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Musical Change and Continuity of Huayin: The Essence of Chinese Zheng Music

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF MUSIC

**MUSICAL CHANGE AND CONTINUITY OF HUAYIN: THE ESSENCE OF
CHINESE ZHENG MUSIC**

By

Haiqiong Deng

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I use *huayin* (the left-hand bending techniques on the zheng) as a tool to discuss the evolution and continuity of modern zheng music. My focus is on bringing out ancient aesthetic and philosophical meanings that are embedded within traditional zheng music, and comparing these meanings to the multi-faceted cultural and social changes of the modern world. Moreover, modern zheng musicians' thoughts become my focal point while discussing the transformation of the contemporary zheng tradition. I also integrate my own reflections along with the selected interviews. By reexamining the use and transformation of the zheng tradition through the lens of the *huayin*, I aim to reflect the essential aesthetic and philosophical meanings in Chinese zheng musical culture, and reemphasize the value of these meanings when dealing with the ever-changing modern tradition.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The zheng, a plucked-string Chinese instrument composed of moveable bridges supporting each string above a rectangular sound box, has a history that can be traced back three millennia. According to a second-century historical document, *Fengsu Tongyi*,¹ the earliest zheng had only five silk strings and a bamboo body. The performance of the zheng was first documented in *Shiji* (lit. “Record of History,” 237 B.C.), which noted how people of the *Qin* state (221-206 B.C.), now *Shanxi* province, China, played the zheng at that time.² During the Tang dynasty (618-907 A.D.), the number of silk strings increased from five to twelve or thirteen, and the bamboo frame was replaced by *wu-tong* wood. The zheng at this time was used not only as a regional instrument, but also became a regular fixture at the imperial court as one part of a string and wind ensemble to perform *xianghege*-- a type of ancient Chinese singing (sung by one person or a group of people³) accompanied by an ensemble. Meanwhile, the art of the zheng was introduced into Japan as the thirteen-string *koto* and to Korea as the twelve-string *kayagum*. Later, in the *Qing* dynasty (1644-1911 A.D.), a zheng having sixteen steel strings became popular. The number of strings on the zheng has been increased again from sixteen or eighteen to twenty-one, twenty-five or twenty-six during the last half century. Since the early 1980s, the 21-string Shanghai zheng became an internationally favored model. This modern zheng uses strings that are made of steel wound with nylon and has a wider range and a strong, mellow sound.



Photo 1: Picture of the Zheng

¹ Han Mei, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, Vol. 27, P 802

² Xiang Si-Hua: 1993

³ Yang Yin-liu: 1981

Each of the bridges on the zheng divide the string into two parts: the right side strings are tuned in a pentatonic scale and plucked by the right-hand with picks on the tips of the fingers; and the untuned left side of each string is the place for the left-hand bending to create pitch variations and ornamentations. This type of left-hand bending technique is known as *huayin* (sliding/bending notes), which is the central focus of this thesis.

The aim of this thesis is threefold: 1) to use *huayin* as a lens to embody the kaleidoscopic nature of the modern zheng music tradition; 2) to employ *huayin* as a symbol and the music conservatory as a place to reveal transformations within the zheng music culture in respect to people, social and political changes, as well as aesthetics and meanings; 3) to highlight two key aspects of traditional *huayin* – their musically improvisational nature and spirituality as conveyed by musicians. Instead of attempting to present a “whole” description of the musical culture, I aim to reveal a central aspect of the musical culture through my own observation and understanding, and contribute a perspective into the modern zheng music tradition.

Huayin contains some basic sliding techniques that can be described, roughly, by the terms up-glide, down-glide, round-glide, and vibratos. Each of these can produce a kaleidoscopic effect, meaning that certain aspects of sound can be uniquely transformed in a manner idiosyncratic to the zheng. For instance, the speed and pitches of glides may be varied each time; the vibrato can be faster or slower, bigger or smaller, shorter or longer; the round glide can be one round or several. In traditional zheng music, mastery of *huayin* is the essential part of studying different genres and distinguishing their origins and localities. Most traditional zheng pieces are monophonic and derived from rich folk operas, narrative songs, or heterophonic folk ensemble music. Therefore, the rich and diverse folk music traditions and local dialects generate music of many zheng schools and versatile stylistic *huayin* traditions. Currently, traditional zheng repertoires are classified under six major schools based on both distinct styles of using *huayin* and their geographic dispositions. They are as follows: *Henan*, *Shandong*, and *Shanxi* (Northern schools); and *Chaozhou*, *Kejia*, and *Zhejiang* (Southern schools).

All of the schools have a considerable amount of repertoire, and each of them has its own characteristic *huayin* that are mainly reflected through various bending elaborations and special ways, especially in making *fa* (4) and *ti* (7). The reason *fa* and *ti* can be

generated in so many ways is because all the aforementioned traditional schools use pentatonic scales including *do* (1), *re* (2), *mi* (3), *so* (5), *la* (6). There is no *fa* or *ti* on the tuned scale, therefore musicians have to bend the strings *mi* (3) and *la* (6) to gain the higher pitches of *fa* and *ti*. One thing that needs to be specified is that the concept of *fa* and *ti* here is not as same as the concept of these scale degrees in Western equal temperament, but rather they represent two major changing notes that may contain several pitches on one bending or miscellaneous ways of glides and vibratos. Generally, traditional northern zheng schools generally have wider vibratos and faster glides than southern schools. For instance, *Henan* school is famous for using *da chan* (dynamic vibrato, the bending usually around or exceeding a major second) or *you yao yin* (the left hand bends a descending note with a constant narrow and dynamic vibrato while the right thumb constantly plucks back and forth on one string, making a bending pitch range normally within a major third). Both *da chan* and *you yao yin* express vigorous or sorrowful feelings in *Henan* music very well. Whereas, music from the southern schools, such as the *kejia*, may not have such dynamic vibratos but is full of eloquent slow bendings, fully presented through the use of *fa* and *ti*. The pitches of these two notes may be varied in different pieces, speed, and moods. None of the notations employed today can fully indicate the subtlety and varied pitches. To gain the proficiency of traditional *huayin* can only be possible through listening and familiarity with local music idioms.

Another factor that grounded a versatile *huayin* tradition was the use of old *gongche* and *ersi*⁴ notations and traditional oral-aural teaching methods. Both *gongche* and *ersi* notations only indicate key melodic notes and *ban* (meters) in Chinese characters to create a kind of skeletal melodic line, referred to as *diaotou* (a mode or a theme). These two notations did not provide detailed directions but generated a great space for individuals to freely add improvised and idiosyncratic elaborations based on the stylistic conventions. The major function of the old notations was to help musicians memorize basic musical forms. Students generally began to sing a score by imitating their teacher's singing and playing to gain the basic feeling of the music style and later applied it to their performing experiences. Teachers focused on the elaboration of the skeletal folk melody and revelation

⁴ “2-4” notation: using the Chinese characters, “二 (two), 三 (three), 四 (four), 五 (five), 六 (six), 七 (seven), 八 (eight)”, to represent *jianpu* (solfége notation) “5 (so) 6 (la) 1 (do) 2 (re) 3 (mi) 5 (so) 6 (la).”

of the associated aesthetic feeling. Thus, transmission of tradition very much relied on individual musicians, who not only served as mediums of memorizing, preserving, and mediating, but also took a generative role of composing, imparting, and performing.

The nature of such interpersonal interaction within the oral-aural teaching tradition on the one hand creates an improvisational music nature and on the other hand gave a great attention on communicating musical feelings and spirit. Playing music in the past was a pastime activity and functioned mainly for self-cultivation, which closely links to the ancient philosophies. Such a confluence of Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian ideals and beliefs of cultivating the higher self, human virtues, and spiritual sensibilities was at the center of all activity. Individual refined deliberations were the best reflection of such flexible music-making. One proverb used to describe traditional zheng music playing says that one piece will have one hundred styles if one hundred people play it. Musicians can freely add or remove notes, change the speed, or use various rhythmic patterns spontaneously while playing with other musicians; they may also create very subtle *huayin* variations on sliding speeds, bending pitches, or vibratos according to their sense of musicality, temperament and feeling in that moment. However, no matter how free one's improvisation is, music still follows certain *ban* (meters) that is indicated by the notation and stylistic conventions. Moreover, since the context of traditional *huayin* were closely associated with local folk culture and playing instruments was not separated from other music forms, musicians generally carried a comprehensive understanding and general capacity of playing more than one instrument within the music tradition.

Since 1948, when the renowned zheng master Cao Zheng established the first university-level zheng program in China, zheng education has become a fixture at the music conservatories in China. Chinese music conservatories, functioning as the authoritative national state-funded music institutions, have been the centers to promote Chinese music nationalism and urbanization since the middle of the twentieth century. Deriving from a Western European classical conservatory background, the Chinese conservatory inherited its educational systems and structures that later deeply shaped modern institutional Chinese music education. The influences in teaching Chinese music at conservatories can be seen in the establishment of “scientific” ways of pedagogy and notation systems, using systematic and theoretical models applied to performance,

composition, and creating new forms of concert music and performance. The function of learning the zheng is no longer solely for self-cultivation or community recreation, but is regarded as a professionalized career pursuit. Such change is deeply linked with larger cultural, social, and political changes within and outside of China. Today, the number of zheng students has grown tremendously and the zheng has become one of the most popular Chinese instruments in the world. The use and meaning of *hauyin* has been transformed tremendously in the modern zheng music tradition.

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, political regimes and agendas have had enormous impact on Chinese musical development and in certain aspects have been a very negative influence on preserving traditional culture. It was especially seen during the Cultural Revolution when traditional music was repressed severely along with other "olds" (old customs, old habits, old culture, and old thinking). It was not until the 1980s when the revival of traditional culture gradually emerged along with the "open-door" policy that led the whole of Chinese society to encounter transformations in every aspect of life, economy, and culture. Influences from the West and other Asian countries not only motivated diverse musical experiments by mainstream composers and musicians, but also generated miscellaneous genres of Chinese popular music.

The involvement of a large number of professional-trained composers in generating new compositions for Chinese instruments from late 1980s has promoted a great emphasis on nurturing stage performance in conservatory training. In modern compositions, especially music composed after the 1950s, many solo repertoires composed by conservatory-trained composers and performer-composers have become a key component of studying the zheng in the current curriculum. Music contexts have significantly expanded from folk ensemble music to other familiar musical forms under both Western and Chinese influences. Composers have applied various scordatura tunings and explored techniques for plucking the right side with both hands in order to produce polyphonic textures. Newly composed zheng compositions have broken traditional rules and greatly extended the contexts of musical forms, ideas, and potential. A large number of highly technically solo repertoires have emerged since late 1980s. Under such circumstances, the notion of virtuosity becomes multi-dimensional. In contrast to traditional folk musicians or

literates, modern-day individual soloists, such as conservatory professors and professionals, have performed a fundamental role in shaping values and perceptions of music performance; the audience-seated concert hall has become the major venue for presenting their virtuosity. Proliferations of music publication and media dissemination have also become powerful tools both in shaping audience aesthetics and values as well as propagating newly composed repertoires. Furthermore, the national zheng music level examination for amateur musicians during the last twenty-some years has fundamentally formalized and standardized the ideologies of the modern zheng music tradition and performing paradigm countrywide -- particularly for younger generations.

The stress of traditional stylistic *huayin* and the approach of learning them have been gradually replaced by new and challenging techniques or unfamiliar music idioms in institutionalized conservatory training; specialization and professionalization replaced traditional “whole” knowledge of learning in the conservatory; and the new notation systems, both *jianpu* and Western staff notation, function as a medium to disseminate the modern music tradition. While constantly searching for creations and innovations, musicians from different generations have tried to balance and adjust to the changes in values, aesthetics, teaching methods, and constant transformations and innovations within the tradition. Many Chinese musicologists and scholars have also brought up deep concerns and re-evaluations of the last few decades of Chinese conservatory music education and its influence on the transmission of Chinese music. More recently, they call for the improvement of teaching, studying, and development of Chinese music in higher educational institutions, especially in the establishment of Chinese music theory, pedagogy, notations, aesthetics and research on traditional music.

Their concern also provides a foundation and broader view for me to re-evaluate the change and continuity of *huayin*. As a zheng musician who has gone through extensive conservatory education and witnessed the transformation of Chinese music since the late 1980s, I have been pondering the meaning and aesthetic of zheng music in both traditional Chinese music and its evolution in contemporary music. As one renowned Chinese musicologist said, “tradition is like a river”, there is no stagnation or separation in music tradition. My understanding of the zheng music is like the river that always flows along my

life. Any segment of the tradition ultimately nurtures the meaning of the music itself and the meaning of being a musician.

In Chapter Two, “*Yi Yun Bu sheng*” – *Traditional Ideology of Using huayin*, I link some extramusical associations, such as classical Chinese fine arts and my first zheng music lesson to facilitate a discussion on *yi yun bu sheng*, the central aesthetic ideology, in playing traditional *huayin* and “*Yi Jing*”, the ultimate aesthetic awareness that is created by artists or musicians. I also choose the traditional *Chaozhou* zheng school as a case study to discuss how *yi yun bu sheng* is shown through traditional *huayin* performance.

In chapter Three, *Huayin – Its Transformation in Modern Zheng Music*, I discuss the changes and transformation in five sections: 1) the social and cultural background of modern Chinese zheng music education in the twentieth century; 2) change in notation systems; 3) *huayin* in modern compositions; and 4) musicians in transformation. *Huayin* in this chapter functions like a metaphor that reflects musicians’ values, aesthetics and perceptions in relating to broader social and cultural transformations.

