

The Role of Sport in Reshaping the Spiritual Outlook of Contemporary Youth

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Abstract

The Party and the state have consistently attached great importance to the development of spiritual civilization. Growing up amid China's rapid development, contemporary youth face intense pressures, which has contributed to diverse spiritual and psychological profiles - often described in public discourse as "hollow-hearted" youth, "bai lan" ("giving up/letting things slide") youth, "angry youth", and "dagongren" ("wage-working") youth. The multifaceted nature of sport indicates its potential to reshape the spirit of contemporary youth. Sport can support brain function, strengthen cultural identification, transmit sportspersonship, facilitate social interaction, foster sound values, and provide recreation and stress relief. Multiple pathways are therefore needed to raise young people's awareness of, and engagement with, sport. The government should actively broaden channels for youth participation and improve basic facilities and public services. Enterprises and public institutions should organize diverse employee sport competitions, enabling young people to experience vitality and enthusiasm for life, while enhancing work motivation and productivity. Youth themselves should also participate more in traditional Chinese sports, inherit and carry forward China's excellent sporting culture, demonstrate a positive ethos, and respond to the national call to become "dream chasers" and "dream achievers".

Keywords

Sport, Youth, Spiritual outlook, The spirit of sport, Sports culture

Introduction

Since its founding, the Communist Party of China and the Chinese state have consistently attached great importance to the cultivation of spiritual civilization, giving rise to a rich array of uplifting moral and cultural ideals [1]. These include the pioneering spirit and readiness for self-sacrifice embodied in revolutionary traditions such as the Red Boat Spirit and the Long March Spirit. They also encompass the patriotic commitment to shouldering the burdens of the nation and striving for national honor represented by the Iron Man Spirit. They further embody the devotion to the motherland, selfless dedication, self-reliance, perseverance, collaboration, and pursuit of excellence exemplified by the Two Bombs, One Satellite Spirit and the Manned Space Program Spirit. There is also the tenacity and fighting spirit associated with the Women's Volleyball Spirit. More recently, they include the values of putting life first, national solidarity, courage, respect for science, and commitment to a shared

future reflected in the Great Anti-pandemic Spirit. Contemporary Chinese youth should cultivate an equally strong and positive spiritual outlook, inherit and carry forward these noble ideals, and strive for the realization of the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation [2].

Problem statement: Reshaping maladaptive psycho-spiritual orientations among contemporary Chinese youth

Against the backdrop of profound transformations unseen in a century, contemporary Chinese youth are facing multiple and intersecting pressures, including the search for self-worth, intense peer competition, the tension between social reality and idealized expectations, and the expanding influence of consumerism [3]. Under these conditions, a range of maladaptive psycho-spiritual orientations has emerged, including youth affected by "Empty-Heart Syndrome", those shaped by avoidance

and the ethos of “lying flat”, groups commonly labeled as “angry youth”, and the self-deprecating yet resigned identity associated with the “working youth”.

The “Empty-Heart Syndrome” resulting from failed meaning-making in life

The term “Empty-Heart Syndrome” was introduced by Associate Professor of Peking University in a 2016 lecture, where he defined it as “a psychological disorder caused by defects in one’s value system” [4]. Young people affected by Empty-Heart Syndrome often experience an intense sense of loneliness and meaninglessness. Although it resembles depression in some respects, many medical interventions, including pharmacological treatment, appear to have limited therapeutic effect. These individuals tend to have a low sense of self-identity and are unable to affirm their own abilities, including basic capacities for survival and social interaction. From the perspective of evolutionary psychology, the purpose and meaning of life are rooted in survival and reproduction. When these two goals become difficult to achieve, or when one’s existence is perceived as imposing a substantial burden on the family - such that other family members face greater life pressure because of one’s presence - life may come to be seen as meaningless, and suicidal thoughts may emerge [5]. Today, Chinese youth are facing increasingly severe social pressures, which further undermine their sense of self-identity and gradually weaken their willingness to marry. This, in turn, deepens their difficulty in understanding the meaning of life and contributes to the emergence of Empty-Heart Syndrome. How to help such youth enhance their sense of self-identity and reconstruct their value system has therefore become a crucial issue in reshaping their spiritual outlook [6].

