On the Definition of Sports Concept and Its Historical Evolution

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Abstract: Throughout the development history of sports, its connotation, extension and even its name are changing and developing. The function of sports has been continuously excavated by people, but people’s definition of sports concept has become more and more vague, and it has evolved from the initial sports level and education level to the social level and spiritual level. It is the general trend of sports development that the connotation and extension of sports are enriched and changed with the development of social productive forces and the change of people’s needs. Understanding the essence and concept of sports plays an important role in the development of sports. In this paper, the “sports concept” is taken as the research object, and the research results of several experts in this category are integrated, so as to clarify the current development situation and research results of sports concept, and sort out the understanding of sports concept.

Keywords: Sports concept, Essence, Development.

1. Introduction

The definition of the concept of sports is a precise definition of the essence of sports, and the “truth” of sports can be found by summarizing and analyzing the origin, development and evolution of sports and its objective existence today. With the continuous development of human society, human beings have been searching for the truth of everything, but in the philosophical category, there is no absolute truth in the world. The progress of mankind from ancient times to the present is attributed to the unremitting search for the truth of things, and there is only truth that is infinitely close to things. Scholars’ continuous research and summary of the concept of sports is an infinite approach to the “truth” of sports. By summarizing the history and analyzing the present, we can look forward to the future of things, as is the development of sports. Only by finding the essence of sports can it find its position in the past and future and promote the continuous development of sports.

2. The Origin of the Concept of Sports in the Embryonic Period of Europe

Ancient Greece is the birthplace of modern European sports. In ancient Greece, the practice of keeping fit was also popular, and its connotation was the same as that of sports. Homer Epic around the 10th century BC recorded a large number of funeral competitions and banquet competitions. From the 5th century BC to the 4th century BC, the Greek philosopher, thinker and educator Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Politics talked about sports[1]. Although sports played an important role in the life of the ancient Greeks, in the ancient Greek literature, there were only a few basic terms about sports, such as athletics, training, gymnastics, competitive coaches and so on. Among these terms, the word “competition” came into being at the end of primitive society in Greece and was widely used around the 10th century BC. The word “gymnastics” originated from the 6th to 5th century BC.

“Gymnastics” in ancient Greece is the general term of all fitness sports. In ancient Greece, a “Gymnasium” with facilities such as running, jumping, throwing, boxing and wrestling was built. Plato’s Republic called “Gymnastics” as “the theory and method system of physical training”.

3. Evolution of Sports Concepts in Europe and America

Gymnastics in ancient Greece was also an important part of education at that time. Aristotle also pointed out that the “basic subjects” in Greek primary schools are often four subjects, namely reading, writing, gymnastics and music. Some are painting, “Gymnastics is usually used to cultivate the character of bravery”, “Gymnastics is good for health and can enhance fighting power”. From the above aspects, it can be seen that the concept of “gymnastics” in ancient Greece is very close to that of “sports” today, and both of them contain the meaning of physical and mental education. In some ancient Greek documents, “gymnastics” and “competition” were used as two concepts[2]. Aristotle, on the other hand, opposes specialized competitive exercises, and advocates taking competition as a means of gymnastics. However, there are differences between the concept of “sports” and the concepts of “gymnastics” and “competition”. It should be noted that today’s sports (in a broad sense) can include competitive sports, and the means are more abundant.

The basic terms of ancient Greek sports have not changed much for thousands of years. Because after ancient Greece, it was the so-called “Hellenistic period” of alien rule, followed by the rule of the Roman Empire and the dark rule of the Middle Ages[3]. In this long period, whether in Greece or other European countries, its sports were far less prosperous than that of ancient Greece. The ancient Greek sports, like its culture, are almost gradually forgotten. It was not until the Renaissance in the late Middle Ages that the ancient Greek sports reappeared and were valued by people again because of the efforts of humanists, the representative of the emerging bourgeoisie. At this time, the basic terms of ancient Greek sports infiltrated into various language families in Western Europe through the evolution of Latin, and became sports words of all nationalities. It can be said that from the Renaissance to the middle of the 10th and 8th centuries, the sports concepts in European countries were basically the same as those in ancient Greece.

After the mid-18th century, due to the establishment of capitalist relations of production in some western European
countries, modern sports also flourished in Western Europe with the establishment of modern education system. In this case, sports terms and their concepts have also seen a new development momentum, with important signs: First, the term “sports” came into being; Second, F. L. Yang, the pioneer of social sports in Germany, systematically sorted out sports terms.

