

Analysis of Differences between Chinese and Western Sport Philosophy

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China is a world's ancient civilization with a long history of five thousand years; meanwhile, it is also the headstream of sports culture. Chinese sports aim at building the body and self-cultivation. The movement structures of sports are mainly the simulation of all kinds of movement of animals, which are particular about static and dynamic equilibrium, firmness, and gentleness, getting refined internally and externally. The feature of Chinese sports is the unification of form and spirit. The pattern of Chinese sports is closely related with Chinese philosophy thought, and the constructed Chinese sports culture has become the essential part of Chinese traditional philosophy. Chinese sports have integrated fitness and aesthetic appreciation into one, which is the specific expression of Chinese traditional thought. However, western sports have integrated with western philosophy thought with strong athletic tint. The characteristic of western sports has a necessary connection with the ancient Greek thought. Ancient Greeks had realized that the relationship between human and the nature was not totally dependent with contrariety, so they thought only fighting with the nature could they survive. The origins of thought of Chinese and western sports cultures decide the differences between Chinese and western sports. The harmony of China and competition of the west can be both embodied in sports. This thesis will analyze the differences between Chinese and western sports philosophy.

Keywords: sports culture, Chinese sports, traditional though, western sports, philosophy differences

1. Introduction

The differences between Chinese and western sports can trace back to the differences of traditional thoughts between China and the west. In Chinese traditional thought, Confucianism is always running through Chinese civilization. The Confucianism advocates the “theory that man is an integral part of nature,” “yin and yang,” and “the five elements.” The integration of these thoughts in sports has become the sports culture with traditional Chinese characteristics, making Chinese sports regard building the body as the foundation, and stress self-cultivation. Chinese sports are also interpenetrated with the theory of traditional Chinese medicine. Chinese medicine strives for the harmony between human and the nature, which will judge one's health condition by intuition and experiments. The fitness effect of Chinese sports is exactly from this. Western sports pay more attention to the improvement of competitive ability, which is closely connected with western philosophical thought. Just like Chinese sports, western sports are also related to medicine theory, but they pay

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more attention to the comprehensive application of medical scientific experiments and theoretical method. No matter Chinese sports or western sports, they both have aesthetic values. However, Chinese sports more stress on harmonious beauty and beauty of connotation, which emphasize the cadence and rhythm of sports, while western sports emphasize the application of athletic skills, and strive for using the power and showing the beauty of speed. In Chinese and western sports, traditional philosophical thought, medicine, and aesthetics elements all permeate into them, which have a positive effect for the development of sports culture.

2. The Form of Chinese Sports Culture

In traditional Chinese culture, traditional Chinese sports culture is the most constituent part among it. Modern people are still fond of many traditional sports as they have inherited for a long time, which play the role of daily fitness and keeping in good health. The form of Chinese sports culture is closely related with Chinese geographical conditions and society historical development.

Chinese sports culture relies on the closed geographical conditions formed by broad plain and rivers along with high mountains and desert. Traditional Chinese culture is contained in social environment, which generates the traditional Chinese sports. China's agriculture civilization decides the dependence on land by Chinese people. And social consanguinity mechanism is founded by rooting in land. Chinese "Zhou Etiquette" and Confucianism are all the signs of the development of social consanguinity mechanism. Under the influence of Confucianism, Chinese sports are developing towards the direction of fitness along with the development of Taoism and Buddhism to promote people to live a long life. Therefore, Chinese sports strive for taking good care of health by nutrition. Sports are used to exercise to achieve the unification of yin and yang, which is "the doctrine of the mean." The unique temperament exposed by Chinese sports is "the golden mean." In Chinese sports, although there is competition, the force is put to the point. The sports skills should be adept, but they can be totally exposed. Instead, feelings should be permeated into sports to make the subtle beauty externalize through the body movements of sports, and make sports be full of artistic appeal. Ancient Chinese people just made Chinese sports have more national characteristics with the help of philosophy, fitness, and aesthetic ideology.

3. The Form of Western Sports

Western sports culture comes from ancient Greek thought. Under the influence of geographical conditions and social history development, western sports have more natural color. The ancient Greek is located near the ocean. With the development of marine traffic, it becomes the interchange of multiculture. The lifestyle of ancient Greeks decides their cultural activities and aesthetic taste, which ferment all kinds of outdoor sports activities. Their competitive character and the spirit of adoring the nature make sports have more competitiveness. Besides, they have the spirit of being brave enough to struggle. The development of ancient Greek culture and the process of science promote the common prosperity of western sports and science. Obviously, in western sports, the power of science plays an important role.

