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The *Qin* and Literati Culture in Song China

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Asian Languages and Cultures

by

Meimei Zhang

2019

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The *Qin* and Literati Culture in Song China

by

Meimei Zhang

Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor David C Schaberg, Chair

My dissertation examines the distinctive role that the *qin* played in Chinese literati culture in the Song dynasty (960-1279) through its representations in literary texts. As one of the earliest stringed musical instruments in China, the *qin* has occupied a unique status in Chinese cultural history. It has been played since ancient times, and has traditionally been favored by Chinese scholars and literati as an instrument of great subtlety and refinement. This dissertation focuses on the period of the Song because it was during this period that the literati developed as a class and started to indulge themselves in various cultural and artistic pursuits, and record their experiences in literary compositions as part of their self-fashioning. Among these cultural pursuits, the *qin* playing was an important one. Although there have been several academic works on the *qin*, most of them focus on the musical aspects of the instrument. My project aims to reorient the perspective on the *qin* by revealing its close relationship and interaction with the literati class from a series of

historical and literary approaches. During the Song, the *qin* was mentioned in a multiplicity of literary texts, and associated with a plethora of renowned literary figures. This dissertation argues that in the Song dynasty, the configuration of aesthetic sensitivities, poetic appeal and philosophical implications that literati imparted to the *qin* reached its mature form, which set a paradigm for later periods. The *qin* not only served as an object of literary representation, but also a primary medium through which literati's full-fledged image as a person with comprehensive talents was formed.

The dissertation of Meimei Zhang is approved.

Hui-shu Lee

Nina Natasha Duthie

Ronald Egan

Torquil Duthie

David C Schaberg, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2019

*To my family*

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“The One Who Understands My Music: Xi Kang and His Literary Representations of the *Qin*.” The 227<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society, Los Angeles, CA, March 17-20, 2017.

“Ouyang Xiu 歐陽脩, the *Qin* and Literati Culture in the Northern Song Dynasty.” The Seventieth Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association Annual Convention, Salt Lake City, UT, Oct 6-8, 2016.

“*Qin* Monks, the Stringless *Qin* and the Literati Culture in the Song Dynasty.” The Twenty-fifth Annual Columbia Graduate Student Conference on East Asia, New York: Columbia University, February 6-7, 2016.

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# Introduction

## I. Topic and Argument

This dissertation explores representations of the *qin* in Song dynasty (960-1279) literary texts and traces the steps through which the instrument acquired the distinctive role it plays in Chinese literati culture. The *qin*, one of the earliest plucked stringed musical instruments of the zither family in China, is also known as the zither, the Chinese lute, the “old” or “antique” *qin* (*guqin* 古琴). It has been played since ancient times, and the earliest excavated *qin* can be dated back to 433 BCE in the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng located at Suizhou, in present-day Hubei province.<sup>1</sup> It was traditionally favored by imperial rulers as a representative instrument of imperial-bureaucratic rule, and also by literati class as an instrument of great subtlety and refinement. Besides its essential function, it also served as a token of exchange among friends, and as an inscriptional surface for encomia.

According to the French sociologist and philosopher, Pierre Bourdieu, social life involves the acquiring of a kind of “cultural capital,” or the collection of symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, and material possessions, that signify one’s place in a particular social class. He argues that such cultural capital takes three forms—embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. Sharing similar forms of cultural capital with others creates a sense of collective identity, a sense of belonging and group position, and allows the formation of a social class constituted by “people like us.”<sup>2</sup> I hold that the Song fashion of listening to, playing, collecting and appreciating the *qin* derived from a desire to display cultural capital in its embodied and objectified state. It was

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<sup>1</sup> Bo Lawegren, “The Iconography and Decoration of the Ancient Chinese Qin-Zither (500 BCE to 500 CE),” *Music in Art* 32.1-2 (2007): 47.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Cultural Theory: An Anthology* 1 (2011): 81-93.

during the Song dynasty that the literati developed as a self-conscious class, started to indulge in various cultural and artistic pursuits, and recorded their experiences in literary compositions as part of their self-fashioning. *Qin*-playing was key among the cultural pursuits through which the literati class constructed and defined itself. During this period, the *qin* was mentioned in numerous literary texts and associated with a plethora of renowned literary figures. It served not only as an object of literary representation, but also as a primary medium through which literati displayed their self-image as persons with comprehensive talents extending beyond *wen* 文 and included music and other forms of connoisseurship. In this dissertation, I will show how the *qin* as a social object figured in the everyday lives of literati; how distinct authors represented a sense of self through the discourse of the *qin*; how the musical and poetic aspects of their lives coordinated with and complemented each other; and how the *qin* and *qin* culture pervaded the social networks of these literati and influenced the formation, contacts, and associations of literary circles.

This dissertation also makes the case that even as the *qin* helped Song literati define themselves, the Song literati also made the *qin* what it would become. The configuration of aesthetic sensitivities, poetic appeal, and philosophical implications that they imparted to the *qin* reached its mature form during the Song and set a paradigm for later periods. This configuration was also part of the larger change in aesthetics that took place during the Song.

## II. Historical Context

In outlining the historical background against which the *qin* became prominent in Song literati culture, I concentrate on two topics: (1) the formation of *shi* as a class, (2) the development of the *qin* and *qin* literature during the Song.

## The Development of *Shi* as a Class during the Song Dynasty

Traditional China's educated, ruling group was the *shi* 士, the scholar-officials or literati. Yu Ying-shih has compared the role of the *shi* with that of intellectuals in modern Western culture and society, finding them similar in the sense that both groups are possessors of elite culture and knowledge and both regarded themselves as having responsibility for public affairs and the well-being of society.<sup>3</sup>

Many scholars agree that it was during the Tang-Song transition that *shi* started to become a social class. Japanese scholar Naitō Konan, a founding figure in the Kyoto School of historiography, argued that the Tang-Song transition was an important watershed that brought drastic changes in society, economics, demography, and politics in China. He also suggested that the transformations that occurred between the middle Tang and the early Song represented a transition from the medieval (*chūsei* 中世) to the early modern (*kinsei* 近世) period of Chinese history.<sup>4</sup> Konan's analysis of the Tang-Song transition has had a profound influence on later studies. One of the drastic transformations that Konan identified was the demise of aristocratic clans, which before the Tang had formed a hereditary ruling class. A broad-based Song literati elite certified through the examination system took over in place of the aristocracy, creating a balance of power between the monarchy and the civil bureaucracy.<sup>5</sup> These Song dynasty literati,

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<sup>3</sup> See Yu Ying-shih 余英時, *Shi yu Zhongguo wenhua* 士與中國文化 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> For the scholarship by Naitō Konan on Tang-Song transformation, see *Shina shigaku shi* (*History of Chinese Historiography*) in *Naitō Konan zenshū* (*Collected works of Naitō Konan*), ed. by Naitō Kenkichi and Kanda Kiichirō, Vol.7 (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1969-76).

<sup>5</sup> On the formation and development of Song literati class, see Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Beverly Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status and the State in Sung China* (960-1279) (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998); Chang Woei Ong, *Men of Letters within the Passes: Guanzhong Literati in Chinese History, 907-1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008); Anne Gerritsen, *Ji'an Literati and the Local in Song-Yuan-Ming China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). For the education and examination system during the Song dynasty, see Edward Kracke, "Region, Family and Individual in the Chinese Examination System," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1947); John W. Chaffee, *The*



who identified themselves as *shi*, were different from their predecessors in various respects, and in general they had received more education. Many were men of remarkable intellectual breath, and they played a crucial role in civil bureaucracy as well as in other aspects of culture.

The composition of the *shi* class changed between the Northern Song and Southern Song. Robert Hartwell argued that the professional elites in the Northern Song gradually gave way to local gentry in the Southern Song.<sup>6</sup> Peter K. Bol, in *This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung*, argues that in the Northern Song, *shi* were mainly scholar-officials, who not only possessed knowledge and literary talent, but also held positions in government. In the Southern Song, due to elite localism and the limited number of government positions available, the majority of *shi* were members of local elites. The transformation of *shi* from Tang aristocrats to Northern Song scholar-officials and then to Southern Song local elites allows Bol to sketch how these momentous social changes were accompanied by intellectual changes between 600 and 1200. According to Bol, the centrality of literary composition and textual traditions of learning in intellectual culture during the Northern Song gradually gave way to *Daoxue* (The Learning of the Dao 道學), an ethical-philosophical discourse based on the re-sacralization of Confucian classics, during the Southern Song.<sup>7</sup> However, as Benjamin Elman points out in his review of Bol's work, while *Daoxue* became the centerpiece of Confucian discourse, literary writings nevertheless remained important in cultural expression, and "the sagely *Tao-hsueh*

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*Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); Thomas H.C. Lee, *Government Education and Examinations in Sung China* (New York: St. Martin's; Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1985). For other changes in social, economic, political, and intellectual spheres in the Tang-Song transition, see Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn, eds., *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.2 (Dec., 1982): 365-442.

<sup>7</sup> See Peter K. Bol, "*This Culture of Ours*": *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992) and *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008).