According to the available data, the word “Physical Education” first appeared in France. In the country’s works on children’s education in the 1960s, the French word “education physique” already existed. Since then, in the book Gymnastics for Youth published by J.G.F. Guthmuth (1759-1839), the pioneer of modern school physical education in Germany, some terms such as “physical education” and “physical exercises belonging to education” have also been used. After the 19th century, “sports” has become a special term appearing in some educational and sports writings. For example, in 1838, F. Amoros (1770-1848), a French sportsman, published Manuele de education physique, gymnastique et morale. In this book, “sports” and “gymnastics” are used as two different concepts. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), a British sociologist, published a paper on Physical Education in 1854, and A. Maclaren (1820-1884), a British sportsman and the originator of anthropometry, also published his Sports System in 1867. The direct cause of the emergence and application of the word “sports” is mainly the development of educational theory. At that time, many educators and sociologists advocated the implementation of education from three aspects: morality, intelligence and body, and the education through physical activities was naturally physical education, that is to say, the word “physical education” was originally put forward from the perspective of pedagogy, and physical education was regarded as an integral part of education.

Following the emergence of the concept of “sports” in the sense of pedagogy, the new word “Physical Culture” appeared in Europe, which is the broad concept of “sports” that we understand today. Exactly how this word came into being has not been tested, but its corresponding German word Korper-Kultur was adopted in the History of Sports written by German sports writer G. U. A. Vith (1763-1836) in 1891[4]. Based on this, it is inferred that this word was produced at the end of 18th century at the latest. When Fett used it, he only directly linked it with the active health care of Russians, and its meaning was rather narrow. Later, in German, this word has the meaning of active “sports maintenance”, and in the corresponding French, it is understood as “the law of exercising”. After the 20th century, it still has different meanings in various languages[5]. For example, in German, there is the meaning of “exercising”, and there is also the meaning of being a physical exercise system to promote health and enhance physical strength. In Germany during the First World War, it was also used as a synonym for a new gymnastics, which meant to cultivate people with vitality and vitality physically. However, after the October Revolution in Russia, corresponding Russian words (физическая культуры) were running, jumping, throwing, wrestling, boxing and other sports. Although individual track and field events are also included in the second and third “Gymnastics” events of modern Olympic Games, this is just a special situation that began to take gymnastics as a competitive event. After the First World War, because some new educational theories, especially John Dewey’s pragmatism educational theory, were widely spread, people began to doubt the educational value of various gymnastics systems aimed at training soldiers, and also raised objections to using the term “gymnastics” to express the actual content of sports. In 1919, American educational circles and sports circles launched an extensive discussion on sports goals. Many scholars put forward that physical education is an important part of education; Sports should provide opportunities to train’ complete individuals’ both physically and mentally. The aim of physical education should be to change the aim of education. For example, C. W.

In addition to the development of the two “sports” concepts mentioned earlier, it is worth mentioning that in the early 19th century, the German sportsman Friederek Ludwig Lahn (1778-1852) had systematically sorted out some basic terms of sports. Out of a Germanic nationalism, he created a new German sports term Turnen and used it to replace the traditional Gymnasti Cs[6]. What does Turnen mean? It seems that I have come to see the definition given by Yang. However, judging from the actual content of Turnen advocated by him in Germany, it undoubtedly refers to German-style sports (formerly translated as German-style gymnastics or Young’ gymastics), which can also be said to be a German-style body movement system. The so-called Turnen movement includes both physical exercise and mental education and training. The slogan of Yang and his followers is Frisch, Frei, Fhllich, Fromm. These four German words can be translated into liveliness, freedom, happiness and honesty[7]. At that time, the badge pattern used by German Gymnastics Association and German Gymnastics School was composed of the first letters of the first four German words. Thus, it is really a misunderstanding to understand German gymnastics as a simple body-building exercise. Turnen and its derivatives are quite popular in German-speaking countries, and the physical exercise methods represented by instrumental gymnastics used by Turnen are spread all over the world.

