of the few ways the ROK and DPRK demonstrate peaceful intentions toward one another, the relationship between the ITF headquartered in Vienna (but staffed by DPRK citizens) and the ROK-supported WT are vital to keeping rapprochement hopes alive. Yet while both parties on either side of these conflicts want to resolve their conflicts, neither is seemingly willing to give up its core identity, resulting in a sluggish pace toward peace.

If the incorporation of modern peace studies practices by taekwondo organizations is successful, the ROK and DPRK governments may be inspired to follow suit. While sports diplomacy efforts must be used in conjunction with other diplomatic measures, just like any sports diplomacy effort (Murray, 2013), continued events such as joint demonstrations between the ITF and WT could maintain the conflict's status quo. It is thus hoped that

introducing a peace studies paradigm into taekwondo studies will inspire a new era of continued peacebuilding between the Koreas.

According to Galtung (1996, 2004), sustainable peace is impossible without transcending the current relationship and reshaping it anew. Evidenced by the fact that the Protocol of Accord helped usher in a new era of reconciliation between the ITF and WT and no actual sports diplomacy has been achieved between the ROK and DPRK, the culture of the conflict has yet to change. Researchers and taekwondo actors could use preexisting peacebuilding techniques to overcome the current ITF–WT stagnant relationship as well as create new and sustainable taekwondo polities.

There is something more to consider: everyone affected by the conflict, not just those who benefit directly from its resolution, must be involved to terminate it (USIP, n.d.). Since the other ITF organizations and practitioners have not been included in the negotiations between WT and the ITF operated by DPRK citizens, the conflict may be doomed to stagnation. Even if a peace is finalized between the ROK-supported WT and the DPRK-backed ITF, the conflict could evolve and resurface because not all voices in the global taekwondo community were heard.

Before taekwondo diplomacy can work truly, its governing bodies must broker peace. Reimagining the ITF–WT conflict within a peace studies paradigm may provide a pathway toward resolving that conflict. Although athletes and sporting events can be used "to engage, inform, and create a favourable image amongst foreign publics and organisations to shape their perceptions in a way that is more conducive to achieving a government's foreign policy goals" (Murray, 2012, p. 581), taekwondo, like any sport (Coalter, 2010), cannot be a panacea for Korean rapprochement. Nevertheless, the martial art and combat sport of taekwondo will remain key soft diplomacy tools for the two Koreas. It just remains to be seen how effective they can be.

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Vernacular Martial Arts: Culture, Continuity, and Combat

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Introduction

Vernacular martial arts (VMA) occupy a special niche within the diverse phenomena classified as martial arts. Cross-culturally, "Martial arts can be defined as systematic bodies of knowledge, belief, and practice that are associated with methods of attack and defense against … adversaries" (Green and Svinth, 2010, p. 331). On close examination, we learn that the behaviors we attempt to gather under this umbrella term are quite diverse, ranging from life-and-death struggles through rule-governed sporting contests to expressive forms, from globalized combat sports to localized martial culture. The systems that fall on the latter end of this spectrum I have applied the VMA label to, and among the various martial expressions these are the ones that most clearly qualify as intangible cultural heritage (ICH). The following distinctions are useful for the current discussion.

Boxing spot in Heze City, Shandong, China, 2010 © Thomas A. Green

Combat Sports

Joseph Svinth has defined martial sports as "physically aggressive athletic games. Individual combative sports such as boxing, wrestling, and fencing essentially mimic dueling while team combative sports such as football, ice hockey, and lacrosse essentially mimic small unit warfare" (2003, p. 275).

Martial Arts

"Martial arts" in contemporary usage (karate, taekwondo, or judo, for example), even when linked with a particular geographic region (Japan, Korea) or ethnic group, are most often associated with the larger than local.

Vernacular Martial Arts

These "folk" traditions I refer to as VMAs are martial practices that meet the needs of the local groups in which they are practiced. They are preserved with minimal, if any, input from outside entities. VMAs are interwoven into the life of a community at the most basic levels. They may be found in schoolyards or prison yards, streets or sacred sites. The kinesics (movement patterns) of VMAs are consistent with patterns of larger cultural enactments such as games, rituals, festivals, and even community subsistence activities. For example, rather than relying on specialized weapons, often tools related to the group's daily activities are repurposed as weapons. Vernacular traditions commonly draw on localized supernatural assistance: shamanic ritual, amulets, and sorcery.