(*Daoxue*) literatus and the worldly poet and cultural critic thus represent two important poles in the Northern Song intellectual landscape...which guaranteed the latter political, economic, and cultural influence until 1126.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, literary achievement and the ethical-political philosophy of *Daoxue* constituted the most significant pursuits of intellectual life for the Southern Song *shi*. It is quite difficult to find an English equivalent to translate the term *shi*, but in this dissertation I use “literati” to refer to this Song group who distinguished themselves by their culture and education, as well as by their participation in politics and the public sphere.

One distinctive feature of the Song literati besides their literary pursuits and *Daoxue* was that they also expressed themselves through other aesthetic pursuits, both as creators and as consumers. Because of their educational and cultural advantages, Song literati took many different roles, including government officials, scholars, poets, writers, painters, calligraphers, and art connoisseurs. It was this period that saw the development of urbanization, a monetized economy, and a burgeoning market offering an increasingly large number of commodities, including many works of art. A literati discourse of connoisseurship emerged alongside this growing market for art. *Shi* production of, writing about, purchasing, collecting, and appreciating works of art expanded their elite milieu, which marked their place in the cultural hierarchy as distinctive from other social groups. In *Word, Image, and Deed in The Life of Su Shi*, Ronald Egan documents the life of Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), one of the leading men of letters in the Northern Song dynasty, and examines the literary compositions and cultural artifacts that he left to posterity. Egan argues that Su Shi was the first figure in the Song to bring both painting and calligraphy into the cultural life of literati. His accomplishment in literature and art in the face of

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<sup>8</sup> Benjamin A. Elman, “Review of Peter K. Bol, ‘*This Culture of Ours*’: *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55.2 (Dec., 1995): 534.

political failure fashioned the idealized image of cultured literatus for his time and afterwards.<sup>9</sup> In another study, *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China*, Egan suggests that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, new aesthetic pursuits, such as collecting stele inscriptions, casual discussions of poetry in a new form, cultivating and composing literary works on peonies, and collecting works of art, aroused anxieties about cultural value among literati, but at the same time were embraced and legitimized in the construction of a rapidly changing literati identity.<sup>10</sup> I hold that it was also during this period that literati took on a new role in their artistic life, namely, the role of *qin* musician and connoisseur. Expertise in *qin* music and connoisseurship, together with engagement in other spheres of scholarship and art, furthered their self-fashioning as a distinctive cultured class that possessed both erudition and refined taste.

### **The Vibrancy of the *Qin* and *Qin* Literature during the Song**

The Song dynasty saw a flourishing in the production of *qin* instruments as well as literature on the *qin*. Unlike their predecessors in the Tang dynasty, many Song emperors were avid fans of the *qin*. In the Song court, Expectant Officials of the *Qin* (*Qin daizhao* 琴待詔) were excellent *qin* players who could perform on the instrument for the imperial family whenever they were summoned. Court attention to the instrument meant that a great number of *qin* were produced by official workshops through imperial commission. These were called “*qin* constructed by the government” (*guan-zhuo qin* 官斲琴). In contrast with these *qin*, the many

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<sup>9</sup> See Ronald Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994). On academic works on other Song literatus figures as painters or calligraphers, see Peter Sturman, *Mi Fu: Style and the Art of Calligraphy in Northern Song China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> See Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

others constructed by ordinary craftsmen and circulated on the market were known as “*qin* made in the wilderness” (*yezhuo qin* 野斫琴).<sup>11</sup>

Compared to the preceding Tang dynasty, during which only a few big names such as the Lei family 雷氏 and Zhang Yue 張越 were known for their expertise in *qin* making, more Song craftsmen are known by name, mainly because they are celebrated in Song *biji* 筆記 texts (a genre known as “miscellaneous writings”) and other literary texts on making excellent *qin*. The Yuan dynasty scholar Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1329-1410), in the *Record of Resting from Plowing in Southern Village* (*Nancun chuogeng lu* 南村輟耕錄), mentions more than ten figures who were famous for making *qin* during the Song.<sup>12</sup> With the vibrant development of *qin* production, the *qin* was mentioned in Song *biji* texts for its material aspects, such as the manufacturing process, circulation, and counterfeiting. The frequent references to the *qin* in such Song *biji* texts involve informations about antiquity, human creativity, and the taste and acumen of these authors and the *qin* collectors.

A number of renowned cultural figures during the Song dynasty, including Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989-1052), Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), Su Shi, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), and Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236-1283), were players and connoisseurs of the *qin*. They composed poems and essays on how they played, listened to, collected, and appreciated the *qin*, and how the *qin* was related to their daily lives and interactions with other people in the literati circle. Compared to previous periods, the *qin* was no longer solely regarded as a musical instrument, or

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<sup>11</sup> Zheng Minzhong 鄭珉中, *Gugong guqin* 故宮古琴 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2006), p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> Li Mengsheng 李夢生, annot., *Nancun chuogeng lu* 南村輟耕錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 29.327. For a comprehensive examination of the styles and characteristics of the Song dynasty made *qin*, as well as their distinctions from Tang *qin*, see Zheng Minzhong, *Lice oulu ji: guqin yanjiu ji qita* 蠡測偶錄集：古琴研究及其他 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2010).

as part of the ritual-music system, but started to become a cultural pursuit that was associated with literati self-identification and self-fashioning. In order to have a comprehensive picture of literati lives in the Song, one cannot neglect the importance of the *qin*.

It was during this period that a number of specialized texts on the *qin* appeared. Some were handbooks on the *qin* that laid out rules for *qin*-making, such as “Master Biluo’s Principles of *Qin*-Making” (*Biluozi zhuoqin fa* 碧落子斫琴法). Some were modeled on historiographical writings with the intention of accumulating and assembling scattered information about important *qin* tunes and *qin* musicians, such as Zhu Changwen’s 朱長文 (1038-1098) *History of the Qin* (*Qin shi* 琴史). Some offered lengthy discussions of the aesthetics and connoisseurship of the *qin*, such as the *Clear Bliss of the Grotto Heaven* (*Dongtian qinglu* 洞天清祿) by Zhao Xigu 趙希鵠 (fl. 13<sup>th</sup> c.). The composition of the first category of texts was due to the prosperity of the *qin*-making industry in both governmental and non-governmental spheres. With the rise of printing culture during this period, these texts were circulated and open to the general public, ensuring that knowledge of *qin*-making was no longer held exclusively within the domain of state-hired craftsmen and musicians. The second group of texts showed Song authors’ efforts to sacralize and classify the *qin* as a representative instrument of Confucian music ideals. What is central to the discussion in the third category of texts was a body of vocabulary which consisted of aesthetic terms such as “blandness” (*dan* 淡) and “ancientness” (*gu* 古), terms that also appeared frequently in literary and art criticism. These terms and the aesthetic principles at work in these texts manifest the intertextual relationship between musical and other disciplines of humanities based on a common set of aesthetic ideals, and explain why the *qin* possessed a special poetic allure and cultural significance in the Song and afterward.

### III. Studies on Chinese Music and the History of the *Qin*

## Chinese Music and Literature

There has been an abundance of scholarship on pre-modern Chinese music through the examination of its literary representation, with the focus ranging from philosophy and aesthetics to the ties between music and politics and cosmology. Some such studies are devoted to material compilation, textual history, and musical thought. Scott Cook's Ph.D. dissertation, "Unity and Diversity in the Musical Thought of Warring States China," treats musical thought from the late Spring and Autumn period (770-476 BCE) to the Warring States period (475-221 BCE). In this work, Cook examines passages selected from nine different texts compiled or written during this period. With music as his focal point, Cook tries to present the whole picture of interactions among different philosophical schools. Cook argues that underlying diverse viewpoints on music there was a continuity of concerns and a drive toward a unified philosophical outlook.<sup>13</sup> Two other articles by Cook, "*Yue Ji, Record of Music*: Introduction, Translation, Notes, and Commentary" and "The *Lüshi chunqiu* and the Resolution of Philosophical Dissonance," also offer solid translations and insightful comments on early musical texts.<sup>14</sup> However, the main concerns of Cook's discussions have been the textual history of the passages that he selects, the philosophy of music, and the relation between music and politics, rather than the interactions between music and literature per se.

Cai Zhongde's *History of Chinese Musical Aesthetics* provides a plethora of sources and information on musical reception and interpretation. Similar to Cai Zhongde's work, Tian Qing's

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<sup>13</sup> See Scott Cook, "Unity and Diversity in the Musical Thought of Warring States China," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1995.

<sup>14</sup> See Scott Cook, "*Yue Ji, Record of Music*: Introduction, Translation, Notes, and Commentary," *Asian Music* 26.2 (1995): 1-96; "The *Lüshi chunqiu* and the Resolution of Philosophical Dissonance," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 62.2 (Dec., 2002): 307-345.

*History of Pre-Modern Chinese Music* also gives an overview of the history of music in China.<sup>15</sup> Although both books include many useful references, they are general in their approach and offer limited insights into any specific historical period that they include.<sup>16</sup> Another work of this kind is Walter Kaufmann's book, *Musical References in the Chinese Classics*, which assembles musical references in the same order as they appear in the *Five Classics* and *Four Books*, then analyzes these key statements on music. Kaufmann retranslates a variety of musical references, and entries compiled under the title of "Ch'in and Se" have been especially helpful for my study on early Chinese thought and the *qin*. However, Kaufmann does not offer any discussion or interpretation of the texts that he compiles.<sup>17</sup>

There have been several works on music and politics in early China. Erica Fox Brindley's monograph, *Music, Cosmology and the Politics of Harmony in Early China*, is a work that examines music in ancient China primarily in relation to the cosmos, politics and body. This study explores the previously overlooked role of music in both political and religious thinking and sheds light on integral and correlative understandings between music, state, cosmos, and body in early China.<sup>18</sup> Michael Loewe's article, "The Office of Music, c. 114 to 7 B.C.," has mainly to do with the Han dynasty Office of Music (*Yuefu* 樂府), the state's main institution for determining music theory and policy. Loewe examines the historical circumstances under which the office was established, the curtailing of its activities, and its eventual abolition. He also

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<sup>15</sup> See Tian Qing 田青, *Zhongguo gudai yinyue shihua* 中國古代音樂史話 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1984).

