



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

(From left to right): Ivana Ardelia Irmanto of Indonesia shows her skills in the women's wushu all-round *nandao* competition at the Asian Games on Saturday. Lin Fan of China competes in the women's wushu *nanquan*. Leung Man Chun of Hong Kong competes in the men's wushu *changquan* competition.

'Long Fist' champ eyeing movie career

HUMBLE CHAMPION WAS A CLASS AHEAD OF RIVALS ON WAY TO GAMES' FIRST GOLD

By TANG YUE
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — Yuan Xiaochao has become an overnight celebrity in China after he claimed the first gold medal of the Guangzhou Games, but he is far from satisfied despite his near-flawless performance in the *changquan* (long fist) discipline of the wushu competition on Saturday.

"Of course I'm happy to win the first gold medal at the Asiad. I'm just not the kind of person who wears his heart on his sleeve," said the 22-year-old, who scored 9.78 points and harbors dreams of following his heroes Jet Li and Jackie

Chan into the local movie industry.

"There's always so much to improve," he said. "I just want to hone my skills and concentrate on my training. The movie thing is on the backburner for now."

Yuan flashed his fighting credentials to *Lethal Weapon 4* villain Li, himself a former national wushu champion, at the Beijing Olympics two years ago, when wushu was staged as a demonstration sport. Yuan won the *changquan* event while Li watched from the stands.

In Guangzhou on Saturday, only one minor slip-up marred



WUSHU

Yuan's performance at the Nansha Gymnasium. In the buildup to the competition, even his closest rivals conceded that no one else had the speed or skills to match him.

The Shandong native comes from a line of winners. His uncle and coach, Yuan Xindong, triumphed at the same event at the 2002 Busan Asian Games, before he passed the baton to the 18-year-old in Doha in 2006.

This came one year after the teenager won his first world title at the Hanoi World Championships in 2005, a feat he repeated in 2007 in Beijing.

Yuan said he now pays more attention to the development of the sport as a whole.

"I'm happy to see so many reporters here because it shows the popularity of wushu," he said. Silver medalist Daisuke Ichikizaki from Japan expressed similar sentiments.

"Four years ago, I took part in the Doha Asian Games and finished 11th. I'm really happy to achieve this today," said Ichikizaki, who scored 9.72. "None of the martial arts athletes in Japan have professional status. I hope my medal helps promote martial arts back in my country."

Iranian Ehsan Peyghambari,

who is coached by China's Mu Ning, seized bronze on the first day of competition at the games with a score of 9.70.

Later on Saturday, Lin Fan made it a Chinese double when she won the *nanquan/nandao* all-round title with a score of 19.80, adding the Asian Games crown to her 2007 world title.

Indonesia's Ivana Irmanto took silver with 18.92. Malaysia's Cheau Xuen netted bronze and early favorite Yuen Ka Ying of Hong Kong, last year's world silver medalist, finished fourth after a series of minor errors derailed her bid to top the podium.

History jerked away from disappointed Wu

By TANG YUE
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — Despite winning the gold medal in Saturday's men's 56kg weightlifting competition, China's Wu Jingbiao was disappointed after failing to break the Asian clean and jerk record owned by Halil Mutlu of Turkey.

In the event's opening section, Wu won the gold by lifting a total of 285 kg — 9 kg more than his

nearest rival, Cha Kumchol of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

However, after breaking the snatch record, Wu failed to lift 160 kg in his second and third clean and jerk attempts.

"Although I won the gold today, the result is really a tragedy. The snatch was okay, but the clean and jerk was poor," said the 21-year-old.



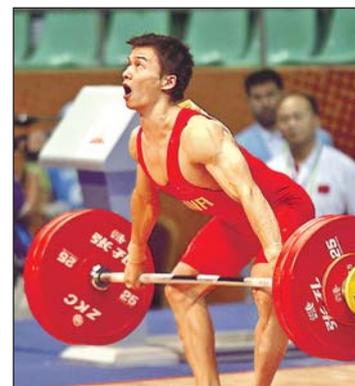
WEIGHTLIFTING

"I had less than two months to recover after the World Championships, otherwise I should have had a better performance," said Wu, who won his first world title with a personal best of 292 kg at September's Worlds in Antalya, Turkey.

However, it is still far from the 305 kg record held by one of the sport's most celebrated athletes, Mutlu.

He won three consecutive Olympics from 1996 to 2004 as well as five world titles.

"Like every weightlifting athlete, I admire Mutlu so much," said Wu, who started lifting at the age of 11 in 2000. "His world record is extremely hard to break. But I will bear it in mind and I'll try my best. I can't promise I can make it in a few years, but that goal will surely make me work harder in the future."



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Gold winner Wu Jingbiao of China competes in the men's under-56kg category.