“Bai lan” youth after the experience of involution

As a psycho-spiritual condition, bai lan - roughly meaning “letting things rot” or giving up after prolonged struggle - is not unique to contemporary society. Historical and literary traces of this mentality can be found in the oft-cited remark attributed to Liu Shan, “one finds such joy here as to forget Shu”. Likewise, it is reflected in Tao Yuanming’s pastoral resignation captured in the line “I sow beans beneath the southern hill,

where weeds flourish and bean sprouts grow sparse”. It also appears in Li Bai’s reflection that “since sages have always lived in loneliness, let only the drinkers leave their names behind”. In this sense, bai lan often reflects a sense of powerlessness that emerges after failed struggle: individuals feel unable, and no longer willing, to continue competing through relentless involution in pursuit of aspirations they increasingly regard as unattainable [7].

Under the pressure of multiple real-life difficulties, many contemporary young people experience a growing tension between two competing beliefs: On the one hand, the idea that hard work and perseverance can lead to happiness; on the other hand, the perception that only the accumulation of wealth, power, and social status can secure a fulfilling life. Caught in this contradiction, some youth fall into self-negation and become trapped in the mindset of bai lan. At the same time, as an escapist subculture, bai lan has spread rapidly through online spaces in recent years and has developed its own distinctive ecosystem, making it easier for many young people to identify with and be absorbed into it [8]. Some studies suggest that bai lan functions both as a form of self-healing under conditions of pressure and as a calculated personal choice shaped by the weighing of costs and benefits [9]. Rather than relying solely on suppression, the more important task is to channel the broader ecosystem surrounding bai lan in a positive direction, so that the spiritual outlook of this group can improve steadily. This has become a key issue in reshaping the psycho-spiritual condition of such youth.

“Fenqing”: Idealistic youth discontented with social reality

During the early period of China’s reform and opening up, fenqing culture was one of the most visible and widely embraced youth subcultures. Today, however, fenqing are more often ordinary individuals hidden behind online identities, whose daily lives, studies, and work are largely indistinguishable from those of others. Contemporary fenqing culture is characterized by a stronger sense of realism and more concrete concern with social issues [10]. Although the expressions of fenqing are often emotionally charged, their remarks also reveal a tangible concern for the nation and society [11].

Through analyses of widely discussed online events, scholars Yang and Zheng classify fenqing into three types: nationalist fenqing, China-critical fenqing, and anger-expressive fenqing. Regardless of category, however, the root of this phenomenon lies in the disjunction between an idealized vision of the world and the realities of social life, which gives rise to intense emotional forms of self-expression. Helping such youth understand that the realization of ideals depends on sustained effort and long-term striving is therefore central to reshaping the spiritual outlook of fenqing.

The self-mocking “dagongren” under the pressure of consumerism

The term dagongren - literally, “working people” or “laboring workers” - emerged online in 2020 and gradually became a popular form of self-mockery among young people. In contemporary society, the spread of consumerism has increasingly reinforced the idea that social status is reflected through goods that signify levels of wealth. At the same time, China remains in a stage of uneven and insufficient development. Because dagongren are typically young people who have only recently entered, or have not yet fully entered, the workforce, they have had limited time to accumulate wealth. As a result, although they are deeply shaped by the consumerist logic of capital, their relatively low economic position often leaves them trapped in a profound sense of anxiety [12]. It is under such conditions that many young people adopt the label dagongren as a form of ironic self-description, seeking humor amid hardship.

The psycho-spiritual condition of this group should not simply be regarded as negative or maladaptive; at its core, it remains future-oriented and resilient. However, realities such as the devaluation of educational credentials, persistently high housing prices, and separation from one’s hometown place enormous pressure on dagongren, forcing them to devote themselves almost entirely to work. In response, many turn to online self-mockery and seek a shared symbolic community in which they can temporarily ease psychological and emotional strain. How to alleviate the dual physical and mental pressures faced by dagongren

has therefore become an important issue in reshaping the spiritual outlook of this group.

Pathways through which sport reshapes the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth

Sport possesses multiple attributes, including natural, cultural, competitive, social, educational, and recreational dimensions, all of which play important roles in reshaping the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth.

Sport promotes physical health and reshapes the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth

From a materialist perspective, consciousness is a function of the human brain. Physical activity is an effective means of improving brain structure and function and of promoting brain health [13]. Sport represents a form of human transformation of the natural body, contributing to both physical and mental well-being. Existing studies have shown that physical exercise functions as a protective factor against depression [14]. Physical health and mental health are closely intertwined. However, during the school years in China, excessive emphasis on intellectual education has often led to the marginalization of physical education, with sports classes being compressed or occupied by academic subjects. This has limited the time and space available for young people’s athletic development and has also made it difficult for them, at the level of ideas and values, to fully appreciate the importance of sport.

