



CHINESE AND WESTERN SPORTS PHILOSOPHY AND THEIR DIFFERENCES



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Abstract: Chinese and Western sports are in two different social systems. Because of the difference in their origin, cognition and value trend, two kinds of sports cultures of different natures have been created. Each of which interprets the characteristics of human civilization in different forms. In Chinese culture, sports are often closely associated with Taoist and Confucian philosophies. Taoism emphasizes “letting nature take its course”, and physical exercise is regarded as a means of harmonizing body and mind, and achieving unity of body and mind. Confucianism believes that sports are to cultivate people’s morality and etiquette, not just to pursue physical limits. In contrast, Western sports philosophy usually emphasizes competition, challenge and self-transcendence. This idea can be traced back to ancient Greece’s Olympic spirit, which is to demonstrate individual honor, strength and courage through physical exercise. In general, although Chinese and Western sports philosophies both believe that sports are an exercise for the human body and spirit, they differ in values, goals and methods. This study takes the comparison between traditional Chinese sports culture and Western sports culture as the starting point and attempts to analyze the commonalities and differences between the two. This has important practical significance for enriching world sports culture and promoting the development of world sports culture.


Keywords: Sports philosophy. Chinese and Western culture. Taoism. Confucianism. Athletics. Harmony.

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Resumo: O desporto chinês e o desporto ocidental estão inseridos em dois sistemas sociais diferentes. Devido à diferença na sua origem, cognição e tendência de valor, foram criados dois tipos de culturas desportivas de natureza diferente, cada uma das quais interpreta as características da civilização humana de formas diferentes. Na cultura chinesa, o desporto está frequentemente associado às filosofias taoísta e confucionista. O taoísmo enfatiza “deixar a natureza seguir o seu curso”, e o exercício físico é considerado um meio de harmonizar o corpo e a mente e de alcançar a unidade do corpo e da mente. O confucionismo preconiza que o desporto deve cultivar a moralidade e a etiqueta das pessoas, e não apenas perseguir limites físicos. Em contraste, a filosofia desportiva ocidental dá geralmente ênfase à competição, ao desafio e à autotranscendência. Essa ideia remonta ao espírito olímpico da Grécia antiga, que consiste em demonstrar honra, força e coragem individuais, através do exercício físico. Em geral, embora as filosofias desportivas chinesa e ocidental acreditem que o desporto é um exercício para o corpo e o espírito humanos, diferem em termos de valores, objetivos e métodos. Este estudo toma, como ponto de partida, a comparação entre a cultura desportiva tradicional chinesa e a cultura desportiva ocidental, e tenta analisar os pontos comuns e as diferenças entre ambas. Isso tem um significado prático importante para enriquecer a cultura desportiva mundial e promover o seu desenvolvimento.

Palavras-chave: Filosofia do Desporto. Cultura Chinesa e Ocidental. Taoísmo. Confucionismo. Atletismo.

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Abstract: Chinese and Western sports are in two different social systems. Because of the difference in their origin, cognition and value trend, two kinds of sports cultures of different natures have been created. Each of which interprets the characteristics of human civilization in different forms. In Chinese culture, sports are often closely associated with Taoist and Confucian philosophies. Taoism emphasizes “letting nature take its course”, and physical exercise is regarded as a means of harmonizing body and mind, and achieving unity of body and mind. Confucianism believes that sports are to cultivate people’s morality and etiquette, not just to pursue physical limits. In contrast, Western sports philosophy usually emphasizes competition, challenge and self-transcendence. This idea can be traced back to ancient Greece’s Olympic spirit, which is to demonstrate individual honor, strength and courage through physical exercise. In general, although Chinese and Western sports philosophies both believe that sports are an exercise for the human body and spirit, they differ in values, goals and methods. This study takes the comparison between traditional Chinese sports culture and Western sports culture as the starting point and attempts to analyze the commonalities and differences between the two. This has important practical significance for enriching world sports culture and promoting the development of world sports culture.

Keywords: Sports philosophy. Chinese and Western culture. Taoism. Confucianism. Athletics. Harmony.