Origins of the Term "Vernacular"

"Vernacular" as used in the present context is a term borrowed from linguistics and art criticism. Attempts at standardization of a martial practice for national or international implementation share some of the difficulties that emerge in endeavors to create a standard, generally elite, form of a natural language. In linguistics, the term vernacular denotes a local language, dialect, or form that does not uniformly incorporate the features of a prescribed version of a given language. In art criticism, the term is used to describe the creations of those artists who are detached from the movements and trends of fine arts. Applied to the martial, the term denotes local traditions that meet the needs of those groups in which they are preserved as distinct from the demands of any outside sanctioning bodies. Therefore, VMAs contrast sharply with those systems, whether contemporary or archaic, that dictate curricula, maintain lineages, and issue certificates, belts, or similar designations of rank. There are cross-cultural similarities among the VMAs: pedagogy, cultural continuities, and weapon choice. The examples for the following discussion are drawn primarily from African-American and Chinese traditions. Jailhouse Rock is an African-American VMA that may be characterized as a direct method of self-defense. Village Meihua Quan (Plum Blossom Boxing, the slightly looser translation here meant to convey the sense of an entire system as distinct from a single strike), exists in contemporary China not only for defense but also for worship, community cohesion, and historical continuity.

Pedagogy

VMAs are passed along as an element of communal life as distinct from being taught in dojos, gyms, schools, or similar dedicated areas. They are passed along in informal venues, often casually. Parks, street corners, village commons, barrooms, and prison cells have all been cited by informants as places in which they were taught the techniques of their particular VMA. Some of these techniques can be passed along in minutes and without any of the warm-up exercises or stretching common to formalized martial arts, therefore lending themselves to the "training areas" mentioned above.

Curricula are extremely informal or ad hoc. No prescribed avenues by which a student advances progressively from basic to more complex skills exist in VMAs. Teaching takes the form of an experienced fighter passing along techniques to a favored novice. Knowledge is usually transmitted orally during face-to-face interactions (as distinct from other media, e.g., print, film) and in a relatively casual fashion that differs from the protocols that mark behavior in the dojo, school, or gym. The scenario illustrated in the following photograph is typical for village Meihua Quan.

It is common for at least a portion of any of these fighting methods to be learned through observation as distinct from instruction. As a result, a relatively complex combination may be learned from observation of a street fight before a mentor passes along the component elements of the same sequence. This makes for considerable latitude in both the individual practitioner's arsenal and across the inventory of techniques that are appropriated by a given VMA. As suggested in the preceding sentence, techniques are not

He Qinghui teaching Wang Xuexiang in courtyard of Wenshui Village, Guizhou, China, 2016
© Thomas A. Green

created from "thin air." For example, in the regional variant of Jailhouse Rock called the "Fifty-two Hand Blocks" or "52s," which developed in the US in the late 20th century, informants cited international boxing, martial arts movies of the 1970s, Brazilian capoeira, and break dancing as among the kinesic "donors" to the fighting style. In this example, as elsewhere, is seen a pattern of martial bricolage that is a hallmark of the VMAs.

For VMAs there is no practice per se. Techniques and tactics are polished through combat or expressive forms (games, for example) in a culturally appropriate context. This principle governs historical forms of "street fighting" such as the earliest documented forms of African-Brazilian capoeira and the unarmed dueling traditions that developed in the southeastern United States during the 18th and 19th centuries. The southeastern VMAs substituted maiming an opponent—by gouging out an eye, for example—for killing (Gorn, 1985). These learning patterns persist into the 21st century.

Jailhouse Rock protective cover by Dennis Newsome, Los Angeles, California, USA, 2002 © Thomas A. Green

Cultural Continuities

Although VMAs do not incorporate standardized practice and formal drills, there exist cultural continuities among localized martial arts and other embodied traditions that enable the development of necessary skills outside the combative context. Games, dances, and festivals tangentially cultivate martial skills. Striking, grappling, reflexes, head movement, footwork, the ability to endure physical duress are developed as corollaries by participation in these activities, rather than as the central focus of the actions as would be the case with drills or practice. VMAs, therefore, are not only themselves examples of ICH; a mutual support exists between them and the ICH genres that enrich and are enriched by them.

Games

Traditional pseudo-fighting games cannot be neglected when considering the development of VMA skills. They permit the acquisition of qualities needed for genuine fights. Striking games such as slap-boxing and chest (or open chest) thumping are widely distributed in the African-American communities of the US.