In addition, under the long-standing cultural tradition of privileging literary attainment over physical cultivation, many young people have grown up hearing misleading sayings such as “well-developed limbs, simple mind”, which reinforce negative stereotypes about sport. As a result, even when they have the time and opportunity, many still seldom consider participating in physical activities, and their physical fitness often falls short of desirable levels. Contemporary youth should therefore recognize the functions and value of sport more fully at the level of ideas and practice, and actively participate in physical activities. These efforts will ultimately improve their physical fitness, help them acquire athletic skills, enhance their bodily form, brain structure, and brain

function, and enable them to demonstrate a more positive and resilient spiritual outlook.

Sport strengthens contemporary youth's sense of national, ethnic, and cultural identity

The cultural function of sport binds together people who share common attributes, forging ties that are distinctive to a nation and an ethnic community. After the Chinese duo Huang Yuting and Sheng Lihao won the gold medal in the 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team event at the Paris Olympic Games, the related hashtag "China wins gold in the 10m air rifle mixed team event" quickly rose to the top of Weibo's trending list, generating 27.282 million views within 24 hours. As Weibo serves as a major online gathering space for contemporary Chinese youth, the shared bond of China and the Chinese nation among young people was further reinforced and consolidated through the global sporting spectacle of the Paris Olympics.

Yet the significance of sport goes far beyond spectatorship. Direct participation in sporting activities generates a stronger sense of engagement and personal gain. The competitive nature of sport is such that it naturally arouses the human desire to strive and to excel. Whether one competes in various sporting events and fights hard to achieve victory, or falls just short, the experience itself can instinctively awaken a sense of vitality and inner strength. For this reason, participating in or organizing sporting activities at different levels - within enterprises and public institutions, families, and schools - constitutes an important pathway for enhancing one's sense of self-worth and identity, while also serving as an important means of strengthening interpersonal bonds. In addition, traditional Chinese sports culture has continued to evolve in the process of its transmission and remains vibrant across contemporary China. The process of understanding and learning from this rich sporting heritage plays an important role in strengthening both cultural identity and personal identity.

The capacity of sport to enhance national, ethnic, and cultural identity can be especially meaningful for young people experiencing maladaptive psycho-spiritual conditions, particularly those affected by Empty-Heart Syndrome. By enabling them to feel a stronger sense of responsibility toward the present world and a clearer awareness of their own identity, sport can help increase

their sense of value and belonging, remedy deficiencies in their value system, and ultimately reshape their spiritual outlook.

The spirit of sport is positive, aspirational, and life-affirming

The "Three Olympic Questions" raised in 1908 by the modern Chinese educator Zhang Boling and others expressed both a sense of national frustration and an earnest hope for the development of Chinese sport. Over the past century, these questions have inspired generations of Chinese people to strive for national sporting advancement. In 1932, Liu Changchun, as the only athlete representing China, participated in the opening ceremony of the Los Angeles Olympic Games. Twenty-four years after the "Three Olympic Questions" were first raised, China had answered the first of them: When would China be able to send athletes to the Olympic Games? It was precisely through the sustained efforts of Chinese sports pioneers that this first breakthrough became possible. In this sense, the spirit of sport is fundamentally positive.

In 1984, also in Los Angeles, Chinese shooter Xu Haifeng won China's first Olympic gold medal. Seventy-six years after the initial raising of the "Three Olympic Questions", Chinese athletes, through extraordinary dedication, perseverance, and an unwillingness to accept defeat, answered the second question: When would Chinese athletes win an Olympic gold medal? In 2008, when the song lyric "my door is always open, welcoming you with open arms" was heard across the country, not only sports professionals but the Chinese public as a whole knew that the Beijing Olympic Games were only one hundred days away. From the opening ceremony to the closing ceremony, the successful hosting of the Beijing Olympics displayed the confident and vibrant spirit of the Chinese people and helped project an international image of China as positive, dynamic, and open. A full century after the original formulation of the "Three Olympic Questions", and after the tireless efforts of countless patriots and athletes, China finally answered the third question: When would China host the Olympic Games?

The spirit of sport is positive, aspirational, and life-affirming. It embodies active participation, perseverance

in the face of adversity, and fair competition. The competitive nature of sport can awaken the instinct to strive, intensify one's vitality, and kindle a passion for life. As a result, the spirit of sport plays a particularly important role in reshaping the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth - especially those marked by tendencies toward "lying flat".