From the above, we can see that since the mid-18th century, many concepts of “sports” have appeared in Europe[8]. The emergence and use of every new concept marks a big step forward in sports practice and theory. However, due to historical tradition and customary reasons, several similar concepts have a long history of coexistence and mixing. For example, from ancient Greece to modern times, the concept of “Gymnastics” was actually synonymous with “sports”. Even after the word “sports” came into being in the 19th and early 20th centuries, its application in most countries was much wider than that of “sports”. On the other hand, the concept of “gymnastics” itself was changing. The main contents of ancient Greek gymnastics are running, jumping, throwing, wrestling, boxing and other sports, while modern gymnastics is mainly suitable for unarmed exercises and physical exercises with instruments needed in military, medical and educational fields, but does not include athletics, ball games and other sports. Although individual track and field events are also included in the second and third “Gymnastics” events of modern Olympic Games, this is just a special situation that began to take gymnastics as a competitive event. After the First World War, because some new educational theories, especially John Dewey’s pragmatism educational theory, were widely spread, people began to doubt the educational value of various gymnastics systems aimed at training soldiers, and also raised objections to using the term “gymnastics” to express the actual content of sports. In 1919, American educational circles and sports circles launched an extensive discussion on sports goals. Many scholars put forward that physical education is an important part of education; Sports should provide opportunities to train’ complete individuals’ both physically and mentally. The aim of physical education should be to change the aim of education. For example, C. W.
Hetherington emphasized in his book Curriculum Plan of School Physical Education (published in 1922) that the “developing goal” of physical education should include the development of physical ability, intelligence, neuromuscular and organ functions; The “goal in social standards” of sports should include cultivating “leadership, good moral habits, ideals and manners”[9]. In the book Sports Organization and Management (published in 1922), F. Wiii Iams criticized the mechanical formal gymnastics which was widely popular at that time, and thought that this sports system only attached importance to health and neglected psychology, which was an abnormal phenomenon in education. He advocated that school physical education should be included in the education plan and put forward a series of measures aimed at reforming school physical education. Through this discussion on sports objectives, the modern sports concept (narrow sense) of “sports is an education by means of physical activities” was gradually established, so that the two long-term confused concepts of “gymnastics” and “sports” finally drew a clear line. Since then, the word “gymnastics” has only been retained as the name of a sports event. It is precisely because of the above changes that many countries in the world (including China) have changed the school “gymnastics” course to “physical education” one after another since the 1920s, and the word “physical education” has been widely used. Up to now, this concept of “sports”, which reflects an integral part of education, has been widely used in all countries in the world. However, after all, this concept can’t summarize all the contents of today’s sports, so whether there should be a superior concept on top of this concept, what words this superior concept chooses and how to standardize this word, etc., are all problems to be solved. In other words, it is necessary to standardize the concept of “sports”.

4. Evolution of Japanese Sports Concept

It was in 1872 that Japan began to introduce the “national education system”. Although the content of “physical education” was reflected in the school curriculum system, the name of “physical education” went through “body art” (1872~1873), “gymnastics” (1873~1941) and “physical training” (1941~1947)[10].

Although the word Gymnastics began to be used in Japan in 1860, the word “gymnastics” was first seen in Fu’s Immortality Law published in 1867 (the expression of Japanese loanwords is ギムナスチーキ). The word was first used in schools in 1868. Fukuzawa Yukichi clearly recorded the word “gymnastics” in the “canteen rules” of Keio University, which he founded (the expression of Japanese loanwords is デムナスチック), and these terms are all used as “sports in schools”. However, after “gymnastics” became the educational name of school physical education, the word “body technique” disappeared. Before the Second World War, the word “gymnastics” had two meanings. One is used as the subject name of school physical education, and the other is “Gymnastics” as the teaching material content in “Gymnastics”, such as unarmed gymnastics such as queue, jumping box and mat floor exercise, which is the main content of school physical education class.

The word “Physical Education” was translated into “physical education” (1873), “education about the body” (1875), “physical education” (1875) and “teaching by example” (1875). However, in 1876, Kondo Zhensan translated it into sports in “Journal of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports”, and the word sports became a common Japanese language and was widely used. Sports is a broad concept at first, including school sports, women sports, national sports, mass sports, social sports and so on. It can be said that sports is a comprehensive concept, which is very close to the sports concept system currently used in China.

Before sports was introduced into Japan, Japan had established a health-preserving theory centered on disease-free longevity based on the theories of Yin-Yang, Five Elements, Five Movements and Six Qi, viscera and meridians of traditional Chinese medicine. Its representative figures are Manase Dosan, Ekiken Kaibara’s “Health Preservation Theory”, “Health Preservation Training” and so on. By the end of the 18th century, this pure disease-free longevity regimen centered on medicine and regimen developed into the regimen of nourishing the heart, daily life and professional life, and then developed into the theory of paying equal attention to physical exercise and regimen. This theory is actually the embryonic form of modern Japanese sports.