INTRODUCTION

Culture is a dynamic concept, and its development is a constantly changing process. Therefore, culture has not only regional characteristics and national ones, but also features of the times. As a form of expression of culture, the spirit of sports culture is, on the one hand, an interpretation of culture and, on the other hand, it is an in-depth exploration of the appearance of sports. Studying culture from the perspective of sports and, then, interpreting sports from the perspective of culture, the relationship between the two can be said to complement each other. Some scholars believe that Chinese and Western sports culture is a heterogeneous culture with different paths of evolution and transformation and different styles. These differences are mainly reflected in the different philosophical ideas,

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medical foundations and aesthetic concepts of Chinese and Western sports cultures. In terms of philosophical thought, traditional Chinese sports are integrated into simple dialectical theories, such as “Unity of Nature and Man”, “Yin and Yang”, “Bagua” and “Theory of Five Elements”, and emphasize physical fitness and self-cultivation. Western sports, rooted in Western philosophy, emphasize external appearance and thinking analysis and pursue competitive ability. They are formed and developed under the penetration and influence of Western philosophical thinking. From a medical point of view, traditional Chinese medicine attaches great importance to the unity of the human body and the nature’s harmony, with a certain experience, intuition and fuzzy nature. However, Western sports are the comprehensive application of scientific experiments, anatomy, physiology, modern medicine, and other theories and methods. From an aesthetic perspective, traditional Chinese sports emphasize rhythm, verve, connotation and harmonious beauty, as well as hazy abstraction and implicit beauty, while Western sports emphasize individual competitive level, competitive methods and results, and masculine power and speed beauty. In addition, the Chinese sports culture has moral values with benevolence, justice, propriety, wisdom and trust as the core concepts, and the Western sports culture has moral values with bravery, competition, freedom, equality, moderation and prudence as the core concepts. They also determine the selection trend of Chinese and Western sports culture and the basic existence mode of Chinese and Western sports (Cui, 2011, p. 34).

1 THE BACKGROUND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHINESE AND WESTERN SPORTS CULTURE

Chinese sports culture can be traced back to thousands of years or even tens of thousands of years of ancient times. People, through hunting, fishing, nets and other ways to obtain food, reflect the shadow of traditional sports culture. From the primitive society’s barbarism to today’s civilization, the form of sports has been changing.

From 221 BC to 280 AD, Chinese history went through the Qin, Western Han, Eastern Han and Three Kingdoms periods, which lasted for more than 500 years. In the course of the historical evolution of more than 500 years, sports, as an important part of social culture, adapted to the requirements of the new era, subjugated based on inheriting pre-Qin sports and introducing foreign sports, and formed the basic pattern of later sports development. During the Song, Jin and Yuan Dynasties, sports developed in many aspects. Amid acute national conflicts and class struggles, military martial arts have further developed and innovated, and the citizen class’s growth has created conditions for the development of urban fitness, entertainment and sports activities (Shi, 2015, p. 34-38). From the Ming Dynasty to the early Qing Dynasty, previous sports achievements were inherited and developed, and through the contact and exchange of sports among various ethnic groups, a situation emerged in which various sports activities competed for development. Especially

after the mid-Ming Dynasty, sports activities showed a booming trend. The evolution of military weapons promoted the development of military martial arts and gradually formed a martial arts system. In the sports, exchanges between China and foreign countries, the sprouts of modern Western sports began to attract the Chinese people's attention.

Judging from the historical process of the emergence, development, and evolution of ancient Chinese sports, it gradually developed through spread and integration in different periods. In addition to the Chinese nation's traditional sports activities, it also includes sports activities that were introduced by many other ethnic groups in the long history and took root and developed in China's land. The original, simple and harmonious ideals, and the spirit of peace and harmony, formed during its long-term development process, determine that its competitiveness presents a form of strong confrontation that is completely different from that in the West, and it pays more attention to etiquette and practicality. At the same time, the integration of sports and cultural activities makes the entertainment, games and fun of ancient Chinese sports particularly obvious (Han, 2015, p. 349). The Chinese nation's long-term formation of quiet, indifferent and natural character, of the heaven and man unity, of the harmonious coexistence and the integration of one, through one of the ideals and attention to the practical spirit of personal cultivation, led to the production of health care, making it an important form of ancient Chinese sports activities and the formation of a typical representative of Eastern sports culture.