Western sports culture also has abundant humanistic color besides the competitive spirit, which brings out the best with the ancient Greek's spirit of competition and enterprising in each other. They pursue individual emancipation, yearn for freedom, and hope to make their life more perfect through creation. The ideas of ancient Greek make them more willing to display their bodies to show their sports ability. The ancient Greek people live in competition, which generates the humanistic thought. With the generation of Darwin's biological

evolutionism and the research on sports by medical scientists, sports movement has become more scientific. In western philosophical thought, the body is the foundation for sports to be prosperous. Strong bodies are the key point of the enduring of sports. Besides physical form, bodies still contain the soul form. However, according to Plato's thought, it is more important to cultivate the soul than developing the body. Therefore, the cultivation of soul should also be paid attention at the same time of focusing on sports. Only with good ideological quality and beautiful soul can one dominate the body better and build better physical fitness.

4. Cultural Difference between Chinese Sports and Western Sports

4.1. The Influence of Origin Theory Makes the Content Differences between Chinese and Western Sports

The origin theory is to explore the origin of the world, which is also the important problem explored in philosophy field. Different understandings to the origin of the world lead to different understandings to the origin of the life. The subject of sports is human. The choice for the content of sports will be different based on different theories of origin between China and the west.

4.1.1. China Takes "Vital Energy" as the Origin of the World

In traditional Chinese culture, "vital energy" is the most important symbol. The culture theory of Chinese sports is also unfolded based on the theory of "vital energy." The traditional culture of Chinese sports is fitness, which plays a role in keeping healthy through adjusting the vein of the body to make people full of energy. According to traditional Chinese physiology, it is "vital energy" that maintains the movement of life, which plays a decisive role in people's life. Huangdi Neijing pointed that people's life was gathered by "vital energy," if it dispersed, people would die. Therefore, the "vital energy" is the one of a living person. The ancient people divided the "vital energy" into three layers, which were of parents: the "congenital vital energy" combined by yin and yang, and the "acquired vital energy" by food to maintain the life. Besides, there was also the air that maintains people's life, which is called the "vital energy of breath." With the existence of "vital energy," the life can be continued. According to Chinese philosophical thought, the "vitality" is initial, which can be maintained to keep a good status but can't be changed. The maintenance of life depends on movement. However, the power needed by movement is the result of complement of yin and yang. The full energy of life doesn't only lay in the form itself, but also the high unification of form and spirit. If the body is unbalanced in yin and yang, crisis will generate in the process of life movement.

4.1.2. The West Takes "Substance" as the Origin of the World

In western people's opinion, all kinds of substance are the origin to maintain the survival of all things on earth. "Water," "wind," "fire," "atom" are all once regarded as the origin of the world. One common of these things is that the state of motion of them is absolute. Just like the competitive nature of western sports, philosophical thought can promote the development of western sports along with sports. For the choice of sports, western people usually choose the irritant sports to show the vigor of life in the sports arena. Western sports culture also strives for harmony. Different from the "harmony" in Chinese philosophical thought, the harmony in western sports culture is based on the "number" theory in Pythagorean School, which stresses on orderliness. No matter Greeks or Athenians, they will both locate the perfect taste in harmony. Therefore, in the process of exercising, they stress more the fitness of physique, such as good muscularity and strong body, etc. The high harmony of all parts in the body is the symbol of pretty figure. In western philosophical thought,

people's life quality can depend on the external force to perfect, while the power of movement derives from the metabolism of physical bodies. The definition to vigor of life by western people is to generate energy through the movement of engine bodies, so as to make the engine bodies create tension. However, the change of position for the life elements will lead to crisis in the process of life movement.

4.2. Different Cognitive Methods Make Chinese Sports Different from Western Sports in Contents

4.2.1. Chinese Cognitive Method of Intuition and Experience

Chinese traditional cognitive method is intuition and experience. Scientific inquiry in ancient China has the nature of experience, which can be raised to the height of philosophy. This science obtained by introverted thinking interaction comes from the observation and conclusion on substance by Chinese people. For example, Confucius's "benevolence," Lao Zi's "Taoism," Mencius's "benevolent government," and Dong Zhongshu's "Interactions between Heaven and Mankind," etc., are all the results concluded by experience. According to Chinese traditional philosophy, the "theory that man is an integral part of nature" means that the relationship between human and the nature is that human is a part of the nature which is harmonious. When people are exercising, it is the exchange of "vital energy" with the nature. People eliminate the foul smell gathered in the body at the same time of exercise, and get the genuine qi from the nature, so as to make the viscera coordinate. Chinese sports culture stresses on direct feeling and uses mind to master the sports movement. It requires people to use simple sports movements to express deeper principles and make the movements full of verve to give people a sense of similarity in vision. It is thus clear that Chinese sports ask for the interaction between external shape and mind. From sports movements, although they are physical movements, the movements are slow, which have special needs for the environment of sports, so as to achieve the effect of "the shape is followed by spirit" and "inspiring the nature's mystery silently." The muscles would not have fierce shrink, which can achieve the effect of keeping in good health. The movements of traditional Chinese sports are most the imitation of animals' movements. Sometimes, non-natural movements will also be adopted to release the tiredness by long-term monotonous actions. By the enlightenment of Taoism thought, some sports movements in China are rounded centered motions to meet the needs of adjusting mind and body. Traditional Chinese sports have little load intensity with slow rhythm.

