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EDITORIALS

Olympic spirit matters

TO WIN, OR NOT TO WIN, THAT SHOULD NEVER BE the question at the Olympic Games. Honor and dishonor medals do not determine, for that is not the spirit of sports.

True, Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of modern Olympics, made "Faster, Higher, Stronger" the motto of the Games. But let us not forget, his other motto is: "The most important thing is not to win but to take part!"

Chinese female weightlifter Zhou Jun failed to hoist 95 kg in three snatch attempts in the 53 kg category at the London Games on Sunday, drawing local media criticism. And though a paper based in Yunnan province published an apology on its front page for calling Zhou's loss a dishonor, the incident shows how wrong some Chinese are about the spirit of the Games.

This wrong notion afflicts athletes too. Another Chinese weightlifter, Wu Jingbiao, broke down after failing to win gold and told a reporter that he apologizes to the motherland, the weightlifting team and everyone who backed him to win.

This shows that even some athletes, especially gold medal hopefuls, are obsessed with winning, and are under heavy pressure from their teams, coaches and spectators.

As Chinese, we should feel happy and excited when Chinese athletes win medals, particularly gold medals. But there is no reason for us to look down upon the failures. Every athlete, Chinese or foreign, who has given his or her best deserves respect.

It's heartening to know that 78 percent of the 6,000 respondents to a Chinese Youth Daily survey, conducted a week before the London Games, said what they cared most about is whether Chinese athletes have tried their best and displayed fine sportsmanship.

Medals are meant only to stimulate athletes into striving for faster, higher, stronger goals. Athletes who overcome odds and physical injuries to complete their events even in the last place deserve as much honor and respect as the gold medal winners.

It is natural for even the best athletes to miss the medals they have trained for and, therefore, understandable for them to cry when they lose. Without the tears what worth would the smiles be?

One cannot learn anything from the Olympic Games unless one learns to appreciate success and failure both.

Economic food for thought

PRESIDENT HU JINTAO SAID AT A CENTRAL MEETING on Tuesday that more priority should be given to stabilizing growth, which reflects China's preparedness to cope with the harsh challenges this year.

But unlike what was done during the 2007-08 global financial crisis China may not have as many cards to play this time.

Hu said the fundamentals of China's economy remain sound, but many unfavorable factors, including the turbulent international situation and domestic problems, could affect economic growth this year.

The two major manufacturing activity surveys, released on the same day, conform to Hu's remarks. The official purchasing manager's index fell to an eight-month low of 50.1 in July, reflecting lingering economic weakness, although it remained above the critical 50 mark, which divides expansion and contraction. The HSBC PMI rose to 49.3 in July, the highest since February, indicating continued but slow recovery.

That both indices have stayed around 50 means China's economic activity remains at a low level. It is in line with the country's growth data, though; China's GDP growth hit a rare low of 7.6 percent year-on-year in the second quarter.

In such a situation, policymakers have few options but to take measures to boost growth so that the economy can gradually bottom out in the coming months.

Many people are still expecting a massive stimulus package — similar to the one that bailed out the economy during the global financial crisis. Unfortunately, things are different now. The external situation is very serious, because there is no sign of a satisfactory resolution to the eurozone crisis. So outside demand will remain weak.

Domestically, the last round of the massive stimulus package has left a legacy of rising inflation, surging housing prices and accumulating local government debts. A byproduct of that is the soaring cost of labor, which threatens to undermine China's advantage in the labor market.

Therefore, the right cure for China is to tap into other resources, such as tax cuts and building low-cost affordable homes, to boost consumption and improve people's livelihood. Options also include more fiscal and policy support for small enterprises, which can help absorb labor and stabilize local economies.

We should not expect a knee-jerk economic rebound like the one that happened in the wake of the global financial crisis. The best result would be for China to gradually step out of the difficulties while trying not to leave the major problems for the next economic cycle.

CONTACT US

China Daily
15 HuiXin Dongjie
Chaoyang, Beijing 100029
News:
(86-10) 6491-8636
editor@chinadaily.com.cn
Subscription:
(86) 400-699-0203
sub@chinadaily.com.cn
Advertisement:
(86-10) 6491-8631
ads@chinadaily.com.cn
Phone app:
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China Daily USA
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800
New York, NY 10036
(001) 212 537 8888; editor@chinadailyusa.com

China Daily Hong Kong
Room 1818, Hing Wai Centre
7 Tin Wan praya Road
Aberdeen, Hong Kong
(00852) 2518 5111; editor@chinadailyhk.com

China Daily UK
90 Cannon Street
London EC4N 6HA
(0044) 0207 398 8270; editor@chinadailyuk.com

CHINA FORUM | XU GUOQI

Heading into collective future

China and the US share many things in common, and only better mutual understanding can make their ties stronger

As the 2012 Summer Olympic Games heats up in London, people around the world might be wondering which country will eventually top the medal tally. Will it be the United States or China?

