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## **Hai Karate and Kung Fuey: Early martial arts tropes in British advertising**

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on the responsibility of advertising messages to authentically mirror and reflect British audience feelings towards 'the Other' and discusses caricatures of the Chinese in advertising through early martial arts tropes. It provides contextual background to Chinese depictions on screen in Britain before illustrating martial arts representations on print and television advertising during the 1970s. The paper includes examples of two popular brands in Britain: Pfizer's 'Hai Karate' (1973) and Golden Wonder's 'Kung Fuey' (1974-76) to illustrate colonial notions of the 'Oriental' during the 1960s and '70s. This interdisciplinary study borrows from ethical representation and martial arts discourse in film and TV, to explain the exoticisation and exclusion of the Chinese in the context of authenticity and appropriation in advertising.

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## Introduction

The paper begins with an historical overview of early Chinese settlement in Britain. With a population of approximately 400,000, the Chinese in Britain represent the third largest minority group yet their representation in advertising remains largely unexplored, despite a strong body of academic work on British Chinese cultural identity (Parker, 1995; Song, 1999), a growing body of research on Chinese feature films in Hollywood (Shu, 2003; Chan, 2009) and martial arts discourse (Farrer and Whalen-Bridge, 2011; Bowman, 2013). Whilst ethical advertising from the perspective of gender portrayals in Hong Kong magazine advertising exists (Chan and Cheng, 2012), very little is known about the Chinese as a silent minority population in Britain yet the common stereotype that the Chinese are 'high-kicking chop-socky martial artists' can be found in all forms of media (Wen 2018). We ask how martial arts representation is constructed in British advertising, enquire into what may be the consequences for authenticity and appropriation for this silent minority.

The Chinese diaspora has a long history of migration to the West and their patterns of settlement in Europe is shaped by the British Empire in the Far East (Benton and Gomez, 2007). Barclay Price's recent publication 'The Chinese in Britain, A History of Visitors and Settlers' (2019) details the industriousness of the early settlers, as well as the level of persecution faced by this community in the host countries. Recognising the heterogeneity of Chinese communities abroad, this paper starts with an understanding of Chinese migration to Britain from the former colony of Hong Kong during the 1960s and 1970s. This was a period when British palates changed, fuelling demand for exotic cuisine, resulting in the growth in ethnic catering trades that saw the expansion of Chinese restaurants and takeaways in every town and city in Britain. This context paints a different picture of the British Chinese population when compared to their 'model minority' American cousins.

1970s advertising in Britain was also a hotbed of creativity with advertising greats, such as Alan Parker of Collett Dickenson Pearce (Cinzano's 'Leonard and Joan', 1978-1983) and Hugh Hudson for Saatchi and Saatchi (British Airway's 'Face', 1989) responsible for some of the iconic ads in Britain, before extending their craft to Hollywood. As martial arts gained popularity in mainstream Britain around the 1970s, this paper includes rhetoric about the prevalence of martial arts as a means of representing the Chinese on advertising on British TV. The study also requires an understanding of the way the British Chinese community has been portrayed on TV and film during 1960s and 1970s in order to understand how martial arts tropes in advertising came to represent this silent minority. This research is therefore informed by martial arts discourse and ethical representations on TV and film that have seeped into the advertising lexicon. It also provides a useful platform for us to question the authenticity of these ads and the extent they have served to amplify the stereotypes of the Chinese in Britain at the time.

The study aims to investigate meaning construction in early martial arts representation in British advertising during 1960s-1970s as a consequence of the way the British Chinese community has been portrayed on TV and film. It will address the following questions:

*What forms of martial arts representations occurred in early British advertising?*

*Where do these martial arts tropes come from?*

*What was the intention behind the advertisements that featured martial arts tropes?*

*How authentic are these martial arts representations?*

Building on the theoretical foundations of ethical representational frameworks as proposed by Schroeder and Borgerson (2005), a selection of early martial arts tropes will be discussed. The paper, by investigating early influences of film and TV on martial arts representation in advertising during the 1960s and 1970s, allows us to re-ignite rhetoric concerning yesteryear's 'yellow face' to more recent debates about appropriation and authenticity through 'whitewashing'.

### **The Act of Representation in 1970s Britain**

The 1970s was an era where racial politics gripped Britain. Enoch Powell's 1968 'Rivers of Blood' speech (as a response to the 1948 British Nationality Act that afforded commonwealth minorities British citizenship), ignited racial tensions as immigration to Britain from the Commonwealth countries started to rise (Tomlinson, 2018). The Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 (previously introduced to limit immigration) provided British citizenship and Race Relations Act 1965 and 1968 protection from discrimination. The Race Relations Act 1976 prohibited racial discrimination based on colour, nationality, ethnic and national origins (Crown, Bray and Earle, 2010). Race relations clearly played a key part in how mainstream media portrayed immigrants in the 1970s.

Concerns about the 'whiteness' and negative portrayals of immigrants on British television programmes during the 1960s and 1970s led to initiatives – such as BBC conferences in 1965 – to deal with racial tensions and conflicts relating to Afro-Caribbean and Asian immigrants, as well as fostering integration and promoting a better representation of immigrants (Waters, 2015). The BFI (British Film Institute) 'Race and the Sitcom' provides an historic potted history of British televisual depictions of race from the 1960s where stereotypes, racist attitudes, 'browning up' white actors and racist name calling were commonplace (Waters, 2015). These 'Enoch Powell sitcoms' (Schaffer, 2010) included: 'Till

Death Us Do Part' (BBC, 1965-75), 'Curry and Chips' (ITV, 1969), 'The Melting Pot' (BBC, 1975), 'Love Thy Neighbour' (ITV 1972-76), 'It Ain't Half Hot, Mum' (BBC, 1974-81), 'Dad's Army' (BBC, 1968-77) (Duguid, nd). ITV's sitcom 'Mind Your Language' (1977-79) with its politically incorrect stereotypical representations of people of colour was one of the first TV shows to feature different nationalities and 'racial caricatures' were at its core (Duguid, nd). Although these sitcoms raised public consciousness towards race and immigration, they also reinforced racism. To counteract these racialised depictions and better represent BAME communities, Campaign against Racism in the Media (CARM) was established in 1976 (Schaffer, 2014).

### **The Oriental on screen**

Despite legislative efforts, the Chinese remain resolutely silent as a minority group (Pan, 1998). Knox (2019) investigated the televisual representations of British Chinese identities in TV drama where 'Asian stock characters and tropes, and the use of stereotypes and reductive tropes' meant many British Chinese actors were cast as criminals or in fantasy, action and crime genres. These stereotypical tropes have their origins in early media portrayal that over emphasised opium fuelled dens in London's Limehouse of the 19th century, and the 'sly, inscrutable and unscrupulous' Chinese as imagined by Sax Rohmer in the popular Fu Manchu novels of 1913-1959 which were translated to the silver screen (Frayling, 2014; Price, 2019:196).

Sinophilia came in the form of Charlie Chan films in the 1930s and 40s with the main character cast by white actors made to look Chinese (Richards, 2017). The practice of 'yellow face' was also evident in a BBC Doctor Who episode 'The Talons of Weng Chiang' (1977) and Ming the Merciless villain in 'Flash Gordon' (1980) – these symbolised 'the West's fear of being overrun by the 'wily Oriental' (Yeh, 2000; Blair, 2018). These 'yellow peril Fu Manchu representational discourse' were



also a common feature in action dramas, such as 'The Avengers' (1961–69) and 'The Saint' (1962–69).

Although the above depictions occurred when stereotypical representations of minorities were rife across TV and film, entertainment from Japan provided alternative representations of the Chinese, albeit played by Japanese actors, which afforded some level of 'authenticity'. For instance, 'The Water Margin' (1977), a Japanese adaptation of a Chinese classic novel, was noted for its incongruous dubbing with British actors imitating 'Oriental accents' (IMBd; White, 2017); and 'Monkey' (1978), another Japanese adaptation of Chinese folklore.

Prior to these Japanese imports, samurai films had already made an impression on British audiences during the 1950s, with film director Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954) fuelling a demand for foreign films, and influencing American westerns, such as *The Magnificent Seven* (1960).

Burt Kwouk's role as Cato in *The Pink Panther* (1964–1992) brought martial arts comedy to a wider audience. Although Kwouk's popularity paved the way for more East Asian actors on screen, it was not until the 1980s that BBC1 sought to break down barriers with 'The Chinese Detective' (1981–82) featuring a Chinese leading actor for the first time on mainstream TV (Chan and Willis, 2012; Knox, 2019). Although the aim of the drama was to reduce racial stereotyping, its inspiration came from the Charlie Chan detective series of the 1930s where the practice of 'yellow face' was commonplace. On British TV, Chinese representations were clearly subjected to 'push-pull contradictory constructions' (Knox, 2019).

Pre-1970s, Japanese styles (principally judo and jujutsu) were popular in the West, before Chinese influence onscreen took over with the Shaw Brothers' success with *King Boxer* (1972) (Hunt, 2003). For the British 'kung-fu' generation hanging on Kwai Chang Caine's

every word in 'Kung Fu' (1972) and following Bruce Lee's rise in Hollywood with *Enter The Dragon* (1973), martial arts featuring Chinese actors (real or imagined), was on terrestrial TV everywhere. Animation in the form of Hanna-Barbera's crime fighter 'Hong Kong Phooey' (1977–79) featuring an accident-prone anthropomorphic dog. With his red kimono, eye mask and *The Hong Kong Book of Kung Fu*, Penry is transformed from yellow belt to a martial arts superhero. These popular TV and film references led to many karate chop imitations in playgrounds across the UK and demands for martial arts classes grew (Teo, 1997; Hunt, 2003; Bowman, 2013).