After the Meiji Restoration, the introduction of the concepts and contents of gymnastics and sports mentioned above made Japan’s sports develop significantly. Especially after the publication of the national “Education Order”, the establishment of the gymnastics training institute responsible for teacher training played a decisive role, and the concept and contents of “physical education” of sports were established[11]. This point can be seen from the necessity demonstration when the Gymnastics Training Institute was established. The introduction of martial arts such as swordsmanship, in-depth study of gymnastics, health examination, training of gymnastics teachers, etc. are all the contents taught by physical education. We can see the dualism of physical education, that is, the model of physical fitness theory.

5. Evolution of Similarity Concept of Ancient Chinese Sports

China is one of the countries with the earliest civilization in the world. There were colorful and colorful sports activities in ancient China. However, because the geographical environment, historical tradition and beauty are different from those of European countries, ancient Chinese sports are also different from those of European countries. In ancient China, almost all sports activities were subordinate to other social activities, and all kinds of sports activities lacked internal social connections, thus failing to form a relatively independent organic unity or a system of theories and methods. Although from a local point of view, some sports activities (such as martial arts, Health-keeping, ball games, chess games, etc.) also have their own complete systems. At that time, Iraq did not have a complete sports system, so it is impossible to have a concept or term that can summarize all sports activities, or there is no concept that is completely equivalent to “gymnastics” in ancient Greece or “sports” today. Compared with today’s related concepts, there are some similar concepts in ancient China, such as keeping in
good health is similar to sports in a narrow sense, shaping and guiding are similar to gymnastics or physical exercises in a narrow sense, martial arts and martial arts are similar to military physical training, and labor and sports are similar to sports. The reason why they are “similar” is that they are different in connotation. Generally speaking, the above-mentioned concepts in ancient China more embody or highlight the spiritual aspect, which also reflects an important feature of ancient Chinese sports.

As early as more than one million years ago, when human social activities could barely distinguish between seeking food (gathering, fishing and hunting) and attacking and defending (attacking and defending wild animals and other people), Chinese people developed basic skills such as walking, running, jumping, throwing and floating. Even 40,000 years ago, Chinese people used the “flying stone rope” and invented the bow and arrow 28,000 years ago, which had a great influence on the development of social productive forces. At this time, as a social phenomenon, sports began to enter the stage of human history with the face of education (in terms of means and content) or embryonic entertainment. Society began to have budding sports.

In the Xia, Shang, Zhou, Spring and Autumn Period of our country, in the slave society that lasted for 1600 years, the need of slave owners’ class rule and frequent wars stimulated the development of military martial arts and attached importance to military physical training. There were many thinkers, politicians and strategists in the Spring and Autumn Period. Their philosophical thoughts, military thoughts, educational theories and sports practice all played a great role in promoting sports activities in this period. For example, Sun Wu’s immortal military classic, The Art of War, contains a lot of contents about physical skills and training. In addition to the six arts education in his private school, Confucius also advocated that students should go outing and swim. Confucius himself also likes archery, hunting, fishing, climbing and other activities, and pays attention to health care, so he is physically strong.

Particularly noteworthy is the sports in the Han Dynasty. Due to the simplicity of policies in the Han Dynasty, the people were able to rest and recuperate, and there was a rule of culture with political consolidation and economic and cultural development. In addition, in order to repel foreign intrusion, it is necessary to strengthen armaments, make people physically fit and get rid of diseases, and promote the great development of sports in the Han Dynasty on the basis of pre-Qin sports. Due to the abundant material foundation of the Han Dynasty, the court and folk recreational sports activities were rich and colorful, with various names. Among them, sports-related events include wrestling, dancing, swinging, dragon dancing, lion playing, walking on stilts and other activities. Some activities developed into competitive sports in later generations, and some are still popular traditional recreational activities.

During the Jin Dynasty, the Southern and Northern Dynasties, there was chaos and division. In terms of sports activities, those activities in Han Dynasty, such as Cuju, were gradually abandoned. But from another point of view, it has also promoted the development of recreational sports and guided health care, such as chess playing, singing and dancing, and hundreds of plays advocated by the rulers.

