A Comparison of the Concepts of Fitness Exercise between Asia and Europe—Mainly Taking China and America for Example

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Abstract. Fitness sports are very important to peoples’ health. This paper compares the ways and reasons of Eastern and Western fitness sports by means of logical analysis. And it takes examples from different angles such as countries and movies. This paper aims at carrying out a set of scientific exercise plan and advocating national fitness project.

Introduction

China is an ancient country, and many traditional sports are based on ancient Chinese philosophy. The traditional thoughts include: "Yin-Yang theory" and "correspondence" doctrines, "the unity of form and spirit" theory. But in Europe countries, the concepts for keeping fit are based on exercise physiology, human anatomy, biomechanics, and chemical basis. From microbiology to microscopic structure of the human body, to biochemical function and finally extend to the whole exercise activities. The difference is evident to be seen here. Each fitness concept and method has own advantages and disadvantages. We need to critically analyze so as to scientifically summarize a more practical project to keep fit.

The Differences in Sports between Asia and Europe

Different forms of sports

In India, an Asia country, yoga is very popular. Yoga also is an alone sport. China traditional sports activities focused on personal activities, but Europe on collective activities, except boxing, fencing, and wrestling, westerners participate in collective games, such as football, basketball, volleyball, football, ice hockey, Yong ball, water Shang Ballet. However, traditional Chinese activities are personal projects, such as martial arts and go, the members can seek quietness in the silence and loneliness. Being lonely has been a kind of cultural tradition inherited even in today’s society.

Different theories of sports

1. Westerners worship strength

Westerners are brave, outgoing and they mainly advocate strength, resulting in their more adventurous nature. They like exciting sport, such as bullfighting, sky diving, skiing, mountain and rock climbing, volatile, intense and thrilling activities. They focus on muscle building. In ancient Greece the Olympics project are: pentathlon (included discus, Javelin, long jump, running and wrestling and boxing), racing, boxing, wrestling, boxing, wrestling (mixed sports of boxing and wrestling), wagon racing, and horse riding. We can safely say that European and American countries since ancient times, admire muscle and strength. Therefore, nowadays foreign popular forms of fitness sports are running, aerobics and aerobic exercise.

For example, various features of Western sports culture and nature has been included in marathon, which is an aerobic exercise. It aims at a healthy body, strong will and indomitable spirit. With time going by, Marathon shows great vitality in the development of culture. In adds new concept: mental
pleasure, individuality satisfaction, back to nature, hobbies cultivation.

Bush is an American model when talking about running. He never gets tired of it. So far, he ran a personal best one mile in 6 minutes and 45 seconds.

Putin learned wrestling when he was 11 years old, and later had a keen interest in Judo. So the aerobic exercise is well accepted in western countries. Because the various benefits gained from this kind activity, more and more people join the exercise movement. America even set up a day to enlighten the importance of doing exercise.

France always takes physical exercise as an important means of improving people's health. On the field, forest and parks, we can see people participating in the exercise. Since 2000, France has carried out "way to heart health" jogging activities. Last year more than 300,000 people joined the program.

2. Chinese prefer unity of yin and yang

However, Chinese are influenced by traditional culture of Confucianism, Taoism, especially the doctrine "mildness outside, hardness inside, and the doctrine of harmony". Chinese traditional sports will be more peaceful and mildly, such as boxing, gardening, fishing, which show some static character, so its sports are renowned for their personal self-cultivation.

For example: the "Yin-Yang theory" holds that the outside is Yang. We study Martial arts from the outer physical exercise to Yang. In order to achieve the goal of fitness, it is very important to keep balance between yin and Yang in the body. Martial arts focus on physical exercise, whether it is common martial arts skills or different boxing routines. They have high requirements for physical exercise. Martial arts workout includes various parts of the body. It is full human body movement. The basic skills of Martial arts skills are: head, shoulders, waist, legs, hands, feet and all parts of the body, such as jumping, balancing exercises. Just as the saying goes: "practice in spirit, practicing outside the physique".

Bruce Lee, Jet Li and Jackie Chan are martial arts superstars; they advocate Chinese martial arts.

