

Compatibility of Golf Culture with Chinese Culture and Suggesting Ways to Promote Its Development

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Abstract

The development of golf game in China is embarrassing because of cognitive bias from the public, lacking of supporting basis and negative influence of over-commercialization. However, from the deep analysis, golf culture and Chinese culture share many similar connotations such as “self-cultivation”, “integrity and self-discipline”, “fairness and equality”, “emphasizing concepts of win-win cooperation” and “emphasizing ceremonies” and so on and so forth. Therefore, as long as we use the right ways to promote the essence of golf culture, golf in China will have a prosperous development, and golf culture communication in China is feasible. In this paper, the ways of “accurate positioning, promoting with the help of the media, getting support from our country and expanding the golf player team” are suggested.

Key words: golf culture, Chinese culture, compatibility, developing ways

1. Introduction

Since golf sport spread to China, people have mainly taken it as a measure to improve the urban investment environment for a long time, but paid little attention to the sport itself, and ignore its role in promoting people's health and social civilization. Therefore, the development of golf sport has been in an embarrassing situation. Golf sport is only regarded a noble sport and “golf” became a pronoun of “corruption”. We found that the perspective is originated in a cognitive bias from misunderstanding differences between Chinese and western culture. In fact, golf culture itself is not the case and its culture can blend with Chinese social culture mutually. This paper tries to analyze the feasibility of golf culture's transmission in China based on introducing the essence and classification of golf culture. And also some suggestions about how to develop golf culture will be introduced. The purpose of writing this paper is to let people have a real comprehensive understanding about golf sport, and participate in the amazing sport actively.

2. The reasons pushing golf development in China into an embarrassing situation

2.1 Cognitive Bias

Golf was born in British aristocracy, and serves the minority who are rich, so many Chinese people have prejudice to golf sport and they regard it as a noble sport which is the embodiment of westerners' pursuit of luxury lifestyle. Especially at present, along the policy of permitting some people to become prosperous has been carried out for a long time, it resulted in a big gap between the rich and the poor and some people with the idea of traditional equalitarianism even show offensive attitudes towards the rich and at last vent their anger to golf sport. Evidently, the contradiction between rich and poor people is not helpful for Chinese people to get a correct understanding of the movement and at last hinder its development in China.

2.2 Lack of supporting Basis

Golf sport in China can not get a broad support for various reasons. The first, consumption standard is too high. Although China has made great achievements in economic construction, but the current economy still have a distance to let every people enjoy in this game. Golf became a high consumption sport and many ordinary people did not contact with golf. Easily to understand, if a person does not participate in this sport, he or she cannot have the experience to feel the culture. The second, some conflicts exist between the fundamental elements which support the development of golf sport and Chinese people's key view of value. For example, in traditional Chinese thinking, land is the most precious resource for developing agriculture. Therefore, it's a kind of sinful behavior to plant grass on a large area of land only for enjoying golf sport. In addition, in China, sport is regarded as national public welfare undertakings serving the people in the charge of a special government department. Yet golf sport as a kind of high consumption of sports, it seems to deviate from the aim of the development of sports which makes both the country and the ordinary people doubt its social value.

2.3 Negative Influence of Golf's Commercialization

The development of golf in China for nearly 30 years has given it a distinctive characteristic of Commercialization which made golf culture more difficult to spread. In some European countries, golf is supposed to bring business people relaxation, good mood and health, and offer a platform for business communication. But, in China, the essence has totally been changed. In a highly professional golf field of commercialization time, the media's highly attention and clamor can cause huge commercial interests. Golf's commercialization means the enterprises will be in pursuit of the maximum profit which can cause a much more high cost when playing in golf course. Golf would not be a relaxation sport, but a more expensive consumption and a tool for some people to make money.

3. Golf culture's compatibility with Chinese social culture

Although its development is facing some problems in our country, golf culture is a kind of fashionable and healthy culture which doesn't contradict with Chinese traditional or modern culture. In fact, there are many common points between these two which can be mainly manifested from the following aspects:

3.1. Self- cultivation

Chinese social culture, under the influence of Confucianism, often defines "self-cultivation" as a purpose of life. Confucius laid great stress on the cultivation of character, purity of heart and conduct. He exhorted the people to develop a good character which is viewed as a priceless jewel and the best of all virtues. He advocated "static in the body" to avoid arrogance and to hone concentration tolerance and enduring and

aimed at inward training, perfecting oneself and improving the level. He thought a person of noble morality should be humble, patient, magnanimous and graceful. The same, a good golf player should be quiet, modest, patient and tenacious. Obviously, both golf culture and Chinese traditional culture were emphasizing a gentle state of mind and showing the same concept “self-cultivation”. Therefore, in essence, both kinds of culture are unified.

