



# Discussion on the Connotation and Value of March 3 of Zhuang Nationality Based on Health Preservation

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**Funding:** National Natural Science Foundation of China (No.81660830), Open Project for Guangxi First-class Discipline Construction of Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine (No. 2019XK038); Funded by Development Program of High-level Talent Team under Qihuang Project of Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine(No.2018005); Guangxi Talent Highland for Zhuang and Yao Medicine and Combination of Medical Care and Elderly Care(No Ting Fa[2017]44); Guangxi Scholarship Fund of Guangxi Education Department(Gui Jiao Ren [2018]18)

**Abstract:** The March 3 Song Fair of Zhuang nationality is not only an important place and form for spreading Zhuang culture, but also contains rich health care ideas. This article briefly discusses the meaning and value of March 3 in Zhuang people based on health preservation.

**Keywords:** March 3; Health-preservation; Zhuang nationality

**Publication date:** June, 2020

**Publication online:** 30 June, 2020

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Health, maintenance of life, is an activity way through home health, body strengthening and prevention of disease to achieve the purpose of delaying aging<sup>[1]</sup>. In the life of Zhuang people's material and cultural life, for example, the very Zhuang people characteristics of the March 3 festival activities also contain numerous health care practices. There are a variety of rich and colorful activities of March 3, mainly including folk songs, folk sports and the production of five-colored glutinous rice, and many other forms of health preservation, which represents the spirit of health preservation, diet health preservation, and sports health preservation with rich connotation and value of medicine.

## 1 The origin and development of the song fair culture of Zhuang nationality

There are about 640 song fair sites in Zhuang nationality of Guangxi. In 2006, The song fair was approved by the State Council to be included in the first national intangible cultural heritage<sup>[2]</sup>. It is a folk custom of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and a form of festival gathering and singing activity held by Zhuang people at a specific time and place, who hold large-scale singing activities every year as scheduled, and March 3 is the most distinctive and spectacular among those.

Song fair is called “Xu Huan”, “Long Dong”, “Wo Po” in Zhuang Language. The name of it varies in different places but all of them have the same meaning like “gathering on a slope”, “singing on a slope,” or “ a joyful festival”. Because this kind of singing activities often sing to each other, so the ancients called it “Dun Xu”<sup>[3]</sup>. At every rush hour, the young men and women of Zhuang people gather together to talk with each other. These has been described in "Chiya" : “ Three or five pick up something beautiful before returning back to home.” The modern March 3 festival has plenty of activities, such as choosing and matching songs, appreciating songs in competition, playing

songs, guessing songs and making duets, it includes throwing embroidered balls, snatching fireworks and fighting over eggs. March Song Fair is the main form of traditional folk culture in Zhuang people and a place where young men and women of the Zhuang nationality gather to socialize, singing loudly and opening their hearts. All in all, the March Song Fair in Zhuang people has played an important role in the inheritance and development of Zhuang people folk songs, and is of great significance to the health care of the people of Zhuang people as well.

## 2 The cultural connotation and health-preserving value of folk songs

Zhuang people folk songs are Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region intangible cultural heritage<sup>[4]</sup>. Zhuang village is the hometown of folk songs, which is called Song Sea. The Zhuang nationality is a nationality of "singing joyfully", singing mountain songs, singing here and responding there"<sup>[5]</sup>. The Zhuang nationality is born to sing, whose love to the folk songs infiltrating everywhere in their life such as meeting friends, sending emotion, choosing lovers by the songs, this kind of culture form has become a characteristic part in the Zhuang nationality culture.

The cultural connotation of folk songs has had a long history since ancient times. The song of Yue People in the book of songs from the pre-qin period has recorded folk songs, and some others have been widely spread in ancient Luoyue area<sup>[6]</sup>. Song, also known as "Huan" in Zhuang language was initially sang in the cave, so also known as "Huan Gan. Jin Dynasty "Nanyue Zhi" says : "The market in Jin Dynasty was named as Xu, most located in village market, gathering all the merchants or singers, dancers together, so the same with the surroundings of the LingNan ". The culture of song fair has been in a long history and developed for thousands of years, the popular March 3 is the most representative. They sing regardless of age<sup>[7]</sup>. Sing whenever want to sing, whether happy or sad, free or busy, not limited by the place and time, the singing sounds beautiful just like the bold and restrained character of the Zhuang people.