Survey of Literature

The focus of this thesis is on the transformation of *huayin* in both traditional and modern music making. There are a large number of sources and archival studies done by many Chinese musicologists and zheng musicians that provide a historical background and point of departure for the thesis.

In addition, the English monograph, *Zheng, Tradition and Change*, by Te-yuan Chen in 1991 presents a comprehensive layout of major traditional zheng music schools, representative musicians, and their distinct performing styles and techniques. Chen also emphasizes the political influences, especially from Marxism, in shaping many new compositions in both China and Taiwan. That dissertation provides many useful references and ethnomusicological points of view in studying the zheng music tradition, but focuses less on multiple music perspectives that are revealed through the musicians’ own views or experiences. Similar to the approach that Shelemay employs in her article, “The Ethnomusicologist and the Transmission of Tradition,” which explores ethnomusicologists actually “preserving”, “memorializing”, and “mediating” the tradition, I intend to give a closer look at musicians themselves. She points out that the very nature of musical

expression is that it is transmitted from person to person across geographic, social, and cultural boundaries, which unfold the nature of ethnomusicological study – an “interpersonal” study. My understanding of the tradition mostly came from my interpersonal talking, studying, and collaborating with other musicians and teachers. Most of the conversation materials are drawn from my interviews with some predominant zheng conservatory professors during the summer of 2005. Each of them takes a role of preserving, memorializing, and mediating the tradition. The angle of interpreting the tradition has never been quite the same by people from different generations, educational backgrounds, life paths, as well as social and culture environments, which shows, in part, the dynamic nature of the tradition.

There are plenty of Chinese articles and references which I found at the Chinese Arts Research Center in Beijing that tackle broad Chinese zheng music topics including biographical, historical, stylistic, aesthetic, archeological, theoretic, and educational subjects. Many Chinese musicologists and scholars have also brought up deep concerns and about revaluations of the last few decades of Chinese conservatory music education and its influence on the transmission of Chinese music. More recently, they raise the voice of improving teaching, studying, and development of Chinese music in higher educational institutions, especially in the establishment of Chinese music theory, pedagogy, notations, aesthetics and music styles, as well as restudy of authentic rural cultural and social backgrounds. They provide a foundation and broader views for the examination of the change and continuity of *hua-yin*. As a zheng musician who has undergone the extensive conservatory education and witnessed the transformation and bewilderment since the late 1980s, I too ponder the meaning and aesthetic of the original music tradition and its evolution in the contemporary music tradition. The more engagement in new music and a multi-cultural milieu, a stronger awareness of the necessity to understand the value and meaning of traditional music culture and people demands my attention when reviewing multiple new voices on the zheng and adjusting to the rapid changes and numerous perspectives in the twenty-first century.

The book *Folk Music of China* by Stephen Jones is an insightful English reference on rural Chinese folk music culture. It presents an insightful access to the living folk tradition in both Southern and Northern China including various music functions,

instruments, styles, musicians and forms. It also provides valuable information while examining traditional zheng music genres. Moreover, he raises a voice as a non-Chinese scholar to urge a strong attention to many endangered folk music cultures.

Virtue or Virtuosity? – Explorations in the Ethics of Musical Performance is a book by Jane O’Dea that comprehensively discussed two essential issues in music study and performing, one is external good and the other is internal good. The former one is more driven by needs of outer society and the later one entails soul searching for truthfulness and integrity. Musicians need to adjust and strike a balance between these two contradictory components always, and the most important is “being true to yourself” as well as carrying a “generosity of spirit” when interpreting music. Such concern is deeply integrated with my interviews with many Chinese zheng professors. “Virtue” used to be greatly emphasized in Chinese classical arts, and seems more meaningful to be re-accentuated especially in today’s highly competitive music milieu. The use of *huayin* metaphorically reflects the dichotomy between virtue and virtuosity in the modern zheng music tradition.

The book *Music, Talent, and Performance – A Conservatory Cultural System* by Henry Kingsbury investigates the Western conservatory music-cultural system, with a focus on a North American conservatory. Kingsbury raises the interplay between music and musicality while talking the educational circumstances in conservatory system. His deliberation on the meaning of being a musician raises similar concerns in current Chinese conservatory zheng education that stresses the notion of being “talented” or “professional”.

The paper *Some Problems of Theory and Method in the Study of Musical Change* (1977) by John Blacking describes the key theoretical orientation in this thesis. He points out the difference between the change within the musical system and the change of the system itself. Blacking strongly emphasizes that, when studying musical change, one should first examine the social context since music change is a result of social and cultural changes. Nevertheless, he points out several shortcomings by his predecessors or contemporaries: 1. The focuses of comparative musicology were more on organization of societies instead of music (Hornbostel and Sachs.) 2. Alan Lomax’s global cultural-based theories do not distinguish the difference between the change of music and the change of culture since music changes do not necessarily have the identical path of social and cultural changes. However, to comprehend the change in these non-musical aspects does not

generate an answer for musical change itself, instead it only provides a path of tracing the process of human beings' cognitive and social changes. Therefore, understanding local folks' view of change is critical because they provide what they value and what criteria they think is significant in discerning musical changes. Furthermore, while each individual's decision and perspective of changing is only relevant to his/her own surrounding world and time, the researcher should take a broader scrutiny of different perspectives, which is called the study of epistemology. However, it may result in moral conflicts, such as among purists, syncretists, or modernists as discussed by Blacking. He thinks none of them provides comprehensive insights on musical changes since they do not take a broader examination of other non-musical aspects of change. Blacking points out one should take at least three approaches in studying music change: synchronic, diachronic, and biological perspectives.

Blacking also alerts that over focusing on social, historical, and cultural changes may neglect the real changes within the musical context. He strongly emphasizes one should study music change through the process of music-making, not the music product itself, more importantly, to discern the difference between "variations and innovations within a flexible system" and the actual change of the musical system. He advocates the real change of music is the change of musical system itself. Blacking regards the musical change as a natural part of human and cultural biological evolution, so the distinction between the change in the music system and the change of the system is greatly significant.

Blacking broadens the definition of musical change not only through musical sounds but also the lens of humanistic and anthropological points of view. He says the purpose of studying musical change is to study humanity itself. One should not aim only to consider the fact of musical change but through studying the change, we can discern how "people can change in unexpected ways."

Blacking's discussion very well fits into my study of the continuity and change of *huayin*. Only comparing the stylistic changes and the different uses of *huayin* in modern compositions are definitely not enough to reflect the real impetuses and reasons behind the change of *huayin*. I must first take a historical perspective to display the past philosophical (Confucianism and Taoism), and aesthetical (*huayin* as fundamental or decorating part of the music; *yijin*; or *yi yun bu sheng*) aspects that applied in traditional zheng music. I then

need to examine the gradual change of major historical and political events, of teaching in notation, in the instrument itself, and in educational methods, which all closely associate with the actual change of *huayin*. In the meantime, I also take a synchronic perspective to present an overview of the change of *huayin* in the current environment. Musicians' perspectives become my main focus. As Blacking mentions, the change of music is not sudden, but is a result of a long process of change. Their different voices manifest a complexity of understandings of the change of zheng music. From their discussion, one can see globalization, Westernization, modern technology, social, political, and economic changes all have imprinted on the process of the cognitive changes on both musicians and audiences.

According to Blacking's main point, music change is the change of the musical system, not the change within the system. In the case of *huayin*, traditional utilization of *huayin* in various schools reflects a very flexible nature, in which both the teaching and playing methods advocated an innovative music tradition. However, such innovation only applies to playing traditional repertoires since variations were all within a stylistic change and in the context of *yi yun bu sheng*, in which the great concern was the depth of *huayin* nuances and one's interpretation. Nevertheless, modern compositions break traditional monophonic music structure and certain conventions into a diverse and non-restrictive tradition. Professional composers, both Chinese and Westerners, start to take *huayin* as one idiosyncratic feature of the zheng and a characteristic ornament in their compositions. They break the traditional pentatonic tuning, and apply unconventional rhythmic and technique methods. In addition to being a solo or ensemble folk Chinese instrument, the zheng appears with many other Western instruments and accompanied by Western orchestra and ensembles. In addition, the notion of individuality is transformed too. Traditionally, the stylistic utilization of *huayin* were used to be the main criteria of valuing a musician's inner artistic expression, whereas the attention of the contemporary stage zheng performance considers much more, such as virtuosity, market value, and audiences.

Various voices from traditionalists, modernists, or syncretists are juxtaposed in evaluating today's zheng tradition. To study the ongoing controversy and value adjustments within the non-stop change of zheng tradition provides a broader sense of how people keep reacting to their surrounding world through music. Tracing the path of change

in *huayin* provides a way of understanding the changing epistemology, philosophy, values, society and culture, as well as the nature of human beings themselves.

CHAPTER TWO

“YI YUN BU SHENG” – TRADITIONAL IDEOLOGY OF USING HUAYIN

Traditionally, the use of *huayin* reflects a central ideology in zheng music: ‘*yi yun bu sheng*.’ This term literally means, “to use (*yun*) the *huayin* created by the left hand to enrich the sound played by the right hand (*sheng*).” Specifically, the right hand fingers pluck strings to create initial notes, the left-hand fingers bend the strings to produce derivative notes or effects that sustain, vary, or embellish the initial notes. Edward Ho explains *yun* as follows: “*Yun* means different things in different situations. In phonetic studies it means tone; in poetry it means rhyme; in painting it means rhythm. In music it can mean resonance, residual feeling, melodic motion or musical expression.” (Ho 1997, p 1) *Yun* and *sheng* are not separate concepts, but rather an oneness that shapes the art of traditional zheng music. It conveys a unification in which is reflected in the renowned concept of *yin* and *yang*. Only by fully mastering this oneness can one comprehend the art of *huayin*. The great nuances and deliberation of *yun* illustrates stylistic authenticity, individual artistry and mentality, as well as musical feeling and ways of music-making.

In this chapter I discuss the ideology of “*yi yun bu sheng*” through viewing both aesthetical and musical perspectives. In aesthetical studying, I start to reach the ancient philosophies and aesthetics that embedded within Taoism, Confucius, and Buddhism. I continually focus on an essential aesthetic awareness, *xu-shi-yijing*, which is associated with almost all Chinese classical art forms, such as painting, calligraphy, poetry, opera, or even martial arts. My own memory of one early zheng lesson on the piece *Water Lily* later on provides a music reflection on this aesthetic idea. In the second part of this musical study, I choose a piece from the traditional *Chaozhou* repertoire, *Liu Qin Niang*, as one case study to unfold how traditional musical methods reflect the spirit of *yi yun bu sheng*.

An Aesthetic Study

Throughout Chinese history, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism had played fundamental roles in shaping ancient Chinese social infrastructures and cultures. Even in today’s modern world, their philosophies still influence the Chinese temperament and

artists' spirits. Nature has been a dominant resource that inspires numerous peoples in the course of history.

Among these three philosophies, Confucianism advocated for common people to cultivate their personality and soul through adhering to the order of the society. Confucius promoted a harmonious society and proper ethical systems that ultimately shaped the social and cultural structures in Chinese ancient dynasties. Buddhism very well blended with Taoism when it was introduced into China. Buddhism regarded desires in practical life as the source of pain; only by deleting them can one reach the ultimate inner serenity. The later school, *Chan* or *Zen*, that being developed by Chinese and later Japanese practitioners, greatly promoted one's intuitive sense, especially instantaneous enlightenment through meditation. Buddhists believed that in order to seek salvation, one must see through one's own nature, in which can only be reached through intuitive insights, not logical or rational examination. Taoism took the similar intuitive and inner enlightenment to approach one's inner wisdom and harmonious life style. Compared to Confucianism and Buddhism, I think Taoism played the most important role in ancient Chinese artistic temperament, forms, and expressions. The *Tao*, as expressed by Lao Zi, was the way to the unification of one's inner self with the universe. To practice the *Tao* in one's life was to search one's own originality, gain harmony with the universe, and reach a great simplicity of life and inner richness. To see the *Tao*, one must have a carefree spirit, a love of mankind, and a great enjoyment of natural life. The *Tao* detached the drama of life and the temptation of wealth and fame; it was the path to maintain a great personality or dignified soul, even though it somehow was regarded as a passive philosophical practice.

All three of them, Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, although each follows its respective system of philosophy and practice, blended in Chinese life and nurtured its cultural tradition and artistic temperament. I would say Buddhism offered Chinese people a religion and comfort in daily life; Confucianism imprinted in every aspect of ancient social, educational, and cultural constructions; and Taoism was the one that touched the deepest core of an individual's spiritual cultivation and inspired the most in artistic creativity. They all regarded consideration of nature and human nature as the basic principle of conducting a life.

In the course of history, almost all great artists, poets or calligraphers in different degrees reflected a free spiritual expression in their art works, which were always profound, yet simple, without any artificial or particular effort shown. Everything went so natural, so smoothly, yet with great subtlety and depth. If art is a manifestation of one's character and spiritual expression, what was highly esteemed by ancient Chinese artists was the moment being created by one who reached an ultimate inner harmony and freedom soul while creating art works. Many times, I feel the greatest ancient poets, calligraphers or painters were those who had the most romantic temperament, such as East Jin dynasty Poet *Tao Yuan-min*, Song Dynasty scholar *Su Dong-po*, Tang dynasty poet *Li Bai*, or Ming dynasty painter *Ba Da Shan Ren*. They were "escapists" from political or busy practical lives but not from the life itself; their great passion stayed in the whole-hearted love of life and nature that ultimate lead to the *Tao*; and they embodied their aspirations and true passions on natural subjects. Bamboo, hollow inside and straight outside, always green regardless of the seasonal changes, became one of the most favorite motifs praised by ancient scholars since it very well homologated their admiration of a dignified personality that was detached from any temptation and ambitions. The hollow inside of bamboo also symbolized the emptiness or oneness in the *Tao*. Similar to the Water Lily, it grew from mud without being contaminated by it. These artistic expressions, by using natural objects, became almost a personal moral statement, not only expressed a feeling, but more deeply reflected one's inner depth of soul and his profound view of life.