<sup>16</sup> See Cai Zhongde 蔡仲德, *Zhongguo yinyue meixueshi* 中國音樂美學史 (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> See Walter Kaufmann, *Musical References in the Chinese Classics* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1976).

<sup>18</sup> See Erica Fox Brindley, *Music, Cosmology and the Politics of Harmony in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012).

discusses the function of the office in arranging musical performances. By analyzing the influence of the office on contemporary literature as well as the literary development at later stages of China, Loewe tries to trace the connection between the rise and fall of this office and other cultural historical changes.<sup>19</sup> However, most of the article is devoted to the historical context of the office, and Loewe only briefly mentions the role the office played in the development of Chinese literature, with little discussion of specific examples from literary texts.

Rulan Chao Pian's *Song Dynasty Musical Sources and Their Interpretation* classifies the musical sources dating to the Song dynasty and describes the edition, content, and bibliographical history of each source. A fair chunk of the book is transcription and commentary of the 87 extant pieces of Song dynasty music, 28 of which were composed by Jiang Kui 姜夔 (ca. 1155-1221) and 12 of which were preserved by Zhu Xi. Both Jiang and Zhu were significant figures in Chinese literary history. Seven of the 28 scores are for *qin*-music.<sup>20</sup> Pian's book has been helpful to my research, especially for its information on relations between literati, music, and the *qin* in particular during the Song, but also because of its treatment of compositions by Jiang Kui and Zhu Xi. As Pian focuses on the musicality of these sources and does not interpret them from a literary perspective, she does not address questions such as the role literati played in the creation, circulation, and preservation of these musical sources, or how the playing of this music was related to their self-identification. These are the questions I have taken up in my dissertation.

Studies of specific Chinese musical instruments have focused on the economic, social, and political contexts in which they were produced and played, or the material aspects of the

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<sup>19</sup> See Michael Loewe, "The Office of Music, c. 114 to 7 B.C.," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 36 (1973): 340-51.

<sup>20</sup> See Rulan Chao Pian, *Song Dynasty Musical Sources and Their Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).



instrument, such as its shape, manufacture, and the tonal measurements. Relatively few have looked at the role of an instrument in cultural history and its relationship with the literati class. Lothar von Falkenhausen's book, *Suspended Music: Chime-Bells in the Culture of Bronze Age China*, is a rich and detailed study of the chime-bells excavated from the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng and of chime-bells in general, and includes a reconstruction of how the music of these bells may have sounded and how they may have been used in the social, political, and religious contexts of Bronze-Age China (to the beginning of the Qin dynasty in 221 BCE).<sup>21</sup> Wang Zichu's 王子初 *Archaeology of Chinese Music (Zhongguo yinyue kaoguxue 中國音樂考古)* traces the history of musical instruments from prehistoric times through the Qing dynasty from an archaeological perspective.<sup>22</sup> Bo Lawergren's article, "The Metamorphosis of the *Qin*, 500 BCE-CE 500," is an archaeological study of the *qin* that traces the evolution in the construction of the *qin* over the course of a millennium. In his conclusion, Lawergren makes the point that descriptions of the *qin* in texts composed during the pre-Qin and Han period not only have metaphorical meanings, but also may include realistic descriptions of the size and shape of the *qin* during that period.<sup>23</sup> Ingrid Furniss's monograph, *Music in Ancient China: An Archaeological and Art Historical Study of Strings, Winds, and Drums during the Eastern Zhou and Han Periods (770 BCE- 220 CE)*, discusses music in ancient China through the lens of the arrangement and placement of different musical instruments or their visual representations in

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<sup>21</sup> See Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Suspended Music: Chime-Bells in the Culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>22</sup> See Wang Zichu 王子初, *Zhongguo yinyue kaoguxue 中國音樂考古學* (Fuzhou: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> See Bo Lawergren, "The Metamorphosis of the *Qin*, 500 B.C.E.-CE 500." *Orientalia* 34.5 (2003): 31-38.

tombs dated from the Eastern Zhou (770-221 BCE) to Han (206 BCE-CE 220) periods, so as to unveil these instruments' social, ritual, and entertainment functions.<sup>24</sup>

Although there have been a great number of academic works on premodern Chinese music, few of them are devoted to the close association and interaction between music and literature. Throughout the history of China, the *qin* played an important role in the aesthetic life of traditional literati. Investigating the literary representations of the *qin* in the Song not only shows various aspects of the *qin* as a musical instrument, but also illuminates the cultural activities that surrounded this specific object by the literati, such as collecting and appreciating antiques, and composing literary works. My project aims to reorient the perspective on the *qin* by revealing its relationship with the literati class through a series of historical and literary approaches. Representing the *qin* in literature not only belongs to the history of Chinese musicology, but also constitutes an important aspect of Chinese cultural history and literary tradition.

### **The *Qin* as A Literati Pursuit**

As R. H. Van Gulik noted in his monograph, *The Lore of the Chinese Lute*, the *qin* occupied a unique status in Chinese cultural history: "It stands entirely alone, both in its character and in the important place it occupies in the life of the literary class."<sup>25</sup> Van Gulik's book is a ground-breaking work in the West that discusses the role the *qin* played in Chinese literati culture. It provides a clear and systematic account of the history of the *qin* by collecting, translating and citing a rich variety of original Chinese sources. My research builds upon and

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<sup>24</sup> See Ingrid Furniss, *Music in Ancient China: An Archaeological and Art Historical Study of Strings, Winds, and Drums during the Eastern Zhou and Han Periods (770 B.C.E.- 220 CE)* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Robert Hans van Gulik, *The Lore of the Chinese Lute* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1969), p.1.

elaborates some of his ideas, especially the notion that the *qin* was a special instrument of the literati class. Although some scattered references in his book to the *qin* are from literary works, most of the material that Van Gulik cites comes from special treatises and handbooks on the *qin*. In my own work, I focus on literary works that thematize the *qin*, have been adapted to *qin* music, or are composed to *qin* songs, so as to complement Van Gulik's study.

Kenneth DeWoskin's *A Song for One or Two* is a study of early Chinese aesthetics through an investigation of music and music theory, with special attention to the history and ideology of the *qin*.<sup>26</sup> Especially interesting arguments in the book are DeWoskin's linking of the establishment of *qin* ideology with the political and philosophical changes that occurred from the Han through the Six Dynasties (220-589), as well as the discussion of inaudible aspects of *qin* music. In all, this work of DeWoskin constructs a comprehensive picture of music in early China, and his thoughtful discussion of the *qin* can be seen as an important contribution to Western scholarship on this instrument. This study has been especially helpful to my own research in tracing the history of the *qin*, as well as in providing original views of the interrelation between political and musical changes.

Another book by Van Gulik, *Hsi K'ang and His Poetical Essay on the Lute*, introduces the Wei-Jin period author and musician Xi Kang's 嵇康 (223-262) life and achievements in literature and music, and offers a detailed literary analysis of the renowned "Rhapsody on the *Qin*" and its commentaries.<sup>27</sup> This study has inspired me to investigate the association of one key literatus, Ouyang Xiu, with the *qin* and to consider how this attachment contributed to Ouyang's self-identification and self-representation. My study is not limited to Ouyang Xiu's involvement

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<sup>26</sup> See Kenneth DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1982).

<sup>27</sup> See Robert Hans van Gulik, *Hsi K'ang and His Poetical Essay on the Lute* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1941).

in the *qin per se*, however, but also analyzes how the *qin* and *qin* culture pervaded the personal life of Ouyang Xiu, and how he constructed his memory of the past and created his own poetic persona from the discourse of the *qin*.

Ronald Egan's article, "The Controversy over Music and 'Sadness' and Changing Conceptions of the *Qin* in Middle Period China," is an exemplary study of music and the *qin* through a historical examination of their literary representations.<sup>28</sup> It deals mainly with the Han and Wei-Jin controversy over sadness (*ai* 哀) as a primary desideratum in music, and how this controversy influenced the conception of the *qin* in the Tang and Song dynasties. Egan gives a close reading of Xi Kang's "Music Has No Sorrow or Joy" and "Rhapsody on the *Qin*," and discusses how the values and outlook that Xi Kang adopted vied with the traditional sentimental approach to *qin* music, as well as how both approaches influenced and shaped later literary treatments of music and the *qin*. He argues that Tang poets such as Bai Juyi 白居易 (223-262) redefined the *qin* as an ancient instrument and its music as classical and refined, and that from the latter part of the Tang into the Song, playing the *qin* became an indispensable part of literati diversions. Building upon Egan's study, my third chapter further explores the development of the conception of the *qin* in the Song dynasty. I argue that although some Tang poets like Bai elevated the *qin* as the epitome of scholarly high-mindedness, it was during the Song dynasty that the aesthetics and philosophy of the *qin* were developed in their fullest form and it truly became the ubiquitous accoutrement of the refined scholar.