The Zhuang people sing for the purpose of cultivating moral character and maintaining life to extend health life<sup>[8]</sup>. Singing folk songs can make them feel relaxed, happy, free of tiredness, and enhance the body's sense of satisfaction, thus strengthening the body's ability to resist diseases, comprehensive immunity and various

bodily functions, Meanwhile, it can also improve the artistic accomplishment and enhance the temperament, being of great benefit to the cultivation of health and affection. Health care is valuable in reposing , worrying too much will damage to the body, less thoughts will be hard to waste heart and blood. Li Qingyuan, a Chinese medicine scholar at the end of Qing Dynasty and the start of the Republic of China, once said in his book "Self-description of Health-preserving" that do not dwell in one's mind, little thoughts to rest spirit, little passion to rest mind, little words to rest Qi. Mediocre people ignore the wonderful idea in it. Zhuang people advocate life of worry-free and content with happiness. As Ge Hong of the Jin Dynasty said in Bao Puzi· Ci Jiao, "Being happy and understanding the fate, one will not have worries." The reasons why many long-lived elderly of the Zhuang people live healthy and long are closely connected to their optimistic life style. They advocate a quiet and inactive mind, a quiet and tranquil mind with no excessive thoughts and desires, indifferent to fame and wealth, not driven by the secular world, they relax their spirit and often feel satisfied, optimistic about everything, feel free and easy, get along well with people, this life style keeps the body's physiological function in the best condition with high immunity, strong resistance to disease. As the Huangdi Neijing·Suwen said: "Tranquility and nothingness following true energy, keeps the spirit inside, how sick comes?" They follow the laws of nature, work at sunrise and rest at sunset, sleep when yang enters yin, and wake when yang enters yin, the Yin and Yang Movement of the human body is in coordination with that of nature, it is a way of life conforming to nature<sup>[9]</sup>.

Singing folk songs on March 3 is also a typical form of keeping health for Zhuang people. It helps them to adjust and relax their mood, keep a good mood and a happy spirit. The folk song culture is the concrete embodiment of the people's physical and mental health of Zhuang people, and the form and spirit are inseparable parts of life. The song fair culture shows that the people of Zhuang nationality attach great importance to both physical and mental health, harmonious integration of body and spirit, vigorous form and spirit, then the abundant positive energy, the healthy body, all of these are benefit to health care<sup>[10]</sup>. They sing for recuperating the mind, keeping calm and not irritable or chaotic, maintaining the Zhuang Medicine "Fire Road" unobstructed, to achieve the

effectiveness of health-preserving and life extension.

### **3 Cultural connotation and health-preserving effect of five-color glutinous rice**

The Zhuang nationality is one of the first to grow rice, the ancestors learned that the earth and the grains can grow by drawing nutrition from the sky and the earth and it can nourish the human body. On March 3 every year, every household will make glutinous rice with different colors for offering on the song fair or sacrificing to the ancestors and gods<sup>[11]</sup>. The five-color glutinous rice, also known as five-color flower rice, being popular in Zhuang family and being recognized as a symbol of happiness auspicious degrees. In addition to the lunar March 3, people also eat five-color glutinous rice on the community Day, the central Yuan Festival, and even the New Year.

It is said that this food was passed down after it won the admiration of the fairies. In other version of the story that it was as a sacrifice to the ancestor of the Zhuang people, Blaudeau, who led the Zhuang people to grow rice, sacrificing himself to others, and lived under a big tree after properly handling people's accommodation. He was beloved by the people of Zhuang people. Therefore, Zhuang people come to worship Blaudeau under the big Banyan tree to remember their ancestors on March 3 every year. March 3 is also known as the Festival of Yin and Yang, five-color rice is also called eating "red and black", place at the sacrifice time, which means eating together with Yin and Yang in order to avoid disaster. Besides, there is another saying that it's for sacrificing the goddess of Song Liu Sanjie. Having such a meal can improve population growth and a good health<sup>[12]</sup>.

There are many wise long-lived elderly in the area of Zhuang nationality. They have their own unique views on health, and penetrate it in all aspects of life like diet. The five-color sticky rice looks ordinary but contains rich health implications in fact. Zhuang people combined Chinese medicinal herb with traditional diet, which is a typical manifestation of Zhuang Medicine Treatment Regimen full of innovation, with dredging the dragon road and channeling anus.

Every march 3, people pick red orchid, yellow rice flower, hundred maple leaves, purple vine and use the juice of them to soak glutinous rice for the five-color glutinous rice of red, yellow, black, purple and white. The colorful and delicious five-color rice is

a representative food in Zhuang's food culture, it has the functions of keeping in good health, such as invigorating the spleen and appetizing the stomach, removing dampness and activating Qi, clearing away heat and activating blood. The red and purple of five-color rice is boiled with red and blue herbs, the long leaves and dark color make the rice turn into purple. The round leaves and the light color then make the rice red. Red and blue herbs are of high medical value and have the effect of clearing away heat, resolving exterior, promoting blood circulation and stimulating the menstrual flow<sup>[13]</sup>. Maple Leaf has a very good ornamental with great efficacy and role, it can drive the Qi and release pain, dispel wind and dampness, so rheumatism patients can use maple leaf after boiling water to wash the affected area. White glutinous rice taste soft, waxy and smooth, filled with the function of complementing deficiency and blood, strengthening the spleen and warming stomach. In the long-term medical practice, ancestors of Zhuang medicine summed up experience of "treating red with red, treating yellow with yellow, treating black with black, treating white with white". Five-color glutinous rice can channel the dragon road, clear away heat and detoxify, expel evil-wind and remove dampness, benefit Qi and invigorate spleen, get rid of disease and strengthen body.

