

Harmony, Health Preservation, Wisdom: A Three-Dimensional Interpretation of the Cultural Connotation of Shuttlecock Sports

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Abstract: This paper aims to go beyond the surface of its sports project and deeply interpret the cultural code inherent in shuttlecock sports from three dimensions: "the physical manifestation of harmonious culture", "the living inheritance of folk wisdom", and "the embodiment of fitness and health philosophy". The paper argues that shuttlecock sports, in the form of physical practice, vividly demonstrates the Chinese people's pursuit of harmony, interaction, and integration, showcases the creative transformation of folk life wisdom, and embodies the core ideas of "nurturing both body and spirit" and "balancing movement and stillness" in traditional Chinese health philosophy.

Keywords: shuttlecock sports; harmonious culture; cultural connotation

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1 Introduction

Jianzi, a small shuttlecock feather, gracefully dances between people's feet, knees, shoulders, and heads, drawing beautiful arcs. It may seem simple, but it has traversed a thousand years of historical time and space, evolving from its embryonic form as "Cumao Wan" in the Han Dynasty, to its popularity in the Tang and Song Dynasties, and now to a modern competitive sport that is popular throughout the country and even the world. Its vitality has remained fresh over time. Behind this is not only its fun as a game, but also because it is deeply rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese culture, becoming a unique cultural practice.

2 Physical Manifestations of Harmonious Culture

2.1 Harmony between humans and objects: The pursuit of technology that integrates mind and body

In shuttlecock sports, participants need to focus their full attention on the flying shuttlecock. The eyes must be accurate to judge the landing point; the body must be agile to move in time; and the feet must be stable to hit the shuttlecock precisely. This process requires a high degree of coordination among various parts of the body, and complete synchronization between thoughts and actions. Successful catching and kicking is the precise control of space, time, and strength by the body, representing the perfect unity of "mind, eyes, body, and feet". This state is precisely the realm of "unity of mind and body" advocated by traditional Chinese culture, where individuals achieve inner harmony and focus through interaction with the shuttlecock.

2.2 Harmony among people: a social mirror image of interactive integration

Whether it's the "solo flight" of individual shuttlecock kicking, the "surrounding shuttlecock" of group kicking, or the competitive net shuttlecock, shuttlecock is a strong form of social interaction. In group kicking, the shuttlecock is passed among people, forming a flowing, shared focal point. Participants do not need words; they can achieve tacit understanding through the trajectory of the shuttlecock. A beautiful pass is a response and respect to the previous shuttlecock player; a difficult save is a responsibility to create opportunities for the next kick. This activity strengthens community connections and cultivates the spirit of cooperation and comity. Even in the highly competitive net shuttlecock, the "opposite across the net" rule avoids direct physical collisions, and competition is conducted within the framework of etiquette, reflecting a

communicative ethic of "harmony in diversity" and "coexistence of competition and cooperation".

2.3 Harmony between individual and time-space: adaptability to adapt to any situation

Jianzi ball has minimal requirements for venues and equipment, making "courtyards and alleys, everywhere a playing field." It can naturally blend into the rhythm of daily life, starting anytime from the park in the morning, the afternoon break at work, or the courtyard at dusk. This strong adaptability reflects the Chinese people's life wisdom of "conforming to nature" and "being content with whatever circumstances one finds oneself in." People can achieve physical relaxation and mental pleasure through interaction with Jianzi ball in any available space and time, achieving harmonious coexistence between the individual and the surrounding environment.

3 The Living Transmission of Folk Wisdom

3.1 The wisdom of using local materials for creation

The craftsmanship of traditional shuttlecocks is entirely a product of folk wisdom. With a copper coin or iron sheet serving as the base, and a few bird feathers (chicken feathers, goose feathers) for balance and decoration, a simple stitching or intertwining process transforms them into an exquisite sports equipment. This approach of "turning waste into treasure" and "using local materials" embodies the combination of frugality, practicality, and aesthetic taste in folk life. Shuttlecocks from different regions exhibit unique characteristics in terms of feather color and base weight, forming a rich regional style and serving as a concrete manifestation of local knowledge.