Sport facilitates social interaction and strengthens the social connectedness of contemporary youth

In assessing whether a person is healthy, it is not sufficient to consider only physical and psychological well-being; one must also examine whether the individual is able to adapt well to society. Sport, as a form of cultural activity, possesses an inherently social character. Participation in sport necessarily involves interaction with others and with society at large; sport is never purely an individual activity. In the process of engaging in sport, individuals learn from others and compete with others. This is especially true in the practice of traditional Chinese sports, where participation is not only a form of physical activity but also a process of inheriting and promoting China's rich sporting heritage. In this process, contemporary youth are symbolically connected to a broader cultural lineage, thereby reinforcing their sense of belonging to the Chinese nation. At the same time, different sports attract large numbers of like-minded participants, who gather around shared interests to exchange ideas, learn from one another, and improve together. In this way, sport strengthens the connection between youth and society, helps build healthy social relationships, and improves social adaptability [15]. It encourages young people to step out into the world, engage with others who share similar interests, reflect on the meaning of life, and gradually form sound values.

Sport is also an important medium through which contemporary youth come to understand society. Through social interaction in and around sport, young people learn to understand both other people and the broader social world. On the one hand, this process can help them reconstruct their value system, recognize their own worth, and affirm their social identity. On the other hand, it can deepen their understanding of society,

including the causes of social problems and the significance of sustained effort and struggle. In this way, sport can ease the emotional tensions that arise when idealized expectations collide with social reality, and ultimately contribute to reshaping the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth.

The development of athletic competence enables youth to gain a strong sense of achievement

First, the improvement of one's athletic competence depends largely on sustained effort rather than innate endowment. Without the investment of time, discipline, and physical exertion, it is difficult to achieve visible improvements in body shape, physical fitness, or athletic skill. This process can gradually reshape the values of contemporary youth, allowing them to arrive, through lived experience, at the understanding that fulfillment is achieved through struggle and perseverance.

Second, the process of developing physical fitness and sports skills can generate a profound sense of accomplishment. When a person succeeds in losing weight after long periods of training, the resulting healthier body often brings a strong sense of confidence. When muscle strength improves through adherence to a training plan, the pleasure of self-discipline can foster a deep sense of self-recognition. When one achieves victory in a sporting competition for the first time, the countless hours of effort and sweat are transformed into joy and emotional release. Such experiences of achievement further help contemporary youth to recalibrate their perceptions of themselves and the world. They can compensate for deficiencies in one's value system, strengthen awareness of personal capability and self-worth, and, while building the body, also help fill the inner emptiness that underlies spiritual disorientation and resistance to passivity.

At the same time, the achievement gained through sport is often accompanied by recognition and praise from others. This allows young people to experience social approval and goodwill, thereby reducing feelings of dissatisfaction with social reality. More importantly, in the process of developing athletic competence, young people may come to understand themselves as more than merely "working people" defined by labor and economic pressure. Beyond the identity of *dagongren*, they may

also discover other meaningful identities - such as the person committed to weight loss, the fitness enthusiast, the football player, or the practitioner of martial arts. In this sense, sport helps youth recover a more comprehensive understanding of themselves as fully developed human beings.

Sport as a means of leisure, emotional release, and mental relaxation

Sport has long served as a form of recreation and emotional relief. Classical Chinese poetry contains vivid depictions of sport as leisure, as reflected in lines such as “From afar one hears the sound of drums; cuju is the joy of the army camp” and “Ten thousand spectators gather by the cuju field, while beneath the swing banners spring unfolds in bustling delight”. These verses suggest that, since ancient times, people have used sporting activities to relax and derive enjoyment. Whether through direct participation in athletic competition or through the spectatorship of sporting events, sport has long been a widely valued form of entertainment.

Contemporary youth, however, face severe social pressures. Under the weight of multiple demands, many young people are compelled to give up various forms of leisure and respond to the harsh pressures of social competition through exhausting work routines such as the “996” schedule. In this context, sport offers multiple avenues for relaxation. Playing badminton with close friends can be an excellent way to unwind, while completing an individual fitness routine alone can likewise produce a restorative effect. If public institutions and enterprises are willing to fulfill their social responsibilities by organizing internal sports activities or competitions across organizations, sport can not only help employees relax but also strengthen solidarity and collective cohesion. Watching a sporting event can also serve as an effective means of emotional release: The pride that accompanies the victory of a favored team or athlete, as well as the disappointment and reflection that follow defeat, can both help contemporary youth express emotions and relieve stress.