James Watt's article, "The *Qin* and the Chinese Literati," mainly deals with how the *qin* came to be closely related with Chinese literati throughout history from the perspective from an

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<sup>28</sup> See Ronald Egan, "The Controversy Over Music and 'Sadness' and Changing Conceptions of the *Qin* in Middle Period China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57.1 (Jun., 1997): 5-66.

art historian.<sup>29</sup> The first half of the essay is a historical study on the *qin*. In this part, Watt traces the history of *qin* music to the Shang dynasty, and discusses its development in different dynasties until the Qing (1644-1912), and lists the most important historical figures related to the *qin*. Watt argues that it was not until the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) that the literati totally took the *qin* as a prerequisite pursuit of their life. In the second half of the paper, Watt uses two paintings in the National Palace Museum by Wang Meng 王蒙 (1308-1385) and Tang Yin 唐寅 (1470-1524) to demonstrate the subtle changes of the association between literati and the *qin* in the Yuan (1279-1368) and Ming dynasties. He argues that while during the Yuan the literatus and *qin* player were one, as manifested by Wang Meng's painting, in the Ming the musician could lay claim to a literatus status before his achievement in the *qin* was recognized. Since Watt does not offer comparisons with any literary texts on the *qin* composed during these two periods, and the examples of visual material that he raises to support his viewpoint are only a few, his conclusion seems hasty and not entirely convincing.

Joseph Lam's article, "Writing Music Biographies of Historical East Asian Musicians: The Case of Jiang Kui (A.D. 1155-1221)," uses Jiang Kui, a famous literatus and musician in Southern Song China, and his biographies as an example of how to deal with the problem of writing music biographies of East Asian musicians.<sup>30</sup> Lam points out that one of the weaknesses of writing such biographies currently is the failure to take the historical contexts and values of the figure into consideration. Lam argues that in order to write a successful biography of a musician, the author should coordinate different historical perspectives. In Jiang Kui's case, on the one hand, he was known as a renowned *ci* writer who was deeply under the influence of

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<sup>29</sup> James Watt, "The *Qin* and the Chinese Literati," in *Orientalism Magazine* 12 (1981): 38-49.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Lam, "Writing Music Biographies of Historical East Asian Musicians: The Case of Jiang Kui (A.D. 1155-1221)," in *World of Music* 43.1 (2001): 69-95.

popular culture and had close relations with female musicians; on the other hand, he was famous for his identity as a musical literatus, which was affirmed by his intellectual and practical interest in historical music. These two aspects are both indispensable to the writing of Jiang Kui's biography. In conclusion, Lam points out that the key to writing biographies of musicians does not lie in the facts, but in how to merge different historical perspectives, values and traditions, so as to give a deeper understanding of the broader world of such figures. This approach has been inspirational for me as I treat literary works about music composed by Ouyang Xiu and associate them with his identity construction.

There have been a number of Chinese works on the *qin* during specific periods in Chinese history. Ou Chunchun's book, *Styles and Features of Poems on the Qin during the Tang Dynasty*, looks at poems on the *qin* composed during the Tang dynasty. Ou examines the historical background of these compositions, the aesthetics of *qin* music as manifested in these poems, and the literary allusions and poetic images most frequently used in *qin* descriptions during the Tang.<sup>31</sup> Li Xiangting's *Aesthetics of the Qin Performance and Musical Thoughts on the Qin during the Tang Dynasty* investigates various aesthetic standards for *qin* performance during the Tang.<sup>32</sup> Both books inspire my discussions of the aesthetics of the *qin* during the Song dynasty, in which I examine how the Song authors developed *qin* aesthetics that both continued and innovated from those of previous periods. Zhang Huaying's *Research on the Music of the Qin during the Song Dynasty* (*Songdai guqin yinyue yanjiu* 宋代古琴音樂研究) is a study that comprehensively examines the development of the *qin* during the Song period. Zhang not only researches the different *qin* schools and renowned *qin* melodies developed in the Song, but also

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<sup>31</sup> See Ou Chunchun 歐純純, *Tangdai qinshi zhi fengmao* 唐代琴詩之風貌 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 2000).

<sup>32</sup> See Li Xiangting 李祥霆, *Tangdai guqin yanzou meixue ji yinyue sixiang yanjiu* 唐代古琴演奏美學及音樂思想研究 (Taipei: Xingzhengyuan wenhua jianshe weiyuanhui, 1993).

investigates the interrelationships between the *qin* and Song emperors, literati class, and religious adepts.<sup>33</sup> Si Binglin's dissertation on the continuous lineage of Chan monks who were expert in practicing the *qin* in the Song also provides rich materials for my research on the subject of the *qin* and religion in the Song dynasty.<sup>34</sup> While both Zhang's and Si's works are more like historiographical surveys of the development of the *qin*, my own project focuses on close readings and analysis of literary texts about the *qin* composed during the Song, and redirects attention to the group of people who sacralized and classified the *qin* and who at the same time manifested their cultural distinction and taste through the *qin*.

### **The Biography of Things and Things as Biographical Objects**

Arjun Appadurai's volume, *Social Life of Things*, advances the argument that objects, especially commodities, have social lives as humans do, and "for that we have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories. It is only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculations that enliven things."<sup>35</sup> Igor Kopytoff, in the article "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process" in the same volume, adopts an anthropological focus on the life cycle and shows that an inanimate object may have a "cultural biography" and that its commodity status could shift as the object moved in and out of the market in different phases of

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<sup>33</sup> See Zhang Huaying 章華英, *Songdai guqin yinyue yanjiu* 宋代古琴音樂研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013). For other scholarly works on the development of the *qin* during the Song dynasty, also see Zhang Bin 張斌, *Songdai guqin wenhua kaolun* 宋代古琴文化考論 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2014), and Luo Qin 洛秦, *Songdai yinyue yanjiu lunwenji: qinxue xingshi yu neirong juan* 宋代音樂研究文論集: 琴學形式與內容卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue xueyuan chubanshe, 2014).

<sup>34</sup> Si Binglin 司冰琳, "Zhongguo gudai qinseng ji qi qinxue gongxian" 中國古代琴僧及其琴學貢獻, Ph.D. diss., Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan, 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Arjun Appadurai, ed., *Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 5.

its existence.<sup>36</sup> There are some differences between the social history of things and cultural biographies of things: the former focuses more on types of things and the long-term shifts and large-scale dynamics that affect the trajectories of the whole class of things, while the latter lays more emphasis on the trajectories that one specific thing has taken.<sup>37</sup> In my dissertation, I use both terms to discuss the *qin* during the Song period. In the first chapter, I discuss the social life of the *qin*, including its production, circulation, collection, and forgery during the Song period as manifested in a number of Song texts, in order to examine the historical development of the *qin* during the Song dynasty. Within this broad historical examination, I also trace the cultural biographies of particular exemplars of the instrument, such as a famous *qin* called “Ice Clear,” and reveal the instrument’s movement among different collectors and the shifts in its price and significants. In the third chapter, I conduct a historical survey of the social life of the *zheng* 箏 (another Chinese plucked musical instrument) from the Han dynasty (206 BCE-CE 220) to the Song dynasty. Although the theory of the social life of things was originally put forth by Appadurai with a focus on exchange and on things as commodities, I use the concept to explore the social context and uses of the *zheng* as well as the gender sensitivities and cultural significances that it had associated with, in order to compare it with the *qin*. In this sense, my project involves examining how musical instruments were represented as things possessing lives and biographies and embodying culture, especially Song literati culture.

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<sup>36</sup> See Igor Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process,” in *Social Life of Things*, pp. 64–94.

<sup>37</sup> See *Social Life of Things*, p. 34. Academic works on Chinese objects that apply Appadurai’s theory of social life of things include Dorothy Ko’s monograph on the inkstone, in which she looks into the industry of inkstone making and its connoisseurship in late imperial China. See Dorothy Ko, *The Social Life of Inkstones: Artisans and Scholars in Early Qing China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017). For the application of the theory of cultural biography to the study of a certain musical instrument, see Judith Zeitlein, “The Cultural Biography of a Musical Instrument: Little Hulei as Sounding Object, Antique, Prop, and Relic,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 69.2 (Dec., 2009): 395-441.



For the role objects play in people's lives, the American anthropologist Janet Hoskins, in her study of indigenous people from Eastern Indonesia, explores the relationship between persons and their possessions, and in particular the ways in which a person may choose to tell their own life history by using a domestic object as a pivot for narrative articulation.<sup>38</sup> She proposes that while things have their own biographies, some of them are "biographical objects" as they are endowed with the personal characteristics of their owners and form the biography and identity of their owners: "Things can be said to have 'biographies' as they go through a series of transformations from gift to commodity to inalienable possession, and persons can also be said to invest aspects of their own biographies in things."<sup>39</sup> Hoskins's idea captures how the particular life histories of an owner and a designated special thing are intertwined. Applying Hoskins's elaboration of the concept "biographical object" to my own study, in the second chapter I argue that the Northern Song dynasty literatus Ouyang Xiu used the *qin* autobiographically, both as the cornerstone of stories about himself when he was banished to Yiling 夷陵 and Chuzhou 滁州 and as a vehicle to construct and define his personal identity as the "Drunken Elder" (*Zuiweng* 醉翁), an idling and carefree local magistrate. In his old age, the *qin* becomes a prop, a storytelling device, and a mnemonic cue for past experiences in his literary writings, creating an idealized past that he was always longing for but never able to recover.