3.2 The inheritance mode of teaching by example and precept

The transmission of shuttlecock skills primarily relies on the folk methods of "oral instruction and personal example" as well as "observation and imitation". Elders guide children, and experienced players mentor novices, passing down basic moves like "dish, knock, turn, and jump" and fancy techniques like "mandarin duck turn" and "leg-crossing" through repeated practice. This non-textual, bodily mode of transmission represents a dynamic cultural evolution. It continually innovates during its transmission, allowing individuals to develop their own unique styles after mastering the basic principles, thus keeping the sport of shuttlecock vibrantly alive.

3.3 Creative transformation from game to competition

Since modern times, shuttlecock has undergone a creative transformation from a purely folk game to a standardized competitive sport. The addition of a net, the establishment of rules, and the integration of modern sports elements such as volleyball, badminton, and football have marked this process. This is a paradigm of the successful integration of folk wisdom and modern civilization. It not only retains the core skills and cultural charm of traditional shuttlecock kicking, but also endows it with stronger competitiveness, appreciation, and international dissemination, demonstrating the strong adaptability and innovation ability of traditional culture.

4 Embodiment of Fitness and Health Preservation Philosophy

4.1 Balance movement and stillness, nurture both form and spirit

Traditional Chinese health preservation opposes extreme "stillness" or "movement" and advocates "the combination of movement and stillness." Shuttlecock sports perfectly illustrate this point. On the surface, it requires constant movement, jumping, and kicking, which belongs to "movement." However, in the process of movement, it also requires a high degree of mental concentration, inner calmness, and even breathing, which is "stillness." This state of external movement and internal stillness is exactly what health preservationists pursue. It exercises the body (physical training) while bringing peace and focus to the mind (spiritual nourishment), thus achieving the health goal of "nourishing both body and spirit."

4.2 Whole-body exercise, meridians and collaterals are unobstructed

Jianzi Ball is an excellent full-body exercise. When playing Jianzi Ball, almost every part of the body, including the legs, feet, waist, abdomen, arms, head, and eyes, needs to be involved. This comprehensive activity can effectively promote

blood circulation throughout the body. From the perspective of meridian theory in traditional Chinese medicine, the feet are where the three yin and three yang meridians meet. Frequent foot movements, such as jumping, kicking, and turning, are tantamount to continuous stimulation and massage of the relevant meridians and acupoints, which helps to dredge the meridians, harmonize qi and blood, and greatly benefits the improvement of cardiopulmonary function and the enhancement of immunity.

4.3 Moderate intensity, suitable for all ages

Unlike many high-intensity competitive sports, the intensity of shuttlecock can be freely controlled. It can be played leisurely and comfortably, or intensely and competitively. This makes it suitable for people of different ages and physical abilities. For young people, it can exercise sensitivity, coordination, and reaction; for middle-aged and elderly people, it is a safe and effective aerobic exercise that can delay the aging of bones and muscles, with minimal impact on joints. This universality reflects the Chinese traditional health philosophy of "individualized treatment" and "moderation", and is a sustainable health practice that spans the entire life cycle.

5 Conclusion

In summary, shuttlecock is far more than a simple physical game. It is a cultural performance that utilizes the body as a medium and kicking shuttlecocks as a ritual. It is a vivid representation of the "harmonious culture" at the level of physical interaction, promoting harmony between humans and objects, between humans, and between humans and themselves. It is a paradigm of the living inheritance of "folk wisdom", full of simple yet great creativity from craftsmanship to inheritance modes. It is also a practitioner of China's traditional "fitness and health philosophy", providing modern people with an ideal healthy lifestyle characterized by the balance of movement and stillness, and the nurturing of both body and spirit. In today's era of rapid globalization and modernization, deeply exploring and promoting the cultural connotations of traditional sports such as shuttlecock is of great practical significance for enhancing cultural confidence, promoting public health, and inheriting China's excellent traditional culture. This small shuttlecock not only dances with feathers, but also embodies the spirit of a thousand years of culture.

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