

## THE PROSPECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF WUSHU TO BECOME AN OLYMPIC SPORT

R.D. Ryabenkov, Zh.V. Formina

Volgograd State Physical Education Academy, Volgograd, Russia

For communication with authors: 13inkv@mail.ru; zhannaformina13@yandex.ru

### **Abstract:**

This article deals with problematic situations of wushu admission in the Olympic program. There is a comparison with other martial arts to approve wushu's originality among the other ones. The author assesses the prospects of the International Wushu Federation activity and events, which aimed at promotion and becoming wushu as a sport included in the Olympic program.

**Keywords:** prospective assessment, Chinese martial arts, admission in the Olympic program, International Olympic Committee, development of wushu.

### **ОЦЕНКА ПЕРСПЕКТИВ СТАНОВЛЕНИЯ УШУ КАК ОЛИМПИЙСКОГО ВИДА СПОРТА**

**Р. Д. Рябенков, Ж. В. Фомина**

**Волгоградская государственная академия физической культуры, Волгоград, Россия**

### **Аннотация:**

В статье рассматриваются проблемные зоны в становлении ушу как олимпийского вида спорта. Проводится сравнение с другими восточными единоборствами для утверждения уникальности ушу перед другими видами спорта. Также оценивается перспективность мероприятий, осуществленных Международной федерацией ушу, для популяризации и становления ушу видом спорта, включенным в программу Олимпийских игр.

**Ключевые слова:** оценка перспектив, китайские единоборства, включение в программу Олимпийских игр, Международный олимпийский комитет, развитие ушу.

### **INTRODUCTION**

It's an honor for each international sports federation, to make their sport as a part of the Olympic program. One of the contenders for inclusion in this list is wushu. Wushu is not only an ancient martial art, which includes elements of physical and moral training of the individual, recreative gymnastics, but also a modern spectacular sport. Over the past decade, an activity of national federations is aimed at creating the necessary conditions for it. This article discusses the prospects of wushu admission in the Olympic program.

The **OBJECT** of our research is martial arts as a form of combat sports.

The public opinion, the activity of the IOC and members of the International Wushu Federation (IWUF) connected with the inclusion of this sport in the Olympic program, has become the **SUBJECT** of our research.

The **RELEVANCE** of research is determined by the following statements:

- 1) the intensive development of wushu, and the growing interest in the world;
- 2) insufficient knowledge of this type of martial arts;
- 3) the significance of wushu as a spiritual discipline and the art of self-defense, a method of socio-cultural education and sport, a system of psychophysical training and symbolic self-realization.

The **WORKING HYPOESIS** of our research is to identify perspective «moments» of becoming wushu an Olympic sport.

The **AIM OF RESEARCH** is to identify significant problems problematic situations of wushu admission in the Olympic program. The following objectives were identified to achieve this goal:

- 1) to analyze the competition rules, which were defined by the International Wushu Federation;
- 2) to make a comparison with other martial arts,
- 3) to approve wushu's originality among the other martial arts;
- 4) to assess the prospects of the IWUF activity and events, which aimed at :

- becoming a kind of sport which has possibility to be included in the Olympic program;
- becoming a popular sport, alongside with football, hockey, boxing and others.

The **SCIENTIFIC NOVELTY** of research is that topic of our work isn't researched enough into scientific sphere, and this information will help to appoint the main ways of wushu federation's development.

**METHODS OF RESEARCH:** theoretical analysis, review and compilation of recent special domestic and foreign papers.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND THEIR EVALUATION

In all parts of the world there are many different martial arts, which purpose is not only to master the techniques of self-defense, and certain physical qualities, but also the spiritual and moral perfection [18, 19]. Since the second half of the 20th century, specific martial arts of Eastern countries, such as wushu, taekwondo, karate, and others have begun to acquire a great popularity. Since then, all these arts have passed a certain stage of development, during which they acquired the status of international sports, which allows them to compete with each other on the sports world stage. One obvious example of it is the competition for a finding of any martial art in the Olympic Games [11]. For proper understanding the difference of wushu from other martial arts, we have decided to consider its features. To start with, one should pay attention to the definition of the term «wushu». «Wushu is a kind of Chinese martial arts, which becomes a modern sport, based on the traditional techniques of boxing and fencing, acrobatics, various breathing exercises» [15, 19].