#### IV. Principal Sources

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<sup>38</sup> See Janet Hoskins, *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives* (London: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>39</sup> Janet Hoskins, "Agency, Biography and Objects," in *The Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Christopher Tilley et al. (London: Sage Publications, 2006), p. 74.

This dissertation illuminates the relationship between the literati and the *qin* from a series of new angles that previous studies have not yet discussed: the materiality of the *qin*, the *qin* as a memory cue and biographical object for literati, and the *qin* as a religious metaphor. In my own work, I focus on literary references to the *qin*, works that were adapted to *qin* music, and special treatises and handbooks on the *qin*. I consult extensive and interdisciplinary primary sources covering a wide range of genres: (1) discussions of music and the *qin* in general; (2) historical records; (3) general anthologies of poetry and prose (*zongji* 總集); (4) collections of writings of individual authors (*bieji* 別集), which also consist mainly of poetry and prose; and (5) other genres, ranging from miscellaneous writings (*biji*), lyrics, and religious texts, to *qin* inscriptions. By examining these sources, I attempt to explicate the role that the *qin* played in literati culture in the Song period.

The primary literary texts I discuss in this dissertation belong to the subgenres of “poems on the *qin*” (*qin shi* 琴詩) and “*qin* accounts” (*qin ji* 琴記). I define these as categories of works which take the *qin* as the subject and theme. These works describe the *qin* as an instrument that produces music, as an object that possesses materiality and historicity, and as a symbol with cultural, philosophical and religious implications. They are not necessarily composed on a specific existing *qin*, but they all center on descriptions of the *qin* and on accompanying activities. The literati figures’ works that I discuss in this dissertation include both those of prominent writers such as Ouyang Xiu, Su Shi, and Zhu Xi, and those of many minor authors whose compositions are contained in the compilations *Complete Song Poetry* (*Quan Song shi* 全宋詩; hereafter *QSS*) and *Complete Song Prose* (*Quan Song wen* 全宋文; hereafter *QSW*).

Besides a large number of *qin* poems and accounts, I also look into texts on the *qin* in the genres of treatises, miscellanies, inscriptions, lyrics, and religious texts. Specialized texts on the *qin* such as “Master Biluo’s Principles of *Qin*-Making” mentioned above provide

rich materials on the production of the *qin* in the Song and explore its materiality. *Biji* texts contain rich and intriguing anecdotes about the *qin* and reveal how literati's everyday life was associated with it. For *biji* texts, I use the editions contained in *Complete Song Biji (Quan Song biji 全宋筆記; hereafter QSBJ)*. In addition, because I discuss the relationship among Song literati, Buddhist monks and the *qin*, I will also discuss religious texts such as Buddhist sutras, biographies of Buddhist monks (*sengzhuan 僧傳*), recorded sayings (*yulu 語錄*), and Buddhist *gāthā* (short verse). These texts not only outline Buddhist monks' involvement in the development of the *qin*, but also show the interaction between Buddhist monks and literati during this period. For the translation of primary sources in this dissertation, unless otherwise noted, all translations in this dissertation are mine.

## V. Chapter Overview

The main body of my dissertation is divided into four chapters and organized according to themes pertaining to the *qin* and Song literati culture. In Chapter One, "The Social Life of the *Qin* in the Song Dynasty," I discuss various aspects of the *qin*'s characterization as a real "thing" in literary works composed in the Song. With the development of a monetized economy and an expanded market during the Song dynasty, the *qin*, as a musical instrument particularly favored by the literati, also appeared frequently in the marketplace and started to be mentioned in Song *biji* texts not only for its symbolic meaning and aesthetic appeal, but also for its material characteristics and value, which had seldom been discussed before. Inspired by Igor Kopytoff's article, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," this chapter uses the biographical approach to study the *qin* as an object whose "life" stages or periods showed the shaping of culture. In this way, the different phases in the *qin*'s "biography" that were

represented in literary texts, including its production, the prices of the *qin* in the market, the circulation of certain *qin* among different owners, and forgery, show the aesthetic and historical convictions and values that shaped Song people's attitudes toward the *qin*. In this chapter, I read poetic works alongside Song *biji* texts to get a glimpse of how *qin* exchanges figured in literati lives. I also examine a number of more practical, specialized texts on the *qin* that appeared during this period, which laid out rules for *qin* making, performing and connoisseurship.

The second chapter, "Recalling the Past: The *Qin*, Memory and Self-Representation of Ouyang Xiu" is a case study of Ouyang Xiu, who was one of the most famous cultural figures in Northern Song literati circles. The chapter examines Ouyang Xiu's literary commemoration of his experiences in collecting, playing and appreciating the *qin* during his period of internal exile in Yiling and Chuzhou. Although these were not periods of success in Ouyang's political career, later in his life they became his figurative spiritual homes by virtue of their pastoral and reclusive associations. This chapter explores how the *qin* served as a memory cue that helped him recover and construct the past, and argues that it was in the *qin* that remembrance, imagination, and self-representation converged. By using the *qin* as a biographical object to tell his life, Ouyang Xiu not only provided information about himself but also fashioned his identity in a particular way, constructing a "self" for public consumption.

In the third chapter, "Constructing A Musical Instrument of the Ideal Past: Aesthetics and Conceptions of the *Qin* in the Song Dynasty," I examine aesthetic reflections and conceptions of the *qin* in literary works composed during the Song dynasty, so as to unveil the process of how it was gradually constructed by many as "the greatest of all musical instruments" 樂之大者.<sup>40</sup> I begin by revisiting the Song dynasty controversy over the Tang dynasty poet Han Yu's 韓愈

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<sup>40</sup> See, for instance, Cheng Xun 程洵 (fl. 12<sup>th</sup> c.), "The Account of the *Qin* Hall and the Go Chess Pavilion" ("Qintang qixuan ji" 琴堂棋軒記), *QSW*, 5832.240.

(768-824) poem, “Listening to the Reverend Ying Play the *Qin*” (“Ting Yingshi tanqin” 聽穎師彈琴). By examining Song authors’ reactions to this controversy, I argue that starting from the Northern Song, the *qin* had been established as a musical instrument that represented the ideal music of China’s high antiquity. In the Southern Song, this conception of the *qin* was further developed by Neo-Confucianist scholars such as Zhu Xi, and the role of the *qin* in discouraging wrongdoing and cultivating moral principles was underscored. The second part of this chapter investigates several key terms of *qin* aesthetics: *gu* 古 (ancient, old, or antique), *dan* 淡 (bland), *he* 和 (balanced or tempered), *qing* 清 (clear or pure), and *jing* 靜 (quiet or tranquil). I argue that these aesthetic standards were fully developed and reached their mature forms in the Song dynasty, setting a paradigm for both professional treatises and literary compositions on the *qin* in later periods. The last section of this chapter traces the development of the musical instrument, the *zheng*. I argue that an important move in constructing the image of the *qin* by Song authors was the tendentious characterization of the instrument’s “rivals.” Unlike the *qin*, the *zheng* had been gradually downgraded, feminized, and constructed as an indigenous instrument from the peripheral Qin region. By characterizing the *zheng* as an instrument inferior to the *qin*, Song literati further elevated *qin*-playing as a scholarly musical pursuit that represented the sublime morality of antiquity.

The last chapter, “The Stringless and Broken Instrument: The Representation of the *Qin* Monks and the *Qin* in the Song,” demonstrates how the *qin* functioned within the religious sphere by showing how literary works composed during the Song represented Buddhist monks who were *qin* players. During the Northern Song dynasty, the number of *qin* monks grew rapidly, and a continuous lineage of Buddhist monks who were good at the *qin* appeared and were admired by literati. I regard this group of monks as belonging to a continuous lineage because they passed on the technique of *qin*-playing between generations and transmitted it

through master-disciple relationships. By investigating *qin* monks in the Northern Song dynasty through literary representations of them, this chapter examines the roles the *qin* played in the interaction and interrelationship between literati and Buddhist monks in the Song. This chapter also explores how Song literary treatments of the *qin* manifested the influence of Buddhism through two metaphors: the “stringless *qin*” (*wuxianqin* 無弦琴) and the “broken *qin*” (*poqin* 破琴). Both metaphors indicated deficiency—they were unplayable instruments—but gestured to Buddhist-inspired conceptions of *qin* music beyond the limitations of its physical form. They originally appeared in literary texts, but it was during the Song that they were used by both literati and Buddhist monks to convey Buddhist ideas. By tracing how the religious and philosophical associations of these two images evolved as they moved from their original settings into Song dynasty contexts, this chapter sheds light on how Chan Buddhism influenced and shaped both literati and Buddhist monks’ thinking on and representations of the *qin*.