Compared with the East, Western culture is a very distinctive cultural form in the history of human civilization. From the historical origin, Western culture and ancient Greek civilization have the same line, with the fearless spirit of fighting and competition, enterprising spirit and the pursuit of individual liberation of the spirit of freedom. What unites the modern Westerner with the ancient Greeks is the Greeks' understanding of humanity itself, the first people to place man at the universe's center. The new way of thinking and the new outlook on life enabled the Greeks to gallop in all creative fields. In the process of shaping their civilization for hundreds of years, they reached a height that is enough to shock people today. Greek poetry, literature, sculpture and sports have become models and criteria for later works because of their excellence and elegance. It is in this sense that ancient Greek civilization has become an important source of Western civilization. The ancient Greeks recognized the human beings' greatness and nobility, and this concept made the ancient Greeks exercise and show off their strong bodies and their superior athletic ability. Their life is competitive, and the germination of humanistic thought in sports and competitions is born from this.

As the essence of ancient Greek culture, the rational spirit is reflected in all aspects of ancient Greek cultural life, especially architectural sculpture and sports. The main manifestation of the rational spirit in the field of architecture is that architectural works must follow appropriate mathematical proportions, so that they can comply with both

physical principles and human aesthetic principles. If the ancient Greece's rational spirit, embodied in the field of architectural sculpture, is a static proportional relationship, then, the ancient Greece's sports fully embody their motion measurement relationship. This motion measurement is also a manifestation of the ancient Greece's rational spirit within the scope of biophysical motion. The definition of motion, in ancient Greek culture, can be explained by philosopher Russel's summary: "For the Greeks who attempted to give a scientific explanation of motion [...], it seemed that only two categories of phenomena were important, namely the motion of animals and the movement of celestial bodies" (Russell, 2012, p. 52). It can be seen that, for Western civilization, sports undoubtedly belong to the category of biophysics, and they must follow the laws of biophysics. However, biological laws are only the reflection of physical laws in the organic world. After the 19th century, Darwin's biological evolution theory brought the Western understanding of sports to a new level. Since then, there have been breakthroughs in biology, anatomy, medicine and other fields, but also made the scientific research of sports unprecedentedly active, and there are many achievements. This not only gives people a more accurate and profound understanding of the nature and law of human life activities, the change of human function and the strength of sports ability, but also provides a scientific basis for the development of modern sports.

2 ONTOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND WESTERN SPORTS CULTURE

The cognition of the universe's origin directly reflects the human beings' different understandings on the life's origin, and the subject of sports is flesh and blood, so this problem first caused the difference in the content selection of Chinese and Western sports.

2.1 THE THESIS OF VITALITY IN CHINA

"Vitality" is an important iconic symbol of traditional Chinese culture and the theoretical pillar of traditional Chinese sports. These philosophical concepts, with simple materialism, play an important role in the development of traditional sports. The purpose of various activities in traditional sports is to maintain, regulate and replenish the innate vitality that a person has received at birth, making it more energetic. Traditional Chinese physiology believes that "vitality" is the human life's material element and the material basis for maintaining life movement. For the human body, in the ancient people's concept, vitality is the decisive factor in the life's existence. The ancients believed that "vitality" was the life's driving force. It originates from the kidneys, is stored in the elixir field and reaches the whole body through the triple burner meridians. It is the elixir of longevity and the life's foundation (Wang, 2014, p. 166-168).