However, few people realize that it was in the US that China became part of the Olympic movement. China's first Olympic appearance was in the Los Angeles 1932 Olympic Games, and it won its first Olympic gold medal in the same city in 1984.

Many people both in China and the US may have largely forgotten their long-shared history of friendship and cooperation through the Olympics. But their shared history goes well beyond the Olympics. The names of the US and China in Chinese literally mean the "beautiful country" and the "middle kingdom". For the Chinese, these names create images and perceptions of places of attraction and greatness.

Historically, the Chinese and Americans share a lot of similarities; both are very proud of their historical achievements and rich traditions. The US has been an attractive model for the Chinese since the early 20th century, while China was of great interest to the US' founding fathers. Benjamin Franklin once said that

China, instead of Europe, would be a better model for the new country to follow, and even described China as "the wisest of nations".

This mutual respect led the two countries to be partners during peaceful as well as turbulent times. China and the US were close military allies in the two world wars. During the Cold War era, however, China and the US found themselves on opposite sides, first directly during the Korean War, then indirectly during the Vietnam War.

Interestingly, both countries share a common trait — that of a national identity crisis. The Chinese wonder whether China is a civilization, a nation-state or a just a state, while Americans ask whether their nation is an empire or a declining superpower. The important but usually forgotten shared history of the Chinese and Americans should serve as a key reference point when we think of the future of Sino-US relations.

Nobody can deny that Sino-US ties are the most important relationship in today's world. But one key point most people often miss is that their shared history will fundamentally define their present and future relations. China and the US are neither friends nor enemies as the past shows. In many cases, they are in the same boat and their survival and continuous success depend on their

mutual cooperation and support.

This mutual cooperation and support is necessary for China to reach its full potential. Despite its spectacular rise in recent decades, China has very limited soft power and has failed to produce a Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, or a Nobel Prize winning scientist.

The lack of cooperation originates from misunderstanding. Many Chinese believe they know the US better than the Americans know China. Even some senior Chinese officials let this slip to the Americans. But this is not true. Americans have far better trained China experts than their Chinese counterparts have on America. An average American has more access and channels to understand China than the average Chinese has on America. Moreover, many Chinese don't even understand their own history and traditional culture well enough.

In April 1974, Deng Xiaoping met Henry Kissinger, then US secretary of state, and asked him: "Doctor, are you familiar with Confucius?" In uncharacteristic modesty, Kissinger said: "Not in detail". Although the Chinese are nowadays trying to return to their traditional culture and values to boost their soft power and political influence, I am afraid most of them have to echo Kissinger's answer, "not in detail", when prompted with the same question.

The fact remains that before knowing their own history well enough, the Chinese simply cannot have the tools to understand the US and its China policy and perceptions about China.

Americans, on the other hand, must understand that China is more a civilization than a nation-state. Historically, China has focused more on soft power than hard power to project its influence. Confucian philosophy emphasizes culture, morality and human harmony, while the West-dominated international system from the 18th century has focused more on hard power — military and economic strength, and cut-throat military and economic competition. In contrast to China, the notion of a nation-state has dominated the concept of civilization in the West since the 1648 Peace of Westphalia.

The Americans must keep in mind that many Chinese still suffer from inferiority syndrome and historical-victimization complex, which make them very sensitive to foreign pressure and heavy-handed diplomacy. The Chinese are masters of the means, while the Americans usually practice diametrically opposite diplomacy, predictably causing friction with China.

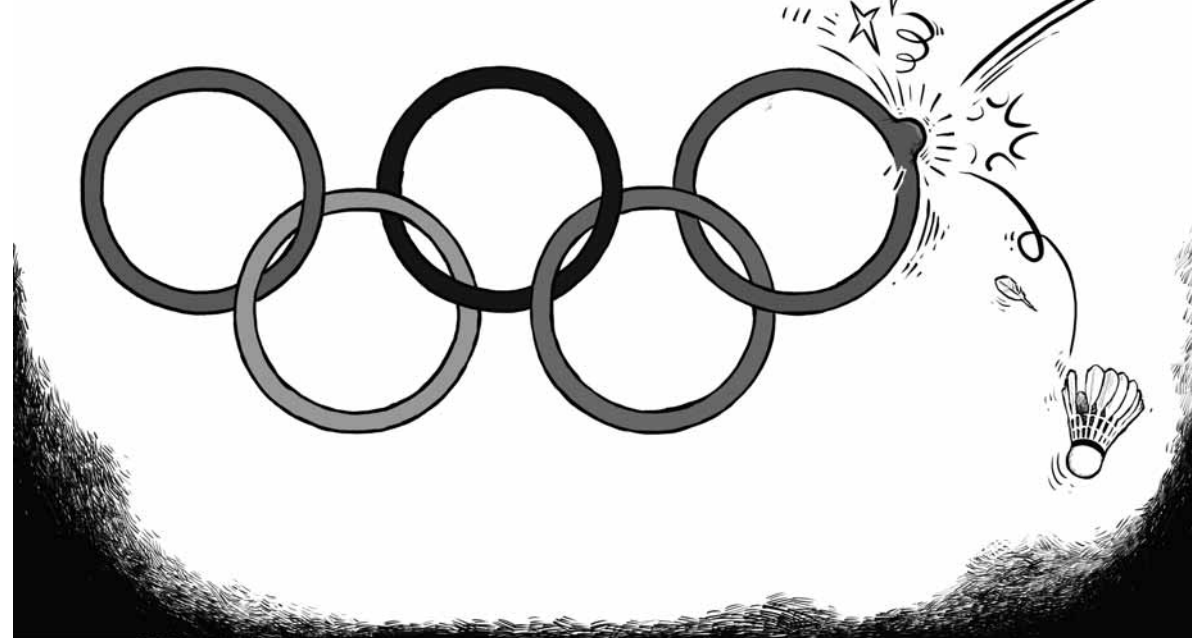
Although China has adopted the Western way of international politics, it has tried to move back to its traditional values after becoming stronger. For example, China has set up scores of Confucius Institutes abroad and pursues a harmonious society at home.

