

# A Study of Zhuang Filial Concepts in the Fang Block Zhuang Character Singing Book *Gumu Zhuwen*

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**Abstract:** The "Gumu Zhuwen" is a square Zhuang character songbook, which is sung at the funeral ceremony of the auntie, as a memorial to her deeds. The lyrics of the songbook reflect the traditional Zhuang concept of filial piety, respecting the ancestors, passing on the family name. This thesis translates the songbook into a modern text in Zhuang, Chinese and English, and on this basis, analyzes and summarizes the Zhuang concept of filial piety, respecting the ancestors, passing on the family name, and serving the parents well. This thesis translates the songbook into a modern text in Zhuang, Chinese and English, and on this basis, analyzes and summarizes the Zhuang concept of filial piety it embodies.

**Keywords:** Zhuang, Zhuang Square Character, Rituals, The concept of filial piety

## 1. Introduction

Song text in the blessing text and the same as the Chinese sacrificial text, is to go to the condolences chanted ritual song, folk also called *cukfwen*, *fwen* is "song", *cukfwen* can be translated as a blessing song or sacrificial song. In the Southern Dynasty, Liu Liu's "Wenxin Diao Long - Zhu Meng" explains the In the Southern Dynasty, Liu Liu's "Wenxin Diao Long - Zhu Meng" explains the sacrificial text as "If the ritual of the sacrifice, the matter is only to tell the sacrifice; and in the generation of the sacrificial text, and praise the words and deeds. As can be seen, the sacrificial text is a sacrifice or offering to express condolences or prayers, its content is mainly for mourning, As can be seen, the sacrificial text is a sacrifice or offering to express condolences or prayers, its content is mainly for mourning, prayers, memorializing the main experience of the deceased in life, praise his virtue performance, send condolences and inspire the living. Tuan "separated from the car," volume 4, there is a record about the sacrificial text: "suddenly there is a Calvary from the empty fall between a few cases, From his record, it can also be concluded that the sacrificial text is a mourning From his record, it can also be concluded that the sacrificial text is a mourning written for the dead, and is for recitation during the ritual.

The "Gumu Zhuwen" was obtained from field investigation and came from the handwritten copy of "Zhuang Rural Application Text" by Mr. Luo Guangji, The songbook is written in square Zhuang characters, praising the merits of Gumma and recording the events of Gumma's life and the cause of her death. There are forty stanzas in the "Gumu Zhuwen", each stanza is divided into four sentences of five words each. Each stanza either recalls a past event in the song or sings a unique emotion, and each line expresses an independent and complete meaning. In a few hundred words, it recounts the process from the aunt's illness to her death, and describes the author's visit to her when she was sick, her care and love for her relatives, the hardships of starting a family. It recounts the process from the aunt's illness to her death, and describes the author's visit to her when she was sick, her care and love for her relatives, the hardships of starting a family, and her family situation, while praising her merits and upright and generous character. It expresses the author's infinite sorrow for his deceased aunt, his incomparable love for life and his incomparable appreciation for his family's love.

Since it is not easy to input and edit the square Zhuang characters into the computer, the article is translated into modern Zhuang, Chinese and English, The article is translated into modern Zhuang, Chinese and English, which makes it easier to digitize and edit, as well as easier to read.

## 2. The meaning of filial piety

In ancient times, the meaning of filial piety had three main aspects: first, respecting the ancestors and honoring the clan. The way of performing filial piety (doing one's filial duty) was mainly sacrifice, by