This paper uncovers how the portrayals of Chinese on TV and film may have origins for their subsequent stereotyping in British TV commercials of the 1960s to 1970s. The influence of martial arts tropes in TV and film mirrors the move away from black and white to colour television from September 1955 to November 1969 (Roderick, 2015). The earliest British adverts that featured Chinese actors occurred during the 1970s, therefore the 1960s–1970s are important eras for the current study.

## Representing Britain's silent community

All representation uses language or signs to communicate meaningfully with others (Hall, 2013a), and advertising's use of 'signifying practices and symbolic systems' produces meanings in ad messages that allow us to 'make sense of who we are' (Woodward, 1997). Adverts, by providing audiences with images that they can identify with, therefore influence the way in which a culture may shape its past and current identity. Clearly, images of culture and Chineseness in the media affect how the community's identity is shaped (Louie, 2002).

To set the context for this paper, the Chinese concentration in the catering trade in Britain provide important clues to the way this population is perceived by mainstream

media. The community's relative invisibility, perceived self-sufficiency and insularity is often compared to other ethnic minority groups (Pan, 1998; Chan, Cole and Bowpitt, 2007). Their highly dispersed settlement patterns in every town and city in Britain are consequences of the community's concentrations in family run catering businesses – particularly for those who migrated from Hong Kong to Britain during the 1960s and 1970s (Watson, 1977; Baker, 1994).

Stereotype occurs when people are mentally placed into categories or 'reduced to a few essentials, fixed in nature by a few, simple characteristics' (Hall, 1997). 'Types' help to classify people into neat categories that facilitate decoding where a person's role, class, gender, age, nationality, racial group and personalities are interrogated (Hall, 2013b). This reductionist approach, coupled with exaggeration and simplification of differences divides us into groups such as those who are accepted and 'the others', who do not belong. The consequence is an ethnocentric imbalance of power towards others, as exemplified by Western cultural hegemony or dominance over the Orient (Said, 1978; Hall 2013b). Stereotypical advertising tropes for the British Chinese may typically involve their depictions as Chinese takeaway owners and chefs (as discussed by Bowman (2020) in this special issue).

Social learning theories also suggests that young impressionable audiences learn from 'vicarious role models' or celebrities, picking up behaviours and attitudes from observing them (Bailey, 2006). Audiences who mimic or imitate the 'accepted and expected' behaviours of their role models would eventually re-enact their ideas, attitudes and behaviours (Bailey, 2006). Cultivation theories suggests that the way audiences are depicted affects the way 'they perceive themselves and relate to others' and that these have implications for their social reality (Gerbner et al., 1986; Bailey, 2006). On the other hand, advertising also has a role to play in distorting reality and this is said to be particularly

pronounced when audiences have limited contact with those depicted (Gerbner et al., 1986; Morgan and Signorielli, 1990; Taylor and Stern, 1997). In addition, resonance is exacerbated when the audience can see their realities aligning closely to what is shown on TV advertising, particularly when (1) they can see similarities between themselves and the models, and (2) if they have experienced the issues as featured in the adverts first-hand themselves (Bailey, 2006). In summary, the use of Chinese characters or models in stereotypical roles in advertising have an effect on how the Chinese community is perceived by the majority, as well as how the Chinese see themselves and ultimately, the transformation of their cultural identities from what was witnessed onscreen (Hall, 1989).

Appiah (2001) contends that ethnic groups exhibiting stronger ethnic identity or stronger cultural values prefer ad messages that featured these cultural values. The question is what is Chinese cultural value? Ethnic audiences also respond to adverts that feature different races – though this was found to be dependent on what is being depicted and the degree of cultural clues, namely model ethnicity similarity in the adverts as mentioned above (Green, 1999; Appiah, 2001). TV images of the Chinese that depict martial arts therefore extend beyond cultural identity and modelling behaviour (Bailey, 2006) to the use of 'people like us' as representations of 'cultural value'.

As a fluid concept, identity may change over time and this depends on what is being encountered and who a person is interacting with. In the case of the Chinese in Britain, representations ranged from the 'extremes of Sinophilia to Sinophobia' (Parker, 1995). For Britain's fragmented and highly dispersed community, the isolation that catering as a livelihood presented, and the 'intercultural encounter' with non-Chinese customers served to heighten 'cultural differences between self and others' (Parker, 1994). This means that British Chinese communities, given their dispersed settlement patterns in

Britain, find their own identities precariously shaped and influenced by mainstream media.

Schroeder and Borgerson (2005, p.584) discuss how the selection of imageries that typify racial representations also affect 'dignity and historical integrity'. In other words, understanding the historical, as well as cultural and social contexts are crucial to our ability to interpret meaning from representational studies. The authors' framework of representational conventions uses 'tacit interpretations' of imageries using the dimensions of 'faceism', idealisation, exoticisation and exclusion (Schroeder and Borgerson, 2005). Hollywood films, for example, either exclude minorities in films or distort their realities by, for example, depicting the Chinese as martial artists or Triad gang members.

### **Martial arts representation in film**

Martial arts as a genre in Hollywood has evolved into various sub genres, from the more violent political depictions of 'street fighting' to the arthouse 'wuxia' (sword fighting). No longer solely the domain of East Asian filmmakers, 'mainstream western movie studios also started to produce Asian martial arts-influenced films' such as *Karate Kid* (1984, 1986, 1989, 1994) (Hiramoto, 2012).

In terms of cultural transmission, the early period during the 1920s and 1970s saw gis (karate uniforms) as a main staple of representation. Americans saw martial arts as a 'signifier of all things Asian in the West – a marker of difference' (Krug, 2001). As a cultural marker in Anglo American cinema, these action sequences were translated into film, books, TV and adverts. This was followed by other studies into martial arts and media discourse (Farrer and Whalen-Bridge, 2011; Bowman, 2010). Krug (2001) contends that Anglo-American culture benefited from karate and other Asian martial arts coming to the West and, coupled with the entertainment industry, embraced its popularity.

During the 1960s and 1970s, mainstream access to martial arts was largely through film and TV representations and publications that focussed on Western hegemony over the East (Krug, 2001 as cited in Bowman, 2010). By looking at the historical development of martial arts in Britain, we can start to understand how its representations in Britain and associated depiction in films and television subsequently led to its popularity in advertising.

Many have recognised Bruce Lee's contribution to popularising martial arts in the 1970s and how this forged 'British ideas of Chineseness' and influenced 'British Chinese people's self-identities' (Chan and Willis, 2012, p.34). Hunt (2003, cited in North, 2005) contends that authenticity in martial arts films refers to the need to retain imageries that feature the physical body as pressures for CGI visualisations increase. According to Foster (2005), appropriation in film provides support that 'appropriation of an Asian male action star's corporeal style reduces Asianness to a generalizable and appropriate set of signifiers' (Foster, 2005). Discussion of authenticity also centres on the racial dynamics of the actors (Feng, 2009), how that actor is 'read' (Feng, 2009, p.14), and 'multiracial typecasting'.

Despite this, marginalisation or exclusion from 'hegemonic masculinity' exists where Chinese martial artists are portrayed as 'masculine figures' with 'homo erotic displays of the male body', or 'sexualized' and 'fetishized' (Foster, 2005; Hiramoto, 2012). In addition, 'kinesthesia' or movement art that involves the body refers to the 'choreographed movement patterns' typically found in martial arts films (Foster, 2005: 194).

Finally, 'mediatisation and intertextuality' means that, although the public today is aware of the link with masculinity, they may not associate the kung fu styles with its Chinese origins (Louie, 2002; Hiramoto 2012). Although Chinese ethnicities of the film's characters may be essential, 'their Chineseness appears to have been

transformed and appropriated for the western market' through the more fluid cultural reference or 'metroethnicity' (Hiramoto, 2012).

### **Appropriation, authenticity and stereotypes**

Cultural appropriation and colonialism go hand in hand. For a dominant culture to take or 'adopt' aspects of a subordinate culture has gained notoriety of late (Ziff and Rao, 1997). But this typifies Britain's colonial relationship with China and Chinese culture, resulting in the dilution of cultural markers over time (Wong, 2013; Rogers, 2006). In martial arts discourse, dominant western culture has appropriated elements of its colonial cousin without 'reciprocity, permissions or compensation' (Rogers 2006).

On the other hand, authenticity concerns Western audiences' entitlement for a cultural experience that is as close to the 'real deal' as possible. 'Authenticity is ascribed to, rather than inscribed in, a performance' and asking who is 'being authenticated by that performance' is key (Moore, 2002: 220). It is therefore important to consider both culture and history for clues of the politics of authentic representation and who the audience is (Zukin, 2008; Gunning, 2012).