Music was one of many ancient art forms that was practiced to nourish one's heart and approach to the *Tao*. The emptiness emphasized by both Buddhism and Taoism in music is reflected through fewer music notes but with a full concentration on each one. No matter whether it was Confucian ritual music or ancient *qin* music, they all stressed the function of rectifying the mind and reaching an inner harmony with the nature. Musical sound was regarded as the voice of the nature. "Emptiness" or "simplicity" or "spaces" were the key words always used in expressing ancient Chinese music. The *Qin* was probably the instrument that demonstrated a high antiquity and expressed the ideas discussed by Chinese ancient literates most fully. I quote some passages that being translated by R.H. van Gulik in his book *The Lore of the Chinese Lute* in order to display how *qin* music was regarded as a mediation between nature and oneself.

“The Lute is considered to hold the mean between great and small music, and its tones are harmonious. Its heavy sounds are not boisterous so as to be confusing, its light sounds are not too weak so as to be inaudible. It is suited for harmonizing the human mind, and may move man to be improvement of his heart. Therefore, the word ‘lute’ means ‘restraining,’ and the word ‘accomplished’ means ‘rectifying,’ indicating that the Superior Man keeps to the Right by restraining himself.”

--- *The Lute*, by Ying Shao, second century A.D.

“When producing sounds one should aim at simplicity, and also at naturalness. Its wonderfulness lies in the correct shifting over from the light touch to the heavy, and in applying correctly *ritardando* and *accelerando*... Playing the Lute is meant for nurturing the nature; therefore one should not aim at acquiring fame by it. If one meets a kindred spirit, then one should play; if not, then one had better put the Lute in its cover, and reserve it for one’s own enjoyment.”

--- *Ten Rules For Playing The Lute*, by Wu Chen, 1249-1331

“When one’s self is naturally aloof and earnest, then one shall correspond to the Mystery of the Way, and one’s soul shall melt together with the Way. Therefore it is said that successfully executing music is not caused but the hands, but by the heart, that music is not produced by notes, but the Way. When one does not strive to express music in tones, but lets it come naturally, then one may experience the Harmony of Heaven and Earth, then one may be in communication with the virtue of the Universal spirit.”

--- *Miscellaneous Remarks on Playing the Lute*, by Wang Piano-cheng, sixteen century.

In actual playing of the *qin*, the performer demonstrates his left-hand sliding notes, which are the part being articulated and stressed the most by the musicians since the length, time, pitch, speed, and sliding variations are the factors that reflect one’s understanding of *qin* music as well as his insights on it. Similar to the traditional *huayin* on the *zheng*, the ultimate emphasis rests on the nuances and depth created by the left-hand sliding notes. A good play of *huayin* is a perfect unification of both hands, and the music goes so smooth by applying *huayin* that a listener cannot even discern the great control made by the player. Ancient artists had emphasized that the highest state or level in making art or music was when one totally forgot he was making an art or music. I may say that many ancient scholars use art forms as means to reach the *Tao*, or a total natural and carefree spiritual expression.

Can this very personal and unspeakable spirit be taught? I would say it is very hard to teach in specific words, but is possible to teach through inspiration. There is a famous

Chinese idiom, “Teachers can only show the gate of the knowledge to the disciples, and the true acquaintance of knowledge all depends on one’s own.” Traditional Chinese musical teaching emphasized inspiration and “*wu*” (similar to *Chan* or *Zen*’s instantaneous enlightenment, or grasp of the essence.) The clarity of plucking, speed, and nuances of *huayin* embodied humanistic spirits and an endless search for a harmonious expression. The criteria of such harmonious aesthetics can be reflected through a well-known ancient idiom, “*Passionate but not wild, sad but not depressed.*” The meaning of the music has always been associated with pursuing a dignified personality and expressing one’s inner soul.

Furthermore, ancient art-making or music-playing were almost all pastime matters. Probably it is one reason that artists endowed so much carefree spirit in their works. It fundamentally differs from modern professionalized and specialized career pursuing. Although the performing methods and functions are more multi-faceted today, the traditional values are still alive in the modern world. Taoism offered ancient artists an eternal spiritual freedom and a harmony between human beings and the Mother Nature and eliminated any artificial or disordered expression in the art simply because it was away from the *Tao*. It may sound very metaphysical in the modern technological world. However, I think any true artists or musicians, regardless of their nationalities or races, know how nature offers the insightful calm that can constantly soothe their spirits and endow their inspirations. Especially Chinese artists who seek their spiritual roots, constantly use modern artistic or musical languages to express ancient values, no matter consciously or unconsciously.

I personally enjoy so much to communicate with these ancient sages through their music, words and artistic expressions, just like meeting with some bosom friends, or freely participating the spiritual moments inspired by ancient talented artists, poets, and scholars. They constant give me inspiration. Such carefree idleness indeed nurtures my calm mind and adjusts my value of life. Practicing music gradually becomes one way of approaching my inner harmony. To this degree, are there any right or wrong ways to play *huayin*? I think this question only belongs to the forms and styles of the different ways of using *huayin* since *huayin* is probably one of many ways to practice the *Tao*.

Xu, shi, and yi jing

Xu, *shi*, and *yi jing* are three key aesthetical concepts in appreciating ancient Chinese art and music. It would be necessary and helpful to discuss other forms of Chinese arts in order to understand the reflection in later music discussion. Literally, *xu* indicates a void or empty sensation, and *shi* stands for something substantial or solid. These two Chinese aesthetic concepts together reveal the *yi jing*, a spiritual state vital in the classical arts, which has been pursued by numerous artists, musicians, and poets throughout the history of China. Chinese philosophy and aesthetics are best reflected in their works and words.

How on earth do these abstract concepts (*xu* and *shi*) come together to bring the light of *yi jing* to the different art forms? Here are some images may provide some indications: 1) A Chinese ink painting, *Fish*, by the Qing Dynasty Master Painter Ba Da Shan Ren (1626-1705) who was an imperial family descendant, and later became a itinerant monk-artist. On the painting, there is only a fish on the right side and his autograph calligraphy on the left side with a considerable amount of empty space.



Photo 2: *Fish*, by Master Painter Ba Da Shan Ren (1626-1705)

(reproduced from <http://www.hkartclub.com/painting/painting219.html>)

The simple image of the fish (*shi*), however, vividly inspires an imagination of boundless waving water (*xu*) where the fish freely swim. This may be seen as evoking an unrestrained spirit in an infinite and shapeless universe.

2) *Bamboo in the Wind*, a hanging scroll ink painting, by Yuan Dynasty painter Wu Zheng (1280-1345).



Photo 3: *Bamboo in the Wind*, by Wu Zheng (1280-1345)
(Reproduced from <http://www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/online/ChineseArts/>)

A single bamboo branch enters from the right side of the painting, its little curved shape and leaves look as if they stand sturdily facing into a strong wind. Wu's exceptional use of forceful brush ink strokes displays his dignified and pure-hearted personality. In Chinese classical arts, bamboo symbolizes a personality that is innocent inside and uplifted outside, without being overly affected by the realistic busy world or any hardship in one's life. Here, bamboo is *shi*, and the spirit conveyed behind it is *xu*.

3) Figure painting by Wu Dao Zi (710-760)



Photo 4: Figure painting of Confucius by Wu Dao-zi (710-760)

(Reproduced from <http://forum.aceboard.net/p-6148-640-14539-0.htm>)

There are no equivalents to the drawings and paintings of Wu Dao Zi in any Western realistic figure paintings. He used hundreds of lines to present body shapes, movements, clothes, expression, and characters, as well as to manifest a vivid, impressive exposition. His painting is an excellent demonstration of a key Chinese artistic aesthetic:

xing shen he yi (lit. “shape-spirit-fuse-one”), equivalent to the connotation of *xu*, *shi*, and *yi jing*.

4) Chinese opera.



Photo 5: A Chinese Peking opera actor

(newsphoto) A Chinese actor performs Peking Opera in celebration of the 2006 New Year in East China’s Zhejiang Province

(Reproduced from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-12/31/content_508214_3.htm)

Xing shen he yi also affects classical Chinese opera. Unlike Western opera which may emphasize extravagant stage settings and large casts, classical Chinese operatic performers convey time, character, place and emotion many times through very subtle hand and body gestures, as well as eye expressions. For instance, the idea of opening a window and looking at the pretty scenery outside can be conveyed to an audience, simply through a

performer's open hands, and the use of eye and facial expressions to convey the character's mood, personality, and even the scenery and weather outside.

"*Xu* and *shi*" in these samples can be replaced by various pairings: still/moving; black/white; empty/solid; *xing/shen*; less/more; soft/hard; and simplicity/complexity, just to name a few. They all create a *yi jing* that directly comes from one's inner soul and inspires the artistic awareness of others. *Yi yun bu sheng* as a musical concept expresses very well such harmonies between *ying/ yang* and *xu/shi*. The resulting *yi jing* created by cultivated musicians infinitely stimulates aesthetic pursuit and appreciation.

An early zheng lesson reflecting *xu*, *shi*, and *yi jing*:

I think the hardest part of learning traditional zheng music has been to understand the depth of *yun* and the stylistic *huayin* that conveys it. The reason I choose one of my early zheng lessons to exemplify the ideology is because that it still has profound impact on my musical perception and life today.

Professor Yao Yi-de, a tall and thin elderly man with a gentle voice and a warm smile, was my first zheng teacher. He taught at the music department of the West-Northern Minority University (*Xi Bei Min Zu Xue Yuan*) for many years before he passed away. After his passing, I found out that professor Yao was the first Chinese conservatory zheng graduate student, and the first Chinese zheng soloist who went abroad to perform. However, his bright career was soon enough destroyed by the Cultural Revolution. As a rightist, he was exiled to come to *Lanzhou*, my hometown in *Gansu* province, and stayed there until his death. In my memory, very few children at that time took private lessons because of the small income of most families. I don't know how my parents managed to pay for my classes, for I remember our family expenses being very tight. Each weekend, we took a nearly three-hour bus ride to get to Professor Yao's home. My studying of the zheng with him continued for almost three years until I was accepted by a music school affiliated with the Xi'an Conservatory of Music in 1987, where I undertook the rest of my juvenile studies.

Professor Yao always tried to inspire me by telling stories, demonstrating on the zheng, or by singing melodies. During my apprenticeship with him, I usually worked on a new piece for every lesson. This particular lesson was on a *kejia* school piece: *Water Lily*.

To me, *Water Lily* was just another beautiful piece with more left-hand *huayin* to grasp. Without too much effort, I learned the whole piece in one week. When my mom and I finally arrived at Professor Yao's home, I could not wait to show him the results of my practice. My expectation of receiving his praise faded, however, as I noticed his serious countenance.

After I played for him, he said nothing but started to demonstrate the whole piece for me. "Why does he play so slow?" I murmured. After an unusual silence, he asked me, "Have you ever seen a water lily?"

"Yes, but not very often." I answered, full of curiosity.

"Do you know how a water lily grows?"

"Not really."

"It grows through mud, but blossoms into the most pure and beautiful flower. *Chu wu ni er bu ran* ('grow from dirty mud without being contaminated by it'), such spirit of purity is what the music is trying to reveal. No matter how hard the situation and life you are facing, you always have to keep your true spirit and soul. That is what the music is trying to reveal..." (I paraphrase his words here, attempting to come as close as I can to his original meaning.)

Almost speechless by his sincerity and seriousness, I began to get a sense of what he was trying to convey. He continued to demonstrate how each *huayin* was bended in order to enrich the right-hand melody and eloquent feeling. It was the first time I realized that there are different pitches of the 4th scale degree (*fa*) in various pieces.

"The 4 (*fa*) is the key note to sustain the feeling of the first phrase..."

"Slow down, use your heart to listen to the sustained bending of the 4 (*fa*)..."

"Feel the space between these two notes, the music is not stopped, but rather full of expression... the silence here is very important, your spirit is in here too!"

Although he never mentioned specifics about the mechanics of *huayin*, he simply profoundly showed me the details of its essence – its sound and meaning. From that day on, the meaning of *huayin* changed for me. I began to feel that *huayin* not only require proper techniques and pitches, but also express deep feelings. It was not simply a left-hand (*yun*) being used to enrich the right-hand (*sheng*), but rather a unity that was equally felt and




supported. It was not simply a maneuvering of *xu* and *shi*, but rather a true expression of the spirit.


A Musical Study of “*Liu Qin Niang*”

In addition to the above abstract and almost emotional elucidation of the ideology of *yi yun bu sheng*, I have chosen “*Liu Qin Niang*,” a representative traditional piece in *Chaozhou zheng* schools, to provide one example of how the art of *huayin* together with methods of variations in modes and rhythms are technically used in traditional music-making. Moreover, by illustrating these structural developments and elaborations in *Chaozhou* school, I also aim to demonstrate how *huayin* is facilitated through the central aesthetic concept, “*yi yun bu sheng*.”