A common characteristic shared by youth affected by Empty-Heart Syndrome, bai lan, and the identity of dagongren is that they live under considerable pressure. Those experiencing Empty-Heart Syndrome search for personal value under stress, yet often fall into depression

because they cannot affirm their own abilities. By contrast, bai lan youth and dagongren tend to cope through avoidance, self-mockery, or the search for a shared symbolic community. Compared with such strategies, however, the relaxation provided by sport is more comprehensive. It promotes restoration across the three major dimensions of health: physical health, mental health, and social adjustment, thereby contributing to the formation of a healthier and more positive spiritual outlook.

Pathways for realizing sport’s role in reshaping the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth

The emergence of maladaptive spiritual outlooks among contemporary youth cannot be attributed solely to individual factors; governments and society also bear unavoidable responsibility. The realization of sport’s role in reshaping the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth cannot rely on the efforts of young people alone. Rather, it requires the active involvement of governments, public institutions, enterprises, and various social organizations to support youth from a practical standpoint by helping them develop their athletic competence, correct their understanding of sport, and promote their awareness of as well as participation in sporting activities. Through these efforts, sport can more effectively contribute to reshaping the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth.

Cultivating youth’s appreciation for and commitment to sport

Education is continuous and lifelong. At the stage of formal schooling, schools at all levels should attach greater importance to physical education, improve students’ physical fitness and athletic skills, and foster a healthier psycho-spiritual outlook [16]. More importantly, in the process of future development, greater emphasis should be placed on cultivating students’ genuine appreciation for sport and guiding their interests in sporting activities, thereby laying the foundation for lifelong participation in physical activity.

At the societal level, public institutions, enterprises, and social organizations should fulfill their social responsibilities by not only providing more accessible opportunities for contemporary youth to participate in sport, but also by paying close attention to their physical and mental well-being. Through the organization of

various sporting activities, these institutions can increase youth participation in sport and stimulate their enthusiasm for athletic engagement. Governments, for their part, should actively attract and host major sporting events, especially those that appeal strongly to young people, so as to provide contemporary youth with greater opportunities for live spectatorship. At the same time, governments should continue to promote the development of sport more broadly, strengthen the construction of sports teams at different levels, and guide young people toward valuing and embracing sport.

In the process of improving the public service system and advancing both the sports sector and the sports industry, equal attention should also be paid to the dissemination of sports and health knowledge, the promotion of the spirit of sport, and the cultivation of sports culture. In this way, the ideas of lifelong education and lifelong sport can be more effectively communicated. By stimulating the interest of different youth groups in sporting activities, young people can come to understand themselves and society more fully through active participation, thereby cultivating a healthier and more positive spiritual outlook.

Government guidance and multi-actor participation in advancing national fitness

In 2022, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council jointly issued the Opinions on Building a Higher-Level Public Service System for National Fitness. This document called for “improving institutional measures for promoting national fitness, expanding the supply of public-interest and basic services, increasing participation, enhancing accessibility, and advancing a public service system for national fitness that covers, serves, and benefits the entire population” [17].

Governments should fully implement national macro-level policies, actively broaden channels for sports participation, and accelerate the development of a public service system for national fitness so as to provide foundational support for youth engagement in physical exercise. Measures such as improving the 15-minute fitness living circle, building sports parks, and constructing fitness trails can reduce the barriers contemporary youth face in participating in sport and exercise. In doing so, government should fulfill its role in

ensuring basic provision and safeguarding minimum needs, advance the equalization of basic public services, and guarantee the fundamental exercise needs of the population.

At the same time, government should actively play a guiding role by mobilizing broader social forces to participate in the building of a leading sporting nation and in promoting the development of sport more generally, thereby presenting young people with a vision of sport characterized by positivity, aspiration, and vitality. While strengthening the basic services of national fitness, equal attention should also be paid to the development of the sports industry. The sports industry should be guided to provide youth with higher-quality sports services that meet different levels and forms of demand, improve physical and mental well-being as well as social adaptability, and ultimately contribute to shaping the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth.

Government advocacy and the proactive organization of sporting events by public institutions and enterprises

When governments attract and host major sporting events, they can encourage young people to watch competitions; when they further support young people’s direct participation in sporting events, they are even better positioned to guide youth toward a sound understanding of sport, stimulate enthusiasm for athletic engagement, and ultimately foster healthier values. Compared with governments and large institutions, youth as a social force are relatively weak in their capacity to transform reality directly. This helps explain why some young people, including those with strong critical emotions, often remain confined to expressing frustration online rather than acting effectively in the real world.