Clearly, martial arts discourse associates its popularity with both authenticity and appropriation, and advertising that uses these forms of representation has a role to play in contributing to identity and cultural appropriation (Feng, 2009). In his focus on recent Hollywood martial arts depictions, Tierney (2006) argues for a better understanding of western appropriations of what is a traditional Far Eastern art form and calls for more questioning of white bias and dominance in martial arts representations.

Hall (1989) contended that films have a key role to play in the shaping of the cultural identities of minorities yet the limited repertoire of images of Chinese in the media

requires an appreciation of cultural production (Barrett et al., 2018). As advertising mirrors cultures and society, the implications with the lack of appropriate representations of a silent, highly dispersed minority population means that stereotypical representations may be amplified (Pollay, 1986; Hall, 2013a). As mentioned above, the ethnicity of the models used in advertising may also influence the perceptions of the brands being promoted (Cohen, 1992). Race and identity are key similarity factors of importance to ethnic minorities and advertisers must therefore understand the link between these factors on advertising that feature actors or models of different races. Audiences who identify with the advert and understand the message, as well as perceive similarities with the characters or models, may have more positive attitudes about the adverts and the products being promoted (Appiah, 2001). The author argues for a renewed emphasis on decolonising the narrative surrounding martial arts representations as demands for better Chinese representations in films start to take effect.

### **Visualising martial arts representations**

Although advertising meaning is notoriously difficult to decode due to its polysemic nature, a post structuralist approach that moves away from debates about whether the advertising is accurate, truthful, or shows reality would enable us to embrace the historically based work, understand the ways in which representations take place, the assumptions behind them and the kinds of sense making about the world. This paper focuses on examples of martial arts tropes in advertising from 1960s-1970s that captured the kinaesthetics of the representation of martial arts. The advertisements selected have a martial art focus with or without Chinese or East Asian actors and feature, for example the training hall, gi (karate suit), Chinese restaurant or laundry setting or Chinese actors. Advertisements were also selected based on how conceptually



interesting or how socially significant they were (Rose, 2012). As part of the analysis, storyboards and advertising copies providing back stories to the advertising messages will be utilised.

The study, undertaken as part of the lead researcher's doctoral thesis, utilises interdisciplinary approaches. Schroeder's critical visual analysis provided systematic assessment of typical or recurrent tropes in martial arts advertisements such as, manifestations of race, ethnicity, authenticity and appropriation (Schroeder, 2006). In addition, textual and critical discourse analysis (CDA) accounts for the media's response to racialised ads (Van Leeuwen, 2000; McKee, 2006).

CDA studies how power and inequality are 'enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk' (Van Dijk, 2001, p.466). The focus of this study is to analyse the way people talk and think about martial arts, specifically: the tone of the debates and arguments, whether appropriation was noted, what words were used to describe racial politics, advertising image choices and how these adverts were received (Hall, 1996). News discourse including coverage by journalists and editorial content and reviews identified discursive frames embedded in the text that are informative of, and informed by, historical context.

These reviews provided insight into discourse surrounding journalistic representations about diversity and representation from 'yellow face' to 'whitewashing' (Hall, 1997; Molina-Guzmán, 2010). In addition to this, commentaries and press coverage that evaluated how the advertisements have been inspired by TV and film provided scope for wider cultural meanings in the use of martial arts representations.

Data obtained during the periods of the selected ads by industry experts, ad directors, ad critics in archives for industry publications, such as: Campaign, D&AD (Design and Art Direction) Annuals and *The Sunday Times*

*Magazine* (TSTM) helped to triangulate the data (McKee, 2006). Martial arts representations that address the importance of an East Asian aesthetic and martial arts discourse that helps 'order the texts and images of martial bodily training and its entourage of cultural side effects' as projected onto the East Asian body are key to our understanding of how these have been applied to TV film and advertising (Farrer and Whalen-Bridge, 2011). These textual or thematic approaches not only accounted for polysemic interpretative strategies typical of ethical representational studies but also hegemony ideologies that may underpin advertising messages.

The plethora of images purporting to represent the Chinese have already been discussed at length by Bowman in this special issue. This paper provides historical backdrop for 1960s and 1970s gleaned from coverage in *The Sunday Times Magazine*, before brand and agency perspectives exemplified in a range of print and TV adverts are used to illustrate martial arts tropes from a creative advertising standpoint. The advertisements are discussed chronologically in this paper.

## 1960s Colonising Judo-Karate

Popular media publications, such as *The Sunday Times Magazine* (hereafter referred to as 'TSTM' or 'magazine'), featured the rise of communist China and Maoism (as well as conflicts in Cambodia and Vietnam) during the 1960s. These stories have a clear colonial bias as illustrated by examples of its headlines: 'How China went red' and 'The roots of revolution' (TSTM issue dated 26th Feb 1967); special issue 'Chairman of China' (23rd March 1969); and 'The Day the unthinkable happened' focusing on the Far East Asian countries of Japan, Singapore and China (30th April 1969).

Whilst British journalism was preoccupied with communism in China, New York agency Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB) had already begun to develop its 'Think Small' campaign

for Volkswagen Beetle with the subsequent release of the iconic 'Lemon' print advert in 1961. This kick-started the creative advertising revolution in London's Soho during the 1960's (Nixon, 2017).

The interest in Japan took off in Britain during the 1960s, partly influenced by the appeal of Akira Kurosawa's samurai films with cultural mavens. Japan was seen as THE place to visit with print advertising for Japan Airlines (JAL) appearing frequently during the 1960s (as well as Indian Airlines in the late 1960s). It is plausible that the rise in economic and cultural capital of Japan and subsequent business travel to the Far East led to the popularity of karate and judo to Britain.

Judo and karate's popularity were reflected in the way the magazine referred to the sport. For example, 'One Day in Cambridge' showed the university's Ladies Judo Club (22nd January 1967) and New York City Councilman's comment that 'most of my men do karate', in 'Tony Imperiale takes up the white man's burden' (16th November 1968). In an Army Careers advert feature, a prominent image of the officers executing a judo throw can be seen in 'The Making of an Army Officer' (25th May 1968). Japanese martial arts appeared to be enjoyed by certain demographics of the population, with judo being much more visible in Britain.

## 1960s Martial arts tropes

**Kellogg's Frosties 'Judo' (1966)**  
**Agency: J. Walter Thompson (JWT)**

The earliest TV commercial to feature martial arts was for the American company Kellogg's and its 'Frosties' brand. The sugar-coated breakfast cereal cornflakes were first introduced in the US in 1952. JWT's relationship with the brand goes back four decades. Originally named Kellogg's 'Sugar Frosted Flakes', it was rebranded 'Frosties' in time for the British market in 1954. Both print and TV commercials feature the iconic animated character Tony the Tiger and his

infamous slogan "They're Grrr-eat!" voiced by American Dallas McKennon.



Storyboard: Kellogg's Frosties 'Judo' (1966)  
(Source: BFI)

JWT devised a series of black and white TV adverts in the 1960s for Kellogg's 'Frosted Flakes' campaign using the sports concept in the US. The commercials featured a young boy talking to Tony the Tiger, each executed in a different setting, for example: soccer ground, zoo or baseball field. The scene then cut to the boy eating out of a packet of Frosted Flakes, or milk is poured on to the cornflakes before being sprinkled with sugar. These executions always ended with the boy beating Tony at his game.

In the UK, the 'Frosties' Judo advert featured a Caucasian boy in a Gi (training suit) and belt showing off his judo prowess on Tony the Tiger. The setting is a traditional Japanese tearoom with cues such as; Japanese shoji screens, low rectangular table, bamboo plant, tatami mat flooring.

*Kellogg's Frosties 'Judo' script (1966)*

*The boy is sat on the floor next to a table.  
He is seen eating his bowl of cereals with a spoon. On the table is a box of Kellogg's Frosties. Tony the Tiger appears  
Tony: Well son, are you ready for your judo lesson? (The boy gets up)  
Boy: Yes I judo lesson (both bow)  
Tony: Let's do... (Boy judo throws Tony to the floor)  
Close up of a bowl of cereals with a box of Frosties next to it*

*Tony's voiceover (VO): Two bowls of those biggest flakes of corn with a special toasted-in sugar frosting  
Cut to Tony lying on the floor: Aww that's too much ener... (Boy grabs Tony, rolls on to his back and throws Tony over, finally trapping him behind the wall bars)  
Boy: Come on Tony have some more of those sugar Frosties – let's live it up!  
Tony (dishevelled with a black eye): Live it up? I've got to live this down first (Horn sounds as a box of Kellogg's Frosties land on Tony's head)*

Aside from the setting and the boy's uniform, there is authenticity in the way the boy is demonstrating judo etiquette: seiza style sitting posture, bowing and judo throw techniques. The American voice over is in line with the brand's tone of voice, reflecting Kellogg's global campaign strategy. The concept centres around the judo lesson and how the sugar frosted cereals gave the boy enough energy to execute not one but two judo throws on Tony the Tiger.

**Luxaflex Venetian Blinds 'Karate expert' (1966)**

European company Hunter Douglas Machinery Corporation, established in 1959 by Joe Hunter and Henry Sonnenberg, developed durable lightweight aluminium window blinds under the brand name Luxaflex for the US market before becoming market leader in Europe in 1951.