As a major school of traditional Chinese thought, Taoism believes that the universe's origin is "vitality" and regards "vitality" as the origin of all things. *Book of Changes-Xici* contains the saying that "In (the system of) the Yi there is the Grand Terminus, which produced the two elementary Forms. Those two Forms produced the Four emblematic Symbols, which again produced the eight Trigrams" (Xiao, 2009, p. 67), which means that Grand Terminus is composed of yin and yang, which maintain relative stillness and movement with each other. This explains the human beings' birth. Human beings are composed of yin and yang. Yin is the mother body and Yang is the father body. The China's ancestors regarded the origin of all things as closely related to "vitality". This concept had a huge guiding effect on sports. Around "vitality", ancient Chinese ancestors created many sports, such as "martial arts", "Qigong", etc. They exercise the organs in the body through the movement of "vitality" through the meridians. The emphasis is on self-cultivation, and the pursuit of cultivating one's special survival ability and adaptability to the external material world, in "self-cultivation", to achieve the goal of health and longevity (Zhang, 2009, p. 116-117).

2.2 FOUR-ELEMENT THEORY IN THE WEST

The earliest representative of the four-element theory is Thales's (about 625-547 BC) world-origin theory of "water". Thales believed that "water" was the source of all things and all life's eternal essence. All things originate from water, and all life ends in water, because when everything corrupts or dies, it becomes liquid, that is, becomes water. Anaximenes (570 BC-500 BC) believed that the substance that constitutes life is not water, but air. Different life phenomena are formed due to the concentration or thinness of air. Heraclitus (about 535-475 BC) believed that all things are born from fire, so they are always in change. Empedocles (about 490-430 BC) synthesized the previous views and added "earth", so there were four elements: water, air, fire and earth. These theories have a common feature, which is that they are in a state of absolute motion and emphasize it. This world-origin theory echoes the struggle in the Western arena and the tenacity in the training hall, and has effectively promoted the development of Western competitive sports (Ni, 2022, p. 1272-1277). When choosing sports content, people particularly prefer those sports that are adventurous, exciting and fully reflect the life's vitality.

Another famous sect is the Pythagoreans, which advocates the world origin theory with "number" as its core. The Pythagoras believed that the origin of all things is "number", the universe itself is a harmony, and harmony is the unchanging principle of all things. Likewise, the human body itself expresses the harmony of numbers. The idea of harmony was a favorable one in Greece at that time. The Athenians applied this view to life's all areas and regarded harmony as a perfect quality (Zhang, 2014, p. 47-48). Manifested in the influence of sports, the ancient Greeks combined physical exercise with the development of fitness and

physique, through sports, to make the body strong, muscular and beautiful, as well as each part of the body and the whole coordination.

Through the above comparison, it is not difficult to see the differences between Chinese and Western sports cultures. China believes that the “vitality”, formed innately, can only be maintained and cannot be changed. While the West believes that the quality-of-life elements can be improved through the action of external forces. China believes that the power of life movement is generated, based on the own individuals’ complementary movement of yin and yang, while, the West believes that the power of life movement comes from the body’s material metabolism movement. China believes that the life’s vitality is manifested in the high unity of spirit and body, while the West believes that the life’s vitality is manifested in the body’s tension, generated by thermal movement.

3 THE DIFFERENCE IN MEDICAL BACKGROUND BETWEEN CHINESE AND WESTERN SPORTS CULTURE

There is no doubt about the influence of medicine on sports. Duan et al. believe that traditional Chinese sports are rooted in the theory of “Unity of Nature and Man”, Yin and Yang, and Five Elements, while Western sports are a comprehensive application of scientific experiments, anatomy, physiology and modern medicine. This view emphasizes the penetrating effect of philosophy, medicine and aesthetics on sports, holds that traditional Chinese medicine is one of the theoretical bases of traditional Chinese sports and Western medicine is one of the theoretical bases of Western sports, affirming the influence of medicine on sports (Duan, 1994, p. 5-8).

3.1 TRADITIONAL CHINESE SPORTS UNDER THE BACKGROUND OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

Form and spirit & interior and exterior are two closely related important propositions, related to the human life’s existence in traditional Chinese sports. Form is the body, including the trunk, limbs, muscles, bones, skin, etc. Spirit, in a broad sense, refers to the general term for the external manifestations of human life activities; in a narrow sense, it refers to spiritual consciousness and thinking activities. The so-called “interior” refers to the inner emotional activities and breath movements of the heart and mind; and the so-called “exterior” refers to the external physical activities, such as hands, eyes, body and steps.