offering offerings to the ancestors at the clan temple, and the object of filial duty was the dead person. In the I Ching it is mentioned that "The ancestor is the origin of the class; without ancestors, evil comes out?" The book tells people that the ancestors are the origin of the nation; without them, there would be no us now, so we should respect our ancestors' elders. Second, pass on the ancestral lineage. To the ancients, the ancestors were the birth of our generation's life; therefore, to worship our ancestors is to carry on the life of our ancestors and live on. Mencius, in Mencius-Li Lou Shang, suggests, "Unfiliality has three, no descendants are great." In Mencius' eyes, if a person fails to fulfill the responsibility of passing on the life of the family, then it can be seen as the greatest unfiliality to one's parents. Third, to serve one's parents well, to serve and obey them with all one's heart, emphasizing that filial piety should be based on respect. The Analects of Confucius - For the Government: When Zi You asked about filial piety, Zi said, "The man who is filial nowadays is said to be able to nurture. As for dogs and horses, they are all capable of nurturing; if they are not respectful, how can they be different?" Confucius believed that filial piety should be sincere and sincere, and that it is not enough to satisfy one's parents with mere material things; filial piety, more importantly, should be "respectful", so that one's parents can receive personal respect and spiritual comfort.

### 3. The concept of filial piety in the songbook of Gumu Zhuwen

The Zhuang people are a family-oriented people, "The Zhuang have a folk song for filial piety: *yaek aeu gingq bouxlaux,rox hauq swnh haet baenz.*" (Be filial to the elderly, be filial to them.). These words exhort people to be filial to the elderly. The crow can still feed back, how can one as a person not respect the elderly! Then there is the song of filial piety in Ma Shan: *Lwnh boh/meh lau cih aen, lwg cib faen yaek geiq. vunz raeuz ok laj mbwn,yaek fungh swngz boux laux.* (It tells of the great kindness of the old father/mother, which the children should remember very much. We are born into the world to flatter our parents.). Without the mother's conception in October and the birth of her children; without the parents' painstaking upbringing, how would the children have grown into adults? Therefore, parents' kindness is higher than the mountains and deeper than the sea. As children, they must remember the kindness of their parents and grow up to be filial to them and support them. This shows the importance Zhuang society attaches to filial piety as a crucial factor in family ethics. Filial piety, as a guideline for family ethics and moral order, is used as a basis for words and deeds between parents and children, between children and even between families, and must be strictly followed so that family relations can be harmonious, brothers and sisters can get along well with each other, and neighbors can have harmonious relations with each other. Filial piety, as a guideline for Zhuang family ethics, is also a criterion for judging a person's moral nobility or otherwise. If a person's words and actions meet the requirements of filial piety, then he can be said to be a person of high moral character, and will naturally gain the praise and respect of the people.

#### 3.1. Good service to parents

There is a word "hozraez" in the Masan Zhuang language, which is often used to praise a person's filial piety, "hoz" means neck, "raez" means long, "hozraez" means long neck. "When the neck is long, the trachea is naturally long, and when the trachea is long, it takes longer to breathe out and breathe in, so it is less likely to lose temper. A person who is particularly tolerant of anger must be a peaceful person; such a person will choose to suffer in silence even if his parents beat him and scold him, rather than attacking them in words and actions. This kind of person is fully compatible with the requirements of filial piety, so a "hozraez" is also a filial person. In Masan, there is a familiar saying in the strong language:

*Doiq bohme h hauqswnh, caeuq beixnuengx aeu daej.* (Modern Zhuang characters)

Dutiful to his parents and dear to his brothers. (English translation)

*Yienghyiengh guh ndaej daengz, heuh de guh lwghauq.* (Modern Zhuang characters)

He is a filial son if he can do both. (English translation)

Filial piety requires people to be filial to their parents, and filial piety in this context has two meanings: the first is to support parents, to provide for them in their old age and infirmity, and to meet their material needs. Parents have worked hard to raise their children and have devoted their lives to them, from the time they learn to speak to the time they grow up to the time they become a father and a mother, each stage of their lives has been nurtured by the blood, flesh, sweat and tears of their parents. ". This is why serving one's parents is sacred in the eyes of the Zhuang people, which includes gratitude for the kindness of their parents in raising them, the blood is thicker than water, and the influence of the concept of filial piety rooted in the souls of all Zhuang people. However, among these three, the requirement of filial

piety provides a guideline, a standard of moral judgment, for filial piety to parents. The opening paragraph of the "Gumu Zhuwen" reads.