According to competition rules, Wushu is subdivided into the following disciplines:

Athletic wushu (taolu) – performances are held on the carpet, participants compete in the performance of complex movements, consisting of fighting techniques, complex kicks, with the addition of acrobatic elements.

Traditional wushu (wushu-chuantun) – performances also take place on the carpet. It differs from wushu taolu with a number of different martial arts styles and a large number of used conventional weapons. This discipline shows a great number

of strokes, cuttings, and other techniques than the acrobatic elements do.

Wushu-Sanda (sanshou) – is a version of unarmed combat (like kickboxing, judo), which include punching, kicking, throwing, pushing, undercuts techniques. Competitions are held in full contact on the platform [6, 15].

One of the main tasks facing the International Wushu Federation is wushu admission in the Olympic Games. It would be a turning point in the history of ancient martial art.

One of international sport organization should perform series of acts, aimed at its development in order to become the part of the Olympic movement. Requirements of the IOC for the international sport organizations mean that the international federation should:

- establish and enforce, in accordance with the Olympic spirit, the rules concerning the practice of their respective sports and to ensure their application;
- ensure the development of their sports throughout the world;
- contribute to the achievement of the goals set out in the Olympic Charter, in particular by way of the spread of Olympism and Olympic education;
- support the IOC in the review of candidatures for organizing the Olympic Games for their respective sports;
- assume the responsibility for the control and direction of their sports at the Olympic Games;
- establish the Olympic program in their respective sports by including or deleting disciplines or events [11].

To determine, what the wushu's prospects have to be included in the program of the Olympic Games, it is important to consider the sequence of events, showing the interest of organizations in this process.

In 2005, after the international championship in Tokyo, there was a meeting of members of the International Wushu Federation Committee, where a plan for further development of the sport has been discussed. At that time participants unanimously agreed that the holding Olympic Wushu Tournament alongside with the Olympic Games in Beijing would create favorable conditions for admission of wushu in the Olympic program [12, 18].

In 2006, the International Olympic Committee decided to hold the Olympic Wushu Tournament alongside with the Olympic Games in 2008 in Beijing, in accordance with the requirements of the Olympic program.

In 2008, during this tournament our athlete Darya Tarasova, the winner of European and World Championships, was particularly distinguished by her execution. Darya received the highest score in her discipline and excited general admiration of the host country spectators. The result of this demonstrative competition was the recognition of wushu as a sport adopted for consideration and admission in the Olympic program [1, 7]. Later, Darya Tarasova became a wushu representative in the official delegation of the IWUF (International Wushu Federation), and the Olympic Wushu Ambassador.

So, after 2008, the list of sports which can be included into the Olympic program had already been secured, the IOC decided to form a list of sports that would be taken for consideration for admission. For a long time, this list has contained seven sports (rock climbing, wakeboarding, roller sports, squash, karate, baseball and softball, wushu), which can enter into the program of the Olympic Games in 2020 and 2024 [6, 7, 12].

In 2014, the Youth Olympic Games were held in Nanjing. During these competitions wushu became the part of an experimental program called Sports Lab – an interactive showcase of four sports: wushu, skateboarding, roller-sport and sport climbing. The athletes demonstrated performances of their sports, and then everyone could try oneself in it. There was another step to ensure special attention of the International Olympic Committee members for wushu [5, 9, and 10].

It's important to say about the work of the Russian Wushu Federation activity, aimed at attracting the attention of the IOC to the sport. During the 13th World Wushu Championships in Jakarta, Indonesia, the Congress of the International Wushu Federation (IWUF) voted unanimously to hold the 14th World Championship in 2017 in the capital of Tatarstan, Kazan and the European Championship in 2016, in Moscow Wushu Palace, a unique sports complex built specifically for practicing and holding international competitions in this sport.