3.2. Integrity and Self-discipline

Golf culture honors credibility which corresponds to the spirit of social credit of modern society. “Honesty” is one of the most important Chinese traditional ethics. As early as the period of primitive society, the people had realized the importance of honesty and always chosen the talented and honest ones to manage their tribes.” When it comes to the early days of Qin Dynasty, the Confucius made it important than it ever been. In Confucius mind, honoring credibility is the most important ethic of human being. Since then, honoring credibility has been a meaningful ethic standard gradually, and it also has been the basis of living, the basic rules of social communication and the capital of business culture in both the ancient and modern society. The same, credit is the basic characteristic of golf culture and it requires a golfer to keep in good faith, treat others with sincerity. Unlike many sports, golf is generally played without the supervision of a referee or umpire. The game relies on the integrity of the individual and all players should behave in a disciplined manner, showing courtesy and sportsmanship at all times. Honesty became the most basic requirement for every player, because there’s often no specific rules to monitor the whole play, when the ball were out of the lane, or blocked by the branches, some players would like to change the position of the ball while others were unnoticed, sometimes even false the results. Therefore, golf can exert a subtle influence on players to be self-discipline. This is the connotation of golf culture. Therefore, both Chinese culture and golf culture present a very important connotation of emphasizing the importance of integrity, fostering integrity and self-respect. Evidently, promoting the golf culture which speaks highly of good faith is suitable for the need of modern society of China.

3.3 Fairness and Equality

Pursuing fairness and equality of golf culture is in line with the need of modern society. Traditional Chinese culture reflects the simple consciousness of fairness and equality, such as “inequality rather than want is the cause of trouble”. In modern China, along the economic rapid development, our society is constantly keeping moving forward and “fairness” has become the people’s eager pursuit of civilization for the justice of democracy. However, “fairness is often damaged in social life, economic behavior, and legal construction and unjust and unfair phenomenon is very serious. Compared with this, golf culture emphasizes the rules. For example, every player has a set of unique track record system, which is called handicap system; it enables different levels of participants to have the same opportunity to win the game. The continuous improvement of handicap system is the result of being pursuit of equality and fairness. That is to say, golf games can offer a platform of mutual competition and equal communication for a player and a kind of fair, equal and lofty culture feature is shown in it which satisfies our country’s needs with pursuit of fair and equal moral culture. Thus, it’s not difficult to understand that the public’s basic psychological identity makes it possible to promote the development of golf games in China.

3.4 Emphasizing ceremonies

There is a strict dress code for golf player; early players wear a tuxedo, playing with boots. With the development of society, the dress code is not so strict, but still retained some basic traditional ceremonies. For example, wearing no-collar shirts, ordinary shoes and slippers are not allowed to enter the course. The

same, China has been called “a state of ceremonies” which attaches great importance to etiquette. China’s thousands of years of etiquette custom is the basis for golf’s development. The requirement for golfers is just a pattern of manifestation. If we take a deep look, we would notice that the emphasis on amiability, comity, politeness in golf etiquette which also reflects the essence of Chinese traditional culture. Although Chinese people’s ideas, customs and even social etiquette have changed with the deepening of China’s reform and opening-up, its essence as a culture of etiquette is still carrying on as before. Therefore, it’s reasonable to believe that golf culture and the Chinese culture can be integrated very well and the former is helpful for us to build a more stylish and healthier etiquette culture by enriching its connotation.

3.5 Emphasizing concepts of “win-win cooperation”

As Hu Jintao, the former president of China said, “China is now an integral part of the global economy” and “a key participant in the international system”. The history of the past 30 years of reform and opening-up has shown that “China cannot develop itself in isolation from the world. And it is equally true that the world cannot enjoy prosperity or stability without China. In a world where the trend toward multipolarity is irreversible, economic globalization is deepening and the scientific and technological revolution is accelerating, China’s future is more closely linked with the future of the world than ever before”. Therefore, “China will unswervingly follow a win-win strategy of opening up”. Indeed, the concept of “win-win cooperation” has been deeply into the Chinese culture. And as one important part of golf culture, caddy culture just complies with the development philosophy of Chinese modern society. Spirit of cooperation is the important content of the golf culture. In the professional golf game, it is necessary to encourage golfers and caddie to cooperate and respect each other in order to get good grades. And modern society has entered a period of competition, which makes “win-win cooperation” become the key factor of developing. Thus, spirit of cooperation in golf culture is also the basic requirement for the national and personal to survive in the fierce social competition and development.