The theory of traditional Chinese medicine believes that the human body itself is a unity of opposites of yin and yang. The movement and changes of yin and yang promote the movement and changes of life, and the life activities themselves are also called “spirit”. When

the spirit disappears, the vitality transformation stops and life ends (Wei, 2021, p. 40-48). It also believes that the human life process consists of the mutual coordination and harmony of form and spirit. At the same time, it also highlights the influence of spirit on form and even plays a leading role. *Su Wen* says: “If the form and spirit are combined, a person will be born; if the form and spirit are separated, a person will die” (Wang, 2016, p. 109). “The spirit is independent and the muscles are one, so it can cover the heaven and the earth for a long time, and there is no end” (Wang, 2016, p. 117). These contents reveal the dialectical relationship between form and spirit that is interdependent and mutually reinforcing in the process of life activities. A healthy person should maintain normal activities in both body and mind. That is to say, a healthy body is the material guarantee for full vitality and quick thinking, and abundant spirit and optimistic mood are the main conditions for physical health. Therefore, traditional sports health care attaches great importance to the overall adjustment of body and spirit, and advocates the co-maintenance of body and spirit to nourish it, regulate the spirit and guard the whole body, so that the body is strong and the spirit is full (Zhang, 2021, p. 7-11). Although traditional Chinese martial arts are diverse and rich in content, with differences in hardness and softness, they all attach great importance to the practice method of integrating interior and exterior, and integrating both spirit and form.

Traditional Chinese sports believe that the human body itself has an intrinsic and close connection with nature. Human beings are part of nature, are restricted by natural laws and follow the same laws of movement changes. When dealing with the relationship between man and nature, we emphasize the harmonious coexistence between man and nature, embodying the overall idea of “unity of man and nature”. The unity of nature and the human body itself is one of the fundamental viewpoints of martial arts ideological understanding and methodology, and one of the cores of martial arts training methods. Therefore, in the process of practicing martial arts, people are always pursuing the harmonious connection between the human body and nature, so that people can follow nature, and their movements must also obey the nature’s changing laws of nature, to achieve a balance between things and self, internal and external, and yin and yang (Zhou, 2018, p. 26-29). Because of this, since ancient times, practitioners have paid great attention to the human body’s coordination and of the external natural environment, such as the four seasons, climate and geography in the process of practice, and adopted different training contents and means according to the time and place, choosing a beautiful and quiet natural environment as a place to practice and cultivate oneself, so that the individual’s body and mind are integrated into the nature. If you move against the weather, time and place, it will be detrimental to your health. You should “choose the time, place, climate, and direction to practice.” For example, when practicing Xing Yi Quan³, you should adapt to the changing laws of the four seasons. When practicing

3 Xing Yi Quan is one of the traditional Chinese martial arts and a representative project of state-level intangible cultural heritage in China.

Xing Yi Quan in spring, you should pay attention to the regulation of internal energy; when practicing in autumn, you should pay attention to reducing violence (Yang, 2021, p. 94-101). Health preservation in four seasons is based on the principles of four-season health care and exercises the guiding technique according to the changes, in yin and yang, in the four seasons and the movement of vitality and blood in the human body's internal organs, such as sitting exercise in the twenty-four solar terms, eight trigrams boxing, etc.

3.2 WESTERN SPORTS IN THE CONTEXT OF WESTERN MEDICINE

Western medicine is “self-centered”, severing the relationship between man and nature, and targeting external pathogens to fight against nature, forming a science that is confrontational with nature, prompting people to boldly dissect themselves, decompose objects and continuously obtain conclusive scientific knowledge. When observing people's health, disease, etc., many physiological parameters are regarded as constant, and the etiology and pathology focus on the relationship between cause and effect. Western medicine has shown great enthusiasm in exploring the natural laws of life movement. Their results, in exploring the laws of life movement, have been absorbed and applied by Western sports and become a tool to better guide sports.