*Faenh gou saw mbouj rox, Aeu doj guh cukfaenz.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

I am an illiterate person, use the vernacular to write the benediction.

*Ngoenzneix gux mbouj raen, Dou danq aen danq ngeih.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

Today my aunt passed away, let's sing your praises.(English translation)

My aunt was a dutiful person who has gone to another place, but her virtues during her life are worthy of remembrance and admiration. We have written a tribute to our aunt's virtue and chanted it while this time of year when all are present, so that we can remember and learn from it. "Filial piety, as an idealized moral code, draws on social opinion to monitor and advocate filial piety to parents and respect for the elderly, thus inducing people's ideology to develop toward filial piety." It is evident that the "Gumu Zhuwen" is a certain propaganda and education with the help of the occasion of funeral, telling people what filial piety is and how to behave in line with it. Concerning the deeds of filial piety of aunt, there is sung in the ritual text.

*Bi cietheiq fat hoh, Gux gou coj bae ranz,* (Modern Zhuang characters)

Every holiday, auntie will come home.(English translation)

*Cunz nangzlaeng lwglan, Gangj vah van lingqlingq.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

Visiting nephews and uncles at home with sweet words and smile.s(English translation)

"Visiting nephews and uncles at home with sweet words and smile." Every time she returns to her mother's home she must visit each family to see if the elders at home are in good health and ask if the younger ones are filial, always with a happy smile on her face, saying every word, every phrase and every sentence as if they were also with a smile. Auntie's words and actions were the natural expression of her inner feelings, which contained infinite gratitude to her own parents and the elders in her family, and infinite care and love for the younger generations. It is evident that the concept of filial piety has penetrated deeply into her heart, guiding her words and actions from her ideology, and in her subconscious mind, she also agrees that it is a happy and pleasant thing to be filial to her parents. As the saying goes, "Save grain to prevent hunger, raise children to prevent old age." The root of China's preference for sons over daughters is that people generally believe that it is better to have a son than a daughter, because a male child can provide for them when they are old and infirm. It is also mentioned in the "Gumu Zhuwen": *Ngoenzneix gux gou dai, Lwg lai buenh soengh laux.* (Today my aunt dies, many sons will see her off to old age.) But here, the deeds of my aunt prove the saying: Who says that a woman is inferior to a man, why should a woman give way to a man? Although she was a daughter, she was still able to observe filial piety, devotedly serving her own parents, regularly returning to Ning, bringing back food and supplies for them, so that they could be clothed and fed and enjoy their old age in peace. There is a local word in Masan called "haeuxlwgmwkw"(daughter's rice), which is the food that married girls bring back from outside their home to pay respect to their parents. When a married daughter misses her parents, she worries that they are too old to work and worry about food and clothing, so every time she goes home to visit her relatives, she will bring some food and supplies to repay her parents for the kindness they have given her. This is in line with the first level of filial piety in the eyes of the Zhuang family, which is to provide for one's parents and to provide them with adequate material conditions so that they can be well clothed and fed.

To be filial to one's parents, it is not enough just to meet their material needs. In the Analects of Confucius - For the Government, it is recorded that when Zi You asked about filial piety, Zi said, "Nowadays, those who are filial are said to be capable of nurturing. As for dogs and horses, they can all have nurturing; if they are not respectful, how can they be different?" Also, in the chapter on "The Filial Piety - Acts", "When a filial son serves his parents, he should pay respect to them when he lives, give pleasure to them when he raises them, give sorrow to them when they are sick, give sorrow to them when they mourn, and give severity to them when they offer sacrifices. When the five are ready, then he can serve his parents." It can be seen that filial piety, in addition to the fact that parents are old and can no longer feed themselves, children should feed them financially and materially so that they can eat and wear without worry, but also pay attention to heart care and inner happiness. Parents have the kindness of raising their children and teaching them for decades, and their life's work has been poured into their children. As a child, all emotions aside, if we just raise the elderly, we can only barely repay the kindness of our parents, but how can we repay the kindness of decades of teaching? How will the children repay

the pain and suffering of the decades? What's more, who can't be without love? If we take into account the factor of affection, then children owe too much to their parents, and I am afraid they will never be able to repay them in their lifetime. Therefore, filial piety requires that children should not only support their parents, but also respect them, obey them without committing any mistakes, and let them enjoy the happiness of heaven and earth.

