Abstract

Sports are an integral part of most modern day societies, and sports stars can be among some of the most influential people in the world, for better or for worse. Chinese tennis legend Li Na is an example of a star athlete who has inspired millions inside her native country to challenge longstanding cultural norms and gender roles. Her success in the world of tennis has led to the dramatic growth of the sport in Asia, but it is her outspoken nature and rebellious actions that have caused her to become a beacon of hope for change within a somewhat oppressive regime. In this essay I use a number of interviews, videos, and news articles to demonstrate how Li has triggered many Chinese to reevaluate their roles in society. While she has not expressly stated any goals she has to alter Chinese culture or domestic politics, her innumerable interviews and speeches more than hint at her desire to arouse change inside and outside of her homeland.

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