

In the Name of Beauty and Health: Freikörperkultur (Nudism) as a Trend in China (1920s-1930s)

From the late 1920s to the mid-1930s, a considerable amount of visual materials (images, films) as well as writings contributed to introducing nudism in China, which was known originally as *Freikörperkultur* in Germany. Some Chinese celebrities, such as Hong Shen and Tang Ying, practiced nudist swimming and sun bathing, which was reported in pictorials.

This research project will trace the transcultural process of how nudism was widespread as a trend from Germany to China, and explore the historical background of the discourse on nudism in China, why and how nudism was visualized and discussed in media, how a new body trend was shaped. I will argue that although depicting nudist life (sport, dancing...) initially joined the mega trend of visualizing unclothed bodies in pictorials such as *Beiyang huabao*, for example, it actually also formed a trend of discussing/popularizing nudism in the public sphere itself. Beauty and health were regarded as the essential values in this discourse. However, it was not only the result influenced by the corresponding ideology of German *Freikörperkultur*, but also the result of asymmetrical negotiations, in which various agents - readers, publishing houses, editors and advertising firms - were involved.