*Gux gwn bya gwn noh, Cix gyaez hoj daengz ran.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

When my aunt eats fish and meat, she thinks of her underfed relatives.(English translation)

*De gag gwn mbouj van, Coj heuh raeuz daeuj cimh.*(Modern Zhuang characters) Instead of being fed alone, she shares food with those of us who don't have enough to eat.(English translation)

*De gyaez nuengx gyaez beix, Gag gyaez ngeix bae ranz.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

She loves her brother and sister, and always misses her family.(English translation)

*De gyaez lwg gyaez lan, Bae ranz sim caengz nyienh.*(Modern Zhuang characters) She loves her grandchildren and nephews, happy only after visiting family members.(English translation)

When people reach their old age, what they are most concerned about is naturally their own children, and only when their children are living well will the old people be happy; when their children are united and loving will their parents be comfortable. As the saying goes, "When parents are here, they don't travel far. When parents are alive, children should not travel far away, otherwise they will make them worry. However, as a daughter, she cannot stay by her parents' side forever and serve them, she will get married one day. Once she was away from her parents, it would be very difficult for her to pay respect to them. That is why my aunt had the saying, "When my aunt eats fish and meat, she misses her family." "She loves her brother and brother, and wants to return home; she loves her grandchildren and nephews, so she is willing to go home. Every time I go home is a rare gathering, and every time I go home, I can honor my parents and bring them spiritual satisfaction and spiritual comfort.

My aunt's family was relatively wealthy, and every time she had fish and meat to eat she would remember her brothers at home, worrying that they would not have enough to eat and wear, and worrying even more that her parents would be distressed by this. So she often brought home food to share with her brothers and share the joy with them. Auntie knew that if she was the only one among her parents' many children who had no worries about food and clothing, while the other brothers did not have enough to eat or wear, then her parents would be worried all day long and could not retire in peace, and would even go back to work in spite of their old age. As a son or daughter, it is against the requirements of filial piety to make it difficult for parents to age in peace, and is condemned by society. So whenever my aunt had something to eat, she would "eat alone" and always "think of the family" and bring a share of good things to the family. So, from this, we can also see why the aunt, as a daughter, would "miss the family when the aunt eats fish and meat, and ask us to follow her when she is not willing to eat alone." This is because "she loves her brother and his meat. One is because "she loves her brother and brother, since she wants to return home, she loves her grandson and nephew, so she is willing to patrol the home." The emotions between the siblings is inseparable, the old do not see their brothers and sisters will naturally miss, affection from their "hands and feet" to promote their own grandchildren and nephews, naturally will miss their own good and understanding of the younger generation. Secondly, and most importantly, the aunt could not bear to see her parents worrying about their sons' lives in their old age, so she took the initiative to share their worries and let them see that their sons and daughters had such a strong brotherly love, so that they could enjoy the happiness of their family. This is exactly in line with the way of filial piety as explained by Confucius, which is to satisfy parents materially as well as to give them personal respect and spiritual solace.

### 3.2. Offspring rearing

Zhuang filial piety is also expressed in raising offspring. In Mencius - Li Lou Shang, Mencius proposed, "Unfiliality has three consequences, and the absence of offspring is the greatest." It is considered unfilial to fail to raise offspring. The Zhuang view of filial piety is that a filial person should not only "have offspring" but should also teach them to be a filial person.