The middle period of feudal society was the Sui, Tang and Five Dynasties, especially in the Tang Dynasty. It took more than a hundred years from the reign of Emperor Taizong Li Shimin to the reign of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang Dynasty. The whole country was unified and the economic, cultural and political development reached its peak. Under this social condition, the development of sports in Sui and Tang Dynasties showed unprecedented prosperity. During this period, sports activities were generally carried out from the royal court to the civil servants, military commanders and ordinary people, showing the characteristics of wide-ranging and large-scale sports activities. At the same time, the relatively high level of production technology in Sui and Tang Dynasties promoted the improvement of stadiums and equipment. For example, in the Tang Dynasty, there were inflatable soccer balls and goals, and stadiums poured with oil.

In the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, sports changed and developed with the social changes. For example, in the Northern Song Dynasty, following the martial arts system and Wang Anshi’s political reform, Qiang Bing, a rich country, was advocated, which stimulated the development of sports. The invention of bi movable type printing promoted the publication of sports books and materials, and also promoted the excavation, collection, research and writing of sports health preservation materials. In the early Qing Dynasty, in order to resist the invasion of Russia, the policy of “stressing martial arts for Suiyuan, defending the enemy and defending Xinjiang” was implemented. In the prosperous period of Kang and Gan, some measures were taken to promote production economically, and the martial arts system was followed in the examination system. Even in the liberal arts examination, riding and shooting were taken first, and those who failed were not allowed to take the written examination. The training system is relatively complete, so not only the army is excellent, but also many celebrities and strong men with high martial arts have emerged among the people. Therefore, in this period, the development of Chinese Wushu has reached a new climax. However, after Qianlong’s reign, the Chinese feudal society declined because of political corruption and poor livelihood. Especially after the mid-Qing Dynasty, the import of a large amount of opium poisoned the people’s health. In addition, in order to maintain its rule, the Qing government “banned people from practicing martial arts”, which led to the decline of national physique, “weak national strength and weak martial arts style”, and was humiliated by outsiders as “the sick man of East Asia”, and sports also fell apart.

6. The Evolution of Modern Chinese Sports Concept

The development of sports concept in China has certain stage characteristics. When it comes to the historical stage, it involves the problem of dividing standards. The development and changes of things happen under the joint action of many factors, and it is impossible to strictly divide the historical stages with a simple and universal standard[12]. Marxism holds that economy is the foundation, and the ultimate cause
of all social changes and changes lies in economy; It is the concentrated expression of political economy. Politics, state, law, etc. will influence the historical process, sometimes even have a special role. Marxism also holds that the evolution of anything is the result of the internal contradiction movement of things, and all things are governed by their own development laws. The same is true of the development and evolution of sports concept, which has its own unique law of development. At the same time, this law is produced under the influence of various internal and external factors. In view of this, the evolution process of China’s sports concept can be roughly divided into five stages.

6.1 The First Stage

The initial introduction of sports concept to the new culture movement in 1915. As we all know, the concept of “sports” in China is an imported product. On the introduction of sports concept, we should start with the introduction of gymnastics. This is because the word “gymnastics” at the beginning is actually identical to the word “sports” later, but the terminology used is different. Most people in China believe that gymnastics was introduced from abroad in the late period of Westernization Movement (probably in the 1890s). There have been many debates in Chinese academic circles about the specific time when the concept of sports was introduced. Most people agree that in 1897, that is, on the eve of the Reform Movement of 1898, the word “sports” was directly introduced from Japan. The Bibliography of Japan, published by Shanghai Datong Translation Publishing House, collected and compiled by Kang Youwei, and Meng Xue Reader, written by Chen Maozhi of Shanghai Nanyang Public School, etc., are all proof. By the end of 1915, the New Culture Movement had just introduced the concept of “sports” in China at this stage, and it was still very strange to most people. People were too busy to understand it and had no time to digest it, so they didn’t form their own opinions on it, which basically belonged to the stage of complete borrowing. At this stage, Chen Maozhi, Du Sicheng and Shen Shukui have defined sports in Meng Xue Reader and Cai Yuanpei’s Progress of Education since 1900. The connotation of sports concept is basically to teach people to keep fit through various methods. From Chen Maozhi to Cai Yuanpei, their understanding of the connotation of sports concept has become clearer and clearer. The former is a matter of hygiene, while the latter realizes that it is through regular labor to keep fit. Their extension is influenced by foreign countries. Without exception, all of them are considered as belonging to education.