This early black and white print advert for Luxaflex in TSTM (11th May 1966) features a Japanese karate expert. His back is to the camera, he is barefoot, in a white gi, black belt and is seen attacking the blinds with 'a side swipe'. Although we cannot see his face, it is implied that he is a senior martial artist. The headline: 'We got a karate expert to tangle with a Luxaflex Venetian blind – he was a good loser' suggests that, even with his karate prowess, he was unable to destroy the blinds.



(Source: HAT)

*Luxaflex Venetian Blinds (1966) – copy*

*If you give a 'Luxaflex' Venetian blind a karate side swipe it doesn't hurt it – or dent it – or knock it out of line. The heat treated aluminium alloy slats just spring back into place.*

*'Luxaflex' venetian blinds behave themselves. They stay up when they're meant to. They fold to the exact angle you want. We believe blind making is an exact science. We're the only manufacturers who make every single part of our blinds ourselves. That's why we guarantee every 'Luxaflex' venetian blind for five whole years.*

*And we believe in exact fitting too. Every 'Luxaflex' venetian blind is made to the exact size of your window. That's why you'll find no light chinks around the side or ugly gaps at the bottom.*

*There are 29 colour shades and patterns to choose from. Sparkling unchippable colours fired to keep that colour there.*

*So if you want a blind that's worthy of your attention you'd better stipulate 'Luxaflex' venetian blinds – who knows – the man might try to sell you something else and that would never do. Write for our free colour leaflet to: Hunter Douglas Ltd., Dept. ST1, 33 Sloane Street, London S. W. 1.*



The long copy is typical of print adverts in the 1960s. It describes the brand's attributes and how a karate striking technique (the 'side swipe') does not 'dent' or 'knock it out of line'. The blind can retain its shape and form despite being attacked by a martial arts expert.

**BMK Carpets (1967-1969)**  
**Ogilvy & Mather**

BMK (Blackwood & Morton, Kilmarnock) was a Scottish company that operated between 1909 and 2005. The company was an established manufacturer of high-quality carpets – its logo featuring the gambolling lamb in most of its print adverts. In the 1960s 'BMK Judo Girl' adverts were part of a popular campaign that included print and television commercials released for both British and American markets. The concept was to show how tough and durable BMK carpets were. In one of the TV commercials, she is seen defeating a male black belt on a BMK carpet (instead of the usual judo mats). In another, BMK Girl uses her martial arts skills to defeat two intruders in her luxury apartment whilst wearing a silk or satin kimono style robe. The voiceover: 'BMK Carpets, tough, beautiful, durable, whatever you happen to throw on them' as she stands over the defeated assailant.

During 1967-1969, BMK carpets ran a series of print adverts by Ogilvy & Mather. These included 'The BMK Girl' (1967), 'Don't let the softness fool you' (1967), 'Soft yet tough as they come' (1969) and 'The soft carpet with the quiet strength' (1969):



The BMK Girl (1967)

Copy: *The BMK Girl invites you to fly around the world with BMK in the 1967 BMK magic carpet competition.*

(Source: HAT)



Don't let the softness fool you (1967):

Copy: *Don't let the softness fool you, a BMK carpet has built in muscle. (BMK the close woven company). The BMK Girl is doing her best to help you sell more BMK carpets. Are you doing your bit and using the free display material?*





Soft yet tough as they come (1969):  
Copy: *Soft yet tough as they come. Last year was the best ever for BMK carpet sales. This year we're promoting even harder, spending more money than ever before. Cash in on this by using the free display material.*



The soft carpet with the quiet strength (1969)

Burmese born Anglo-Irish actress Edwina Carroll became a household name because of the campaign. The art direction focusses on the strength and toughness of the BMK carpet as associated with the martial arts prowess of the actress/model. Despite the success of the campaign, there was often confusion in the public's mind as to what form of martial arts is featured in these adverts with some referring to judo, whilst others recall karate (despite these being different forms of Japanese martial arts).

**Maxwell House: Yardley 'Silky Pearl Lipstick offer' (1967)**

Along a similar vein to the 'BMK Girl', this black and white TV commercial also featured an attractive female in a martial arts themed advert. In this case, the commercial is promoting the offer of a free Yardley branded lipstick with the purchase of a Maxwell House instant coffee. It features the model applying lipstick whilst looking at the camera before drinking Maxwell House coffee from a mug. The final shot is of a jar of coffee and range of lipsticks with the endline 'free with Maxwell House'. The commercial is interspersed with scenes from a martial arts contest between two men in their gis.



Storyboard: Maxwell House-Yardley (1967)  
(Source: HAT)

As a quintessential English brand, Yardley moved from fragrance to cosmetics in the 1960s and was part of the 1960s vibe with the model Twiggy fronting the advertising campaigns. Sponsorship was a key communications strategy that the brand employed and clearly, the link with Maxwell

House's instant coffee brand was deemed a good partnership at the time.

### Selling the Sixties

The examples above indicate the increasing popularity of martial arts tropes on TV and print advertising during the 1960s. Casting tended to focus on Caucasian actors and models, with limited scope for Oriental actors onscreen. Authenticity was therefore exhibited in the way judo or karate were depicted (the setting, gis, etiquette, basic reference to the technique) rather than racial identifiers.

These examples showed that martial arts in the 1960s have been appropriated and taken by mainstream audiences as their own. With Britain's success in international judo competitions, it quickly became part of British culture. These campaigns were also fronted by an attractive female mirroring the sexual revolution and female empowerment of the time (York, 2020). Martial arts tropes in this era were associated with strength and durability which were easily associated to the brands in question. By the 1960s, brands were starting to exoticise Oriental sounding names, as typified by Helena Rubinstein's print advert for Tang After Shave and its headline 'Flatter him shamelessly' (TSTM 15th Dec 1968). It was around this time that Pfizer's Hai Karate aftershave was launched in America before making its way to British shores by the late 1960s.

### 1970s Exoticising the Orient

The increased coverage of minorities in TSTM during the 1970s is reflective of the revised Race Relations Act 1976 which made discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, and ethnicity unlawful (Rodrigues, 2015). The first features in the magazine about Chinese

food and Chinese communities in Britain occurred during late 1970s: 'Blossoming Lotus' was about the British Chinese (2nd February 1976); and 'The Silent Dragon' about London's Chinese community (22nd May 1977).



(Source: HAT)

In addition, 'Takeaways of the UK' (11th Sept 1977) and 'The New Cookery: Mysteries of the Orient explained' (4th Dec 1977) reflected a burgeoning interest in exotic cuisines, particularly Chinese and Indian foods as witnessed in a double page advertisement feature for Sharwood's<sup>1</sup> (Allison, 1978).

Boots pharmacy's 'Teatime at Boots' and Japan Airlines' 'The Way we still care is the way we fly' – the latter featuring a Bonsai tree (5th February 1978) – provided ample illustrations of oriental influences in advertising during this period. Increased international travel to the Far East is evidenced by the many adverts for airlines: notable examples included Singapore Airlines' strapline 'To know Singapore is to

<sup>1</sup> Sharwood's is a British food company that specialises in Asian food. It was established in 1889.



know the east' (5th Jan 1976) and Japan Airline's 'The way we are is the way we fly' featuring Japanese teenage girls in Kendo uniform (23rd October 1977). By the summer of 1972, Singapore and Malaysian Airlines started to compete with Japan Airlines for space in TSTM.



(Source: HAT)



(Source: HAT)

Japan's cinematic influence onscreen was starting to be felt (25th Nov 1979) and mixed-race relationships provided intrigue (9th Dec 1979). The inclusion of minorities in advertising is evidenced by an Air Lufthansa advert that featured a black air hostess (May 1973) and the notorious Sylvasun infamous advert for suntan medication with the headline 'We all have resistance to sunburn. Only some of us have more of it than others' (26th May 1974). Likewise, Lifespan (TSTM's lifestyle section)'s inclusion of Oriental or mixed-raced models in its features was notable (18th Sept 1977). Meriel Cooney's exotic looks featured regularly in the fashion pages: 'Feathered friends' as a native American Indian (11th July 1976) or as an oriental model in the 'Eyes of the East' feature (10th October 1976).

The 1970s overwhelming interest in China was seen from a colonial lens with magazine features about Chairman Mao, China's imperial history, 'yellow peril' and the Opium war: 'The Opium War: The British as pushers' (30th Jan 1972), 'Locking up the Yellow Peril' (4th June 1972), 'No Medals for Mao' discussing China's approach to sports (27th August 1972), and an issue entitled 'The mellowing of Mao' (3rd Dec 1972). These articles were interspersed with features about Saigon and Vietnam, 'A chat with the Chairman' (24th Oct 1979), 'East Looks West' about 'the Other China' (Taiwan) (8th May 1977), and 'The Great Haul of China' about the Terracotta soldiers (a collection of terracotta sculptures that depict the scale and size of the first Emperor of China's army) were typical (16th Dec 1979). It was not uncommon to use Mao as points of reference in advertising, for example, Dexion's advert 'Is this really what's holding up the British Industry' featuring an animation of Mao with Karl Marx (18th Sept 1977).

Colonial visualisations were aplenty with Smirnoff's Vietnam rickshaw advert (17th Dec 1972) depicting a Caucasian man against a

Far East Asian backdrop and Dormeuil's<sup>2</sup> strapline 'Oriented to embrace both style and elegance' (18th April 1976 and 2nd Feb 1976) depicting an oriental woman with a Caucasian man in a power suit. It was around this time that brands started to adopt global marketing strategies as typified by Guinness' double page spread with the headline 'A foreigner's Guide to Guinness' (May-June 1970) and the 'Guintelligence test' (24th Jan 1971) and the many Guinness print adverts in the magazines (22nd Oct 1972).