Basic *huayin* techniques

Before dwelling on the specific piece “*Liu Qin Niang*,” I would like to explain the usage of basic *huayin* techniques. Mostly, the tip of the fingers can press each string on the left side of the bridges down with weight from elbow and forearm in order to change pitches or add embellishments of the sound plucked by the right fingers. There are four fundamental bending techniques:

- Up-glide (*Shang-hua-yin*): generally add a symbol of “” after the note on the music. Technically, the left-hand fingers press the left side after the right finger plucks the right side of the string to raise the pitch within a range of a major third.
- Down-glide (*xia-hua-yin*): generally add a symbol of “” before the note on the music. Technically, the left-hand fingers press the left side before the right finger plucks the right side of the string in order to get a higher pitch and gradually release the string to the original pitch.
- Round-glide (*hui-hua-yin*): generally add a symbol of “” on the top of the note on the music. Technically, it combined the up and down glides as one glide. It can start on down-glide and end on an up-glide or vice versa.

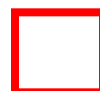
- Vibrato (*chan-yin*): generally add a symbol of “” on the top of the note on the music. Technically, it is a constant and narrow pressing of the string by the left-hand to sustain the sound with a waving quality. The vibrato generally does not change the original pitch. The range of vibrato can be wider or narrower based on the stylistic traditional conventions or individual interpretations.



Almost all types of *huayin* and nuances are based on these four basic techniques. The great effort on learning the traditional stylistic *huayin* mainly rests on listening to and discerning the nuances and subtle pitch variations. The speed of *huayin* depends on the mood implied and beat the note’s duration. For instance, if it is a one beat note, the left-hand can bend the string at the upbeat, whereas if it is only a half note, the bending needs to be followed right after plucking. But there is restriction on the place and time to add bending, which is always relevant to one’s own temperament and interpretation.

Both plucking notes and *huayin* composed most of the traditional zheng musics. The choice of when and where to use *huayin* along with the plucking notes in order to better reflect *yi yun bu sheng* or *yi jing*, however, are subject to individuals. There are no specific rules or instructions on systematic learning of *huayin*. Most of the learning is from listening to and familiarity with of conventional musical styles and quantity of learned repertoires. Here, I choose a five-note variation to demonstrate subtle differences created by both plucking and bending combinations. One may ask where to use an up-glide or a down-glide; it is subject to individual interpretation. Generally, glides create a line between pitches and the great enjoyment rests on feeling the process of pitch changes. When looking at the original note, one can think there are five notes. But when applying *huayin* in different places, one may hear two or three main notes. This example aims to let people who are not familiar with the use of *huayin* get a basic sense of the possible changes.

Five-note *Huayin* Variation

Figure 1: (Track 1) Five-note *huayin* variation



- **X:** The notes under the symbol are produced by left-hand *huayin* and notes plucked by the right fingers.
- **▼:** Notes under the symbol are accented.
- : Up-glide.
- : Down-glide.

Introduction of *Chaozhou* zheng music

Chaozhou is located in southern China and is surrounded by mountains and rivers. It has a rich cultural and historical heritage. Local people have a long history of practicing Buddhism. There is a rich local music culture that including *Chaozhou* opera, *Chaozhou Luogu* (drums) and *xianshi*, which heavily influenced the local zheng music tradition. *Xian* means “string” and *shi* meaning “poems”. *Xianshi* is a type of music played by a string ensemble. The plucked instruments in *xianshi* include *yaoqin*, *pipa*, *sanxian*, *zheng* and *qinqing*; the string fiddles include *erxian*, *tihu*, *yehu* and *dihu*. Sometimes the flute instruments *xiao* and *dizi* are also used.

Chaozhou zheng musicians refer to *huayin* as *zuoyun*, which literally means, “making rhymes.” This is regarded as the essence of playing *Chaozhou* zheng music. *Zuoyun*, together with *bianzou* (improvisations and variations on the skeletal line), are the two key components of *Chaozhou* zheng music. Both of them are implemented through changing modes and rhythms as well as creating rhymes by using left-hand *huayin*.

Traditionally, in order to *zuoyun* (“create rhymes”) in *xianshi* or *Chaozhou* zheng music, one is required to be proficient in speaking *Chaozhou* dialect. The teaching method accentuates singing *ersi* or *gongche* scores before playing them on any instruments. This is a vital process that involves comprehending the rhyme of the music in one’s mind before beginning to play any instrument. Through singing in dialect, musicians learn the subtleties of phrasing, dynamics, length, music sensations and mostly the *yun*. Only by doing this and understanding *yun* in his or her mind can the musician later reveal his or her proficiency in playing the music. *Su Qiao-zheng*, a well-known *Chaozhou* zheng musician, recalls her studies with her father, Su Wengxian, a representative *Chaozhou* master, in her monograph *Arts of Chaozhou Zheng* (1991, Hong Kong):

“Looking back to my long-time study of arts, I did not start with systematic materials or with strict logic or precise arguments. My father first taught me how to sing *xianshi* and then taught me hand by hand how to play the zheng. He helped me understand the relationship between *xianshi* and zheng songs and then helped me understand their qualities in my mind and learn playing techniques by hand. With his great effort and my diligent practice, I later sensed and understood that there exists a complicated and creative process between a piece of *xianshi* and zheng. This process not only involves people’s different understanding of *xianshi* due to having different instructors, but also illustrates each person’s technical capability and artistic accomplishment, which combine to develop one’s playing style. I learned from his impromptness and mobility-- the essence of folk music. I also learned how to explain *xianshi* with the zheng.”

This learning process, however, is almost exclusively practical to local people who speak *Chaozhou* dialects. For most zheng learners outside of the *Chaozhou* area, their studying of traditional repertoires mainly relies on recordings by local masters and published Solfège notation. Studying one traditional school music is no longer the attention and purpose of learning the zheng in current education. The institutional education of the zheng focuses on not the depth of knowing one school but the broader musical styles and

idioms. Both the media and publication dissemination to certain degrees propagate representative repertoires, however, they do not provide an access to experiencing the process of traditional music-making that includes understanding old notations, musical structures, and its improvisational nature, like what *Su Qiao-zheng* discussed as essential concepts and values involved in learning traditional *Chaozhou zheng* music. Even though her studies did not involve "systematic materials, logic or precise arguments" (in contrast to the current dominant conservatory educational system), her learning of zheng was rooted in the absorption of local *xianshi* music tradition that the *Chaozhou zheng* music originally derived. Moreover, this un-systematic process prioritizes gaining the music's "quality in mind" and the understanding of the "impromptness and mobility" of this music. Such "quality of mind" and "mobility" are reflected through the manipulation of *zuoyun* and *bianzou*.

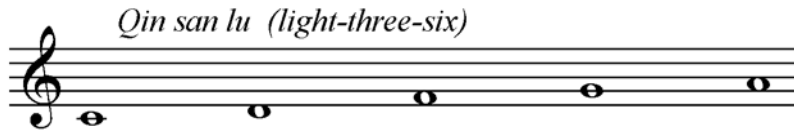
Generally, *Chaozhou zheng* music has a regulation of generating a whole piece. It follows a path of slow – medium – fast speed sections. The first part is always in a 4/4 meter and has a full deliberation of skeletal notes by applying *huayin* and adding extra notes; the medium part starts at the part of *kaopai* that uses lot of up-beats and syncopated rhythms to speed up the pace of the piece. The following parts apply methods of *cuiban* to accumulate the music until the end. All the notes in these parts are based on the skeletal notes.

Diaoti

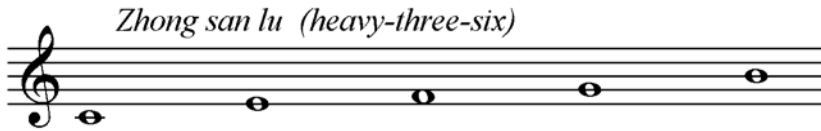
In *Chaozhou zheng* music, different *diaotis* (melodic modes or scales, mostly pentatonic) indicate different sensations and stylistic bending pitches. There are five major *diaoti* or modes: *qinsanlu* (light-three-six), *zhongsanlu* (heavy-three-six), *qinsanzhonglu* (light-three-heavy-six), *huowu* (active five), and *fanxian* (rotate modes). The name of each *diaoti* is indicated in either *ersi* or *gongche* notation to designate which pitch needs to be varied. In *ersi* notation, the Chinese three equals *jianpu* 6 (*la*), six equals to *jianpu* 3 (*mi*), and the five equals to 2 (*re*). The following chart is a comparison of three notations in a pentatonic scale.

The change of *diaoti* is executed through pressing left-side strings based on a pentatonic scale to change the pitches by the left-hand. Each *diaoti* express certain moods:

- *Qinsanlu* mode (light-three-six) consists of five pitches: two (sol), three (la), four (do), five (re), six (mi) -- 5 6 1 2 3 (*jianpu*) -- and emphasizes the lightness of the three (la) and six (mi) to express a happy and energetic feeling.



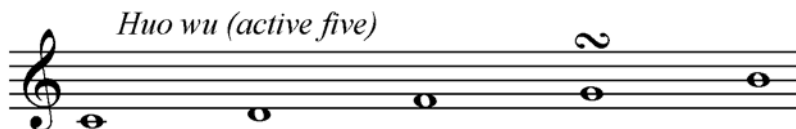
- *Zhongsanlu* (heavy-three-six) alters *qinsanlu*'s three (la) into (ti) and six (mi) into (fa)-- 5 7 1 2 4 -- by using the left hand to bend the string to form a mode of two (sol), three (ti), four (do), five (re), and six (fa), which conveys a solemn and melancholy feeling.



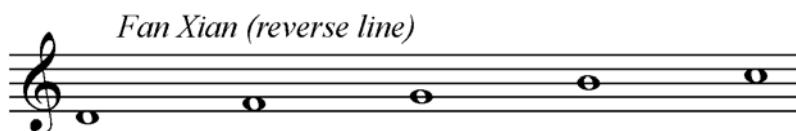
- *Qinsanzhoulu* (light-three, heavy-six) combines both the light and heavy three (la) and the six (fa) -- 5 6 (7) 1 2 (3) 4, with an emphasis on the light three (6) and heavy six (4). The heavy three (7) and light six (mi) apply as decorating functions to serve the major mode.



- *Huowu* (active five) is based on the mode of *zhongsanlu*, and the five (re) also needs to be bent (to active-- 5 6 1 2̃ 4) to reveal a deep and sorrowful sentiment, however it should not be activated so much that the original taste is lost, nor should it be too reserved. There is no specific verbal method of explaining how much the five (re) string must be bent to be active; rather, the comfort zone of the active five comes from experienced local musicians and their proficiency in the *Chaozhou* music style.



- *Fanxian* means to start to play the mode on different pitches. It can be changed according to *qifan* (change within a seven-tone scale) and *wufan* (change within a five-tone scale). These changes are based on the *fanxian* scale: 6 1 2 4 5. After *fanxian*, not only are fingerings and pitch zone changed, but also the mood and *zouyun* vary. For example, a basic five-note scale is two (sol), three (la), four (do), five (re), and six (mi). A piece can be started on any note in the scale depending on the feeling and variation desired. No matter which note the music starts on, the music changes within the scale pitches. Most *fanxian* music expresses an amusing and animated feeling.



One piece may be interpreted through all of these modes. For instance, *Liu Qin-niang* can be played in all five *diaotis*, and each of them consists of thirty *bans* (30 measures in 2/4); *qinsanlu* (light-three-six) *Liu Qin-niang* is originally derived from the *ersi* notation. Musicians apply left-hand *huayin* to sustain the light three and six in this mode; in *fanxian Liu Qin-niang*, the whole piece is moved a perfect fourth up, but the left hand still keeps the sensation of light three-and-six *huayin*; *huowu* (live five) *Liu Qin-niang* moves the piece a major second lower based on *qinsanlu* version, placing particular emphasis on the embellishments on the five (re); *zhongsanlu* (heavy-six-three) shifts a perfect fifth down from the *qinsanlu* version and changes the light three-and-six into heavy three-and-six mode by pressing the string deeper. Furthermore, in this version the piece starts on the fifth measure of the original score and the first four measures are placed at the end. The change of *diaoti* not only alters the pitches and variations, but also the mood and sensation. The following is a sample that lists all four *diaoti Liu Qin Niang*.

Cuiban

Once the *diaoti* of one piece is set up, musicians can initiate variations and improvisations by employing methods of *cuiban* (urging beats). *Cuiban* literally means “urging beats,” and it is used in speeding up music. Extensive studies have done by many Chinese musicians, composers, and musicologists on various methods of *cuiban*.⁵ The following is a list of some major *cuiban* methods:

A Sample of Using *Cuiban* Methods

Original Skeletal Notes	
<i>Dan Cui</i> (urging in one)	
<i>Shuang Cui</i> (urging in two)	
<i>Si Cui</i> (urging in four)	
<i>Zhu Lu</i> (rest on the six)	
<i>Xia Tiao Qiou</i> (shrimp jump ball)	
<i>Shuang Yu Yue</i> (two jump fishes)	
<i>Dan Zi Cui</i> (Urging in single word)	
<i>Zhou Mi Cui</i> (peck rice urging)	
<i>Lei Zhi Cui</i> (urging in thumb)	

Figure 5: A Sample of *Cuiban* Methods

- : All notes with empty note-head are the notes added on the skeletal notes.
- * represents thumb glissando.

⁵ Xu, Xiaoling: 1990-3; Lin, Maogen /Cheng, Anhua: 1981-3; Thrasher, 1988

- *Yi dian yi* or *dan cui*: adding one extra note on the skeletal notes.
- *San dian yi* or *shang cui*: adding two extra notes on skeletal notes.
- *Qi dian yi* or *si cui*: adding four extra notes on skeletal notes.
- *Zhu lu*: consistently repeating the same note after each skeletal note.
- *Xia tiao qiou* or *shang yu yue*: syncopated or dotted rhythmic patterns on the skeletal notes.
- *Die zi cui*: double one skeletal note.
- *Zhuo mi cui*: delete the downbeat notes and start at upbeat.
- *Lei Zhi Cui*: adding glissandos after downbeat notes.