The key point is that Chinese and Americans both have an important shared history. The future of Sino-US relations largely depends on both countries learning lessons from the past. As China's first global historian Sima Qian wrote more than 2,000 years ago: "Those who don't forget the past will be masters of the future."

It does not really matter whether Chinese or American athletes triumph at the London Games. What is of importance is that Chinese and Americans both need to keep their shared history in mind to ensure that their collective future is in good hands.

The author is professor of History at the University of Hong Kong.

PANG LI



Development follows scientific path

Editor's note: Party General Secretary Hu Jintao addressed the opening session of a workshop for officials at the ministerial and provincial levels on July 23. The following is the latest People's Daily commentary on the address:

"The most important reason why China has made historic accomplishments and progress is that it has adhered to the guidelines of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of the Three Represents, and formed and implemented the Scientific Outlook on Development on the basis of practice-based theoretical innovations," Hu told a high-level workshop on July 23.

Hu's remarks incisively generalized the fundamental reason for the great progress China has made in the past decade since the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and scientifically expounded the theoretical guidelines that should be followed to push forward the progressive cause of the Party and the nation.

To carefully study the spirit of Hu's remarks, we should deepen our perception of the Scientific Outlook on Development from a new ideological level and fully grasp its practical value, theoretical contributions and practical requirements to

continuously strengthen our consciousness and steadfastness for its implementation.

Scientific development is a distinct theme of contemporary China and it is also where people's fundamental interests lie. To thoroughly grasp the Scientific Outlook on Development, we should fully realize its practical values. Over the past decade, we have faced not only a rapidly changing international situation, but also the heavy domestic task of reform, development and stability.

We have faced opportunities not present before, as well as encountered challenges totally new to us. We have hosted the Beijing 2008 Olympics and the Shanghai 2010 World Expo, faced the 2003 SARS epidemic, the deadly 2008 Wenchuan earthquake and felt the damaging impact of the global financial crisis.

The Party has led the 1.3 billion Chinese people to thoroughly implement the Scientific Outlook on Development and vigorously push forward reform and development, considerably bolstering the country's economic force and its overall national strength, improving people's living conditions and displaying to the outside world a new outlook and image of the Chinese nation. The fruits of China's development have fully showcased the power of truth in the Scientific

Outlook on Development and its practical values.

The Scientific Outlook on Development is the embodiment of the Party's theoretical innovations since the 16th National Congress of the CPC and a major strategic thought that must be adhered to for the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. To fully grasp its significance, we should have an in-depth understanding of its theoretical contributions.

The Scientific Outlook on Development has developed into a scientific theory, guiding the development and progress of contemporary China because it has inherited and developed the important thoughts of the three generations of the Party's leaderships, and combined with the world outlook and methodology of Marxism and advanced with the times. It has become the important guideline for China's economic and social development because it has provided the correct answers to such crucial questions as what kind of development model the country should have and how, under different situations, it can give rise to a series of new thoughts, new viewpoints and new conclusions to help choose the direction of the country's socialist modernization drive.

Fully implementing the Scientific Outlook on Development will be a long-term and arduous task. We

should be determined to push for its full implementation by taking more forceful measures and inventing better systems to convert it into a powerful force that can promote fast and good economic and social development.

We should stick to development as the Party's top task to govern and rejuvenate the nation. We should adhere to the "people-first" principle and "all-round, coordinated and sustainable development" approach, and strive to change concepts that are not adaptable to the Scientific Outlook on Development. And we should more consciously embark on a scientific development road to implement the Scientific Outlook on Development in every aspect of the country's economic and social development.

As the latest theoretical fruit of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the Scientific Outlook on Development is a combination of Marxism and the actual conditions in contemporary China. It is also the crystallization of the collective wisdom of the CPC and the Chinese people.

We will be more capable of undertaking the historical task of developing a more powerful and prosperous China in the process of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics if we adhere to the Scientific Outlook on Development.