The thirst for martial arts is evidenced by mainstream press articles, such as the full page spread 'Occident by Accident' by Brian James of the Martial Arts Commission for Sportsmail's 'complete guide to the growth of martial arts' (Daily Mail 17th Feb 1977). It discussed how karate arrived in the West through the American forces based in Japan and the inaccessibility of Chinese Kung fu training, despite the popularity of the TV series 'Kung Fu' (1972-1975). Goodbody's (1977) Lifespan feature in TSTM 'Get your kicks from karate' discusses the popularity of various forms of karate for black communities in Britain in their drive for betterment, as well as speculation that their hip flexibility made training easier to endure (TSTM 27th Nov 1977).

The 1970s was also a period of increased ad literacy amongst British audiences as Cadbury's Smash Martians (1974) by Boase Massimi Pollitt and its 'For mash get Smash' slogan entertained ITV viewers. ITV's (and Channel 4's 1982) foray into commercial television reflected the trend for the lucrative commercials targeted at mass audiences (Curtis, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Established in 1842, Dormeuil manufactures and supplies English cloth worldwide.

## 1970s Martial arts tropes

### Whitbread Tankard 'Judo' (1971) Collett Dickenson Pearce (CDP)

Whitbread's Tankard was one of the key players in keg bitter in the market for British beers. It appealed to younger drinkers who would pay more for a premium brand. Advertising in the 1970s promoted keg over cask bitters as the former was more expensive. Keg bitter's popularity was eventually overtaken by lager (Redman, nd).<sup>3</sup>



Whitbread Tankard Judo (1971)  
(Source: HAT)

Whitbread Tankard's concept was that their beer could help the drinker to excel. The emphasis on Judo continued with this 30 seconds TV commercial for the British beer. With up-tempo instrumental background music, the setting is at a dojo or gym. Two men are shown practicing their judo throws with their partners whilst being watched by the others. This is interspersed with scenes of the beer being poured from a beer tap into a large glass at a pub. The camera pans to one of the men at the dojo who wipes away the sweat from his face. The scene then changes to the same man who has now changed out of his Gi and downing his pint of Tankard before walking towards the bar to order another. The voice over towards the end of the commercial states simply: 'cool... refreshing... Whitbread Tankard'.

<sup>3</sup>

[https://www.retrowow.co.uk/retro\\_britain/keg\\_bitter/60s\\_and\\_70s\\_beer.html](https://www.retrowow.co.uk/retro_britain/keg_bitter/60s_and_70s_beer.html)



The quality of the judo is evidenced by the demonstration of various judo throw techniques. The association with judo suggests that the beer is preferred by more discerning drinkers. The judokas, all Caucasians, have clearly mastered the sport. CDP was one of the most influential advertising agencies during the 1970s and with a large client base, it was not uncommon to find the use of martial arts imageries being used by the agency to market different brands.



Storyboard: Wrigley's Tunes 'Judo' (1976)  
(Source: HAT)

### Wrigley's Tunes 'Judo' (1976)

Tunes, manufactured by The Wrigley Company in the UK, is marketed as a cough sweet, or anti-congestant lozenge. In 1976, its memorable TV commercial featuring the actor Peter Cleall who enunciates the word 'Tunes' after taking the anti-congestant made the brand and its slogan 'Tunes help you breathe more easily' a household name.

#### *Wrigley's Tunes 'Judo' (1976) – script*

*Setting: A busy judo club with men practising judo throws. British and Japanese flags, as well as judo association flags hang from the ceiling. A man arrives at the club with a scarf and coat. He touches his nose and shakes his head. The instructor spots him*

*Instructor: 'Here – you need tunes'*

*Man: 'Tunes?'*

*VO: when you have trouble breathing, try*

*Tunes – they're menthol medicated*

*Close up of packaging with 'Menthol'*

*'Medicated' copy displayed on screen*

*Cut to changing room: The man takes off his coat whilst sucking the lozenge. His instructor is seen leaving the changing room.*

*VO: suck tunes and you release a cool menthol vapour that really does help clear stuffiness*

*Gym floor: In slow motion, the man kiai's and judo throws his instructor to the floor*

*Close up: The man looks at the instructor and says 'Tuunes!'*

*End line: Help you breathe more easily, in cherry, honey and new blackcurrant favours*

The concept for the commercial focusses on the benefits of the lozenge. By mid 1970s, judo continued to be used despite the growing popularity of karate and kung fu. The setting for Tune's Judo appears authentic with visual cues of the club's associations. The casting includes judo experts as it is clear that judo throws are being executed at the start of the commercial and during key background scenes. Although all the cast members were Caucasian, one of the men at the start of the commercial appeared to be 'Japanese'. However, this 'blink and you will miss it' split-second appearance would have been easily missed by the audience.

### Hai Karate (1969 – 1976)

Geers Cross Advertising (UK) McCaffrey & McCall (USA)

The style of commercials did not change until Hai Karate came along. Hai Karate was a transatlantic brand that was invented by George Newell, Co-Creative Director of McCaffrey & McCall agency, in 1967. The brand, one of the most well-known men's aftershave, had the advantage of possessing functional benefit associations (the user is taught basic self-defence). By 1961, it was owned by the Leeming Division of pharmaceutical giant Pfizer – a market leader in men's toiletry during the sixties (Pollard, 2008; Ostrom, 2017). The brand was discontinued in the 1970s and briefly revived in the 1990s (Pollard, 2008).



Hai Karate:  
Don't dare use it without memorizing this  
(Source: <http://www.georgenewall.com>)

Hai Karate's popularity was cemented by the humorous TV commercials that incorporated many of the clichés of aftershave advertising. This was supported with an Oriental themed brand concept of black packaging with Chinese effect typography that contained self-defence instructions to help the user defend himself from amorous women. The brand extension included variants beyond cologne and aftershave, namely: soap on a rope, shaving cream, talcum powder. As well as Regular, Hai karate lines included Oriental Lime (1968), Oriental Spice (1968) and Musk (1968) (Pollard, 2008).



New Oriental Lime  
Use too much and you can find yourself in a tight squeeze

Hai Karate shows how clever advertising, branding and sales promotion helped it overtake sales of the more established competitors, namely: Old Spice (associated with manliness), Brut (sportiness) and Denim (seductiveness). According to blogger David Henningham, Hai Karate's ability to combine these with 'an element of Bruce Lee characteristics' made it stand out<sup>4</sup> The 30 seconds TV commercials in the US and UK did not have budget for celebrity endorsed commercials that these competitors had. Instead, the advertising featured a stereotypical 'wimp' being pursued by attractive females and having to resort to his Hai Karate skills to defend himself with the tagline 'be careful how you use it'.

<sup>4</sup> <https://retro-hen.com/2019/05/25/hai-karate-aftershave-the-fine-line-between-self-defence-and-vandalism/>

**Hai Karate 'House Visitor' (1967)**  
(Source: Valerie Leon YouTube)

*Hai Karate House Visitor (1967-69) – script*

*Setting: A man visits a woman at her house. As he knocks on the door, he is seen holding a box of chocolates behind his back. A woman opens the door, greets him and invites him in. Once he enters the building, the woman starts to chase the man around the living room as soon as she catches a whiff of his aftershave.*

*VO: This man has used a little too much of an aftershave called Hai Karate. Hai Karate is a cool soothing lotion, drives women wild, makes men irresistible. That's why every pack of Hai Karate contains indispensable instructions on ...self-defence. Hai Karate aftershave. Be careful how you use it.*

A similar black and white version of the above commercial was made for British audiences, this time featuring actress Valerie Leon in the starring role. Variations on this theme on colour TV can be seen in the following 30 seconds commercials broadcast at Christmas using the same concept for 'House Visitor' but executed in different settings: 'Restaurant' (1973), 'Pool' (1974), 'Museum' (1976), 'Food hall' (1976), 'Hospital' and 'Department Store'. Valerie Leon's contribution to these British commercials is best illustrated in 'Restaurant':

*Hai Karate 'Restaurant' (1973) script- 30 sec*

*Setting: restaurant scene, woman sits alone at a table. She is about to take a sip from her wine glass when she spots a man, stands up suddenly, knocking over her table in the process:*

*VO: Hai Karate aftershave drives women wild ...makes men irresistible. The man throws karate punches to warn her off and split a water fountain in two with a karate chop, before falling over and water splashes over a couple dining at another table*

*VO: that's why there is a special leaflet on self-defence.*

*The woman advances towards the man whilst he jumps up and lands on a table behind him VO: in every pack.*

*The woman follows him to the floor before the scene cuts to a still image showing a bottle of the aftershave and body talc*

*VO: Hai Karate after shave...and body talc.*



Hai Karate 'Restaurant' (1973)  
(Source: HAT)

**Hai Karate 'Eastern Spice' (1973)**

This version featured the same scenes as Hai Karate Restaurant but with amendments to the VO script to account for the new Eastern Spice line. The commercial had new features in the form of gong sound effects, stills of the new packaging (shown at the start and end of the commercial) and 'be careful how you use it' endline.