Unlike China, transforming the world is a traditional Western understanding of the relationship between man and nature. For Western sports, the emphasis is on overcoming nature, defeating nature, studying and changing nature. From the ancient Olympic Games to the current ones, thousands of years of history have left traces of Western athletes' conquest of nature. Racing originated from the ancient humans' hunting activities. Fast running was a need for ancient people to survive, because it was a means and skill to obtain production materials and escape. The ability to run fast became a major part of ancient people's descendents' education. After racing became a sports event, it was divided into sprint, middle and long-distance running. As it becomes more closely integrated with medicine, the tendency of Western sports to conquer nature and transcend the self becomes more intense.

Under such circumstances, new scientific theories specializing in sports have emerged, such as exercise physiology, sports anatomy, sports biomechanics, sports medicine, etc. The development of these theory disciplines of sports follows a method of reduction and decomposition and conducts in-depth research on the mechanisms of changes in the human body during exercise. In competitive sports, scientific rational thinking is used as the guide, human anatomy is used as the theoretical basis and a series of regular body movements have a direct impact on the human organism, so that the human body's anatomical structure and physiological functions are actively biologically improved. The ultimate goal is to construct a logical sequence from the individual to the society, from the micro to the macro. This is manifested in competitive sports as enabling people to discover themselves, understand

themselves, and form a competitive outlook on self-overcoming, self-transcendence and constant challenge to new heights. Transcendence and competition constitute a vital mechanism of Western sports culture. The most basic thing, in a sports competition, is the transcendence of oneself, then the transcendence of opponents and, finally, the transcendence of records and sports laws. These transcendences are competition, competing with oneself to achieve a stronger new self, and competing with others and higher goals based on a stronger new self. Whether it is competition or transcendence, it is a manifestation of man's conquest of nature and his challenge to himself (Ma, 2017, p. 129-132).

4 AESTHETIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND WESTERN SPORTS CULTURE

As a part of human culture, sports mainly point to "people". Therefore, the cultural form of sports is the "people's" cultural form, and the main idea reflected in sports aesthetics is the sports people's main idea "turning" beauty into beauty. Based on the differences in thinking patterns between Chinese and Westerners, two distinctive humanistic types are shown in sports. Western thinking is analytical, paying attention to the winning and losing points of sports competitions, emphasizing results, while Eastern thinking is integrated and considers overall self-cultivation. Western sports culture focuses on self-expression and individuality. Eastern sports culture focuses on fitness, cultivating both body and spirit, following etiquette and focusing on the process. The difference in thinking patterns has led to the differences in the humanistic and aesthetic patterns of Chinese and Western sports (Xu, 1987, p. 101).

"Harmony" and "transcendence" are a pair of categories that go hand in hand with the humanistic beauty of traditional Chinese sports and the humanistic beauty of Western competitive sports. China is known as the "Land of Etiquette" in the world. It pays attention to "in practicing the rules of propriety, it is the harmony that is prized." and "moral cultivation" first. It focuses on cultivating the people's harmonious beauty themselves and the harmonious beauty of interpersonal relationships. This humanistic aesthetic concept, in traditional Chinese aesthetics, that focuses on emotions and respects moral concepts has been fully reflected in the field of native traditional sports (Zhang, 2018, p. 22-38). As "[...] the most traditional sports with national aesthetic and cultural characteristics, martial arts are the epitome of the beauty of ancient oriental civilization". Among them, the personality beauty, cultivated through "martial arts", has become the unique aesthetic style that distinguishes traditional Chinese sports from humanistic beauty of Western competitive sports. Martial ethics, that is, the spirit of advocating martial arts and advocating virtue, is a code of words and deeds shared by the martial arts community. Under the guidance of the concept of "harmony", the arrangement of martial arts sparring routines follows the "simulation" principle of attack and defense between the moves, highlights the concept of humanistic care between attack and defense, reflects the moral cultivation realm of the martial artist,

and shows the human nature's equality principle. For example, in the process of martial arts routine sparring, the attacker's and the defender's role is played. The attacker, in the first round, will be the defender in the next one, and the defender, in the first round, will be the attacker in the next one. The roles of offense and defense are interchanged, and a set of sparring is not complete until the routine drills come to an end and both parties perform a "fist-holding ceremony" to end harmoniously.