## Chapter One

### The Social Life of the *Qin*

The Song dynasty in Chinese history witnessed the development of a monetized economy and an expanded market offering of an increasingly large number of commodities.<sup>41</sup> Many objects, such as ancient bronze vessels, that used to be kept at a distance from the realm of commercial exchange by the literati also entered the market and became saleable objects. The *qin*, as a musical instrument particularly favored by the literati, also appeared frequently in the marketplace and started to be mentioned in Song *biji* texts not only for its symbolic meanings and aesthetic appeal, but also for material aspects that had seldom been discussed before. These texts not only discuss the manufacturing process of the *qin* and the famous trademarks of the *qin*, but also record *qin* prices in the market, the circulation of certain *qin* among different owners, as well as the counterfeiting of *qin*. All of these topics touch on the core aspect of the *qin*'s materiality in the Song: it was not only a musical instrument confined to aristocrats' quarters or literati studios, but was also an object that had the potential for exchange.

Arjun Appadurai's edited volume, *Social Life of Things*, advances the argument that objects have biographies and social lives as humans do. Examining different "life" stages or periods of an object can reveal the shaping of culture, as well as a tangled mass of aesthetic, historical, and political dynamics that form people's judgments and attitudes toward this object.<sup>42</sup> In this chapter, I will examine a *qin*'s different life-trajectories in the Song period, with a focus on the *qin* as an object that has the potential for exchange. Through examining the literary

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<sup>41</sup> For scholarship on the growth of market and commercial activities in Song China, see Shiba Yoshinobu, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, trans. Mark Elvin (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1970); Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past: A Social and Economic Interpretation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), pp.113-202.

<sup>42</sup> *Social Life of Things*, p. 64.

construction of the *qin*, we see its deep connections with the lives of Song people, especially the literati class.

This chapter first discusses the production and fabrication of the *qin*, focusing on a text entitled *The Book of the Qin* (*Qin shu* 琴書), which lays out important rules of *qin*-making in the Song and was collected in the *Significant Records of the Qin Garden* (*Qinyuan yaolu* 琴苑要錄), a Ming dynasty copy of Song dynasty materials regarding the *qin*. I then proceed to examine the prices of the *qin* on the market. Although comprehensive records of *qin* prices are lacking, in a couple of *biji* texts, such as *The Sheng River Banquet Talks* (*Shengshui yantan lu* 澗水燕談錄), the changing prices of certain *qin* instruments are precisely tracked over a certain time duration, along with their circulation among different named collectors. In a text entitled *The Collection of Hundreds of Valuables and All Treasures* (*Baibao zongzhen ji* 百寶總珍集), which was compiled by a Southern Song curio dealer, the author records the principles of appraising and selecting antiques, jewelry and other valuable objects. Standards for judging the price of the *qin* are discussed in detail. Poetic works from the Song period that mention the purchasing, selling, and pawning of the *qin* also offer a glimpse of how the exchange of the *qin* figured in the lives of the literati.

After discussing *qin* prices, I turn attention to famous trademarks of the *qin* that especially fascinated the Song buyers, with a focus on connoisseurs' obsession with the Lei family *qin* 雷琴. Starting from the Tang, famous makers of the *qin* had been celebrated by their contemporaries for their outstanding craftsmanship. The Song fascination with *qin* made by the Lei family, as well as some other well-known brands of the *qin* made before the Song, was due largely to the antiquarian vogue of the time. Antiquarianism also led to another phenomenon in the *qin* market: counterfeiting. The prevalence of counterfeits of antique *qin* is mentioned in a couple of Song texts, which not only list different methods of judging the quality and history of



the *qin*, warning people of scams, but also express anxiety about the circulation of fake *qin*. In the last part of this chapter, the topic of *qin* collection will be discussed, so as to show how the collection of *qin* plays a role in the lives of people from different social groups and is associated with their self-fashioning.

## I. Production and Fabrication of the *Qin*

The *qin* produced in the Song dynasty were either commissioned by the imperial house and constructed in official workshops, or made by ordinary craftsmen.<sup>43</sup> The prosperity of the *qin*-making industry in both governmental and non-governmental spheres was accompanied by the composition of various texts on the fabrication of the *qin*. As Ronald Egan indicates, “The transition from manuscript to print culture, the early stages of which seem to have occurred roughly between 1000 and 1200 in China, likely affected many aspects of the way people thought about and used books.”<sup>44</sup> The flourishing of printing culture during this period meant that these texts on the *qin* were circulated and open to the general public and that knowledge of *qin*-making was no longer the exclusive domain of state-hired craftsmen and musicians. Compared with texts on *qin*-making from previous periods, the emphasis here shifts from mystical and romantic literary descriptions to introductions to a standardized, practical, and even painstakingly complex craftsmanship. The detailed and comprehensive knowledge that they

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<sup>43</sup> *Gugong guqin*, p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> Ronald Egan, “To Count Grains of Sand on the Ocean Floor: Changing Perceptions of Books and Learning in Song Dynasty China,” in Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerd, eds., *Knowledge and Text Production in an Age of Print* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 44. For the scholarship on the prosperity of Song dynasty printing and its cultural consequences, also see Wang Yugen, *Ten Thousand Scrolls: Reading and Writing in the Poetics of Huang Tingjian and the Late Northern Song* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011).

contain was sufficient enough to guide even an amateur in the Song in the building of a new *qin*, and affected people's thinking of the *qin*.

The first step in making the *qin* is selecting the wood. The earliest extant text to mention the wood for *qin* is “Tribute of Yu” (“Yugong” 禹貢) chapter of *the Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚書): “[Xuzhou’s] tributes are earth of five colors, variegated pheasants of the Yu Valley, the solitary paulownia tree from the southern slopes of Mount Yi, floating musical stones at the banks of the Si River, the oyster pearls of the Huaiyi barbarian, and fish” 厥貢惟土五色，羽畎夏翟，嶧陽孤桐，泗濱浮磬，淮夷蠙珠暨魚。<sup>45</sup> The brief description here indicates that excellent paulownia trees grew on Mount Yi’s southern slopes and provided suitable material for constructing two musical instruments, the *qin* and the *se*. In *The Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing* 詩經), the poem “When Ding Culminated at Night Fall” (“Ding zhi fang zhong” 定之方中) also has a line describing growing different trees in order to make the *qin* and the *se*: “Catalpas, paulownias, and lacquer-trees, that we may make *qin* and *se*” 椅桐梓漆，爰伐琴瑟。<sup>46</sup> The three woods, paulownia, catalpa, and lacquer-tree, were regarded as the prerequisite materials for making the *qin*. According to *The Book of the Qin* written in the Song dynasty, the paulownia wood was always used to fabricate the upper board of the *qin*, the catalpa was used to fabricate the lower board, and the lacquer-tree produces lacquer, which was used to cover the surface of the *qin*.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, and Liu Qiyu 刘起鈞, annot., *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun* 尚書校釋譯論 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), p. 612. Here I use the translation of Bernhard Kalgren with slight revision, see Bernhard Kalgren, trans., *The Book of Documents*, in *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 22 (1950): 14.

<sup>46</sup> Cheng Junying 程俊英, and Jiang Jianyuan 蔣見元, eds. and annot., *Shijing zhuxi* 詩經注析 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), pp. 136-137. I use the translation of Arthur Waley with slight revision, see Arthur Waley, trans., *the Book of Songs: The Ancient Chinese Classic of Poetry*, ed. Joseph Allen (New York: Grove Press, 1996), p. 42.

<sup>47</sup> *Qinyuan yaolu*, in *Zhongguo gudai yinyue wenxian jicheng di'erji* 中國古代音樂文獻集成第二輯, eds. Wang Yaohua 王耀華 and Fang Baochuan 方寶川, Vol.11 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan, 2012), p.64.

Beyond *The Book of Documents* and *The Classic of Poetry* and so on, later literary authors continued to describe the wood as the material used making the *qin*, especially paulownia wood. In the rhapsody “Seven Stimuli” (“Qi fa” 七發), the Han dynasty poet Mei Sheng 枚乘 (d. 140 BCE) describes the emotive power of *qin* music, associating it with the material from which the *qin* is made, the paulownia tree:

The paulownia trees of Longmen are bare of branches to a height of one hundred feet. Their trunks are gnarled and twisted, their roots spread out and divide. Above is a thousand-*ren* peak, below lies a hundred-*zhang* flume. A rapid current, eddying waves, throb and pulsate there. The roots are half dead, half alive. In winter violent winds, whirling sleet, and flying snow lash them. In summer rolls of thunder shake them. At dawn the oriole and *gandan* bird sing there; at dusk a wandering hen and lost bird sleep there. A lonely swan screams at daybreak from the top; a jungle pheasant cries mournfully as it soars below.<sup>48</sup>

龍門之桐，高百尺而無枝。中鬱結之輪菌，根扶疏以分離。上有千仞之峯，下臨百丈之谿。湍流溯波，又澹淡之。其根半死半生。冬則烈風漂霰、飛雪之所激也，夏則雷霆、霹靂之所感也。朝則鸝黃、鴉鳴鳴焉，暮則羈雌、迷鳥宿焉。獨鵠晨號乎其上，鷓鴣哀鳴翔乎其下。

This passage describes a secluded and precipitous mountain setting in which the paulownia tree was grown. The extreme severity of the environment made the tree tall and special, thereby imbuing the music of the *qin* with melancholy and arousing commiseration in the listeners. Such descriptions of the paulownia tree and *qin* music by Mei Sheng inspired later authors and initiated the fashion of composing rhapsodies on a specific musical instrument or art form during the Han and pre-Tang periods.<sup>49</sup> In some of these rhapsodies devoted to the *qin*, similar

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<sup>48</sup> Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531), ed., *Wenxuan* 文選, annot. Li Shan (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 34.1562. Here I use the translation by David Knechtges and Jerry Swanson with slight revision. See David Knechtges, and Jerry Swanson, “Seven Stimuli for the Prince: the Ch’i-fa of Mei Ch’eng,” *Monumenta Serica* 29 (1970-71): 108-109.