4. Several suggesting ways to promote development of golf culture in China

From the above analysis, the golf culture and the Chinese social culture can blend mutually, golf should have a well development in China and golf culture deserves our identity, but it has been misunderstood and its development is embarrassing. Therefore, some ways should be suggested to get rid of these misunderstands and promote its development.

4.1 Accurate positioning

The perception that the popular regard golf as a game reserved for a privileged pursuit weakens its chances of really taking root among the public. Therefore, changing the public’s views, getting their understanding, seeking for their support and gaining their recognition are very important. The premise to realize these lie in giving golf an accurate positioning and making it return to the nature of the sports.

The first, the essence of golf is a sport. Since it is so, according to its physical properties, the government should adjust the current discriminatory policies and encourage golf in public and it is an objective requirement to promote further and healthy development of golf industry.

The second, golf is a sport which is not just for the nobility. In China’s mainland, it’s difficult to have a chance to play golf for the ordinary people because their consumption ability is very low. The establishment of the golf course should pay a high construction cost and maintenance cost, so it must increase charging level to ensure the normal operation of the club. However, as increase of people’s living standards and economic income and adjustment of relevant policy, golf will go to the public and be accepted by more and more people.

4.2 Promoting with the help of the media

The first, advocating its internal advantages. On the one hand, propagate cultural connotation such as “self-cultivation”, “integrity and self-discipline”, “fairness and equality”, “emphasizing concepts of win-win cooperation” and “emphasizing ceremonies” in golf sports similar to Chinese culture in order to evoke the public’s positive psychological effect; On the other hand, highlight its own characteristics of mixing competitive sports and leisure sports together. As a part of the development of modern sports, development of golf sport not only has the basic characteristics of the general competitive sports, at the same time, its basic way and basic characteristics of outdoor sports can offer leisure entertainment for the players and meet their physical and mental demands. Therefore, playing golf has become the important means of leisure sports culture which is becoming increasingly popular in the modern society.

The second, creating a hero and “star” effect. The main purpose of media is to attract a large audience and undoubtedly, the most direct and effective way is to create a hero to satisfy the audience’s psychological needs and the needs of the society. China’s golf media should pay much attention to the process of cultivating a golfer, their training, competition situation and especially report their achievements in time in order that the improvement of domestic golf can be promoted and then create golf star power in China.

4.3 Seizing the opportunity to get support from our country

Although the State Council, China’s cabinet, has suspended approvals of golf course projects since 2004, some new opportunities helpful to develop golf are arriving. The first, golf has been voted into the 2016 Olympics as a competitive sport. Therefore, China’s leap forward onto the fairways seemed even more compelling. As Hal Phillips, a golf-resort client said, “The Olympic decision is a game-changer for golf in China” and “it opens the doors for the Chinese government to spend heavily on courses and training centers, and eventually compete for Olympic medals.” The second, the fast development of economy provides a solid foundation for our country to support golf. Generally speaking, when per capita GDP is more than \$5000, golf development will be into the acceleration and stable development stage. Yet GDP per capita of our county is 6629\$ in 1013, so our country has the abilities to offer support for golf development.

4.4 Expanding the golf player team

First, attracting the middle class. Although golf in China is primarily accessible only to the elite in China, the middle class holds the potential for growth. Middle class is the main guide of social consumption group and their ways of life can ensure the stability of huge consumer market. At the same time, it’s easy for middle class to accept, understand and respect golf culture because this class is characterized by a high level of education and strong self-discipline. Facing the increasingly large middle class population in our country, golf development which has been focused on the high end of the market should timely guide middle class consumption patterns, grasp the core of the middle class consumption demand, make full use of the advantages of golf sport such as relaxing and expanding social circle to attract more middle-class to join. This can largely increase the stock of golf crowd, accelerate the development of golf, and conducive to change the public’s misunderstanding towards golf. The second, guiding the golf industry to develop in the direction of public. Because of opposition from the government, there are few public golf courses in China. For business purposes, many private golf courses open exclusively to members paying high fees for their use of the facilities. Therefore, it’s not conducive to promote golf in public. As some experts mentioned, the lack of public golf course has become the biggest obstacles to hinder the development of golf sports in China. Therefore, our government should take the lead in building public golf courses, grant preferential policies in taxes and prices for public courses in order to make golf more affordable for ordinary people.

5. Conclusions

Golf culture and philosophy in China has not been very well spread because the public's misunderstanding regarding it as the product of high consumption for the upper class and an identity and status symbol for the rich. In fact, spirits of golf sports reflect a kind of gracious culture consistent with the essence of Chinese culture. Therefore, the future of China's golf development should pay attention to accurate positioning, the spread of golf spirit, showing its inner advantages and promoting its development in order.

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