Cuiban can be both *xu-cui* and *shi-cui*. *Xu* indicates a void or empty sensation, and *shi* stands for something substantial or solid. In combining with left-hand *huayin*, musician may create a high artistic unification of different colors and quality of sound within a small passage; the sound may be light, sharp, soft, or crystal. Both *xu* and *shi* in these two aforementioned ancient Chinese aesthetic concepts are essentially the spirit of *yi yun bu sheng*. For instance, *yun*, the pitches produced by the left-hand bendings are *xu*, and *sheng*, the right-hand plucking notes can be thought of as *shi*. The concepts of *xu* and *shi* can be applied more broadly in *Chaozhou zheng* music: the *diaoti* and *cuiban* can be considered *shi*, the mood and *yun* can be regarded as *xu*. *Xu* links with sensation or *yinjing*-- the profound feeling conveyed by the musician; *shi* is the prerequisite to produce such *xu*, for example, a musician's playing techniques. *Xu* and *shi* are always unified into one whole, just like the unification of *yin* and *yang*. When applied to actual playing, musicians can freely juxtapose any combination of *xu* and *shi* or *cuiban* methods, either rhythmically or technically, implicitly or explicitly to initiate a fully articulated piece.

“*Liu Qin Niang*”⁶

Chaozhou musicians sometime call “*Liu Qin Niang*” the origin of *xianshi* for the reason that it is not only one of the best examples to demonstrate the change of *diaoti* (modes), but also to unfold various ways of *cuiban* (method of changing beats). *Huayin* is the essence to reflect the change of *diaoti*.

⁶ *Arts of Chaozhou Guzheng* by Su, Qiao-zheng is major reference of my analysis on *Liu Qin Niang*.

Liu Qin Niang

Er Si Pu

Qin San Lu

Zhong San lu

Huo Wu

Fan Xian

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Liu Qin Niang'. It consists of two systems of five staves each. The first system includes labels for 'Er Si Pu', 'Qin San Lu', 'Zhong San lu', 'Huo Wu', and 'Fan Xian' on the left. The notation is skeletal, using a single system with a key signature of one flat. The second system continues the notation for the same five parts, each starting with a measure rest. The notation is skeletal, focusing on the pitch and rhythm of the notes.

Figure 6: Music Sample of Four *Diaoti Lu Qin-niang*
(Notating only skeletal notes)



Figure 6: Continued

This music chart provides a sample of how one original melody can be varied in different scale degrees and rhythms. Without tracing back to the original *ersi* notation and the configuration of variations on *diaoti*, a person unfamiliar with the tradition may not easily discern that these four *Liu Qin-niang* were originally derived from one notation.

Finally, I choose *huowu Liu Qin Niang* as one actual performing interpretation by *Chaozhou* zheng master *Lin Mo-gen* to display full music development in one *Chaozhou* piece. The first part demonstrates the connection between original skeletal notes and musician's actual interpretation. The second, third, and fourth parts are the illustrations of a process of a typical *Chaozhou* music variation and development. I provide a music appreciation guide on part one following the music sample based on my own musical perspective since I think it might help those who are not familiar with the zheng music tradition.

Liu Qin Niang (Huo Wu)

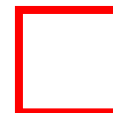
Music interpreted by *Lin Mao-gen*

Part One
Adagio

Original Skeletal Notes

Music by Mater Lin

Figure 7 (Track 2): *Liu Qin Niang (Huo Wu)*



5

10

15

20

24

29

Figure 7 (Track 2): Continued

Part Two: Kao Pai



Musical score for Part Two: Kao Pai, measures 1 through 26. The score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is primarily composed of eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. Trills are indicated by a double wavy line above the notes. Measure numbers 6, 11, 16, 21, and 26 are marked at the beginning of their respective staves. A triplet of eighth notes is shown in measures 10 and 15.

Part Three
Allegro







Musical score for Part Three: Allegro, measures 1 through 26. The score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The melody consists of continuous eighth and quarter notes, with frequent beaming. Trills are used in measures 10, 15, 20, and 25. Measure numbers 6, 11, 16, 21, and 26 are marked at the beginning of their respective staves.

Figure 7 (Track 2): Continued

Part Four



Figure 7 (Track 2): Continued

-  : All the notes with this symbol are *huo wu*.
-  : Glissando.
-  : Down-glide.
-  : Vibrato.

Instruction of listening to Master Lin's interpretation:

Measure 1-3: This phrase functions as a short introduction. The syncopated rhythm in the first measure, especially the triplet-sliding note, leads to a tentative feeling. But the active five G immediately expresses the *tiaoti* – *huo wu* (active five). Pay attention to the pitch of the *huo wu* vibrato. The following *huo wu* have constant subtle nuances and variations that reveal different feelings. The first phrase ends on the octave F at the third measure and the next F and Eb is the start of the next phrase.

Measure 4-7: The vibrato on Eb and F are just light embellishments. In measure five the first B-octave jumps a perfect fourth to uplift and intensify the feeling. But the tension soon releases on the second *huowu* triplet at measure six and rests on the Eb triplet at measure seven. The Phrase ends on the sustained Eb with a light vibrato to continue the feeling. The next phrase starts at the last two pickup notes G and F at measure seven.

Measure 8-16: Music in these measures has four layers. Measures eight and nine generate a smooth motion and the syncopation at measure nine passes on a steady pace. However, the jumped octave C at measure thirteen breaks the peace and the next two *huowu* at the next measure intensify the tension. This time the tension is released through a very dramatic *huayin* lasting five notes, from up-glide F to natural D that leaves a questionable feeling on the three C at measure sixteen.

Measure 16-30: These measures seems to continue the preceding questions but in various forms. The constant *huowu* projects very well various colors of feeling. Among them, the *huowu* in measure twenty-four are the most dynamic. All these queries are gradually solved in the last two measures.

This case study of *Liu Qin Niang* suggests that *hua-yin* is not simply an ornamental part of the melody, but rather is deeply built into all aspects of traditional music-making. Only by comprehending the “qualities” of zheng music and the improvisational music nature of its performance as well as the notion of *yi yun bu sheng*, can one start to explore the art of traditional zheng music.

CHAPTER THREE

HUAYIN – ITS TRANSFORMATION IN MODERN ZHENG MUSIC

The Social and Cultural Background of Modern Chinese Zheng Music Education in the Twentieth Century

The “*Five Four New Culture*” movement, initiated in the early 1920s in China, sought to inspire nationalism and modernize all aspects of the “old” society. Earlier cultural reformers and scholars had bridged western and eastern philosophies in their search for a “new democratic and scientific” society with better political, cultural, and educational systems. After the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, Chinese music was advocated as an efficient tool for political propaganda under chairman Mao Zedong’s agenda,⁷ which promoted the slogan: “The arts serve the masses, the West serves the Chinese, and ancient serves present.” Those who composed or programmed music used various kinds of tools to signify patriotism and proletarianism, such as socialist titles, familiar folk tunes, or programmatic music. Such politically-oriented developments in music brought about negative consequences when it came to issues of retaining and preserving traditional ways.

This was especially seen during the Cultural Revolution when traditional values and culture were repressed severely as part of the four “olds” (old customs, old habits, old culture, and old thinking). No one can deny the devastating damage made by the Cultural Revolution, not only on the traditional culture, but humanity itself. Under the lens of history, ten years may be very short, but it is long enough to make cultural gaps especially so many literates, musicians, artists were died or suffered and it is long enough to let new emergence rapidly become pervasive nationally especially after the “Open Door” policy. Although cultural continuity became scattered during and after the Cultural Revolution, it did not being snatched up and go away. The traditional values and aesthetics are still there. Like my zheng lesson with Professor Yao, he naturally conveyed the spirit of water lily meant by the music and I took it naturally. It later sprouted into a larger idea of chasing

⁷ In 1942, Mao Zedong “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Arts” to emphasize the value of art and literature for political propaganda in Yan’an, Shanxi province.

traditional cultural values. However, no matter from social or cultural perspectives, Cultural Revolution generated many problems for later generations to adjust.

Since 1980s “open door” policy, Chinese society presents an unprecedented vitality in developing economy, social infrastructure and culture. In response to this, Chinese music conservatories, functioning as the authoritative national state-funded music institutions, have been centers to promote Chinese music nationalism as well as urbanization of Chinese music education since the middle of the twentieth century. Derived from a Western European classical conservatory background, the Chinese conservatory advocates “scientific and modern” music education, such as establishing systematic teaching and notation; developing theories of performance, composition, and music styles; specializing in music studies; and emphasizing the concert stage performance. Early pioneers, like Lu Tian-hua who standardized the *erhu* music and made it into a formal concert solo instrument in early twentieth century,⁸ provided a model and direction in establishing an academic pedagogy for other Chinese instruments. Conservatory zheng professors witnessed many renovations to their instruments. For instance, the standard string used today is a steel string wound by nylon. This replaced the traditional silk and steel strings, and can produce a mellower sound with wider resonance. The potential of left-hand techniques has been explored greatly also. Instead of only putting picks on right fingers, musicians nowadays use picks on both hands. Compared to the traditional monolinear music style of the left-hand *huayin* enriching the right-hand melody, modern zheng music includes greatly expanded polyphonic compositions, and the overall genre has gained great flexibility concerning forms, tunings, techniques, and expressions.

The modern conservatory education brings about two dichotomy of learning. In traditional schools of zheng music, the left hand *huayin* is tightly associated with the use of right hand plucking, as I aforementioned *yi yun bu sheng*. Not only so, one needs a comprehensive understanding and studying of the stylistic changes and endless varieties of *huayin* before mastering it maturely. In conservatories, solo repertoires composed by conservatory-trained composers and composer-performers gradually become the central portion of studying zheng music. *Huayin* in new compositions is being applied more as an ornamental or idiosyncratic component for coloring music effects and giving character to

⁸ Stock, 1992

pieces. The learning of traditional genres no longer rests on a long-term familiarity with traditional music culture, but more on technical and stylistic music interpretations. In addition, individual soloists and virtuosos have great impact in shaping values and perceptions in appreciating modern Chinese music. Moreover, on the international music scene, *huayin* has been considered as a set of special timbres or a major symbol of Chinese music with the capacity to reveal an authentic Chinese music sensation by many Chinese and foreign composers. Musicians from different generations have to constantly face to balance and adjust the growing complex in values, aesthetics, teaching, and creativity.

Change of Notations

Across China today, *Jianpu*⁹ (Solfège notation) and Western staff notation are considered to be the major systems of notation used in institutional education, publication, and composition of the zheng. The effort of preserving traditional *gongche* and *ersi* notations has constantly been taken up by Chinese musicologists and scholars. In early 1963, renowned zheng professor Cao Zheng set up a class called *Reading Ancient Notation* and tried to emphasize preservation of the endangered *ersi* notation at Shenyang Conservatory of Music,¹⁰ however such an effort was inevitably ceased during the Cultural Revolution. Since then, both *gongche* and *ersi* notations have never been reinstated at formal institutions as standard systems of notation.

On the one hand, *jianpu* greatly helped earlier conservatory zheng predecessors record and notate traditional repertoires,¹¹ which tremendously preserved much of the disappearing and neglected folk music tunes as well as stylistic interpretations by certain notable masters. This collecting effort broke many regional geographic lines for the first time, and led to an in-depth study and stylistic comparison of all of the traditional zheng

⁹ *Jianpu* (Solfège notation) was introduced into China in the early 1940's. It uses Roman alphabet numbers to indicate pitches: 1 (do), 2 (re), 3(mi), 4 (fa), 5 (so), 6 (la), 7 (ti); to show octave differences, a dot is placed above or below the note. For example, 1 (do) with a dot above it is one octave higher than 1 (do) without a dot; if a dot is placed under a note, it indicates that the pitch is one octave lower than the note without a dot. If it is two octaves higher, there are two dots above a note and visa versa.

¹⁰ Cao Zheng, 1981-2, p33-40

¹¹ Xi'an National Symposium on Teaching Materials for the Zheng, 1961, thoroughly discussed standardization on notation, fingering, and conservatory zheng music curriculum. Representative Masters include Cao Zheng, Gao Zi-cheng, Lou Jiou-xiang, Zhao Yu-zhai, Zhou Yan-jia, Wang Xun-zhi.

genres. Eventually, institutional education concerning the zheng expanded, as did the population of those familiar with the instrument.

On the other hand, nevertheless, such change creates a difficulty in preserving traditional zheng music. The transformation of the notating system radically changed the nature of traditional music-making and its improvisational music nature. It prevented the younger generations from tracing back to the original skeletal notation and learning traditional improvisation on that notation.

***Huayin* in Modern Composition:**

In current zheng music publications, there are generally two sections: traditional and contemporary repertoires. Music after 1950s departed from folk music-oriented traditions and entered into a period of new compositions by professionally-trained composers or performer-composers. From 1950s to 1980s, a large quantity of zheng music was composed under the expanded political milieu. Many repertoires also started to include Chinese minorities' tunes, political songs, and folk songs, and apply relatively complicated rhythmic patterns to the music. This brought about many new directions for the repertoire.