<sup>49</sup> The rhapsodies on music composed during Han and Wei-Jin periods belongs to one branch of the large genre, “rhapsodies on things” (*yongwu fu* 詠物賦), which are usually short pieces written in simple language on a single subject. The earliest rhapsody entirely devoted to music that survives today is Wang Bao’s 王褒 (ca. 84-53 BCE) “Rhapsody on the Musical Pipe” (“Dongxiao fu” 洞簫賦). It inaugurated the trend of setting certain musical instruments or art forms as the subject of the rhapsody. This rhapsody consists of four parts: the description of the environment where the wood for the pipe grows; the process of making the pipe; the description of the music of the

descriptions of the paulownia tree can be found, stressing the links between the nature of the wood and the sound and moving power of the *qin*. Xi Kang, one of the most famous cultural figures of the pre-Tang period, also mentions in his “Rhapsody of the *Qin*” that the best material for making a *qin* is the wood of a paulownia tree grown on high mountains. As a steadfast opponent of the vogue of emphasizing sadness in music, however, Xi Kang figures the paulownia tree as belonging to a region that abounds with beautiful creatures and valuable local products. Praising the *qin* as the noblest among various musical instruments, Xi Kang also links the environment where the tree grows to the nature of the wood, which all together influences the character and musical quality of the *qin*.<sup>50</sup>

The texts on *qin*-making composed during the Song dynasty inherit the basic statement from *The Book of Documents*, while unlike the rhapsodies composed during Han and Wei-Jin period, their focus shifts from spectacular and imaginative literary descriptions of the environment that produces the wood to the quality of the wood and how the craftsmen process it in practice. *The Book of the Qin* thus mentions that the best wood for making a *qin* comes from “the lonely paulownia tree grown on the southern slope of a mountain” 山之阳孤桐.<sup>51</sup> Unlike in

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pipe; the influence of the pipe music on humans and the natural world. This four-fold structure was influential and had been adopted by a number of later authors in writing rhapsodies on musical instruments. The “Rhapsody on Musical Pipes” also initiated the tradition of emphasizing the sadness feature of music, as it opens with an account of a very remote and precipitous mountain setting, and describes the blind players as full of sorrow. The music of the pipe is filled with emotion, which arouses the commiseration and grievance of the listeners. The rhapsodies on music reached its greatest florescence during the Wei-Jin period. Including the excerpts preserved in later compilations, there are more than twenty rhapsodies on music dated to this period. The topics of them include various musical instruments such as the *qin*, the *zheng*, the *jia*, the *konghou*, and the *pipa*, as well as different types of musical performances such as singing, dancing, and whistling. Among these rhapsodies, most famous ones are Xi Kang’s “Rhapsody on the *Qin*” (“*Qin fu*” 琴賦), Pan Yue’s 潘岳 (247-300) “Rhapsody on the Reed-Organ” (“*Sheng fu*” 笙賦) and Cheng Gongsui’s 成公綏 (231-273) “Rhapsody on Whistling” (“*Xiao fu*” 嘯賦), all of which are preserved in the *Wenxuan*. For Chinese scholarship on these rhapsodies, see Ma Jigao 馬積高, *Fushi* 賦史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987).

<sup>50</sup> Dai Mingyang 戴明揚, ed. and annot., *Xi Kang ji jiaozhu* 嵇康集校注 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1978), p. 82.

<sup>51</sup> *Qinyuan yaolu*, p. 64.

Mei Sheng's or Xi Kang's rhapsodies, however, that text does not elaborate on the environment in which the paulownia tree grew, but only describes how one should assess the quality of the wood and make the best use of it. Another *qin*-making text composed during the same period, "The Secret Rules of *Qin* Craftsmen" ("Zhuojiang mijue" 斫匠秘訣), also preserved in the same encyclopedia, points out specifically that there are five kinds of paulownia wood with distinctive sounds, a fact to which craftsmen should pay special attention when they select the wood.<sup>52</sup> "Master Biluo's Principles of *Qin*-making" by Shi Ruli 石汝礪 (fl. 11<sup>th</sup> c.), a scholar of classics and music in the Northern Song period, further states that due to different attributes and properties of paulownia wood and catalpa wood, the sizes of the upper and lower parts of the *qin* should be adjusted accordingly.<sup>53</sup>

Returning to the earlier sources, such a shift of focus can also be seen in other steps in *qin*-making. In "Seven Stimuli," Mei Sheng writes about the entire process of making a *qin*:

Then, as the season turns its back on fall and edges into winter, the master of the *qin*, Zhi, is ordered to cut one (paulownia tree) for a *qin*; wild silkworm threads are used to make the strings. Orphans' sash pins serve as the *yin*, grieving widows' earrings act as the *yue*.<sup>54</sup>

於是背秋涉冬，使琴摯斫斬以為琴，野繭之絲以為絃，孤子之鉤以為隱，九寡之珥以為約。

This short passage includes various steps of *qin*-making: cutting the wood, making the strings, installing decorations and *hui* studs.<sup>55</sup> Zhi refers to a legendary figure who possessed excellent *qin* skills and lived in the state of Lu during the Zhou dynasty. The "Orphans' sash pins" and

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<sup>52</sup> *Qinyuan yaolu*, p. 122.

<sup>53</sup> *Qinyuan yaolu*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>54</sup> *Wenxuan*, 34.1562. Commentators differ in their explanations of *yin* ("hidden") and *yue* ("restrained"), but these terms very likely refer to ornaments and *hui* studs on the *qin*.

<sup>55</sup> The *qin* has 13 *hui* studs marking the harmonic nodes running along the far side of the first string, which traditionally are usually made from jade, gold, or mother of pearl.

“grieving widows’ earrings” add to the mystical feel of the passage, their grievance and sorrow permeating the *qin* and informing its music with strong emotional effects.

All of the *qin*-making steps mentioned in “Seven Stimuli” are elaborated in more concrete detail in Song dynasty *qin*-making texts. For example, where “Seven Stimuli” mentions that the right time for cutting the wood is at the end of autumn and the beginning of winter, *The Book of the Qin* specifies that “if the circumference of the wood is smaller than one *chi* and five *cun*, but bigger than nine *cun*, then one should use the catalpa tree harvested in the first month of the Xia calendar, which is the eleventh month of our present calendar...If the circumference of the wood is smaller than five but bigger than three *chi*, then people should use the catalpa tree harvested in the twelfth month of the present calendar” 圍一尺五寸以下九寸以上，用夏正月則十一月斬之楸木...圍三尺以上五尺以下，亦十二月斬之.<sup>56</sup> The short description of string-making in “Seven Stimuli” is also expanded in *The Book of the Qin* into a whole chapter, “Rules for Making Strings,” which expounds on the procedure of string-making, including selecting the right silk, rubbing the strings, boiling them and installing them. The last section of “Rules of Making Strings” includes illustrations of three of the tools used in installing strings: a wooden tool that resembles a human palm, a shaft, and a bamboo tube.

The legendary anecdote of how the Han dynasty author and musician Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133-192) encountered his burnt-tail *qin* is also reworked into a whole account of the *qin*-curing process in the Song dynasty *qin*-making texts. The original story of Cai Yong and the burnt-tail *qin* is found in the “Biography of Cai Yong” in *The Book of Later Han (Hou Han shu 後漢書)*. It recounts how Cai Yong one day came across a woodman burning a piece of paulownia wood.

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<sup>56</sup> *Qinyuan yaolu*, p. 66. In the Song dynasty, one *chi* roughly equaled 31.2 centimeters, and one *cun* equaled 3.12 centimeters.

When Cai heard the snapping sound as the wood burned, he realized that it would be an excellent material for a *qin*, so he saved it from the fire, bought it from the woodman and made it into a *qin*, whose tail still had burn-marks.<sup>57</sup> If we check into the making of other stringed instruments in the West, we will also discover similar process, which is to dry the wood in ovens so as to produce excellent sounds. Edward Heron-Allen, who served an apprenticeship with Georges Chanot (1801-1883), a preeminent violin maker in Europe, in his *Violin-Making, As It Was and Is: Being a Historical, Theoretical and Practical Treatise on the Science and Art of Violin-Making for the Use of Violin Makers and Players, Amateur and Professional*, first published in 1884, states that drying of the wood is necessary to the construction of violins, and early violin makers also baked the wood.<sup>58</sup> The Cai Yong story would be an aetiology, a story that gives the supposed origins of a practice. *The Book of the Qin* also includes drying the wood as a necessary step in *qin*-making, but reworks Cai Yong's anecdote into a hands-on manual that covers every detail of the process:

Therefore (people) construct a cave so as to bake it (the wood) with coals... After baking it for more than five days but less than ten days, the wood will seem to have smoky colors, and then one should weigh it to determine if it is dry or wet. If it is no longer decreasing in weight, then the wood has already been dried, so the baking process should be ended... The reason why Cai Yong's "Burnt-Tail" *qin* produced excellent sounds was that it was what had survived the fire.<sup>59</sup>

乃作燒竈以炭火爆之...五日以上十日以下，其木似有煙色，乃秤其輕重，以定乾濕。斤兩不減，則其木為干，乃止曝焉..故蔡邕焦尾琴其聲妙者，蓋燼余也。

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<sup>57</sup> Fan Ye 范曄 (398-445), *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書, annot. Li Xian 李賢 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 60.2004.