6.2 The Second Stage

From the full-scale development of the New Culture Movement in 1915 and the May 4th Patriotic Movement to the eve of the Lugouqiao Incident in 1937, under the background of ideological emancipation, marked by Mao Zedong’s Research on Sports, many Chinese theorists, thinkers and educators of the older generation put forward our own understanding of the concept of sports according to China’s actual situation, and the Chinese people’s understanding of the concept of sports went from spontaneous to conscious. The New Culture Movement in 1915 and the subsequent May 4th Movement played an immeasurable role in the ideological emancipation of modern Chinese people, and a large number of intellectuals advocated this trend, among which sports thought was also a sharp weapon in their hands. During the period, Mao Zedong’s Research on Sports; Guo Fen’s History of Chinese Sports; Principles of Physical Education by Fang Wanbang; Principles of Physical Education co-edited by Wu Yunrui and Yuan Dunli; Cheng Dengke’s Outline of World Sports History; Chen Yongsheng’s Introduction to Physical Education; Wang Xuezhen’s “Sports and Education” and “Introduction to Sports” have discussed the concept of sports. At this stage, the generalization of the connotation of sports concept tends to be specific, because in the first stage, the essential attribute of sports is to keep fit through various methods. At this stage, people emphasize to keep fit and promote psychological development through regular physical exercises. From various methods to physical exercise, from physical fitness to physical and mental perfection, we find that people have a deeper understanding of the nature and function of sports (it is worth noting that at this stage, Guo Xifen divided the concept of sports into broad sense, sub-broad sense and narrow sense). At this time, the extension of sports concept still belongs to education.

6.3 The Third Stage

From 1937, when Japan launched a full-scale war of aggression against China to the eve of the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, War of Resistance against Japan and the War of Liberation took place one after another, and the influence of the war was everywhere. The development of sports in the areas under national control, enemy-occupied areas, base areas and liberated areas was different, but overall, the development of sports concept was slow. During this period, there was little discussion on sports, and the typical one was the understanding of the concept of sports in Ci Hai by Zhonghua Book Company: the training to help the body grow and develop is called sports. As one of the primary and secondary school subjects, it is divided into games, gymnastics, sports and other items, and it is called “three educations” together with moral education and intellectual education. In fact, at this stage, Chinese people’s understanding of sports has not stopped, but war is the focus of all work, and people don’t pay much attention to deeper problems such as sports concept. From the above sports concept, we can see that at this stage, the connotation of sports concept is to use training to assist the development of the body, and its extension still belongs to education. It can be said that as far as sports concept is concerned, it has not changed much from the second stage.

6.4 The Fourth Stage

From the founding of New China in 1949 to the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, after the founding of New China, everything was in ruins, and Chinese sports, which had just started to fly, then suffered the catastrophe of the Cultural Revolution. This is the exploration and development stage of sports in China, and the development of sports concept in China is tortuous. The typical definition of sports is Ci Hai in 1965; Xinhua Dictionary in 1971 and Cihai in 1977. At this stage, there is little knowledge about the concept of sports, which is basically concentrated in some reference books. With regard to the connotation of the concept of sports,
improving health and physique is still its essence, but its function has risen to the height of serving the politics and economy of the country and society. Although the extension of sports concept at this time is still considered as an educational activity, the education at this moment is a kind of education in a broad sense, that is to say, the extension of sports concept extends to the scope of social and cultural education, not just a kind of school education.

6.5 The Fifth Stage

Since the end of the Cultural Revolution in October 1976, in this stage for nearly 30 years, bringing order out of chaos after the smashing of the Gang of Four and the goal shift of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee have brought about a comprehensive recovery and rapid development of China’s sports industry. The development of China’s sports concept has also ushered in the most complicated stage of contention in history. Numerous sports theorists and authoritative books have put forward their unique views on sports according to the reality, including Ci Hai in 1977. In 1979, Sports Theory compiled by 26 colleges and universities including Shandong Normal University; In 1980, the sports newspaper “Writing Books for the Development of Sports”; The 1980 Encyclopedia (Introduction Draft) explains sports; Physical Education Theory in 1980 (common in physical education institutions); Xiaofeng Hu’s Some Issues about Sports Science System; Yan Shaol’s Sports and Sports Science; Hu Xiaoming’s “Sports should be a social science”; Lin Xiaofeng’s Sports and Sports Methods; Cao Jun’s Introduction to Sports; Introduction to Physical Education, 1995 edition; Yang Wenxuan and Chen Qi’s The Logic Problem of Sports Concept; Xiong Douyin’s What is Sports and Thoughts on the Integrity and Localization of the Concept of Sports; Han Dan’s On Three Early Sports Concepts in China, On Chinese Sports, One Divides into Three and On the Multi-meaning Understanding of the Word “Sports”; Liang Xiaolong’s Physical Education and Functions of Physical Education; Zhou Xikuan’s Basic Course of Sports Theory, etc. At this stage, there are many understandings about sports concepts, and at the same time, these understandings are quite different. As far as the connotation of sports is concerned, most people emphasize that physical exercise (physical exercises) can help to keep fit and promote physical and mental development. At the same time, they think that sports should enrich social and cultural life and serve social politics and economy. As far as the extension of sports is concerned, there are many different voices. Some people think that sports is a natural science. Some people think it is a kind of pedagogy; Some people think that it belongs to the comprehensive science or discipline group of natural science and social science; Some people think that sports belong to technical science and engineering technology; Some people think that sports belongs to human science. So far, people’s understanding of the connotation of sports concept has entered a period of a hundred schools of thought contending, and the Chinese people’s understanding of the connotation of sports concept tends to be more and more in-depth and perfect, which is closely related to people’s understanding of the essence of sports.