Moreover, the Congress of European Wushu Federation (EWUF) also voted for the nomination Gleb Muzrukov to the position of EWUF President. Moreover, Darya Tarasova's election as a chairman of IWUF athletes' commission is one more proof of the Russian wushu's growing prestige on the international arena [2, 3 and 13].

But there is also so called "flip side". Recently, Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), taekwondo, karate and kickboxing competitions have been widely spread. This is due to strong financial support of foreign organizers and founders. Schools of these martial arts have become a large industry of show business and they take all the new efforts to strengthen their positions and continue their expansion by organizing massive galas and international tournaments, providing a lot of money on training and coaching stuff.

With growing contention of these sports, the popularity of wushu, as well as its understanding is reduced, which adversely affects on wushu [4, 10]. By comparing the performances of athletes in tao-lu, chuantun and sanda disciplines, it can be seen such gymnastic elements as twist jumping, landing in splits, throwing weapons in the air, holding the balance. These exercises don't realize practical methods of combat in wushu. They appeared at the time when Chinese government had restricted the development of hard and cruel aspects of wushu, and were keen to direct its development on the way of recreation gymnastics and demonstration exercises. That's why some people don't accept wushu as a martial art [14, 17 and 19].

It should be emphasized that wushu is «martial arts» in its name and origin, and replace wushu with gymnastics or sporting events would mean to kill the spirit of wushu itself, deprive it of its inner content and meaning, finally, losing the most important components of this holistic knowledge system about human being. This means that removing the competitive practices of most of the acrobatic and gymnastic elements, we see that «martial arts», which wushu has been until the 20th century [6, 15].

Recently, there was a tendency to hold wushu taolu competitions alongside with wushu sanshou ones. This practice has recently started to develop in China, as well as in some other countries. The organization of «two in one» events is usually ex-

pressed by representatives of wushu taolu. This indicates that they want to restore their previous positions when they were absolute lawmakers in the world of wushu. Representatives of wushu taolu would like to revive their invented taolu "techniques" on the growing popularity of wushu sanshou. So, all these negative effects don't contribute to the proper development of wushu. So, that's why wushu federations should prevent and «struggle» against these effects [4, 16].

The revival of this kind of wushu, a proper understanding of its spirit, forms and content, the adaptation of techniques and methods of training to modern conditions of life, makes it possible to bring a lot of new and valuable in harmonious development of the human being, allows to use the enormous potential of wushu in the rise of the physical, moral and cultural level of people.

The growing wushu's popularity in the world, the high-ranking competitions of wushu taolu and sanda, and finally adopted the International Olympic Committee decision to include wushu into the program of demonstration performances of the upcoming Olympic Games need to pay close attention to the development of this wonderful her-

itage of Chinese culture, containing in itself not only the combat assignment, but also inexhaustible potential recovery techniques created over thousands of years and based on the achievements of Chinese traditional medicine [15,17,18].

**CONCLUSION** To summarize, it should be noted that every year number of fans and sportsmen of this martial art is growing worldwide, and the greater the number of events and festivals in this sport are held. It has beneficial effect on the development of wushu in the world, as for any sport, a large number of enthusiasts stimulate the progress:

- wushu is included in the list of sports taken for consideration of admission in the program of next Olympic Games;
- the training level of European athletes is increased and they are less inferior than the Chinese ones;
- the activity of Russian and European Wushu Federations is directed to improve facilities and organizing process;
- promotion of this sport helps to increase number of supporters and athletes.

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#### СВЕДЕНИЯ ОБ АВТОРАХ:

Рябенков Руслан Дмитриевич – студент 3-го курса (кафедра бокса и тяжелой атлетики) Волгоградской государственной академии физической культуры, e-mail: 13inkv@mail.ru;

Фомина Жанна Владимировна – кандидат филологических наук, доцент кафедры иностранных языков Волгоградской государственной академии физической культуры, e-mail: zhannaformina13@yandex.ru.