Qin Feng-nian (1955, Celebrating Harvest), by Zhao Yu-zhai (**Track 3**) is the first piece that breaks monophonic traditional regulations to create a polyphonic effect, such as using a continuing chord effect by both hands. Zhao Yu-zhai was one of the earlier elder masters that initialed the zheng class at Chinese conservatories. Although the technique of this piece was considered revolutionary at that time, traditional tunes and left-hand *huayin* still comprise the main features of his compositions, since he had been deeply nurtured by traditional *Shandong* folk music tradition. His contemporaries, such as Gao Zi-cheng (*Shandong* School), Cao Dong-fu (*Henan* School), and Zhou Yan-jia (*Shanxi* School), all undertook similar approaches in their compositions. Most of these pieces expressed common stereotypic themes, such as happiness of life, the beautiful motherland, or heroic figures. For instance, *Xiu Jin-bian* (1958, Embroider Golden Banner) by Zhou Yanjia (**Track 4**), a professor at Xi'an Conservatory of Music, employed a popular folk song, rich with traditional *huayin* of the *Shanxi* school, to eulogize Chairman Mao and express praises from the common people.

A later composition, *Zhan Tai-feng* (1965, Fighting the Typhoon) by Wang Chang-yuan (**Track 5**), deserves to be mentioned here. This piece glorifies dockworkers fighting a typhoon in Shanghai. Its unprecedented success derives not only from its political theme (a favorite among the people), but also because it fully explores two-handed techniques of the instrument. Today, it is still one of the most popular pieces of the stage repertoire.

There are fifty-six ethnic groups in China. Among them, the *Han* is the majority ethnic group and occupies over eighty percent of the Chinese population. *Han* culture is the dominant entity in China. During the last few decades, the richness of cultures from other different minorities has been gradually introduced into the official Chinese cultural scheme. The distinct minority musical traits have also inspired many new compositions and styles. *Huayin* in many of these pieces serves for imitating and creating minority stylistic affects.

For instance, consider *Xue Shang Chun Xiao* (Spring Dawn on Snowy Mountain) composed by Fan Shang-er in late 1970s. The composer uses a Tibetan folk tune to imitate a Tibetan singing style in the first melodic section. The second part of the piece uses typical rhythmic patterns to convey Tibetan dance. *Huayin* in this section are used to create the effect of the minority style music.

Xuan Shan Chun Xiao by Fan Shang-er, Ge Sang Da ji (Section after Introduction)



Figure 8: (Track 6) Section of *Xuan Shan Chen Xiao*

- (1): E is produced by left-hand up-glide on D
- (2): up-glide
- (3): short and big vibrato

Twelve Mukam San Xu Yu Wu Qu composed by Zhou Ji, Shao Guang-shen, and Li Mei in 1988 is another example that illustrates how *huayin* was used for such a purpose. The left-hand rhythmic patterns vividly suggest a dancing music style from Northern *Xing Jiang* mukam music.



Figure 9: (Track 7) Section of *Twelve Mukam San Xu Yu Wu Qu*

Similar use of rhythmic patterns to reflect *Yun Nan* minority music style can be seen in another later composition, *Huan Xiang Qu* (Fantasia) by Wang Jian-min, from the early 1990s.



Figure 10: (Track 8) Section of *Huan Xiang Qu*

The alternate tuning of this piece is another feature that facilitates this music style.

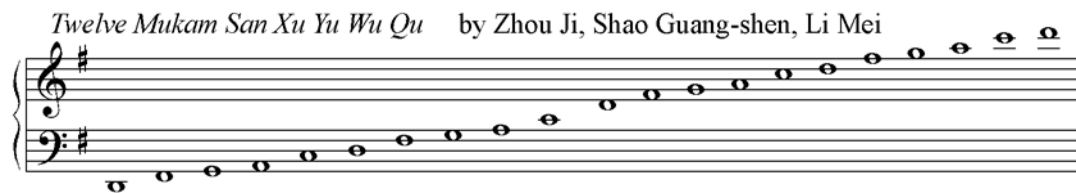


Figure 11: Tuning of *Huan Xiang Qu*

Like *Twelve Mukam San Xu Yu Wu Qu*, there are infinite variations in tuning in modern zheng compositions. The flexibility of changing scales by moving bridges provides composers with much room for innovation. Compared to traditional music that is almost all played on pentatonic scales, contemporary composers abandoned traditional pentatonic scales and arranged the strings in alternate scales according to personal preferences and needs. Here are some examples that illustrate these major changes including two pieces composed by two American composers, Dr. Chihchun Chi-sun Lee and Dr. Michael Sidney Timpson (all the tuning lists in the following are all for twenty-one-string zheng and the scales indicate each string from the lowest to highest pitch.)

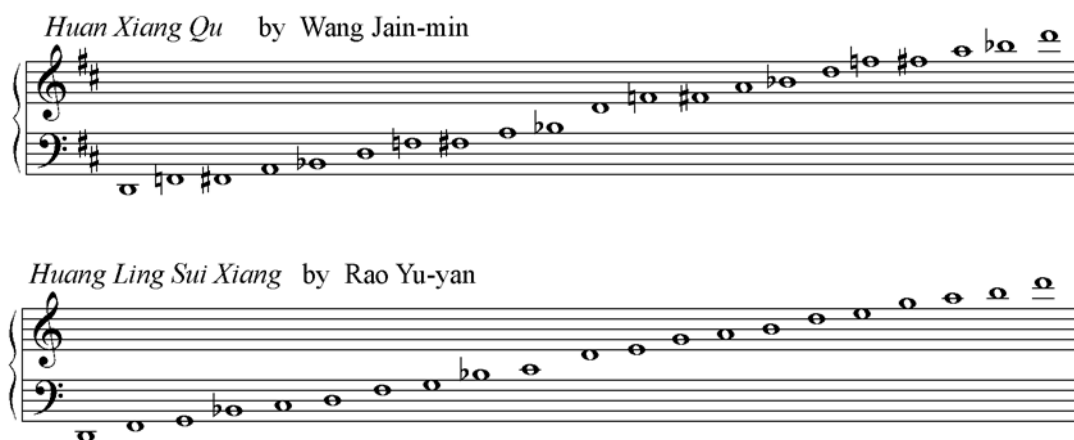


Figure 12: Five Alternative Tunings

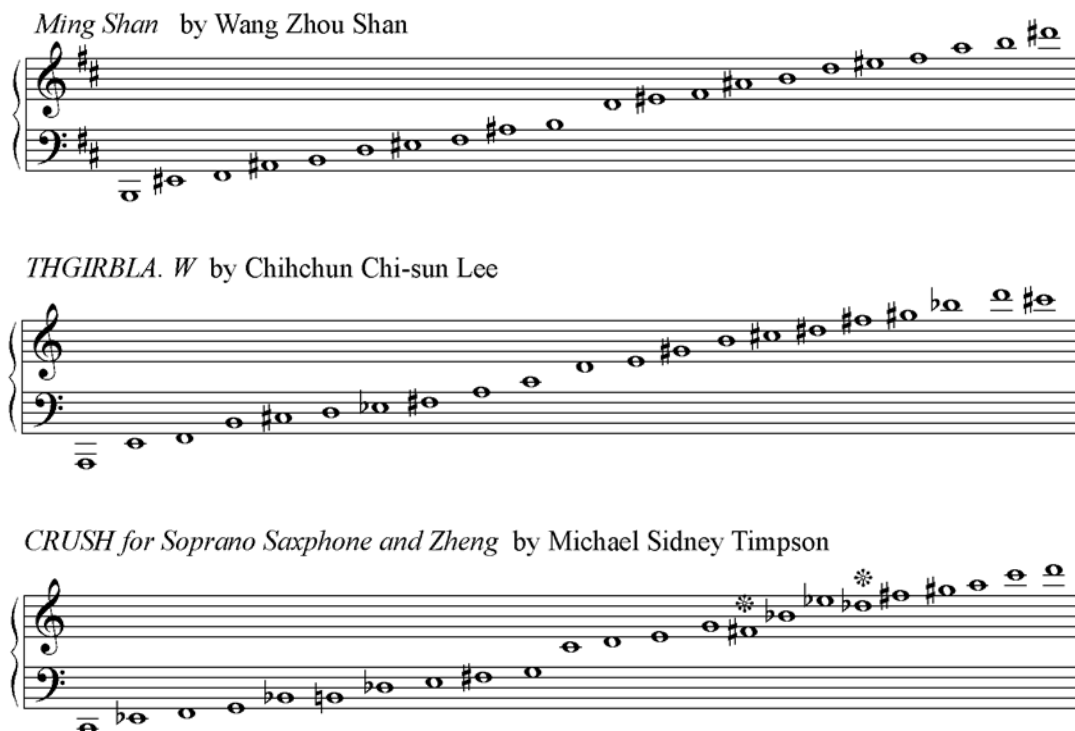


Figure 12: Continued

*** Change G and E-flat into F-sharp and D-flat at section A**

Nowadays, most zheng performers wear picks on the fingers of both hands, in order to be able to play highly technical polyphonic parts. This move was a radical change for left-hand playing techniques. However, it also inevitably reduced traditional *huayin* usage.

Musicians in Transformation

Individuals always play an intertwined role in relating to the change and continuity of culture. No one can escape the influences from their surrounding cultural environment, and individuals' reflection and creation in the meantime cultivate the evolution of culture. The leading conservatory zheng professors, composers, and musicologists, with whom I conducted interviews in Beijing in the summer of 2005, described to me a complex situation in the zheng music tradition. As Blacking points out, that in order to understand music change, synchronic study is more significant than diachronic study. My interviewees' lively conversations provide me a vivid link and deeper understanding to the transformation of the music culture and its impacts on musicians. *Huayin* often functions

as a metaphor for traditional zheng music, and there is an ethical concern regarding its use throughout our conversations. This ethical concern is also an aesthetic one, conditioned by our own artistic ideals and values as well as our own manners of hearing and perceptions. Certain critical issues raised by them reflect their argument, adjustment, and reconciliation within this ever-changing zheng tradition. These issues pertain to teaching philosophies and methods, performance techniques and functions, perceptions and aesthetics, and ultimately a search for the deep meaning in the zheng music tradition.

The interviewees I chose are from different generations and music backgrounds, in order to represent diverse perspectives in the present-day zheng music tradition. These people are:

1) Professor Shi Zhou-yuan, a professor who is in his mid-seventies. As one of the earliest zheng conservatory students who learned from elder folk zheng masters, Professor Shi taught at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing for a few decades before his retirement. He is recognized as a representative figure in traditional *Kejia* school and very much represents traditional values and aesthetics associated with the zheng.

2) Professor Wang Zhong-shan, who is a performer-composer in his late thirties. He is currently one of the most influential zheng performers in China. He gained a reputation for using the “fast-fingering methods” (use a series of fingering patterns to play highly-technical and fast musical sections) in the late 1980s. These methods later influenced the zheng repertoire greatly. He is currently a zheng professor at the Chinese Music Conservatory in Beijing and takes on many major responsibilities, including organizing competitions and standardizing curriculum for both conservatory and amateur musicians. He represents a link to the transition of the zheng into the conservatory system.

3) Doctor Li Mei is a Chinese musicologist in her forties. She became renowned for her zheng composition *Twelve Mukam* (1988). As a researcher at the Chinese Arts Research Center and recently a Chinese musicology professor at Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, she considers herself rather a scholar instead of zheng musician.

As the leading authoritative music institutions, modern conservatory creates a competitive environment for students, who, constantly have to adjust to the ongoing change of the surrounding world, as well as explore the dichotomies between virtue and virtuosity, internal and external goods, and tradition and modernity while maintaining a professional

music career. The attention on gaining virtuosity in traditional music by mastering stylistic *huayin* and conveying the aesthetic of ‘*yi yun bu sheng*’ no longer plays priority in learning, but rather satisfies the need of more and more highly technically-oriented and flamboyant stage performances. Instrument structure, performing gestures, appearance, and personal values are all being acculturated in various ways. While more and more young talents are recognized through regional and national zheng competitions, highly technical displays (*ji shu*) and spectacle stage performance become a necessity for establishing one’s self-identity and virtuosity. Such tendencies present great challenges to traditional ideas and ethics of virtuosity, and functions of *huayin*.

This situation raises challenges and discrepancies in modern teaching philosophies. Professor Shi related to me a memory of learning traditional *kejia* school music with Master Lou Jiu-xiang when he studied at Tianjin conservatory of music in 1959.

“At the beginning, before Lou Jiu-xiang came to *Tianjin* (Tianjin conservatory of music, Master Lou taught there one year), we (Professor Shi and another student who is now a professor at Shanghai Conservatory of Music) were confused by Lou’s playing. One piece he played ten times, all differently. Both of us tried to notate every single note he played, but we never completed the transcription. We did not know where the beginning and end were, or even whether it had an ending or how long the piece was. Actually, the *kejia* music is easy to start, but it is extremely difficult to play well. Just like playing *weiqi* (Go, the Chinese surrounding game), the rule is very simple: you just need to use four same-colored stones to enclose one. Sounds very simple, but it is so difficult if you want to be a good player. In the course of history, there has never been an identical *weiqi* game, and *kejia* music is similar. After so many years, very few of my students can fully convey the essence of the *kejia* music. Why? Because in order to play *Kejia* music, one needs a deep understanding of Chinese culture. For instance, you need to write good calligraphy, make Chinese paintings, and understand Chinese poetry. You can sense the subtlety of all these arts, as well as the natures they reflect; if I am in a delightful mood today or the moon is bright, I might apply this feeling to the music; if it is raining and thundering, I might articulate entirely differently. The art of playing *kejia* zheng was embedded into the cultivation of the Chinese culture...”

Professor Shi points out three very essential key points in traditional zheng learning:

1. Understanding the flexible music nature (as I explained in chapter two, example *Liu Qing Niang*.)
2. Music study is part of cultural comprehension that closely relates to other types of art.
3. Music making is a very personal experience linked to enlightenment.

