

Through the lack of physical training since the days of the Sung dynasty, the Chinese people have become known to the world as "the sick man of the East," but with

government encouragement of popular athletics, it is hoped that in time, this appellation would no longer be applicable to them.

## The Sixth National Athletic Meet

BY K. LOCK (曙光)

WITH fifty or sixty thousand others I attended the opening of the Sixth National Athletic Meet held on Thursday, October 10, 1935, at the imposing new Stadium at the Shanghai Civic Centre, and individually and collectively, as the opening ceremony proceeded we were alternately thrilled and awe-struck. Before that vast concourse, with banners waving and the drone of airplane motors overhead, nearly three thousand of the pick of the country's young man and womanhood marched into the Stadium and took their places before the official stand. There were contingents from far Malaya, Mongolia and Thibet, who were received by the spectators with as great a welcome as they accorded the units from the home provinces. One unit, that from Hongkong, perhaps received the lion's share of attention, containing as it did two outstanding public favorites, Miss Yeung Sau-king, swimming star, and Lee Wai-tong, football star.

For ten days following the opening day the Meet proceeded, with public interest unflagging. Attendance on the four or five days immediately succeeding the opening day dropped, but when the semi-finals of various events, especially the football games and swimming events, were held, the Stadium again was besieged by eager spectators. On the five different days I was present I had no quarrel to find with anything. The Stadium, built as it is in accordance with the most modern plans, affords every spectator a full, unobstructed view of the track and field, and except in one or two isolated cases good humor among the huge crowds was the order of the day.

The final attendance figures and the prominence given the Meet by the vernacular and foreign-language local press indicated to what extent Shanghai has become "athletic-minded," and presumably the country as a whole must have displayed just as much interest in what was transpiring at Shanghai's Civic Centre.

Public interest in the Meet has not yet died away, as witness the photographs of various phases of the Meet still being printed in the local press, and the ever-present crowds before the windows of those photographer's shops which display pictures of the Meet. I cannot help but feel that such public interest in athletics, whether that interest centers on an individual, a team, or generally, can have other than a wholesome effect. As a recent editorial in these columns said, National Athletic Meets are an incentive for the youth of China to build by clean living and training strong, healthy bodies. A nation which has strong, healthy youth can look to the future with confidence. As I watched those finely-trained young men and women march into the Stadium and later saw them in action on the track, in the field and in the

swimming pool, it occurred to me that here is a great lesson for the sabre rattlers. What right, I thought, has any man to do or say anything to send those splendid bodies to be torn and mangled or suffocated with some noxious gas in war. Next year in Berlin we shall see not the pick of one nation's athletes but the athletes of thirty or forty nations. If the thought which came to me should come to those in power who witness in 1936 World Olympic Games, perhaps that next World War of which we have heard and read so much as being near at hand will never come to pass.

At the National Meet I am reviewing, new national records were created and when those new records are compared with those created at, say, the First National Athletic Meet, or the Second, or the Third, it is amply demonstrated that if progress is continued at the same rate, it will not be many years before Chinese athletes will be able to compete with the world's best on equal terms. At the last Olympic Games held in Los Angeles in 1932, China had one lone representative, who, by the way, competed at the Sixth Meet in the 100 and 200-meter dashes the first of which he won. At the next Olympic Games which, as herein mentioned, will be held at Berlin in 1936, China will be represented by a really large unit. It is too much to hope that they or any of them will place first or even second or third in any of the events they participate in at Berlin but the experience they will gain will be invaluable. Not only that but in the meantime thousands of young men and women all over the country will, with the hope of being chosen to be included in China's Olympic team, keep themselves in good physical condition. When the Olympic unit is finally chosen and is participating in the Games, athletics will receive another wholesome fillip.

As I watched various events at the Stadium, I was again and again struck by the eye-satisfying picture a finely-built and beautifully-striding young man represents. True, we do not have as yet the equivalent of a Eulace Peacock, a Jack Lovelock or a Bill Graber, but from what I saw of our athletes we most certainly do have material for potential world's record holders. To judge from progress we have achieved since the First National Athletic Meet was held in Nanking in 1910, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that when the 1940 Olympic Games are held we shall have young men who will have run 100 meters in ten and a half seconds, 1,500 meters in four minutes and ten seconds and pole-vaulted fourteen feet or more. If it so happens that we do have such young men, then the flag of China will wave at the top of the staff at least once during the 1940 Games. Then again, what a delight it is to watch a football, basketball or volleyball team in co-ordinate action, and what a

lesson in citizenship it represents. A team may have one star or even two, but without his teammates coordinating with him he would star to no avail and at the end of the game would most likely find himself one of the losing team.