7. Several Foreign Language Phrases Related to Sports

7.1 Physical Education

Physical Education is a common phrase used to express sports-related content in English. In Chinese translation works, it is often translated into physical education or physical education or physical education.

Meaning of physical education: According to the authoritative Webster’s Third New International Dictionary (1988) of the United States, the explanation of physical education is: “The education of methods and systems aimed at promoting physical development and protection usually includes the guidance of body building, systematic exercise and various sports and games.” It can be seen that physical education mainly refers to the guidance and education of physical education. According to the annotation of the Dictionary of Sport Science (VerlaKarl Hofmann Publishing Company, former West Germany, 1987), in the United States, the concept of this word was limited to physical education in schools in the past, and later, its meaning was expanded to refer to vocational education of physical education and knowledge education of learning and mastering sports skills, but it still belongs to the category of education. In China, physical education is generally translated into physical education. Although there are different views on this translation, physical education is basically used to correspond to it in relevant authoritative tool books in China. Therefore, it is more common to translate physical education into physical education (sometimes translated into physical education), such as English-Chinese Ci Hai (National Defense Industry Press, December 1988.), English-Chinese Sports Vocabulary and other reference books also regard “physical education” as physics. In China, some newspapers and magazines also translate the word “sports” into physical education, but most of them refer to sports in a narrow sense.

In Russian, the corresponding explanation of physical education is: the educational process aimed at forming people’s specialized knowledge and skills and developing comprehensive physical abilities. Like education, it is a general category of individuals and society. As an activity necessary for society, its specific content and policy depend on the class interests, the characteristics of social and historical development and the needs of people to improve their bodies. It is characterized in that its main function is to teach sports movements and develop the physical ability of exercisers. In the process of its implementation, people are also educated in general to cultivate people’s interest motivation, standards, behavior norms and value orientation.

It can be seen from the above that the word physical education can basically correspond to the narrow sense of sports in the current concept of our country.

7.2 Physical Culture

In English, there was no physical culture, which originated from Russian and German, and is the corresponding word of “body culture” or “sports culture” in Russian and German.
Physical culture often translates it into “body culture” or “sports” in Chinese.

Meaning of Physical culture: According to the former West German Sports Science Dictionary, this word first appeared in Europe at the beginning of this century with the change of society and the whole lifestyle. At that time, in order to avoid the adverse effects that modern civilization might bring to human body, people demanded to actively protect the body and take part in beneficial activities to improve the adaptability, health level and working ability of the body. In particular, a large number of sports enthusiasts among workers regard “body culture” as a collective undertaking and an integral part of working class culture and socialist culture. After World War II, this concept began to be widely used in the former Soviet Union, the former Democratic Republic of Germany and other socialist countries.

In Russian, the interpretation of the word “physical culture” is: an organic part of the culture of society and individuals, and it is an activity field that meets the needs of society to ensure that people are physically prepared for various forms of life activities, first of all, labor.

When translating physical culture in China, it is usually translated as “body culture” or “sports”. In some sports newspapers and magazines, the translation of the word sports into physical culture can still be seen. In fact, according to the original Russian and German texts, physical culture refers to a kind of culture that promotes the development and protection of people’s body and mind. Compared with sport and physical education, it has more social ideology and belongs to the category of social culture. Therefore, it can’t be completely equivalent to the concept of sports (broad sense) in Chinese, although some people still correspond to it.

7.3 Sport

The word “Sport” is used frequently in the field of sports. In many countries, it has been used as the general concept or superior concept of sports.