In New York City, the southern area of the Bronx is regarded as particularly violent and lawless. Geoffrey Canada remembers that during his youth growing up there, "the face and

head were the primary target" in slap-boxing games; "just as the name implies, you had to hit with an open hand" (Canada, 1996, p. 47). The strikes and feints of slap-boxing are based on the model of international boxing, and the game is popular among adolescent males in schools and detention facilities.

In "chest," or chest boxing, according to the rules of the game as played in Dallas, Texas, during the 1980s and early 1990s (Boyd, 2003, interview), two or more players look for opportunities to deliver full-power strikes to each other's chests while keeping their own guards up, thereby protecting against similar strikes. Chest and slap-boxing both develop coordination, the ability to take and give hits, and to think under stress and in pain, in addition to toughening the physique. The relationships between games and the development of fighting ability for VMAs is not limited to African-American contexts, of course. These connections are cross-cultural phenomena.

Dance

According to Alan Lomax, dance is a template (or perhaps a mirror) of the group's cultural kinesics. He argues that this expressive behavior emulates movements and postures drawn from everyday behavior and, therefore, contributes to cultural continuity (Lomax, 2000). Whether it imitates combat or combat draws on dance for its physical vocabulary, in much indigenous dance the similarities between the expressive and the martial are palpable.

Fighting and dancing share common ground throughout African America. The "upset" (which entails the fighter's bending rapidly forward to grasp his opponent's pants cuffs and stand up in order to throw him) was passed to Michael Hume by his father, a former tap dancer. His father said, "Once you flip the dude, tap-dance on his head and body" (Hume, 2005, interview). Because this information was passed along in the context of a one-on-one interview, I volunteered to serve as his opponent for a demonstration. As a result, I *felt* more than *saw* that after the upset, a succession of rhythmic toe and heel kicks are delivered up and down the fallen opponent's ribs, chest, and stomach.

Capoeira practice under the direction of Mestre Preto Velho, Los Angeles, California, 2009 © Thomas A. Green

Dance is often integral to the practice of the fighting system, either as sublimated training or as a ritual prelude to combat. Generally, the preliminary dance represents the mechanics of the fighting method in a stylized fashion. Representative cases are Muay Thai and Krabi Krabong (Thailand) and capoeira (Brazil).

Oral tradition maintains that the urban dance style known as "up-rocking" and African-American VMAs such as Jailhouse Rock and the 52s spring from a common source (Green, 2012). In fact, aggressive up-rocking served as sublimated street warfare for urban gangs in the US during the 1970s and 1980s. In these confrontations, Jeff Chang writes: "Rivals ... went head to head—making as

if they were jigging, stabbing, and battering each other" (2005, p. 116). Daniel Marks points out that up-rocking and the 52s share the same back-and-forth and side-to-side footwork. He notes, "The 52s ... may look wild and untamed but that's deliberate. The up-rock [pattern of movement] is a huge part of the deception. At best, the 52s is like a dance" (Marks, 2005, interview).

Robert Farris Thompson, in his examination of the aesthetic principles of West African dance, identifies, among other traits, the "dominance of a percussive concept of performance, multiple meter [cf. the "broken rhythms" and "change-ups" of fighting] ... [and] verbal and kinesic derision" (Thompson, 1999, p. 75). These principles are recurrent themes in popular musical and dance genres originating in the African-American community (hip-hop, jazz, and break dancing) and sport as influenced by Black athletes (boxing and basketball). They are clearly at work in both African-American vernacular musical genres (worksong and blues) and African-American VMAs.

Festival

Combat games and similar martial displays are common elements in festivals cross-culturally, as demonstrated in the seasonal sword dances of the British Isles, the stick fighting games of the Caribbean Carnival, and the Lion Dances of China. In many cases these expressive activities resonate with the primary focus of larger events. In the case of the Liangquan of Meihua Quan, combat is the primary focus. The term "plum blossom" or "plum flower" is associated with various Chinese boxing styles, but the Meihua Quan

Liangquan, Houma Village, Hebei, China, 2012 © Thomas A. Green

discussed in the following comments is a vernacular form of the art practiced at the village level in Houma Village, Hebei, China. Folk history attributes this style of boxing to Zou Hongyi. According to traditional history, Patriarch Zou's original disciples in Houma gathered at his house in order to demonstrate their progress in the art he had taught them on Lantern Festival (the last day of Spring Festival) to perform the first Liangquan lit. "show boxing". In recent times in Houma, Mei boxers gather at the tomb of the patriarch in order to pay homage to him and to local Daoist supernaturals, and to publicly reenact the original event. Similar reenactments occur in villages such as Zhuzhai in Henan Province. These practices are generally associated with Daoist ritual, but the ancestor worship carried out at Liangquan is a syncretism of Daoism, Confucianism, and the shamanic practices that predate both. The veneration of Patriarch Zou represents one way in which both antiquity and the continuity of the life are celebrated.