In Masan Zhuang, "mbouj baenq lwg" (Not an eligible son) is often used to scold an ungrateful son or daughter, and its counterparts are "mbouj baenq meh" (Not a qualified mother) and "mmbouj baenq boh" (not a good father), i.e. not a good mother and not a good father. It is a common belief in Zhuang society that the character and characteristics of children are inherited from their parents, and what kind

of parents have what kind of children, and unfilial children are naturally poorly educated by their parents. There is a local familiar saying in Masan that says.

*Lungz miz lungz, fungz miz fungz, duz nou okdaeu j rox daj cong h.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

A dragon gives birth to a dragon, a phoenix gives birth to a phoenix, and a mouse is born to make a hole.(English translation)

This familiar phrase comes from Chinese, and after it was introduced by Zhuang, it focuses more on emphasizing that parents are the best teachers for their children. It is believed that the character of a child's parents can be generally seen from his or her body, and if both parents are filial, then the children educated will also be filial, and if both parents are unfilial, then it is natural that the children educated will hardly become filial children under the influence of words and example. In Zhuang society, an unfilial son will be condemned and spurned by the moral opinion of the society, and after the condemnation and spurning, the blame will naturally be put on his parents or even grandparents, which is "rats are born to make holes". A local word called "fougiaeuq"(uneducated) is also used to describe a person's unfiliality. If a person is said to be "fougiaeuq", then all the relatives present will feel very ashamed. As the saying goes, "if you don't raise a child, your father's fault", the reason why there will be such an unfilial son or daughter, it must be the fault of the parents, and by extension, teach such a person's father and mother, grandparents are also at fault, and to shame their parents, so that they can not hold up their heads in front of people, is bound to be a great disrespect to their parents. On the contrary, if a child is filial, then he will not only be filial to his parents in their old age, but will also be respected and praised by people, and his parents will feel honored by this. Because of this, Zhuang families pay special attention to cultivating the concept of filial piety in their children, and see raising children as a requirement of Zhuang filial piety, so that they can, on the one hand, retire well for themselves and, on the other hand, reap people's praise, so why not! In the "Gumu Zhuwen" it is written.

*Lwgmbwk hix yaek haq, Lwgsai yah yaek aeu.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

Even daughters must marry, and men must marry.(English translation)

*Banh cienz youh banh haeux, Gux caen gouq dwgrenz.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

Raising money and worrying about rice is hard enough for my aunt.(English translation)

Auntie pays special attention to the upbringing of her children, teaching them when they are young and taking care of their marriages when they grow up, so it is clear that she has devoted her life to raising her children, pouring out countless sweat and tears. In the text, it is also mentioned that when her eldest daughter died young and left her children unsupported, her aunt took the initiative to take up the responsibility of raising them.

*Youh gangj dah mbwk daih, Buenq ciuh dai bae yaem,*(Modern Zhuang characters)

Aunt's eldest daughter, who died before she was 50.(English translation)

*Ndek ce lwg geij gaem, Ce gyang daemz gyang dah.*(Modern Zhuang characters) Oldest daughter's child, turned into an orphan.(English translation)

Since her eldest daughter was "half dead", her children were left unsupported, playing in the water between the ponds all day long, unable to understand the sorrow of losing their mother and unable to plan for their future. Her aunt took pity on these children and raised them in her own home, treating them more like her own children. She gave so much to her offspring because of her affection and because she was deeply influenced by the concept of filial piety in her blood.

### 3.3. Ancestor Worship

The Zhuang emphasize rituals and believe in "death is still life", believing that after death, people do not "die and disappear" into heaven and earth, nor do they "reincarnate" through the six paths and reincarnate again, but become ghosts. It is believed that after death, a person does not disappear into heaven and earth, nor is he "reincarnated" and reincarnated through the six paths. After the death of a person, only when the funeral ceremony is held for him, his soul can be successfully gathered to the ancestral shrine to enjoy the worship of future generations. It is written in the "Gumu Zhuwen" that.

