

The Chinese Culture and its Role in learning how to freedive

Sport Ideology of China and its impacts

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1. Introduction:

Looking into the *modern* sport development and its ideology of China, there's a clear thread to see, which is the cultures of east and west collided and mingled.

This paper reviews the inheritance that traditional sports of China share, examines the modern development of sport ideology in China, and discusses its impacts on learning freediving.

2. Sport Ideology of China

2.1 The Inheritance of Ancient Sport Ideology of China

- **Oneness**

Traditional Chinese believes in the unity of man and nature, and the theory of oneness advocates the inner and outer peace, harmony and balance between human and the nature. The purpose of sport is only for self-cultivation, thus the ancient sport emphasizes moral education rather than competitive prospective, which leads to a distance from the feature of sport like strength and speed.

- **Moderation**

Moderation emphasizes the entire harmony of society, which have great positive impact on friendship first, cooperation, and teamwork, but the drawback is that moderation limits the individual development.

- **Courtesy**

In the time of ancient China, six principles were employed for the education of man of noble characters, which are courtesy, music, archery, riding, literature, and mathematics^a. The sport itself, which are archery and riding, is closely related with courtesy. Hierarchy played a very important part of the spirit of ancient sport, which

results in limits for the independent personality, strangled the spirit of fighting and lack of fair game.

- **Pragmatism**

For ancient education, there's one underlined requirement of studying skill, which is that the attainment of knowledge must benefit the service to the country^b. With its application to sport, the positive side is that it shows spirit of patriotism and sense of national consciousness, but it also instills obedience, and worship, respect for the emperor, where attachment and blind faith are appreciated, and these are on the opposite to the spirit of independence, and science of modern society.

2.2 The Development of Modern Sport Ideology of China

The modern sport ideology in China started from the inflow of western education, since 1840. Great clashes had been seen during this 200 years of development and evolution to date, and with the deepening understanding of "The West thought applies to the East"¹, it finally made its own way as "learning, copying, imitating, and intermingling"^c.

- **The Opium War of 1840:**

The Opium War of 1840 was a turning point for the society of China. With the invasion of the western, the wave of national crisis was set off, and the defeat of Sino-Japanese War of 1894 aggravated the sense of urgency on "saving the country".

Reformist Scholars like Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao advocated adding military practice into the education system, which functioned as way to educate citizens to build the ability and loyalty of serving and protecting the nations and country, which accelerated the formation of Militarism Education of Sport Ideology.

¹ "The West thought applies to the East", refers to the inflows of academic and philosophical thoughts of Europe and America and their application in China, during the period of late Qing Dynasty.

- **The New Culture Movement in 1915:**

The Revolution of 1911 overthrew the Qing Dynasty, and the establishment of the Republic of China brought in ideals of democracy and the republic. The New Culture Movement began in 1915, while traditional feudal ethics had been greatly challenged. The military practice did not meet the needs of development of time, thus its implementation started to experience decline.

The visit of American Scholar John Dewey brought in fresh air, that his opposing “spoon-fed” learning and proposing of learning by doing aided the Utilitarianism prevailed in China^d. Then ball games, track and field, regular gymnastic practice had been introduced as part of sport education. During this period of time the sport started being considered as a way of life, rather than means to fight for the country or suppress insurrection.

- **The Founding of New China in 1949:**

There were quite a few different voices towards sport education and reformation and it was a bit of chaos when People’s Republic of China first establish, in regard of sport ideology and methodology. In order to solve this, the government promoted the theories and experiences of the Soviet Union, and meanwhile criticized and rejected entirely of American ideology of sports.

The Soviet Union methodology emphasized sport education was only means of communism education, and it ignores the individual needs and does not value the independent learning ability, and resulted in constraint of personal development.

- **Economic Reform of China in 1978:**

The Economic Reform opened the door of China to the world, meanwhile the sport ideology experienced hundred schools of thought contend. The sport scholars started to think about the nature, feature, function, and values of modern sports, and

differentiated the concept of leisure, elite and fitness for the first time.

People oriented Sport ideology started to become the main stream of new era.

3. Impact On Learning Freediving

- **Enjoying Harmony**

With the oneness and moderation being inherent beliefs, Chinese students in general do not tend to show aggressive and competitive behavior in sports. The practices for freediving like breathing and stretching share common features of tranquility and self-cultivation with the traditional sport of China.

- **Less independence**

Chinese students are more likely to act as in group. It's often to see "I'll go if you go" behavior in booking courses, taking trips, buying equipment and etc. It might indicate some lack of courage to shoulder responsibility since it's safe with group decisions.

- **Seldom to question**

The "spoon-fed" teaching methodology had been prevailed in China, and it'll still take years to change and waiting for its influences to be washed away. The inheritance of obeying to the emperor practice turns into obey to the authority of modern times, thus Chinese students in general tend to be the quite and listener students, and it's almost definite to receive nodding yes if confirmation of understanding of the knowledge was asked.

- **Less synthetical ability**

The education system of China has been acted with "one purpose only" mode, and are challenged and debated since recent years. The one purpose education leads to the situation that all the

studying is for the students to get into university and then get a better job, thus from elementary schooling to high schooling are all implicitly university entrance oriented. Schooling then becomes the result of pragmatism since anything not related to the ultimate goal will be taken away since they are “not beneficial”. Then it is not hard to understand why it is so often to see missing parts of common science knowledge and insufficiency of physical competence from Chinese students.

- **Certification orientation**

As one result of the “one purpose only” education, and taking the population of China in mind, overwhelming majority of the participants of this education system, whom are the students, are routed to compete on one possibility. Thus the stress for graduates to get employed after their education grows, and longer list of certifications on CV may partially serve the purpose to help students stand out from others. In past 15 years, it has becoming easier to see certificate-holic in college students since they are encouraged and driven by the stress of getting a job. Studying itself is then twisted into more focusing on certification acquirement rather than ability acquirement. This also applies to freediving studying, and level of certification is taken as tag for the ability, and sometime the ability itself is inferior to the certificate.

4. Conclusion

Western sports as the modern sport in China has been introduced for over 200 years, however comparing to the long history of China, the influence of ancient sport ideology of China is still strong and prevail.

Even the core value of traditional sport and modern sport are different to a great extent, the combination of these two still benefit freediving, as it's a western sport but emphasize inner peace and

self-cultivation. However, conflicts of western and east culture still need to get the attention for the teaching Chinese students.

With growing population of Chinese freedivers, their learning patterns of freediving will show a broaden picture in the future. This paper may only serve as a knocking brick and hope more sophisticated and qualitative researches can be done on freediving in short future.

Bibliography

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