Dancing by women who are Mei boxers, former boxers, or married to boxers holding handmade plum blossom "pom-poms" precede the demonstrations of Mei boxing. The dances are not overtly martial. Boxing then begins as sequential exhibitions by the various boxing groups (usually village coalitions) attending. This rapidly gives way to multiple simultaneous performances by groups after their turns center stage. These are at least covertly competitive. The action becomes more spectacular and the accompanying drums and cymbals become louder and more aggressive in an effort by each group to draw the largest circle of admirers. While certain actions may appear hostile on the surface, the cohesion that is the general festival function emerges. During the 2012 Liangquan at Houma, for instance, a demonstration between two boxers devolved into an actual fight. However, the altercation was stopped quickly by the other participants.

Master Zheng Dani, Houma Village, explaining the use of the iron whip to Dr. Li Yun, 2012 © Thomas A. Green

Working and Fighting

Paul Connerton argues, "In the cultivation of habit it is our body which 'understands'" (1989, p. 95). In *Body and Soul* (2001), Wacquant analyzes the physical actions of boxing as investing competitors in the sport with a distinctive habitus (culturally developed habits, skills, and physical constitution). Turning to Connerton's apt phrase, training causes habitus to be "sedimented" in our bodies. As is the case with athletic training and expressive culture so much more so with subsistence activities that in daily life are practiced on an even more basic and repetitive level. Implements such as tools, that are habitually utilized within the group, frequently are incorporated into the vernacular martial arts.

Many farming implements, when reduced to their bare essentials, are simply modified sticks. Horticulturalists use pointed sticks, traditionally called dibble sticks, to cultivate small plots of land by drilling holes to receive seeds, tilling and loosening soil in

gardens, and curved sticks are modified to serve as human-powered ploughs. Pastoralists commonly fought with sticks, the tools used for herding. An example is provided by the Irish *shilleleagh* that traditionally has been used to herd sheep. Always near at hand, this tool becomes a weapon of opportunity (i.e., a convenient resource when conflict develops), which is used both for personal defense and the ritualized faction fights for which the Irish are famous (Hurley, 2007). Similarly, the long sticks of the cattle-herding Ethiopian Mursi have been employed for defense against natural predators, human adversaries, and in ritualized "coming of age" rites (*The Mursi Tribe: Day of the Donga*, 2000). With modernization, stick fighting has been preserved as an art form and socio-religious ritual, although stick fighting, like many other VMAs, is losing ground to international combat sports such as judo and mixed martial arts.

In addition, the physical attributes, the coordination, and muscular development that are required to manipulate the tools of a culture's trade are often utilized in the handling of traditional weaponry. Many traditional Chinese villagers relied on the use of long-handled gardening tools with which soil was tilled by pushing and pulling actions.

Meihuaquan spear, Heze City, Shandong, China, 2012 © Thomas A. Green

Spears 12 feet (3.6 m) in length, such as the one the author is so awkwardly wielding in the past were used against mounted enemies. This tactic was trained not only by specific drills, but tendons, muscle, coordination, and balance resulted as an adjunct of daily subsistence labor. In contemporary Meihua Quan practice, despite the fact that they are no longer necessary for village defense, the spears are deftly wielded as a traditional art form by boxers into their eighties.

In some cases, the weaponization of a tool is recognized and controlled by official authorities. The Finnish *puukko* (knife) serves as an example. Designed as a utilitarian cutting instrument used in a variety of trades, the omnipresent blade also found use as a Finnish sidearm, so much so that so that contemporary possession requires the bearer to be licensed. The association of the *puukko* with VMA is documented in the folk ballads of the "knife-men" collected and analyzed by Edgar. The knife was used "in woods work ... and the old bullies of the ballads used it for a fighting weapon" (Edgar, 1949, p. 53). As examples, we have these lyrics:

> Vasa's blood will never run cold, nor Kauhava's blade grow rusty,
> So grab his neck, and a knife in his back, unless he yield without. (54)
> Meltoo Jukka's puukko-knife was as sharp as an arrow. Behind Harsila's
> Martti's barn, there died Ketola's Jukka. (Edgar, 1949, p. 56)

In the period following Reconstruction (1863–77) after the U.S. Civil War, both written and unwritten laws (customary practice) restricted the possession of weapons by African-Americans, especially firearms. At the same time, former slaves with limited employment opportunities often worked as valets or barbers. In these roles they could safely carry a straight razor (a shaving razor whose blade folded into a handle) as a tool of their trade. They also developed methods whereby they could use them to deadly effect. According to Richard Merritt, at least one system is based on boxing. He is the inheritor of such a system practiced by his father, a mathematician who as an African-American in the early 20th century was not allowed to practice his profession. Ultimately, he became a barber, learning both that trade and the boxing-based VMA associated with it (Merritt, 2012, interview). Ernest Hemingway incorporates a description of this style in his short story, "The Porter"—holding the razor in his hand, "his fist closed, the blade open across the knuckles," Hemingway then describes a classic boxing combination: "George ducked and jabbed three times with the blade" (Hemingway, 1987, p. 576).

Conclusion

What is the value of preserving VMAs? This is an especially pertinent question in the case of those arts whose intent is violent. The answer lies in the fact that VMAs are not "stand-alone" phenomena—they have organically developed in relation to other specific behaviors. In cases in which globalization has been attempted, the arts that are preserved, while sources of national or ethnic pride, are separated from the localized support community. Compromises that translate the art to the larger-than-local audience, make the art into something quite different from the original. Local efforts attempt preservation with minimal distortion. The highly daunting challenge of globalization vs. preservation in the 21st century is to find the means to support the original VMA in cultural context, while allowing for its appreciation on the global stage.

Revitalization of the Chongqing Small Dragon Dance by Beibei Fire Department, Chongqing, China, 2016 © Thomas A. Green

The characteristics of VMAs are identified above: the general lack of a structured curriculum by which a novice advances, learning through a combination of observation and comparatively informal instruction, and knowledge transmission that is generally oral and casual. This last characteristic is of crucial importance. Occasionally a community may preserve its martial heritage in a written form passed along among group members, but textual or visual renderings that permit broad distribution outside the folk group are virtually non-existent. Often vernacular knowledge is embodied, transmitted unconsciously through culturally dictated movements of practitioners not only in strictly martial contexts but also during related expressive forms and even work patterns. In contemporary contexts, these means of transmission make VMAs among the most endangered forms of ICH.

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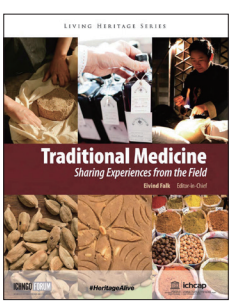

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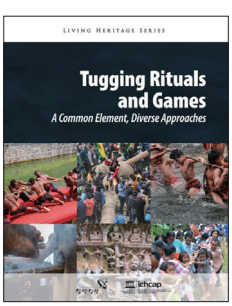

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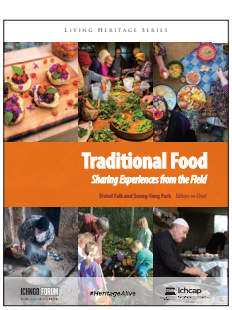

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For the past several decades, UNESCO has been increasingly championing the importance of culture as a driving force for the proliferation of cultural diversity and the sustainable development of a global society. Sustainable development in this sense, however, is not equated to economic growth alone, but also to a means to achieve an equitable intellectual, emotional, and spiritual existence among the global community.

At the same time, societies around the world have been facing challenges in promoting the values of cultural pluralism. As such, UNESCO has been an advocate for promoting culture and intangible cultural heritage in particular since the 1980s with the Decade for Cultural Development and later with the Living Human Treasures program (UNESCO 142EX/18 and 142EX/48). These promotions and programs culminated with the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Both of these instruments recognize the importance of sharing and promoting intangible cultural heritage to enhance understanding and appreciation of the cultural assets of the humanity.

In 2017, ICHCAP, as a UNESCO category 2 center in the cultural heritage field, started the *Living Heritage Series* to promote cultural diversity and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage In this publication project, ICHCAP teams up with other organizations to share information about heritage beliefs and practices from cultures around the world in the hopes that intangible cultural heritage can be sustained by communities and the broader international society.

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