

UNIVERSITY SPORT AS A MEANS OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORT CULTURE IN CHINESE UNIVERSITIES

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SUMMARY

Having reviewed the growth of university sport in China, this article aims to explore the development of sport culture in Chinese universities, from a perspective of historical development and modern requirement. More accurately, the author examines the following three stages, that is, from the Opium War in 1840 to the foundation of New China in 1949, from New China to the opening-up China in the 1980s, and China in the recent 30 years. In the 21st century, university sport should act as a means of internal and external communication to characterize the globalization of sport culture.

Key words: University Sport, China, culture, communication

ÖZET

*İÇSEL VE DIŞSAL İLETİŞİM ARACI OLARAK ÜNİVERSİTE SPORU:
ÇİN ÜNİVERSİTELERİNDE SPOR KÜLTÜRÜNÜN GELİŞİMİ*

Üniversite sporunun Çin'deki gelişimini inceledikten sonar, bu makale Çin üniversitelerinde spor kültürünün gelişimini tarihsel süreç ve çağdaş gereksinimler bağlamında araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Daha açık olarak, yazar şu üç dönemi araştırmaktadır: 1840 Afyon Savaşından 1949'da Yeni Çin'in kuruluşuna kadar, Yeni Çin'den 1980'lerdeki dışa açılan Çin'e kadar, nihayet son 30 yıldaki Çin. Yeni yüzyılda üniversite sporu, spor kültürünün küreselleşmesini karakterize eden bir içsel ve dışsal iletişim şekli olmalıdır.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Üniversite sporu, Çin, kültür, iletişim*

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INTRODUCTION

It is incontestable that university sport is an important and integral part of the university education in China. When discussing the sport culture in Chinese universities, we should first of all make it clear what the objective of university sport is in China. Some Chinese scholars traditionally believed that the objective is “physical education”. However, many Chinese scholars currently trust that the objective is “cultural education” (4). Besides the imparting of knowledge, the training of skills, the enhancing of physical quality and the forming of manners for the students, “cultural education” takes sport as ways of thinking, behaving and living. This article aims to explore the development of sport culture in Chinese universities, from a perspective of historical development and modern requirements.

University sport was introduced into China after the Opium War in 1840 from the western countries. It established its position in the modern education system of China in 1904. In the 20th century, China’s university sport was modelled on that of other countries such as Japan, America and the Soviet Union. Sport militarism, sport naturalism and sport intellectualism successively became the main theories of university sport in China. Since the 1980s, the development of university sport has shown the tendency of diversity. The author believes that university sport as a means of internal and external communication in China should characterize the globalization of sport culture in the 21st century.

University sport in modern China (1840-1949)

- At the stage of sport militarism:

The starting point in the history of university sport in China should date back to the first Opium War in 1840 and the second Opium War (1856-1860) (2). With the rising of “Western Learning” and “Westernization Movement” in China, western sport was also introduced into the universities, mainly the military ones. The government of the Qing Dynasty intended to “make its army powerful” through sport, so the university sport had a strong color of militarism. The “Military Gymnastics” and the “Military Drills” such as sticks and prodding were the main content of the university sport.

The “May Fourth Movement” against imperialism and feudalism broke out in Beijing in 1919, which brought the all-round reforms of

education system in China. It was stressed that sport in the universities should pay more attention to the coordinating development of the students' mind and body. In 1922, the "Military Gymnastics" was demolished, symbolizing the declination of sport militarism. Gradually, sport militarism was substituted by sport naturalism from America (1,5).

- At the stage of sport naturalism:

Naturalism of sport was the main stream from the 1910s to the 1920s in China. In the sport field, the American sport scholar C. H. McCloy was the representative who deeply affected Chinese sport in modern times (2). Due to the influence of sport naturalism, many universities changed the course of "Military Gymnastics" to that of "Sport Education" including athletics, balls and games. In addition, cultivation of the sport teaching staffs was attached great importance, and research on sport theories pushed forward the scientific advance of sport in China.

- At the stage of pluralism:

In the 1930s, the pattern of sport pluralism was formed in China, though sport naturalism was still in dominant position. The co-existence of the various academic arguments such as sport naturalism, sport militarism, disputes on traditional Chinese sport and western sport, and arguments on educating through sport or militarizing through sport, etc, had promoted the development of university sport theories and had also enriched the content of sport education in the universities.

University sport in New China (1949-1980)

Since the foundation of New China in 1949, university sport has had a hard experience during the following four periods (3).

- The first period (1949-1957):

During this period, some organization systems and regulations were formulated. For example, unified sport teaching syllabus and textbooks were used national-wide. In addition, the cultivation system of sport talents was set up then, i.e., eight sport institutes were established and 38 normal colleges and universities started to have sport departments. Both the theory and the practice of university sport were generally affected by Soviet Union during the period. Western sport thoughts and theories were denied and excluded. Due to its long-time stop in one concept and pattern, university sport no longer had its liveliness.

- The second period (1958-1965):

This is a transition period. In the three-year period of 1959-1961, for the serious economy decline in China, students' physical conditions went down in general. In response to the Party's Central Committee policy of "to adjust, to consolidate, to substantiate, and to improve" the physical condition of the students, the development of university sport was back on the road.

- The third period (1966-1976):

The decade was the period of Cultural Revolution in China. University sport was seriously destroyed. Sport militarism rose again.

- The fourth period (1977-1980):

This is the new development period of university sport in China. After 1980, university sport in China started to develop in a systemic and scientific way. The "Sports Law" established the legal position of university sport. This is the new epoch for the development of university sport in China. During the period, great progress was made in sport theories, sport facilities and the cultivation of sport teaching staffs.

University sport in the opening-up China (1980-)

All kinds of sport theories, both local and foreign, started to spread in the universities all over China. Sport teachers began to make researches and reforms on teaching methods, such as structural teaching, happy sport teaching, success sport teaching, etc... However, sport intellectualism was still the main feature of sport education in the 1980s-1990s. Entering the 21st century, China made a new round of reforms concerning sport education courses.

CONCLUSION

Reviewing the growth of university sport in China, one may find that the changes mainly focus on the following three aspects: 1) how to treat Chinese traditional or internal sport culture; 2) how to treat foreign or external sport culture; 3) how to realize the harmonious and effective combination between the internal and external sport cultures.

It is predicted that creating adequate possibilities for developing university sport, cultural and spare time activities as a part of creating conditions for forming a complex and harmonious personality of university students should be based on the following changes:

1. It is common sense in China that university sport is “physical education” in nature. However, the author addresses the significance of taking university sport as a “cultural education”, which regards sport as a way of thinking, behaving and living.
2. Spare time activities in Chinese universities are extension of sport classes, only stressing on building up students’ bodies. However, spare time activities in the future should turn to be cultural ones, promoting internal and external communication among universities.
3. It is essential that both the soft and hard environment of university sport should be improved regularly. On one hand, the soft environment refers to the university sport system, organization and ideology, etc... On the other hand, the hard environment refers to sport facilities and equipment which should be established, maintained and made full use of by the universities.
4. One of the main tasks of university sport is to help students acquire sportsmanship and form a complex and harmonious personality. Sportsmanship stresses fair play, courtesy, striving spirit, and grace in losing, etc...

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