A historical example helps illustrate this point. In the mid-1960s, under the national call that “good people and good horses should go to the Third Front”, workers from across the country were mobilized to the Panzhihua region in order to adjust China’s industrial layout and prepare for a severe external environment. Yet because of the special geographical conditions and developmental level of the Third Front regions, recreational opportunities for young people were extremely limited. Their spiritual and emotional condition became increasingly fragile, which in turn seriously affected

productivity. To meet their cultural and recreational needs, public institutions and enterprises began to provide organizational and material support for sports activities on the basis of grassroots initiatives already emerging among workers, thereby accelerating the development of employee sports. Although such activities were constrained by limited funding and the special historical circumstances of the period, they still played an important role. As one study notes, “the development of sport played an important role in enriching workers’ cultural lives, enhancing their physical fitness, improving productivity, and strengthening organizational cohesion and employees’ sense of belonging.” In this sense, sporting activities helped reshape the spiritual outlook of young people at a fundamental level and mitigated the decline in productivity associated with poor psycho-spiritual conditions.

Governments, public institutions, enterprises, and social organizations should therefore attach full importance to the role of sport and provide governmental, institutional, and social support for youth participation in sporting events. By actively organizing competitions at different levels and across different sectors, they can help reshape the spiritual outlook of young people, strengthen team cohesion, and enhance enthusiasm for work and collective life.

Inheriting China’s fine sports culture and reshaping the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth

From the mounted archery traditions of northern China to the dragon boat culture of the south, Chinese sports culture is both extensive and deeply distinctive. Different regions should draw on their own geographical, ethnic, and cultural characteristics to inherit and revitalize China’s fine sports traditions, excavate their contemporary value, and employ their spiritual and cultural appeal to reshape the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth.

In northern China, for example, the mounted archery tradition - marked by freedom, confidence, courage, and fearlessness - holds particular value in this regard. On the one hand, sports activities with strong regional characteristics possess considerable appeal for young people and continue to be inherited and developed among younger generations. As one account observes, “when

horse racing is held on the grasslands, young people from within a radius of one hundred li come voluntarily to take part.” Another study notes that “mounted archery culture has developed in diversified ways across competition, performance, and entertainment demonstrating the elevation of the pluralistic value of nomadic culture”. This provides an important cultural foundation for sport to reshape the spiritual outlook of youth. On the other hand, the distinctive nature of mounted archery culture is also conducive to promoting interaction and integration among different regions and ethnic groups. Every summer, sporting events centered on mounted archery culture attract both participants and spectators from across China and beyond. For instance, many athletes and spectators pay close attention each year to the opening dates of Naadam festivals in different places and travel across Inner Mongolia to compete and observe. Such activities are conducive to fostering a stronger sense of the Chinese national community and enhancing young people’s sense of national, ethnic, and cultural identity, thereby helping reshape their spiritual outlook at a deeper ideological level.

Conclusion

As Xi Jinping has noted, “The vast number of young people are both dream chasers and dream realizers.” Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and through the sustained efforts of countless Chinese people, China has won the battle against absolute poverty, built a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and moved steadily closer to the great goal of national rejuvenation. Contemporary Chinese youth live in an era of rapid national development and have witnessed a series of historic achievements, including the successful hosting of the Beijing Olympic Games and the Beijing Winter Olympics, China’s rise to become the world’s second-largest economy, the commissioning of the country’s first aircraft carrier, Liaoning, and China’s successful landing on the far side of the moon. In this sense, they are living at a pivotal and promising historical moment. Yet the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation has not yet been fully realized, and contemporary youth continue to face severe and complex challenges.

Sport plays an important role in the growth and development of young people by promoting physical health, psychological well-being, and social adaptation.

Its multiple attributes help contemporary youth cultivate sound values and a proper understanding of struggle and perseverance, strengthen their identification with the nation, the Chinese nation, and Chinese culture, enhance social interaction and social connectedness, improve physical fitness, and relieve mental stress. In all these ways, sport contributes to reshaping the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth.

Contemporary youth should not allow themselves to be overwhelmed by social reality. Instead, they should attach full importance to sport and make active use of it as a means of seeking self-worth, confronting challenges, and gaining a clearer understanding of reality in the process of contributing to national development. Through this process, they can continue striving for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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