Reasons for Different Sports Culture

Different culture ecology

The national culture ecology is different, resulting in different national character, thus affecting the sports cultural differences. In Western countries, marine and business society civilization makes Westerners more dynamic and adventurous, and Chinese city civilization and agricultural society make Chinese mild and restrained, the difference between China and western countries sports culture caused by the certain civilization soil, dynamics of Western society makes their sports activities more rapid and fierce while static nature of China society makes its sports activities tends to soothing and peaceful.

Different universe view

Chinese and foreigners share various nature and universe view, Western social believes in heaven separation and guest confrontation, so Westerners worship conquering nature when taking part in traditional sports, but Chinese is different, Chinese emphasize the direction of Heaven and Man in One, and the harmony between man and nature, as part of nature, human beings should involve themselves in nature and seek common interest with nature. So it is understandable that why so many poets write poems to sing for nature and why masters of kung fu lived in mountains. In the process they have produced endless attachment and appreciation to nature.

Illustrations of Different Sports Styles from Perspective of Movies

Forrest Gump—about running

We can find the evident distinction in Chinese and American elements films about sports. Taking Forrest Gump for example, Gump lives in Alabama and his IQ is Only 75•Gump who has been
always teased by fellow students has to run in order to avoid children's bullying. Told by sweet Jenny with great care "just run, Forrest! Run!", Gump constantly runs in his childhood life. Then before going to join the army in Viet Nam, Jenny told him "No matter what troubles you encounter with, don't try, just run, shall you?" It makes "running" as a tool for Gump to survive. Self-realization is people's lasting pursuit, Gump is no exception, though he does not deliberately pursue the social acceptance. He begins running from negative feeling when young to "run" into the football team in University and "run" into the football all-star team, and received by President Kennedy; In the Vietnam war, Gump becomes a war hero for quickly running to rescue the comrades. And he was received by President Johnson. When Jenny slipped away, Gump suddenly began to run. It is the fourth time that he ran across the United States, triggering a nationwide campaign to run. Running is complete reflection of Gump’s indomitable perseverance spirit, a secret to success and also a reasonable way to solve the problem.

In the movie, it is easily seen that running, an aerobic exercise, is well accepted by American people. It is not only because the function for forming a healthy body but also for relieving himself from the sad past what amazed people is that his action of running helps other suffering or hopeless people find the goal in their life and be more brave to face the agony. Maybe that is the real meaning of running. So it counts why today so many people join the majority running club.

Kung fu panda—about kung fu

Taking another movie kung fu panda for example, it tells a story that a lazy panda saves world by learning kung fu diligently. In a peaceful valley, there are happy animals. Fat panda little Bo, a waiter in a noodle restaurant, is famous for his laziness and zeal for Chinese kung fu. But he is kind hearted, which also makes him popular in the other animals. One day, a fierce snow leopard breaks the piece of the valley, residents plan to hold a meeting to choose a proper one to fight against the strong enemy. The tiger together with other masters with unique skills agree panda Bo is the promising one to defeat snow leopard. So days of wasting time sleeping and eating gone, panda Bo is addicted in learning Chinese kung fu. The process of learning Chinese kung fu perfectly shows Chinese traditional sports concept.

Chinese “Yin-Yang theory” suggests that life lies in the Coordination of yin and Yang. Balance of yin and Yang is the basic signs of human health. So the body engages in normal activities. The livers, meridian, blood of human body should keep stable, so yin and yang will not lose balance and the normal physiological state will be maintained. Thus promoting the survival of the organism. It is through the combination of inside and outside exercise that martial arts achieve the unity of God, reflecting the balance of yin and Yang. Some actions of kung fu practice speed endurance, balance jumps. But the basic idea is to train the certain parts of the vulnerability so as to get a certain capacity and improving the quality of body.

Form the analysis of movies above, we can drive the conclusion that Chinese sports emphasize on the unity of yin and yang or the nature and body, while Europe countries sports pay more attention to muscle’s building and strength’s training. That’s two important aspects of man’s body that muscles help us healthy in body and “qi” contributes us active in mind.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these kinds of fitness exercise have its own significant advantages, we need to analyze personal condition and choose comprehensive exercises so as to produce better results. For young people under 45 years old whose body function are in best period, they should do strength and physical exercise to maintain and even increase their level of physical function and power capacity. For more than 45 years old Chinese traditional health-life is most suitable. Where there is life, there is exercise. Health is everlasting pursuit, we should learn from good exercise habit and put it into practice, finally forms a useful fitness system.
References