The participation of women in the National Meets only goes back to the Fourth Meet held at Hangchow in April, 1930, when over four hundred of them participated. It might be said that the progress they have made surpasses male progress. The form and technique they displayed at the last Meet was amazing and it will not in the least surprise me if we have a world's champion among our women before we have one among our men. The times recorded in the women's dashes do not compare as unfavorably with world's record times as those recorded for the same men's events.

The technique displayed by the majority of the contestants bore witness of long training and intelligent coaching. These two things must go together because an athletic might devote all his time to training and never get the best results from his efforts if he has not been coached or has been improperly coached. A start in coaching Chinese athletes in the modern manner was made this year, when a carefully chosen few were sent to a summer training camp at Tsingtao under a noted German athletic coach, who had come out to China on a special invitation. I believe I am correct in saying that at least two of the men who attended that camp established new National records in the recent Meet.

It was on the days when the football semi-finals, excepting, of course, the opening and closing days of the Meet, that brought out the greatest number of spectators. It is a source of satisfaction that this was the case and that the public display such great interest in watching team-play and not an individual. Association football would seem to be becoming the national game and as it is a game which calls for courage, skill and stamina, the sooner it does become the national game the better. The football championship of the Sixth Meet was won by Hongkong, holders of many National and Far Eastern championships, and their opponents in the final was Canton. Our Cantonese brothers, it would seem, have a special aptitude for football.

The participation of the hundred odd members of the Malayan delegation was made possible by the generosity of Mr. Aw Boon-hu, the well-known overseas philanthropist. His generosity was not misplaced because the Malayan track team, somewhat contrary to expectations to be sure, garnered second place in the Meet championship. The rest of the delegation by no means disgraced themselves by placing seventh in the field championship, while one of the Malayan swimmers brought glory to himself and his team by breaking the National record in the 1,500-meter free-style race. It is to be hoped that as the National Meets are held, more and more participants from overseas will compete.

As was expected, the swimming events were exceedingly popular, and the spectator accommodation of the beautiful, modern swimming pool was taxed to capacity on all the days the events were held. More National records were created, both in the men's and women's events. An upset in the 50-meter free style race for women caused a furor when Miss Yeung Sauping, China's premier woman swimmer was narrowly beaten by Miss Lau Kwei-chan of the Canton team. Miss Yeung, however, staged a great comeback by winning later the same afternoon the 100-meter backstroke championship in time which constitutes not only a National but a Far Eastern record. The swimming championship of the Meet was won by the Hongkong team.

When the swimming events came to an end, the close of the most successful of the National Meets was very near, and it finally wound up in a blaze of glory on October 20, when a team of local foreign athletes competed with men picked from various units. The results of that competition was a foregone conclusion in view of the superior condition of the Chinese athletes, who placed first and second in all the events except one, the discus throw, and in the 400-meter race a new National record of 52.2 seconds was established.

I have before me a comparison of National and World athletic records from which it is evident that our athletes still have considerable progress to make. However, they have definite marks to aim for and if they enter into their training and their competitions with the knowledge that in one respect the equality of the country lies with them, we may safely, I believe, rest assured of China's athletic future.

## New Records Made In The National Meet

By K. S. CHANG (張國勳)

THE advancement of a nation's athletics can be best measured by the way the records topple in a national meet. While China should not feel over jubilant on the achievements of the 2,670 athletes of both sexes from all over the country in the 11-day contests at the Civic Center Stadium last month, she has ample reason to be satisfied with the fact that despite the disastrous floods and communistic uprisings which have wrought havoc with

the people's lives and property and disturbed their peace of mind, her young men and young women are continuing in their strides toward athletic development.

The records of the Chinese athletes, both new and old, are still way off the standards set by the leading performers of other nations, but when you compare them with those that were in the books of a decade ago, you will find that progress has been made all round and that