*Hai Karate 'Eastern Spice' (1973) – 30 sec script*

*VO: Hai Karate second fragrance – new Eastern Spice*

*Gong sound effect*

*VO: Just one whiff drives women wild. Its sultry, oriental aroma makes men irresistible. That's why there is a special leaflet on self-defence in every pack.*

*Hai Karate and Hai Karate Eastern Spice – be careful how you use it!*

*Still image: Regular and New Eastern Spice bottles.*

*VO: Hai Karate – be careful how you use it*



### Hai Karate 'Kit Kat Club' (1973)

This extended 40 seconds commercial is the only one that did not feature Valerie Leon. Valerie Leon is intrinsically linked to the commercials and, like Edwina Carroll for BMK Carpets before her, became known as the 'Hai Karate Girl'. She later starred in 'Carry On' films, 'Revenge Of The Pink Panther' (1978), and as a Bond girl in 'The Spy Who Loved Me' (1977) and 'Never Say Never Again' (1983) (Padman, 2015).



Storyboard: Hai Karate 'Kit Kat Club' (1973)  
(Source: HAT)

*Hai Karate 'Kit Kat Club' script (1973) – 40 sec*

*Setting: Stripclub. 60s music in the background whilst a woman (leopard) dances inside a cage.*

*A smartly dressed bespectacled man in a long coat is seen at the top of the stairs. He looks over at the dancer then notices a sign at the cloakroom 'Please Don't Touch the Leopards' followed by another sign directly below 'Violators will be persecuted'. He turns to the camera grimacing 'mm'*

*A leopard removes his coat and grabs him whilst he tries to get away*

*Leopard: 'oohh what's that aftershave you're wearing?'*

*Man: 'hey!'*

*He runs down the stairs to be confronted by a crowd of leopards reaching out to touch him.*

*The man shouts 'hahh!' gesturing with his arms to warn them off*

*VO: wear too much Hai Karate aftershave and women can be a problem. That's why we have to put instructions on self-defence in every package*

*Man: 'Hii-yah' 'pardon me'*

*He bumps into another leopard before defending himself using knife-hand strikes 'hah!'*

*The women become increasingly hysterical as he trips and knocks over a table in a room filled with other male guests sat on their own.*

*He turns to one of the female guests*

*Man: I'm terribly sorry*

*He turns round and karate chops tray that one of the leopards was holding spilling its contents 'Hahh!'*

*Cut to two bottles -aftershave lotion and cologne*

*VO: Hai Karate aftershave, cologne and gift sets*

*Cut to: man being dragged by the other leopards into the cage*

*Man: stay off girl!*

These 'farical advertising' were influenced by the popularity of Bruce Lee's kung-fu films with its 'comic violence' and 'Carry on' or 'Benny Hill style of humour' (Ostrom, 2015). Other Hai Karate commercials included updates, such as the bottles moving in line to 'punching sound effects' similar to those found in 1970s martial arts films. The self-defence leaflet is often referred to as a 'kung fu' guide suggesting, once again, the tendency for British audiences to mix up the Japanese karate with Chinese Kung fu (Curtis, 2002). In addition, the use of 'Chinese typography on its packaging to emulate Chinese calligraphy strokes may have racialized connotations (Wang, 2018).

Despite a successful run of commercials over five years, the brand eventually fell out of favour with British consumers. To this day, Hai Karate commercials continue to feature regularly in blogs and on TV documentaries for its creative use of humour. In 1995, the trend for nostalgia re-ignited interest in Hai Karate's revival by the cosmetics company Miners International (Marketing Week, 1995).



**Golden Wonder's Kung Fuey (1974-76)  
J. Walter Thompson (JWT)**

Golden Wonder was established in 1946 by William Alexander, an Edinburgh baker. The acquisition by Imperial Tobacco in 1960 led to increased investments in production with TV commercials communicating Golden Wonder's success as the UK's leading crisps manufacturer, beating established rivals Smiths and Walkers (Berry and Norman, 2014). In 1974, the company launched Kung Fuey, a crunchy corn and potato snack with an 'unusual' flavour (bacon and mushroom), targeted at teenagers and children. Its distinctive yellow packaging included an illustration of a martial artist – a clear homage to Bruce Lee (Gosling, 2019). JWT's TV concepts for the brand ran successfully for two years and the brand became a popular snack amongst children during the mid-1970s before Golden Wonder stopped trading in 2006. The TV commercials for Kung Fuey were supported with sales promotion tactics, such as coupons in the Daily Mail newspaper and Action comic.



(Source: Gosling, 2019)



Hey Kids! Cut the coupon and cut the costs of crisps and snacks! (Daily Mail, 21st April 1977) (Source: HAT)



Here's Real High Flying Fun – the exclusive Kung Fuey Dragon Kite! (Action, Issue 35, 9th October 1976). (Source: 5mudg3 Blog)

Four closely related TV commercials deserve quick description and inclusion:

### 1. Kung Fuey 'A New Way of life' (1974):

This 30 second TV commercial featured karateka Enoda Keinosuke – Annoyda Sensei – in a white gi and black belt performing kata (set of karate moves), before sampling and indicating his approval for the brand, followed by the obligatory board breaking using his hand.

*Kung Fuey 'A New Way of life' (1974) script*

*VO: Kung Fuey. From out of the East, comes a taste of a new way of life...Kung Fuey. Kung Fuey in bacon and mushroom flavour. Crisp, crunchy. Kung Fuey – the smashing new snack from Golden Wonder*



Storyboard: Golden Wonder's Kung Fuey (1974) (Source: BFI)

### 2. Kung Fuey 'Something Special' (1974/1975)

This shorter 15 second commercial with Annoyda Sensei shows him sampling a new flavour of Kung Fuey crisps.

*Kung Fuey 'Something Special' (1974/1975) – Script*

*VO: We asked someone very special if he would like to try our new Kung Fuey bacon and mushroom flavoured snack. We were lucky – he liked it. Crispy, crunchy WHACK! Kung Fuey – new from Golden Wonder*



Storyboard: Golden Wonder's Something Special (1974/1975) (Source: BFI)

### 3. Kung Fuey 'Warriors of the World' (1976)

The third advert no longer feature Annoyda Sensei. Instead focussing the commercial introduces Britains Deetail plastic soldiers. The commercial is accompanied by fanfare and sound effects (battle cries, bugle sounds, machine gun shots) as different toy soldiers appear on screen. This commercial is a departure from the norm and although some of the original content is the same as 'Something Special' (1974), the commercial noticeably changes tact half way through to showcase the promotion of Britains Deetail soldiers.



Storyboard: Golden Wonder's 'Warriors of the World' (1976) (Source: BFI)

*Kung Fuey 'Warriors of the World' (1976) – Script*

*'Gong' sound effect*

*VO: From out of the East comes Kung Fuey crisp crunchy bacon and mushroom flavour ... cheese and ham flavour.*

*And now (battle cry) Warriors of the World Turkish, British, Apache, Desert Fighters (bugle sound) all in full colour and armed to the keep ...they're yours to collect in Kung Fuey packs*

*Machine gunshots followed by a gong  
VO: Look for details on special packs. They're  
in the shops...now!*

#### 4. Kung Fuey 'Fighting Stars' (1976):

This final commercial features the promotion of a free dart board. Annoyda Sensei is once again replaced – this time with a Chinese actor in a black kung fu suit teaching a young boy and girl how to play the dart board game. The setting includes antique Chinese screen panels in the background. The commercial also starts with the 'gong' sound effect commonly associated with the Shaw Brothers martial arts films.

*Kung Fuey 'Fighting Stars' (1976) -Script:  
VO: From out of the East comes Kung Fuey  
crisps...crunchy...bacon and mushroom  
flavour...cheese and ham flavour. And now  
(Gong sound) with Kung Fuey comes the  
thrilling Fighting Stars game...the Kung Fu  
pallet with three magnetised soft, plastic  
fighting stars that stick, like magic  
Girl: your turn  
VO: 75p when you buy special Kung Fuey  
packs. Get Fighting Stars...now!*



Storyboard: Kung Fuey 'Fighting Stars' (1976):  
(Source: BFI)

The early Kung Fuey commercials possessed martial arts authenticity by casting a real-life karateka. Annoyda Sensei was invited to Britain from Japan in 1965 as part of the Japanese Karate Association's initiative to introduce Shotokan Karate to the West. His demonstrations live on BBC in 1973<sup>5</sup> led to

<sup>5</sup> Dave Hazard (2007): *Born fighter* (pp. 71–74). London: John Blake Publishing.

his subsequent casting in the 1974 Kung Fuey commercials that clearly played on his karate prowess. He later reprised his role in a Wrangler Jeans TV Commercial (1980) for Young & Rubicam Scandinavia. In contrast, Kung Fuey's 'Fighting Stars' (featuring a Chinese actor demonstrating his skills on the dart board) is a departure from Annoyda Sensei's kata demonstrations. Kung Fuey offered audiences the 'real deal' in terms of martial arts representation as it was the first time that oriental actors were featured in commercials, albeit with non speaking parts.