*Hai mwngz haemh sangciengz, Bauq vunzbiengz ciz rox.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

Have a funeral service and invite everyone to attend.(English translation)

*Mwngz baenz muengz bae moh, Mbouj gyaez hoj gijmaz.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

You become a ghost to go to the tomb, do not have regrets.(English translation)

After her death, her aunt was transformed into a ghost, so there was a "you enter the tomb and become a ghost". In order to bring her back to the ancestral deity, the descendants "held a night of ceremony" for her and sent her to the ancestors. The Zhuang song of filial piety says, "Riengz boh meh daengz gwnz, haet baenz vunz rox laex." (Only when you have taken care of your parents to the heavenly court can you be considered a man of honor. After the death of parents one has to perform funeral ceremonies for them and send them to the heavenly court so that one can be considered a filial son. The Zhuang believe that if they do not hold a funeral ceremony for their parents after their death, their spirits will have nowhere to turn to and will wander around, wandering through heaven and earth, not only unable to protect their children and grandchildren, but also subject to evil spirits and misery.

Funeral ceremonies are held when an old person dies, and sacrifices are offered from time to time after death. Offerings are prepared at the time of the rituals, and it is mentioned in the "Gumu Zhuwen".

*Dawz noh daeuj baiz mwngz, Rox mwngz gwn rox mbouj.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

I offer you meat as a sacrifice, can you eat it.(English translation)

*Cukfaenz doeg daengz neix, Dwk haeuj feiz bae coemh.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

The article was read and put into the fire and burned to ashes.(English translation)

*Hawj runz soengq bae mbwn, Hawj mwngz guh goj geiq.*(Modern Zhuang characters)

Ask the wind to send to heaven, for you to read.(English translation)

Some of the offerings are placed on the table for the ancestors to enjoy and for the person to eat afterwards, for example, meat, rice, wine, biscuits, sweets and other eatables. Some offerings can be burned with fire and let the wind take a ride, for example, paper clothes, paper money, and sacrificial writings. With these offerings, the ancestors can be clothed and fed in heaven, and without the sacrifices of their children and grandchildren, the spirits of the ancestors will lose their source of livelihood.

Life on earth lasts at most a hundred years. You can do it yourself and feed yourself in abundance during your lifetime, but what about after a hundred years? After a hundred years, if there are no children or grandchildren to hold funeral rites, then they will become lonely ghosts; if there are no sacrifices from their children or grandchildren, then even ghosts will go hungry; if there is no incense from their children or grandchildren, then the spirits of their ancestors will lose their livelihood. Therefore, the Zhuang family emphasizes sacrifices, firstly, to help the deceased return to the ancestral deity, and secondly, to continue the offerings and ensure that the ancestors are clothed and fed in heaven.

#### 4. Conclusion

Filial piety, as a code of family ethics and morality, has long been deeply rooted in the consciousness of the Zhuang people. It not only influences people's values and way of thinking in social consciousness, but also regulates people's behavior and habits as a potential social system, affecting the harmonious and healthy development of Zhuang society. Nowadays, the problem of aging population in China is becoming more and more prominent. According to statistics, China's elderly population has exceeded 130 million people, accounting for about 11% or more of the total population. By 2025, China's elderly population will reach 280 million, accounting for about 20% of the total population, and the number of elderly people over 80 years old will also reach 25 million. Among these elderly people, more than 70 per cent still live in rural areas, and most of them still have relatively low livelihood security. They need not only material assistance and care in life, but also spiritual solace. China is still in the primary stage of socialism, with a low level of economic development and a social security system that needs to be improved. Therefore, it is impossible to rely entirely on the state and society to solve the old-age problem. In order to solve the old-age problem, we must also return to the traditional old-age model. China's old-age care model has traditionally been based on family care, and relying on the strength of the family to solve the old-age problem is a tradition that has been formed for thousands of years, so there is the saying that "accumulate grain to prevent hunger and raise children to prevent old age". Filial piety, as a code of family ethics, has long been deeply rooted in the consciousness of every Chinese person. Therefore, it will be of great practical importance to promote the traditional culture of filial piety and to actively advocate the traditional virtues of respecting, honoring and helping the elderly.

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