He continues on describing the essence of learning traditional *kejia* music. The flexible nature of *kejia* music shares many common characters with *Chaozhou* music-- particularly in terms of improvisational conventions:

“*Kejia* zheng music has a basic melody we call *diaotou*. You can improvise freely, but you have to always follow the number of the *ban* (meters). You can add ornamentations or delete notes or change the speed as you wish. When musicians meet together, they don’t need any music score; if one person suddenly changes *diaotou* or *ban*, the others need to react immediately; otherwise, you won’t follow them again. It all depends on how well you maneuver the music. I always think I should recapitulate those practices. However, it is so difficult because they all relate so tightly to each individual’s artistry. I always told my students it is not that difficult to understand *kejia* zheng. You can focus on learning three pieces at the beginning, memorize the *bantou*, and rotate those three pieces constantly. Once you get it, you can do any variations as long as you keep the *diaotou*, adding or deleting. Once you digest entirely, you can sense the delicacy of certain notes, and you start to understand the *kejia* music.”

“Sense the delicacy of certain notes,” indicates an extract in the essence of traditional zheng music playing. This is where the art of *huayin* exists. Just as my first zheng teacher Professor Yao emphasized the nuances and depth of *fa* in the piece *Water Lily*, the delicacy of *huayin* is ultimately unfolded through one’s own soul and deep catch of the music spirit. Since ancient times, using diverse artistic media to cultivate an educated person has long been admired in Chinese education. The idea is still pervasive in China today. The stress of understanding of traditional Chinese culture is on fully cultivating one’s internal goods, virtue, and artistic awareness, which ultimately reflect through the “*Yi jing*” in one’s works. Professor Shi regarded only a person who has such artistic awareness and cultivation can fundamentally understand the essence of *kejia* music and “sense the delicacy of certain notes.”

Dr. Li Mei elucidates more of her deep concerns on modern teaching of delicate traditional *huayin*, which she thought is the most important feature in the zheng music.

“[...] what they mean by “techniques” is how fast *si dian* (a fingering pattern: middle-thumb-index-thumb) is played, the *yaozhi* (tremolo), and other newly created techniques. They [teachers] should be responsible for such a concept because this is how students are taught. One individual popularized zheng ensembles, in which many people play together, exactly the same. It is more like a group callisthenic. Because teachers

wish to allow more and more people to learn the zheng, they never seriously consider that the instrument's history and tradition are being lost. They nurture a large number of people who can play the zheng but don't understand it"... Without playing traditional repertoires, how does one present the art of left-hand *huayin*? In ensemble, it is impossible to fully explore the art of left-hand. Like what I played just now, every single note embodies *huayin*. I always focus on a full expression of one sound even as my right hand plays the next string. Without such a consciousness, one cannot capture the soul of the zheng thoroughly--that is, bringing out the *yun* through *huayin*. For example, in *Xiu Jin-bian*, many notes are played on *youyao*.¹² You can enjoy the many subtle changes in such a small *youyao*: firstly, the pitches constantly change. It is not like the piano--every note has a Hertz [frequency of vibration]; secondly, the tone color changes. If a group of people plays it, how can such subtlety be unfolded? Moreover, like *Chaozhou* school, every place has a different *fa*-- what should be changed during the music, and what shouldn't; it is impossible to present it on the score. However, now what they emphasize is how many notes they can play in a short amount of time. If it is too fast, there is no rhyme left, so the left-hand *huayin*, the most important feature, is lost. If this is so, how can we still express 'bitter sound,' 'happy sound' (*Shanxi* school stylistic *huayin*) or *qinsanlu*, *zhongsanlu* (*Chaozhou* school modes)? I feel like I like a panda, because it is so hard to find a teacher like me to teach students like this..."

This is probably also why Professor Shi cannot bear some irresponsible interpretations or differing representations of *kejia* music asserted by some current teachers. He expresses a deep concern on current scholarship in teaching the essence of traditional *huayin*:

"One conservatory zheng professor (who will remain anonymous) notated every detail of what Master Lou played. He then finalized a version based on what he notated. He marked every little dynamic change, every bending, and then required his students to achieve exactly the same *huayin* pitches. In the end, when Master Lou heard this, he was speechless and only sighed; today his students can play *Ya Shanai* together-- ten students with identical interpretations. I know this is not what Master Lou did; I think we should foster a healthy scholarship attitude. Nowadays, there are many people who finalize a playing version of a traditional piece and put their name after the title. There is never an identical interpretation in traditional music, and those such as Master Lou Jiou-xiang could play dozens of *Xun Fenqu*, every of them exquisite. Everybody can practice techniques, but the comprehension, style, and sensation-- this is not

¹² Changing pitches and vibratos by the left hand while the right thumb constantly plucks back and forth on one string.)

something you can just learn. You can't say which one is right or wrong. I told many younger zheng musicians to be responsible for what you say, because what you do will have a mark in history. You should be very cautious. How many people, however, care about what I say today?..."

Compared to few decades ago, the population of zheng students has grown tremendously along with economic and media expansion. Using a life-long time to "sense the delicacy of certain notes" seems no longer enough for pursuing a performing career or satisfies modern social needs. I witnessed this expansion of the zheng population at three National Zheng Conferences at *Yangzhou* in 1990, 1994, and 1998. The first one was held by many elder masters and the ethos was on inheriting traditional zheng music tradition. There were fewer than twenty students (including myself) performing different pieces from the traditional schools. The focal points of many papers and discussions were on the research of traditional stylistic music or musicians. The next two conferences, however, gave me a very different impression. The number of the zheng players grew tremendously and the performances in conferences lasted a few days. A large amount of new repertoires with modern techniques and creative music idioms appeared and fascinated the younger generations. Traditional music was only one part of the agenda, and the search for modern scientific pedagogy and compositions dominated conference themes. Newly emerged modern compositions provide a different satisfaction and self-fulfillment in stage performance to younger generations. But it creates a tendency of losing the balance of keeping the essence of tradition while searching for new idioms.

One of the contemporary outstanding zheng composer-performers, Professor Wang Zhong-shan gives his perceptions that seem keener on the modern music society:

"What is technique? Let me redefine it. The slow music is technical, the stylistic traditional music is technical, and everything is technical. I would like to use some Western concepts. I like to use the way piano plays or other ideas to explain the techniques. It all depends on the situation. When you're dealing with a technique training process, you have to systemize each detail and then quantify it, just like the McDonalds all over the world-- same method... Chinese music uses the method of minus; Western music uses the method of plus. It is very hard to maintain an unchangeable concept of ancient Chinese aesthetics and philosophy in today's multi-cultural environment. China is no longer the ancient China. However, I never agree when somebody says that Chinese music is not advanced. It's because that they don't understand us, don't understand

Chinese, our thinking, our aesthetics. In my music, I try to reconcile this. I love piano music because I think it is the instrument that most reflects Western wisdom. But the zheng music is in my blood already and cannot be removed from it. Sometimes teaching Chinese music is too ambiguous. How can a little kid understand so many profound meanings in music? So we should apply ‘scientific’ and ‘true’ principles in current zheng teaching. The zheng music notation is too simple. It can never fully denote the potential of the left-hand *huayin*. We can dig into so many nuances even in one measure. However, many people ignore the flexibility and the potential of the left-hand *huayin*.”

The concept of “scientific” principles echoes the sentiments of institutionalized Chinese music education since the beginning of the twentieth century. Many predecessors examined various stylistic music idioms, and systemized playing techniques. Modern musicians constantly add their new creations and ideas into the zheng tradition. The questions here are whether everything can be scientific taught; and whether everything can be synchronized with other tradition? To professor Shi, techniques can be taught in a scientific way, but “comprehension, style, and sensation” cannot be easily taught since it is a process of personal enlightenment and cultivation. Moreover, it is not only a matter concerning delicate *huayin*; it is a matter of understanding of the musical culture itself. He points out another distinction in the aesthetic of performance between the past and the present:

"Another professor uses her body to express music. This is what she said and how she teaches her students; there are so many people now chasing such a trend. It is so unacceptable, it losses genuine expression and authenticity. The true Chinese music makes you *listen*, not *watch*. The Chinese go to *Beijing Opera*, *ting xi* (listening opera) not *kan xi* (watching opera). Music is the same. Our elder teachers, no matter whether they were educated or not, literati or folk musician, were not allowed to move while playing. Not like today, where there is not only moving, but even banging on the board.”

This statement reveals the changes in the function of playing music, as well as changes in attention paid to the instrument. As I discussed in chapter two, traditional music learning, like many other fine arts, has functions of self-cultivation and entertainment. Self-cultivation comes through the expression of *yun*, while entertainment comes with the

capacity to move audiences. Modern composition and performances give great attention to the capacity of moving audiences. Professor Wang gives the following explanation:

“I was very frustrated at beginning of my conservatory study. I realized that my old way of performing (more traditional way) did not match the conservatory style. It did not focus on the stage performance with fast speed playing. I did not know how to use my breath to control my performance. Unlike today, we were aiming purposely for a kind of performance that juxtaposed both physical and mental balance. Elder folk musicians just play it, not like us; we add many physical gestures in order to enrich a stage performance. Many female musicians absorbed mature performing arts; like many pianists, they can reveal their feeling through an effective performance. We are not elder folk musicians and do not play for self-entertainment. There are two types of functions in music: self-entertainment and the entertainment of others. Fairly speaking, the music conservatory is for nurturing musicians who will entertain others--a professional place to train musicians to make a living. Getting into professional performing orchestras or holding concerts to make a harmony with audiences-- that is all. However, I also had a contradictory feeling when my teacher constantly emphasized such a concept while I was studying. My best feeling is that there is no audience, just the use of music to express my inner feelings. So, I always put my inner feeling and thoughts into my compositions, poems, and paintings. Other people think I am too conservatorinized and always play very fast. I am a professional musician and a teacher; I could not only play something beautiful, but rather I always look for new possibilities and potential on the zheng.”

Professor Wang unfolds the practical surrounding circumstances for students who are pursuing a professional career. He raises a dichotomy between performing for others and playing for oneself. It is undeniable that physical gestures do help a lot in revealing music feeling to audiences, but one supposes this to be a very natural process and not artificially intended. In my perspective, traditional and contemporary are not totally contradictory ideas, but rather dialectical and relevant to various repertoires and circumstances. However, I would somewhat dispute the idea that the “music conservatory is for nurturing musicians who will entertain others--a professional place to train musicians to make a living”; since I think it simplifies the meaning of music education. Finding a professional place and making a living is one manifestation of being a musician in the modern world, but it is not the ultimate purpose for everyone. Master teachers ideally endeavor to “turn the soul of the apprentice toward a particular conception of interpretive excellence, the internal goods of performance” (O’Dea, p.33). On one hand, education and teachers function as a major tool

in shaping students' values and perceptions; this is why both professor Shi and Dr. Li Mei are so concerned about current teaching methods. On the other hand, current teaching philosophies are also conditioned by social needs. The nation-wide amateur zheng music examinations that held by leading conservatories, such as Chinese Music Conservatory, Shanghai Music Conservatory, and Central Music Conservatory, greatly increase the numbers of zheng players. Larger ensemble zheng music is a result of the growing population. Therefore, it is not too surprising for a conservatory zheng professor let a group of students play one traditional piece, all with the same articulations.

Many of modern zheng compositions have left out of traditional criteria and brought frustrations and confusion to many people who persist largely with more traditional criteria, like Professor Shi:

“Recently, I have been disturbed by something. Before my retirement, I attended many national zheng competitions as an adjudicator. But it was very difficult for me to be touched by many new repertoires. I was afraid of giving any negative or positive comments on those new repertoires. I hope somebody can give me certain directions in appreciating such pieces. Traditionally, if the zheng is in tune, musicians enrich the music by adding watering glissandos and left-hand rich *huayin*, to suit their own stylistic and individual tastes. The music sounds very rich. But today's contemporary zheng music is truly beyond my understanding. I remember one of my students who is now the famous zheng professor at the Central Conservatory of Music, gave her master graduation recital in Beijing. I helped her sell more than five hundred tickets. Most of them were amateur zheng students and their parents. The recital repertoires were almost all contemporary except *Liu qin-niang*, an authentic traditional *Chaozhou* zheng piece. After half of the concert, some of my students wanted to leave but were afraid of being scolded by teachers. After the recital, it was raining heavily outside. Most of us were waiting by the door, very quietly, unlike usual. One student broke the silence: "is she the best modern zheng player?" I answered, "she is quite good." Silence again. But I heard some murmuring: "if the zheng sounds like this, I will never learn it." Actually, after listening to her playing, I was caught by something unspeakable. I have been devoted to popularizing the art of the zheng for more than thirty years. I know there has been a great change in our society since the *gaigekaifang* (Open Door policy). But you can't change everything--moral, ethics, concepts, and yet you should not forget your ancestors, your roots. That is why I worry so much. Maybe I am regarded as conservative, but I have no satisfying explanations from those who are avant-garde. I know one thing: that the music is getting away from normal people, further and further from audiences. Considering that zheng music is an art, this is a terrible thing.”

Professor Shi's story stems from the 1980s when many new avant-garde repertoires appeared. I myself, along with these amateur students, feel out-of-date. This may be the result of a very different attitude by today's audiences, since so many avant-garde modern arts and music activities have been introduced to Chinese audiences during the last twenty-some years. Both musicians and audiences' epistemology have been gradually acculturated along with dynamic social changes. Professor Shi regards it as a demolition of cultural moral, ethics, and values. However, Professor Wang had a different perspective:

"Every teacher has a different understanding of the zheng music and the concept of traditional schools. This is a very complex issue. What do you think about traditional schools? Can these old schools still dominate the zheng music in the 21st century? Should we merge traditional and contemporary or separate them? Those are very trouble-making questions because they are a matter of one's own perception and values, which differ as much as teaching methods in Chinese Conservatory and Central Conservatory. However, recently we [himself and professors at Central Conservatory] gained more common voice since we all teach the same contemporary repertoires. Many concepts are assimilated and institutionalized; nevertheless, the standardization is not something good, especially when it comes to folk music. We should be cautious of doing this. I think the standardization of learning is helpful in teaching zheng at conservatories, but it is very dangerous to bring such a concept into society."