The martial arts (real or imagined) in these commercials suggest that kung fu was starting to become more popular by the late 1970s. Despite this, karate and kung fu are referenced interchangeably from the Chinese influenced 'Kung Fuey' brand name to the casting of Annoyda Sensei. Around the mid-1970s, Hong Kong Phooey was a popular animation TV series and this may have influenced Golden Wonder's decision to select a brand name that children could readily identify with. Berry and Norman (2014) described how children in playgrounds were already 'karate chopping piles of wood and trying to kick down walls barefoot' before TV commercials 'filled with Chinese stereotypes doing the same in the name of snack food'.

Stereotypes could come from visual and aural representations – in this case, the use of 'gong' sound effects and xylophones common in martial arts films may contribute to stereotypically racist depictions of the Chinese.

#### Wall's Sausages 'Japanese' (1976) Collett Dickenson Pearce (CDP)

The next two examples provide clues to the level of racial stereotyping that occurred mid 1970s onwards. Wall's Meat Company was established in 1786 by Richard Wall. The company became a Unilever subsidiary in



1930. As one of the most well known brands in Britain, its sausages were a staple part of every British household. Wall's started to use TV advertising to counteract increasing competition and remind consumers of its range. CDP came up with the Stab One Tonight campaign to increase the brand's recognition in 1976 (Judge, 1977). One of its 45 seconds executions was entitled 'Japanese'.

*Wall's Sausages 'Japanese' (1976) script*

*Setting: A Japanese father and son are having dinner at home.*

*Father: Number three son, before you visit Britain... must learn art of eating Wall's sausage*

*Son: Wall's sau-harge...hah...*

*Father: Pick up fork...stab sausage ...dip in yellow paste...*

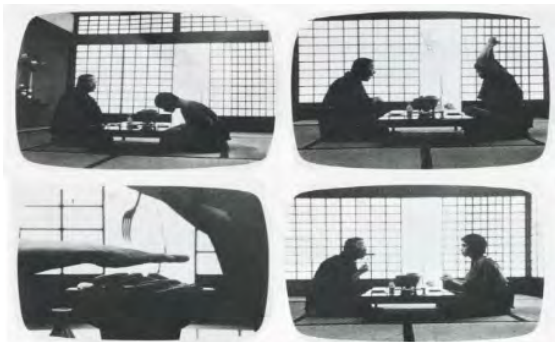
*Son: ahhhhhhhhsoooooo!*

*Father: No! Like this...British love Wall's sausage ...eat many times each week ...*

*Son: Father...if British love Wall's sau-harge so much, why stab with fork?*

*Father: No-one know, my son. British inscrutable island people...Have many mysterious customs... Come...try again.*

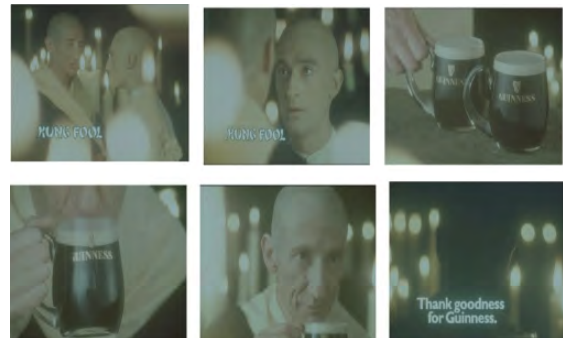
*VO: Succulent pork. One of a range of great British sausages from Wall's. Stab one tonight*



Storyboard: Wall's Sausages Japanese (1976)  
(shown here in black and white)  
(Source: HAT)

This essentially humorous TV commercial communicates the focus on 'Stab One Tonight' effectively and was one of the earliest adverts featuring oriental actors who had speaking parts. The work made it to the 1976 D&AD Annual which suggests recognition by the industry of its level of creativity. The

setting provide cues to its Japanese setting: shoji screens, low rectangular table, tatami mat flooring. The father and his number three son pays homage to the Charlie Chan films. By the late 1970s, increasing use of oriental actors in British TV commercials, albeit in stereotypical roles for the food grocery category was common place (see Bowman's article in this issue). This commercial is no different with its emphasis on 'Japanese' accents, the use of the word 'inscrutable', and reference to 'mysterious customs'. The link to martial arts is seen by the father's quest to teach his son to 'master the art 'of eating sausages using a fork and the son's attempt to exert some force before attempting to stab the sausage. The son also exclaims 'ah so!' This commercial may also have exacerbated the imitation of the derogatory term 'ah so!' by British schoolchildren in the playgrounds, along with the slant-eye or 'sitty eye' gestures in the 1970s.



Storyboard: Guinness 'Kung Fool' (1977)  
(Source: BFI)

**Guinness 'Kung Fool' (1977)**  
**J. Walter Thompson (JWT)**

Guinness & Co. Brewery, from its humble origins in Dublin, introduced the stout in 1759 before achieving global success worldwide. It moved its operations to London in 1932 and is currently owned by Diageo PLC. The brand has a long history of advertising – from its first ever print ad in the Daily Mail on 6th February 1929 with 'This is the first advertisement ever issued in a national paper to advertise Guinness' – to AMV BBDO's 'Surfer' TV (1999). In 1977, Alan Parker directed 'Kung Fool', a



parody of the popular American TV series 'Kung Fu'. The series, broadcast from 1972-75, was notorious for casting Caucasian actor David Carradine as Shaolin monk Caine / Grasshopper opposite blind Master Po who was played by a Chinese born American actor (Keye Luke)

*Guinness 'Kung Foo' (1977) – script*

*Setting: Two monks are in a dark room filled with candles. The words 'Kung Fu' appear on screen*

*Master: The first lesson in meditation Greenhopper is to learn how to loose yourself in the dark*

*Greenhopper: But it's still light though master (points to the sky)*

*Master: You always done that does you credit Greenhopper but is it not true – some only see light while those more fortunate observe the dark*

*CUT to two glass full of Guinness. Master takes a drink slowly from a Guinness glass whilst Greenhopper watches*

*Greenhopper: You have lost me master*

*Master: No I loose myself and thus discover the innermost secrets of the dark*

*Takes another drink*

*Master: Come Greenhopper join me in the dark*

*Greenhopper: Yes master (Greenhopper:starts to blow out all the candles whilst Master sighs in the dark*

*Master: You still have much to learn*

*Greenhopper*

*End line: Thank goodness for Guinness*

In keeping with the theme of the original TV series, Guinness' Greenhopper is played by English actor Philip Sayer. The Master, on the other hand, is played by Preston Lockwood as opposed to a Chinese actor (unlike the TV series). To emulate the TV series, the Master spoke in riddle which the young apprentice had to decipher. The commercial's strong reference to the TV series with the words 'Kung Fu' at the start is unmistakable and Greenhopper's failure to unlock the secret to enlightenment made for a humorous commercial. The script also had an element of Star Wars (1977) with its reference to the 'dark side'. However, being authentic to the TV series would require a Chinese actor to

inhabit the role of the monk. The 'yellow face' casting of Caucasian actors for the a storyline based on the Shaolin temple illustrate an appropriation of Chinese culture for entertainment purposes.

### **Brick Development Association (1978) Everetts Advertising Agency**

The Brick Development Association (BDA) was established in 1946 to promote the UK's brick industry and support its clay brick and paver manufacturers. It communicates the interests of its members through advertising and PR. In 1978, Everetts devised a 30 seconds TV commercial featuring a martial artist attempting to break a brick with his bare hands. The advert was awarded the diploma at the British Arrows Awards a year later.

*Brick Development Association (1978) -script*

*Setting: Dimly lit room. Man in karate Gi approaches the brick and rolls up his sleeves*

*VO: It is easy to work with, it's there when you want it in over 800 colours and textures*

*He breathes in*

*VO: Bricks can't start or spread a fire He gets ready and positions his right hand on the brick*

*VO: ...and it's a good insulator for a quieter life He inhales quickly and Kiai loudly as he strikes down on to the brick*

*VO: ...and brick is very, very strong*

*The brick does not break and his holds his hand, covering up his pain, turns and walks away*

*VO: That's the beauty of brick. Let's make more of it*

*End line The Brick Development Association*



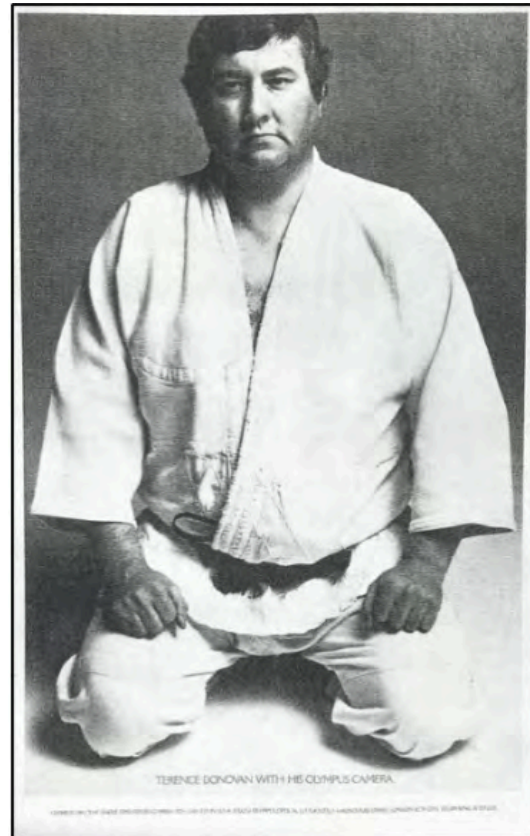
[source: HAT]

This TV commercial is targeted at the business to business sector and broadcasts prima facie a serious message that all karatekas can identify with – the focus and intense preparation needed to prepare for breaking. The actor is seen preparing for this challenge by warming up with a few punches before focusing all his attention on the brick. His preparation, breath control and kiai (yell), ‘mind over matter’ posturing in executing the manoeuvre suggests some level of authenticity in his approach. The attention to detail in the copy and twist at the end made this an effective commercial that communicated the benefits of bricks to its audience. There is authenticity in his approach and his technique despite the fact that the karateka may be portrayed by an actor.