The word “Sport” originated from Latin “desportare”, which became “desport” in medieval French. In 14th century, the verb “sport (to sport)” appeared in English, meaning “make yourself happy”. Sport, which appeared as a noun in the 15th century, has the Latin meaning of lusus naturae. In the 16th century, the plural form of sport appeared, which refers to various sports and competitions. At this time, the meaning refers to games or recreational sports, especially some degree of physical activities for entertainment in the outdoors. In the 17th-18th century, the meaning of sport changed again, which refers to the behaviors and activities that people are proud of following the wild activities, especially hunting or gambling related to the outcome and letting others watch it. In the middle of 19th century, sport has become a kind of sports, entertainment and games with competitive nature, and it also means various non-competitive fitness sports and recreational entertainment and games[14].

Since 1970s, with the further popularization of sports and the continuous enrichment of sports terms, sport has gained many new connotations and extensions in concept, and its concept is changing. Because the connotation and extension of the word “sport” are constantly changing with the changes of times and social living habits, and the differences of cultural backgrounds and language habits of different countries, it has not been possible to reach a clear and unified definition of the word in a long historical period, but to use it by one’s own understanding. With the expansion of rationality and sociality of sport and the change of its content, the complexity of the word sport is getting deeper and deeper. In view of the need of international communication, it is necessary to establish a concept of sport that can be understood internationally. Therefore, the International sports Council put forward the Sport Declaration in 1968. This declaration defines the concept of sport as: it is a kind of physical exercise with game nature, including self or competition with others, and to overcome natural obstacles. This definition clearly emphasizes the competitive nature of sport. Since then, with the rapid development of modern civilization, such as social development, mechanization of labor, automation of life and urbanization of residence, modern civilization diseases associated with lack of exercise have emerged one after another, and the number of people participating in sport activities has increased rapidly. The content of sport has also changed under the stimulation of a wide range of needs, with new development. Therefore, although the unified definition of sport was given in 1968, it is difficult to adapt to the development and changes of modern society only by limiting sport to the scope of competition, and different countries have different views on the concept of sport. Based on the above situation, in 1975, the European Community Commission put forward and adopted the European Volkswagen sport Charter through the meeting of sports ministers. When this charter was adopted, the concept of sport was understood from the following categories: competitive sports; Outdoor activities and health care activities. Obviously, the concept of sport here is expanded than before, and it is understood from a broader sense.

In recent years, some countries have used sport as the general concept of sports, such as sport for All, top sport and lifetime sport derived from Sport. In Germany, since 1980s, it has become a trend to regard sport as the superior concept of sports. In recent years, Germany has basically replaced the word “body culture” as the original superior concept of sports, making sport the general concept or superior concept of sports has become a reality, which can be found in relevant Germany[15].

Words are confirmed. This phenomenon is not only in Germany, but also in France, Japan and other countries, and more and more people agree with it.

From the above, it can be seen that sport has become a trend as a general concept of sports or a superior concept. China also has this tendency, such as sport science, an authoritative magazine in China, whose English name is Sport Science. Although the content of sport can’t completely correspond to the sports content that China understands, the meaning of the word sport in modern English is very close to the broad concept of sports in China. Therefore, some people think that it is more appropriate to translate Chinese sports into English physical education and sport. Because sport is historically corresponding to physical education as a school, and its
emergence is not for the purpose of education, no matter how sport develops, it cannot be completely equal to physical education. At least, at present, the components and significance of sport’s physical education are still weak, so it is considered appropriate to combine them to express the general concept of sports in China.

8. Conclusion

Sports, born out of physical movements in social practice such as production, life and military affairs, is endowed with many functions such as physical education, moral education infiltration, social adaptation and so on in the process of human socialization. It is influenced by politics, economy, culture, science and technology, environmental protection and so on and reacts on them. The development process of sports is not only a process of constantly discovering and exploring sports functions, but also a process of constantly innovating and metabolizing sports events. The connotation and extension of sports are enriched and changed with the development of social productive forces and the change of people’s needs. Through reading, analyzing and summarizing the papers of various scholars, I think that the concept of sports is really difficult to define, but the research results of various scholars give us the enlightenment that the study of sports concept can not be separated from the actual situation in its objective existence and the different reflections of sports concept on different objective bases, only grasping the main contradiction of the problem: the form, function and purpose of sports concept in today’s human society. Only in this way can we truly guide the development of sports concept in the future.

References


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