Three professors point out a key issue in modern zheng music tradition, which is how to maintain the essence of *huayin* and its related values and aesthetics while adjusting to the constant growth and change of the zheng tradition. These considerations about *huayin* have not only musical but cultural implications as well. Firstly, *huayin* as an idiosyncratic musical feature of the zheng and a link to traditional musical cultures provides a place for us to reach back to a "generosity of spirits" (O'Dea). To comprehend various bending pitches in traditional schools and their improvisational conventions is to understand different expressions, values, and ways of behaviors in this music tradition. It helps contemporaries maintain the traditional spirit in a modern context. Secondly, none of us can isolate ourselves from relevant history and associated social and cultural circumstances. Thus, studying traditional *huayin* is a pathway for understanding humanity itself. The ideal way of learning traditional zheng music mentioned by professor Shi strives for searching out the delicate essence of traditional music, and involves being cultivated by diverse traditional

arts without struggling against the modern world, although this ideal way seems harder to fulfill in the competitive, academic world and better suited to an individualistic pursuit. I feel our challenge is to reconcile this tension.

Furthermore, I would say every musician takes a different path in valuing the meaning and essence that embeds itself in music culture according to his/her surrounding world. My personal experience let me realize it more deeply. I still remember how much I was moved by Wang Xun's (Wang Xun is teaching the zheng at *Nanjing Academy of Art*) performance of the *Fantasy* by Wang Jian-min in 1990. The unprecedented complexity of techniques, the non-pentatonic tuning, and the irregular, dynamic rhythms for the first time instilled in me a strong desire for self-expression and flamboyant stage performance. Almost all of my ten-year conservatory training was practicing in hopes of fulfilling such a desire. I believe many of my colleagues feel calling toward a similar pursuit. Since coming to the United States, I have collaborated with a fair amount of Western composers and musicians in contemporary zheng compositions. Their ideas and creations are even more different from what I learned in the Chinese conservatory. I have had to adjust to varied tunings; unconventional rhythmic patterns and effects; very precise timings; and a view of the zheng as a unique timbre among other, Western instruments which is employed to generate new type of color. This has been a very rewarding process of seeing great possibilities for what the zheng can do. Many of these Western composers like to use *huayin* in certain passages to reflect a feeling of authenticity or uniqueness of the zheng. In this sense, *huayin* almost functions as a "trope" that represents a kind of quintessential sound for Chinese music. It generates an illusive or evocative feeling. Such evocation also appears in many other forms of music. For instance, Tang Dun's film score for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* uses substantial ancient *huayin* elements within cello melodies, and uses these elements so strongly and effectively to evoke one's sense of Chinese music and all the spiritual and aesthetic underpinnings. *Huayin* becomes a distinct cultural trope or a symbolic sound that expands Chinese music in different and dynamic ways.

However it was not until recently that I felt a strong desire to return to the study of the traditional zheng music and its cultural meaning. I realize that what conservatory education offered me is the proficiency of playing the instrument and a foundation to build my future career and artistic growth. I not only gained polished techniques and the ability of

dealing with different musical circumstances, but I also gained a general knowledge of music itself. Now, I am more mature and mindful of the cultivation of “internal goods” and broader artistic awareness as well as the search of past cultural values. Instead of aiming at flamboyant stage performance, the search for the depth of “*Yi jing*” in music has become my primary focus.

The modern zheng tradition is just like the modern world full of novelty, creativity, and diversity. All of these professors I interviewed possess an integrity and wholehearted commitment to the development of this zheng music tradition. Each of them takes their own path in fulfillment of their wishes. Their conversations convey that the traditional ideologies of “sense the delicacy of certain notes” and “*yi yun bu sheng*” are still shining through the change and continuity of zheng music tradition. Musicians practice these ideas and aesthetics through different approaches. However, the mere survival of these traditional ideologies suggests a great need in advocating the traditional zheng music-making and art of *huayin* as well as the philosophy, aesthetics, and meaning behind it in modern pedagogies.

CONCLUSION

The zheng tradition, thanks to modern Chinese musicians and Chinese society in general, remains very active and lively. As one of many zheng musicians, I feel there is a need for examining and balancing the traditional and contemporary ideologies of music-making. *Huayin*, being a fundamental feature in traditional zheng music, and acting as a characteristic symbol and trope in modern composition, becomes the best metaphor that unfolds the change and continuity of the zheng tradition.

Traditional zheng music has had a very flexible nature. It emphasized the stylistic nuances of *huayin* as well as personal improvisation on skeletal notes. *Yi Yun Bu Sheng* became a central aesthetic ideology that reflected traditional zheng art. Musicians pursue *yi jing*, a spiritual vitality, through a master using “*xu* and *shi*” or “*yu* and *sheng*” in playing music. Other ancient fine arts and philosophies were considered as one unity for nurturing artistic awareness and free-spiritual expression with music. Music playing functioned mainly for self-cultivation. In the case study of *Chaozhou* music, musicians presented their virtuosity through applying different methods of variations on *diaotou* (mode) and *cuiban* (urging beats) in diverse systems of *huayin* accompaniment. A single technique of *huayin* can be very delicate, and may need a year of work in order to gain the true meaning behind the note. This is what Professor Yao instilled in me while teaching me “*fa*” in the piece *Water Lily*. The meaning of a *huayin* technique in traditional music may be beyond mechanical analysis, but may still be essential in gaining an understanding of humanity and aesthetics.

The modern conservatory mirrors the change in society, culture, politics, and values in modern China. Influenced by the Western conservatory system, Chinese music education pursues scientific and systematic teaching methods, that including systemizing the notation, curriculum, and performance techniques. Moreover, stage performance and highly technical virtuosity have replaced traditional focus on *huayin* and has become the priority in teaching, composing, and studying. The large amount of using two hands in contemporary repertoires greatly reduces the use and function of *huayin*. Many modern composers leave out the traditional zheng music structure and only take *huayin* as a characteristic feature or a trope in their compositions. Musicians are now considering their body gestures in helping to

convey their inner expression and have an affective performance. As study of the zheng becomes more and more a professional pursuit, the attention of studying the zheng is more on entertaining audiences and fitting the social needs.

Musicians as preservers, mediators, and imparters become my focus on conveying the complexities of the modern zheng tradition. With the fast growth of zheng population, teachers have to adjust their methods. Outcomes of this include the appearance of larger zheng ensembles and identical music interpretations by students. It leads to a difficulty of fully present the art of rich *huayin* and a danger of losing the traditional values and methods. Traditional teaching followed one-to-one oral-aural teaching methods, and the focus was on the detailed process of comprehending music-making and the art of *huayin*. Few teachers and students can still keep this tradition due to a shift from traditional repertoires to modern repertoires in the central role of zheng performance. *Huayin*, which used to be an essential part of the zheng music, now gradually becomes an ornamental part in compositions.

Through tracing the change and continuity of the zheng tradition and its surrounding world, I have aimed to use *huayin* to reexamine the meanings and aesthetics in traditional music, since I think it is not only a music feature that had been generated through hundreds of years, but more a cultural trait that is deeply embed in the nature of humanity. Although no one can change or cease the development of a tradition, certain values and meanings should not be easily replaced. *Yi yun bu sheng* is always the essential ideology of *huayin* and it makes the zheng unique and distinct from other instruments in the world. One should not forget the deep philosophy and meaning behind the *huayin* tradition since this is where the Chinese traditional spirit and our cultural values exist.

Glossary of Key Chinese Terms

Bianzou 变奏 – the term for improvisation and variation on the skeletal line in *Chaozhou* music.

Chan-yin 颤音 – vibrato.

Chaozhou School 潮州筝 – one of the six major traditional zheng schools.

Da chan 大颤 – dynamic vibrato, the bending of a tone usually around or exceeding a major second.

Diaoti 调体 – the term for melodic modes or scales (mostly pentatonic) to indicate different sensations and stylistic bending pitches in *Chaozhou* music. There are five major *diaoti*: *qinsanlu* (light-three-six), *zhongsanlu* (heavy-three-six), *qinsanzhonglu* (light-three-heavy-six), *huowu* (active five), and *fanxian* (rotate modes).

Diaotou 调头 – melodic modes in *kejia* music.

Erhu 二胡 – Chinese two-string fiddle.

Ersi notation 二四谱 – using the Chinese characters, “二 (two), 三 (three), 四 (four), 五 (five), 六 (six), 七 (seven), 八 (eight)”, to represent *jianpu* (solfège notation) “5 (so) 6 (la) 1 (do) 2 (re) 3 (mi) 5 (so) 6 (la).”

Fengsu Tongyi 风俗通义 – 2nd century work mentioning the zheng.

Gongche 工尺谱 – Chinese traditional notation with characters 上 尺 工 凡 六 五 乙 上

Henan School 河南筝 – one of the six major traditional zheng schools.

Huayin 滑音 – playing of the zheng by the left hand, which involves sliding and bending notes produced by the right hand on the opposite side of the bridge. These effects can roughly be placed in four categories: the up-glide, the down-glide, the round-glide, and the vibrato.

Hui-hua-yin 回滑音 – round glide. A *huayin* effect where the pitch glides up and down (or down and up), coming back to the same pitch.

Jianpu 简谱 – Solfège notation.

Jishu 技术 – term for performing techniques.

Kaopai 拷拍 – in *Chaozhou* music. *Kaopai* is a section of music which follows a slow section, and uses many up-beats and syncopated rhythms to speed up the pace of the music.

Kejia School 客家箏 – one of the six major traditional zheng schools.

Qin 秦 – dynasty of China (221-206 B.C.)

Qing 清 – dynasty of China (1644-1911 A.D.)

Shandong School 山东箏 – one of the six major traditional zheng schools.

Shang-hua-yin 上滑音 – up-glide. A *huayin* effect where the pitch goes up to a major third.

Shanxi School 陕西箏 – one of the six major traditional zheng schools.

Shiji 史记 (lit. “Record of History,” 237 B.C.) – 3rd century B.C. work that contains the first known reference of the zheng.

Tang 唐 – dynasty of China (618-907 A.D.)

Wu 悟 – a Buddhist word means instantaneous enlightenment.

Wu-tong 梧桐 – paulownia wood, which came to replace bamboo for the frame of the zheng.

Xia-hua-yin 下滑音 – down-glide. A *huayin* effect where the pitch goes down to a major third.

Xianshi 弦诗 – is a type of music played by a string ensemble in *Chaozhou* music. *Xian* means “string” and *shi* meaning “poems.”

*Yi jing** 意境 – lit. “condition of mind or spiritual atmosphere”; a mood or atmosphere created by art or music.

You yao yin 游摇音 – the left hand bends a descending note with a constant narrow and dynamic vibrato while the right thumb constantly plucks back and forth on one string, making a bending pitch range normally within a major third.

*Yun** 韵 – originally means “rhyme”. In combination with *qi* 气 (spirit, force, general atmosphere), it expresses the highest aim of Chinese painters, musicians, calligraphers, etc.; “rhythmic vitality.”

Zhejiang School 浙江箏 – one of the six major traditional zheng schools.

Zheng 箏 – a plucked-stringed instrument of ancient and modern China. The number of strings on the zheng has varied between 5 and 26, with the 21-string model becoming preferred internationally.

Zuoyun 作韵 – the term for making rhymes in *Chaozhou* zheng music.

The *translations were consulted from the book *The Importance of Living* by Yutang Lin.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Haiqiong Deng began her music study at a very young age. She received her Bachelor of music degree in *zheng* performance from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and her Master of Arts in Arts Administration from the Florida State University School of Music. She is currently enrolled in the graduate program in Ethnomusicology at the Florida State University College of Music, where she is also the Director of the Chinese Music Ensemble.

Haiqiong was the winner of the Outstanding Performance Prize at the Chinese National Zheng Competition in Shanghai. She made her professional début in Beijing in 1997. Since that time she has developed an international reputation as zheng soloist and chamber musician with numerous performances throughout China, Japan, Singapore and the United States. Since 2000 she came to the United States, she has performed in numerous contemporary works in music festivals and concerts. She has given lectures on both traditional and new zheng music at various universities, colleges, and national/regional conferences in the United States. She has appeared as a soloist with many symphony orchestras including the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, and the Singapore Chinese Orchestra. She made her Carnegie Hall début recital in 2003. The concert program included two world premieres: *Dots, Lines, Convergence* by Chihchun Chi-sun Lee, a concerto for *zheng* and chamber ensemble commissioned by the Harvard Fromm Foundation, and *CRUSH*, a duo for *zheng* and soprano saxophone by Michael Sidney Timpson.

Haiqiong released her solo CD, *Ning – Chinese Zheng Solo by Haiqiong Deng* (Celebrity Music Pte. Ltd., Singapore), in September 2002. She also appeared as a soloist with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra in *Out of Tang Court* (by composer Zhou Long) on Evelyn Glennie's CD *Oriental Landscapes*; and on the CD *Tales From the Cave*, with the performance group *Music from China*.

She has received honors and grants from various organizations including the Tallahassee Music Association, the Tallahassee Music Guild, the Florida State University College of Music, the Singapore Arts Council, the Singapore Lee Foundation, the Shanghai Zheng Association, and the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.