**Olympus Optical Company Terence Donovan’ (1979) Collett Dickenson Pearce (CDP)**

A review of martial arts in British advertising would not be complete without this business to business example for Olympus Optical Company, a global manufacturer of optical and digital solutions, including cameras and medical systems. This print advert was an entry for the 1979 D&AD Annual (Trade and Professional Magazines category) for its level of creativity.

It features renowned celebrity and fashion photographer, Terence Donovan, in his judo outfit with the headline ‘Terence Donovan with his Olympus camera’. Donovan was a judoka and zen buddhist whose interest in martial arts was influenced by Akira Kurosawa’s ‘Seven Samurai’ (1954). Not content with achieving his black belt in his 40s, he co-authored, photographed and published Fighting Judo (1985) with former World Judo Gold medallist, Katsuhiko Kashiwazaki.



(Source: HAT)

There is authenticity in that the advert features a judoka who provides credibility to the brand as a leader in its field.

### Seventies Throwback

1970s Britain is characterised by growing interest in the economic rise of the Orient, increasing cultural sophistication of the British as they seek out foreign cuisines and embrace all things Japanese. Chinese perceptions, on the other hand, were limited to magazine coverage of communist and imperial China, opportunities presented by China’s Open Door Policy in 1978 and burgeoning demands for international travel (airline advertising was at its peak). Although CARM in 1976 paved the way for better representations of minorities in Britain, magazine coverage such as those seen in the Sunday Times perpetuated their ethnic stereotyping, not helped by films (The Pink Panther, 1964-1992; The Water Margin 1977

and Monkey 1978 and) and TV commercials (Wall's Sausages 1976; Guinness' Kung Fool 1977). These could manifest itself in the use of 'yellowface' (Kung Fu 1972-1975), invitations of Chinese accents / expressions, references to aspects of culture eg calligraphy or muting the roles for Chinese actors. Earlier commercials such as BMK and Hai Karate Girls reflected women's sexual liberation despite a distinct lack of Oriental women being cast as martial artists.

1970s advertising tended to feature Japanese martial arts (karate and judo) as these forms were more accessible. This is reflected in the selection of commercials in this paper where judo was the preferred martial arts trope during this period. TV commercials for Whitbread's Tankard (1971) and Wrigley's Tunes (1976) and the print advert for Olympus Optical Company (1979) all featured Caucasian judoka's. Commercials that featured karate in Kung Fuey (1976-76) and Brick Development Association (1978) provided some level of authenticity in the way the Japanese martial arts is shown. The Hai Karate campaigns (1969-76), although less authentic in how karate is represented, increased its brand awareness and recall amongst different generations of men before eventually reaching cult status (Pollard, 2008; Baskin, 2013).

In contrast, authentic Chinese kung fu or Hong Kong star Bruce Lee were notable in their absence in published media in Britain in the 1970s, despite the latter's reputation in bringing martial arts to Western audiences (BBC Radio 4, 2013). Its associations are linked to popular TV series 'Kung Fu' (1972-75) as referenced in Guinness' parody 'Kung Fool' (1977), 'Hong Kong Phooey' (1977-79) and Kung Fuey's 'Fighting Stars' (1976).

## The Rising Sun

This study sought to investigate meaning construction of early martial arts tropes in British advertising during 1960s -1970s as a consequence of the way the British Chinese

community have been portrayed on TV and film. The examples of work discussed in this paper involved some of the most influential agencies (Collet Dickenson Pearce, Ogilvy and Mather and J. Walter Thompson). The advertising profession's emphasis on creativity means that, when there is client pressure to deliver, the work generated emphasises novel and disruptive messages at the expense of historical representational references. However, creative ads are only creative if the audience can interpret the messages meaningfully and connect with them – this also suggests why humour appeals were a recurrent theme in advertising (Smith and Yang, 2004).

Building on the theoretical foundations of ethical representational frameworks proposed by Schroeder and Borgerson (2005), a selection of early martial arts tropes have been identified that demonstrated exoticisation of Japanese / Chinese cultures / martial arts, and exclusion in terms of white washing / 'yellow face':

*Judo – throws (Tunes, Tankard, Frosties) – Caucasian cast*

*Karate – kata/board breaking (Kung Fuey with Annoyda Sensei; Kung Fuey's Brick Development Association)*

*Kung fu – master (Guinness' Kung Fool; Kung Fuey with Chinese actor)*

The study has provided insights to the Japanese and Chinese styles of martial arts representations. Although Chinese and Japanese cultural reference points were often used interchangeably in the 1970s to represent the 'Orient', this study uncovered notable differences. Japanese forms (Judo and Karate) visualised the craftsmanship of these forms of martial arts through: kiai's (yells), breath control, and a plethora of throws, punches and swipes techniques being demonstrated on screen. Japanophilia is evidenced by the attention to detail in these early martial arts tropes for both print and television in terms of the setting (dojo), etiquette, Gi's and quality of the judo throws, katas. The engagement / associations with



Japanese judoka / karateka indicated an appreciation and understanding of the sport, despite these being largely represented by Caucasian actors / models. Britain clearly benefitted from access to Japanese martial arts that increased their appeal and captured the imagination of the British public. The early martial arts tropes ascribed positive meanings such as 'strength', 'durability' (and in some cases, 'beauty') that could easily be applied to a diverse range of products categories, from food (cereals, beer, crisps, sausages) to household goods (carpets, bricks).

In contrast, Chinese kung fu tropes were strongly influenced by TV and films with commercials with its humour linked to the popularity of 'Hong Kong Phooey', 'Monkey' and the visibility of Chinese actor Burt Kwouk's in the Pink Panther films. Chinese cultural references were also drawn from the success of the American TV series 'Kung Fu' and burgeoning interest in Bruce Lee's films. Kung fu tropes reflected the inaccessibility of these martial arts for the British public which, coupled with sinophobia and China's Open Door Policy for economic advancement, perpetuated stereotypes of Chinese culture (customs, accents, calligraphy). Kung fu tropes in advertising therefore presented more complex means of association as who is being authenticated in the advertising poses important questions. Perceptions of race and ethnicity, model / actor similarity, typecasting, and cultural markers by those being depicted are crucial. An Anglo-centric view of the world and the West's thirst for authentic, accessible martial arts contributed to debates surrounding casting (Edwina Carroll or Valerie Leon), competencies of the karateka or judoka (Annoyda Sensei / Terence Donovan), and racial stereotyping. Appropriation whereby mainstream audiences embraced the sport as their own will continue to be important, particularly for the more accessible Japanese forms of martial arts compared to the more elusive Chinese kung fu.

## **Conclusion: Advertising China and the Orient in Britain**

The paper has highlighted the key socio-cultural trends and the influences of TV and film during the 1960s and 1970s that led to the popularity of martial arts tropes in British TV commercials. The paper also provide clues about the extent to which martial arts tropes have contributed to brand messages and how brands associated with martial arts may enhance its appeal to its target audiences. In the case of 'Kung Fuey' (1974-76) and 'Hai Karate' (1967-76), brand associations were maintained at the outset from the oriental sounding brand names to advertising executions. In contrast, BMK Carpets (1967-69) and the Brick Development Association (1978) benefitted from the strength and durability concepts associated with judo and karate. These categorisations have enriched our understanding of the role of martial arts tropes in advertising and that judo, karate and kung fu (and their variants) ascribed different meanings to an increasingly ad literate audience in the early period.

As positive and negative stereotypes reinforce attitudes (Kawai, 2005), broadcasters have 'a responsibility not to pollute the cultural air with negative stereotyping of racial or ethnic groups' (Mullan, 1996). The fact remains that advertising continue to 'exoticise' or 'otherize' cultures and the limited representations of Chinese on British television during the early period meant these have greater representational power (Gillespie, 1995; Borgerson and Schroeder, 2002). Understanding the impact of stereotypes on the silent Chinese community would encourage more authentic representations by facilitating further debates as martial arts tropes in advertising continue to be popular. Advertisers using martial arts as points of reference must contextualise and historicise these rhetoric in their advertising. The commercials featured in this paper achieved notoriety for their creativity despite the prevalence of stereotypes. This paper, by delving into historical Chinese representations on TV and film as a precursor

to their depictions in advertising have provided insights to how advertising agencies should question their assumptions of China and the Far East, and whether recurrent images in martial arts films and TV (from which they draw their references) mirror, reflect or contribute towards appropriation,

given that portrayals change over time (Pollay, 1986). It is hoped that the rhetoric concerning yesteryear's 'yellow face' to more recent debates about appropriation and authenticity through 'whitewashing' may contribute to further debates concerning meaning construction.

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