### **4 Forms and sport health-keeping significance of folk sports activities**

On March 3 in Zhuang people, Zhuang people often hold a series of folk sports activities, such as competitions of match-making, ball-throwing, and firework-snatching. People will also be organized to dance in special style of Zhuang nationality together, for instance, bamboo pole dance pole dance and so on.

The folk sports health-preserving culture has rich connotation and a long history. Originated from in the social and cultural background of Zhuang nationality, it has the characteristics of worshipping totem, reflecting work, conveying feelings and expressing ideas, and alluding to traditional culture and social life. Since ancient times, the Zhuang people have been a nation capable of singing and dancing, they join in folk sports activities every March 3, which not only can strengthen their bodies, but also vent their emotions, hone their will and cultivate sentiments, in addition, it help unblock their blood and tendons, keep the human body and nature, the air the same, maintaining the body in a healthy state. The dance of the Zhuang nationality

in Zhuang medicine usually includes some specific common movements, simulating the labor movements in farming activities, such as the posture of harvesting and threshing rice like graceful and natural standing, squatting, lunging, turning and hitting. Some of them include movements of all the joints of the body. For example, the Wu dance in the fresco of flowers and mountains in Guangxi, which relaxes the body and mind, dredges up the Meridians and blood vessels as well, is of great health and guidance significance. When holding competitions like ball throwing and firework snatching, young people rush to participate in these<sup>[14]</sup>. In this sport, the movements often include head raising, arm waving, turning, shaking, throwing and catching, which can stretch the joints and exercise the strength of the upper limbs and the waist and abdomen, relax muscles, protect the cervical spine and waist, promote blood circulation, play a role in promoting health<sup>[15]</sup>.

Zhuang medicine is based on the principles and methods of regulating Qi, detoxicating, tonifying deficiency and regulating mind. The regulation of Qi ranks first, which indicates the importance attached to it by the Zhuang nationality and it also reflected in the March 3, for example, many folk sports in Zhuang nationality achieve the aim of keeping fit and healthy through stimulating or clear the Qi of the human body and make it run properly. Zhuang medicine believes that the human body is made up of Qi and blood, which are the basic materials for life conservation. They circulate all over the body by means of three channels and two roads, nourishing harmonizing and balancing each other. Qi, the power of the human body, is invisible but moveable; blood, the source of power, is tangible but static, they are the root of life. The folk-custom movement in Zhuang nationality makes Qi and blood operate in a proper way, so that the Qi of the heaven, the Earth and the human body can keep the same pace, maintain coordination and balance, thus keeping healthy<sup>[16]</sup>. As a special cultural performance of the Song Fair in Guangxi, playing zhuangquan has the functions of strengthening the body and health care, which embodies Zhuang medicine's thought of "prevention before disease", that is, curing the disease before acting<sup>[17]</sup>. Except invigorating the spirit, keep fit and prevent diseases, the March 3 folk sports activities of Zhuang nationality embody the spirit and style of active life and health preservation of Zhuang people, have characteristics of tradition, nationality and territoriality. There are many sports routines in the

folk sports activities. Different movements can exercise different parts of the body, and often with multiple movements to dredge Qi and blood, relax tendons and activate collaterals, adjust the balance of Qi and blood, and also exchange emotions, cultivate the mind with rich medical connotation and value<sup>[18]</sup>.

## 5 Outlook

The Song Fair in "March 3" of Zhuang nationality have various forms which are highly traditional, national and regional. With the continuous renewal of the development concept, the ancient "March 3" Song Fair has been given more significance of the new era. Not only more diverse contents year by year, but also the strong organization and purpose of activities with atmosphere of civilized and healthy times. The song fair has been rich in medical connotation and value, making great contribution to promoting the germination and development of Zhuang medicine, and people's consciousness of medical care and promoting the formation of Zhuang medicine. Today, as the whole people advocate fitness and health preservation, the folk activities of March 3 in Zhuang people have broad prospects for development. Developing more activities with certain functions of health preservation and health care and incorporating excellent theories of Zhuang medicine into it from the perspective of health preservation will be a great development direction for March 3 song fair.

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