4.2.2. Western Reasonable and Scientific Cognitive Method

For physical exercise, western people pay more attention to systematism research. It explains all kinds of sports from the angle of science. Meanwhile, it is also permeated with medicine knowledge, including physiological function, human anatomical structure, etc. Western people don't ask for the harmony with the nature, but they research the nature scientifically and conduct activities of conquering the nature. As western people are fond of participating in sports, the definition for beauty has changed. They call the robust physique as beauty, so they stress the bodybuilding of muscles. In physical exercise, the large muscle groups will participate in it. With the fierce movement of muscles, people's bodies will get exercise. Then, the function level of body will enhance. In western scientific research field, western sport is a discipline of it. The discipline is to perfect skilled movements and create unceasingly by using scientific principle through the reasonable analysis of sports skilled movements, so as to make sports movements more coincident with human's physiology construction. The systematical research to sports movements is the subdivision of sports movements to make the sports theory research normalize gradually.

5. The Complementation of Culture between Chinese Sports and Western Sports

Chinese sports exist under different philosophical backgrounds. Because of the consistency between Chinese philosophical thought and western philosophical thought, there must be scalability between Chinese sports and western sports, which is established on the foundation of sports philosophy. With the development of culture, the culture should be inclusive to promote the common prosperity of culture. Chinese sports culture and western sports culture are both the important parts of sports culture. With the development of Chinese and western cultural thoughts, the regional nature of traditional culture has been broken, which is extending to the world culture gradually and becomes the common wealth of human. That means that Chinese sports culture is complementary with western sports culture.

5.1. *The Complementation of Way of Thinking between Chinese Sports Culture and Western Sports Culture*

Chinese sports culture is developed under the agrarian economy environment, which is in the closed state influenced by the unique geographical conditions of China. Besides, abundant folk-custom culture with regional color is also integrated into sports culture. Western sports culture is established on basis of social production mode with personalized development, which stresses the economy of sports. Chinese sports culture is generated and developed under the self-sufficient natural economy, forming relatively dependent and secluded state, ethicality, folk customs, and religiousness. Western sports culture adapts the modern time. Comparing Chinese sports culture and western sports culture, the difference between them is based on the mode of thinking. Chinese sports culture strives for comprehensiveness and western sports culture strives for analyticity, which are reversible and complementary. Therefore, Chinese sports culture and western sports culture are complementary each other with cultural complementarity.

5.2. *Philosophical Thought Complementation between Chinese Sports Culture and Western Sports Culture*

Chinese traditional culture takes Confucianism as the representative, which aims to build a world of universal harmony. To achieve this wish, it is necessary to connect with western culture. Chinese sports culture should also closely connect with western sports culture to make the Chinese and western philosophical thoughts both have abundant connotations. Chinese Confucianism strives for the humanistic spirit of “constantly striving to become stronger,” which supports Chinese athletes to struggle doggedly. Western sports culture strives for “higher, faster, and stronger” which is the endless spirit of sports. People should surpass themselves continually to make success and surpass others to get better achievements. However, western sports culture stresses competition, so they will use forbidden drug for winning, and there are even court violence phenomena. Chinese traditional sports culture strives for autonomy. The fusion between Chinese and western sports culture is significant, because Chinese sports culture has a make-up effect for western sports culture. Although there is the concept of harmony in western sports culture, this kind of harmony is the expression of regulation, which is different from that in China. Western sports culture pays more attention to individual. The fusion of these two cultures can make up their shortcomings each other and lay a foundation for the development of the world’s sports culture.

6. Conclusion

In sum up, although there are differences between Chinese sports culture and western sports culture, Chinese sports culture is established on the basis of traditional culture and western sports culture is developed from the ancient Greek culture. Therefore, there are obvious differences between Chinese sports culture and western sports culture under the influence of regional environment characteristics and different philosophical thoughts. However, comparing them from the angle of philosophical thoughts, it can be found that no matter Chinese sports or western sports, they both stress harmony. The difference is that western sports stress the harmony of individual, while Chinese sports stress the harmony between human and the nature. It is helpful to promote the higher development of world's sports culture by mutual complementation of the two cultures.

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