Western competitive sports are deeply immersed in the Western "people-oriented" humanistic cultural tradition, and are based on mind-body dualism and Western individualistic thinking patterns. From an aesthetic perspective, the humanistic beauty dimension of Western competitive sports pursues transcendence and strength. Competitors conquer the human beings' natural obstacles and win the crown on the podium. The beauty of "competition" is personal supremacy, which is also the so-called beauty of "transcendence". Competition is an important review method for Western competitive sports to demonstrate the sports subjects' physical ability and improve technical levels. All kinds of "world records" represents only a kind of competitive sports symbol. The subject's transcendent spirit, who creates the symbol, is an important asset of the competitive sports treasure house. Breaking records that have not yet been attempted by predecessors, and climbing to peaks that have not yet been reached, mark the pursuit of a realm beyond the limits of Western competitive sports (Du, 2008, p.87-89).

Tai Chi and marathons are another typical comparison. Tai Chi is a traditional Chinese martial art form that emphasizes harmony, balance and inner peace. In the practice of Tai Chi, competition and winning are not the main focus. What is more important is personal practice and inner peace. This pursuit of harmony reflects the characteristics of Chinese sports spirit and the emphasis on harmony, balance and innerness in Chinese culture. In contrast, marathon is a typical Western sports event that emphasizes competition, transcendence and personal perseverance. Marathon athletes constantly challenge themselves during the competition and strive to exceed their personal limits to achieve better results. This spirit of competition and transcendence embodies the characteristics of Western sports and also reflects the emphasis on competition, transcendence and personal achievement in Western culture.

From the gods' and human's entertainment in religious competitions, in ancient Greece, to the "seven skills of knights" served by feudal rule, to the gentleman's sports after the Renaissance, to the Olympic sports spirit of continuous improvement, daring to challenge, never being satisfied and admitting defeat, and the fighting spirit of not being afraid of hardships and dangers, daring to climb peaks, challenging and conquering nature expressed by the modern Olympic Games motto "Faster, Higher, Stronger", all of them reflect a typical "transcendental" Western individual-oriented humanistic aesthetic trend that aims at pursuing free competition and advocating individuality (Song, 2021, p. 92-96).

The pinnacle of statue art in the ancient Greek period, *The Discus Thrower*, depicts a strong, outstanding and energetic athlete in the process of throwing the discus back to the highest point, about to throw the moment and present the most expressive one of “temporarily do not act, waiting for the moment”. The violent and sudden movement of the statue allows viewers to immerse themselves in the sports subjects’ desire for “competition” and their confidence in “transcendence”, which reveals the true meaning of the humanistic and aesthetic dimension of Western competitive sports.

CONCLUSION

It can be seen, from the above analysis, that sports, in different philosophical backgrounds, are very different, that is, the root cause of the differences between Chinese and Western sports is the difference in philosophical thinking styles and philosophical concepts between China and the West. Sports, influenced by traditional Chinese philosophy, are “quiet” ones that focus on health care. Sports, influenced by the “subject-object dichotomy” of Western philosophy, are competitive “moving” ones that focus on the pursuit of victory. Traditional Chinese sports philosophy focuses on harmony with nature, while Western sports philosophy focuses on confrontation with nature. Traditional Chinese sports aesthetics focuses on the humanistic beauty of “harmony”, while Western sports aesthetics focuses on the competitive beauty of “transcendence”. In addition, we should also see the commonality between the two to a certain extent. They contain some common values of human civilization, represent the ideal of human civilization progress, and the ultimate goal is to promote the human beings’ comprehensive and free development. Under the tide of globalization in the new century, we should promote the integration and common development of Chinese and Western sports, so that the cultural structure and value structure of the two complement each other to better promote the modernization process of world sports culture.

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