<sup>58</sup> Edward Heron-Allen, *Violin-Making: A Historical and Practical Guide* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2005), p.129. For the scholarship on the construction of violin and its history, also see Robin Stowell, *The Early Violin and Viola: A Practical Guide Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), and Chris Johnson, Roy Courtinall, and Yehudi Menuhin, *The Art of Violin Making* (London: R. Hale, 1999).

<sup>59</sup> *Qinyuan yaolu*, p. 66.

While still incorporating mystical or literary elements from previous texts on the *qin*, the *qin*-making texts in the Song focus more on practicality. They not only record the steps in making a *qin*, from selecting the wood to installing the strings, but also provide exhaustive lists of ingredients regarding various steps of fabrication. For example, in discussing the lacquering of the instrument, *The Book of the Qin* notes that the maker will need a number of materials, such as:

One *jin* of good-quality clear raw lacquer, six *liang* of clear sesame oil, two *cun* of cassia nomame, two *qian* of smoky coal, one *qian* of lead powder, and one fruit of Myrobalan. Use the coal fire to decoct them together and wait until the bubbles resemble eyes of myna birds arise. Use the iron knife to test if the lacquer is stringy, and then use the cotton to filter it. This process is called screening the light.<sup>60</sup>

好清生漆一斤，清麻油六兩，皂角二寸，油煙煤二錢，鉛粉一錢，訶子一箇。右用炭火同熬煎，候見鷓鴣眼上。用鐵刀上試牽得絲為度，綿濾過為翳光也。

This passage bears a resemblance to a professional chef's detailed recipe in the way that it provides a comprehensive list of ingredients that are required for lacquer decocting, and lays out instructions for the procedure.

It is difficult for readers nowadays to know whether Song people indeed followed these *qin*-making texts in their actual construction of the *qin*, but what is noticeable in these texts in the Song period is the focus on material aspects of the *qin*. They list the sizes and shapes of various parts of the *qin*, how to fix the upper and lower boards, the characteristics of the ideal material, steps in lacquering the *qin*, and how to make and install the strings. In this respect they seem like hands-on how-to manuals for *qin* lovers in the Song, which serve as a special lens through which to view craftsmanship, craft knowledge production, and concepts about music during the Song dynasty.<sup>61</sup> Compared to texts on the production of other objects, which appear mainly in the

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<sup>60</sup> *Qinyuan yaolu*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>61</sup> During the Song dynasty, a number of "treatises and lists" (*pulu* 譜錄) appear, many of which contain information not only regarding appraisal and connoisseurship of objects such as inkstone and incense, but also about their manufacturing process. Although the Song *qin*-making texts do not belong to this group of writings, they share



Ming and Qing dynasties and are systematically described in the Ming text, *The Works of Heaven and the Inception of Things* (*Tiangong kaiwu* 天工開物) by Song Yingxing 宋應星 (1587-1666), the professional texts on *qin*-making appeared much earlier.<sup>62</sup>

## II. The Price of the *Qin*

Closely associated with the prevalence of *qin*-making texts in the Song was the flourishing exchange of instruments in the marketplace. Although some *qin* went directly into the imperial collection or government bureaus for official usage, such as being played in ritual and sacrificial musical ensembles, or were used for the entertainment of imperial rulers, most *qin* entered the market and became saleable objects. Here several questions arise: how much did a *qin* cost in the Song? What were the important factors that determined its price? How did the buying and selling of the *qin* influence literati's lives? Though texts that systematically record the prices of the *qin* are lacking, there are some Song *biji* do mention the prices of certain *qin* in passing. For example, *The Sheng River Banquet Talks* by Wang Pizhi 王闢之 (b. 1031) records the changing prices of a *qin* named "Ice Clear" (*Bingqing* 冰清) over a period of time:

Chen Shengyu in Shanchi was famous for his knowledge of the *qin*. When he was a young man in Qiantang (i.e., Hangzhou), he borrowed Shen Zhen's *qin* ("Ice Clear") to play and was extremely fond of it. After thirty years, Shengyu held the position of Chamberlain for Ceremonials. Just by chance Shen Zhen's nephew Shen Shu was selling the "Ice Clear" at the price of a hundred thousand coins, but Chen was not able to afford it. After a short while, Shen Shu passed away. His wife was paid twenty-thousand coins and the *qin* was sold to monk Qingdao, and afterward it fell into the hands of the Grand One Daoist Priest Yang Ying.

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similar interest with *pulu* in providing, classifying and managing specialized knowledge of man-made or natural things. For scholarship on *pulu*, see Martina Siebert, *Pulu: Abhandlungen und Auflistungen zu materieller Kultur und Naturkunde im traditionellen China*, *Opera Sinologica* 17; Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, chapter 3.

<sup>62</sup> Dagmar Schäfer examines the philosophical foundation of *The Works of Heaven and the Inception of Things* and its connection with social and economic changes of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century China. See Dagmar Schäfer, *The crafting of the 10,000 Things: Knowledge and Technology in Seventeenth-Century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Long after, Shengyu finally obtained the *qin* at a price of fifty-thousand coins, and he exceptionally valued it as his private possession.<sup>63</sup>

山在陳聖與名知琴，少在錢塘，從振借琴彈，酷愛之。後三十年，聖與官太常，會振姪述鬻冰清，索百千不售。未幾，述卒，其妻得二十千，鬻於僧清道，轉落於太一道士楊英。久之，聖與以五十千購得，極珍秘之。

“Ice Clear” was made by the Lei family in the Tang dynasty, and bore inscriptions attributed to two famous Tang poets, Du Mu 杜牧 (803-852) and Li Shangyin 李商隱 (ca. 813-858). The protagonist of this passage, Chen Shengyu, is unknown today, but Shen Zhen, the original owner of “Ice Clear,” was the cousin of the renowned Northern Song politician and author Shen Kuo 沈括 (1031-1095). It can be deduced that Chen lived sometime in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In this passage, the process by which he managed to obtain his beloved *qin* was full of twists and turns. At first, he could not afford the price of a hundred-thousand coins to purchase it. After the owner’s death, the *qin* was sold at a comparatively low price and passed through various hands. It was finally purchased by Chen at a price of fifty-thousand coins. During the Song, “thousand” was a colloquial form of the standard unit of one thousand bronze coins (usually known as *guan* 貫), which was roughly equivalent to one tael of silver. Though it is difficult to compare the price of “Ice Clear” to the average incomes of the Song, because those are always given in quantities of rice rather than coin, with the market price of rice fluctuating considerably, a rule of thumb is that the average income of a soldier (a figure scholars often use for average incomes in general) in the Northern Song was 7.5 *dan* 石 per year, and the average price of rice was around 800 coins per *dan*. We can roughly calculate that average annual income in Northern Song was 6 *guan* per year. Salary levels were much higher in the Southern Song, roughly double, but that still only comes to an average annual income of 12 *guan* per year. In one

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<sup>63</sup> Wang Pizhi, *Shengshui yantan lu*, *QSBJ*, 8.88.

memorial to the throne composed in 1091, Su Shi mentioned that the contemporary price of one *mu* (roughly 0.17 acre) of high-quality farming land was no more than 2 *guan*. In other words, the price of “Ice Clear” was at least twenty-five times the price of one *mu* farming land, and more than six times the average annual income. Buying “Ice Clear” was something like buying a Porsche.<sup>64</sup>

Zhang Bangji 張邦基 (fl. 12<sup>th</sup> c.), in *The Random Jottings from the Ink Villa (Mozhuang Manlu 墨莊漫錄)*, records that the monk Shi Zhaokuang 釋照曠 (fl. 12<sup>th</sup> c.) discovered an old *qin* named “Frost Bell” 霜鏞, made by the Lei family in the Tang, and managed to repair and restore it to its original condition. It was later sold to a eunuch at court: “Eunuch Chen Yanhe obtained it for seven-hundred thousand coins. He furthermore used horse-price pearls to make its *hui* studs and white jade to make its pegs.” 中官陳彥和以七百千得之，別以馬價珠為徽，白玉為軫。<sup>65</sup> This record later notes that the time that Chen bought “Frost Bell” should be a little before 1127, which was the last year of the Northern Song period. During the last few years of the Northern Song, salaries continued to rise, but the price of seven-hundred thousand coins was still an astronomical amount of money. The buyer Chen Yanhe not only paid this high price to purchase the *qin*, but also embellished it expensively after he obtained it. One more example was the *qin* named “Exquisite Jade” 玲瓏玉, which is mentioned in the *Clear Bliss of the Grotto*

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<sup>64</sup> Here I owe special thanks to Professor Richard Von Glahn for his explanations of Song dynasty commodity price and people’s annual income. For more details about commodity prices in the Song, see Richard Von Glahn, *The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>65</sup> *Mozhuang manlu*, *QSBJ*, 4.55.

*Heaven*: “There was a high official who purchased it with a thousand *min* and left” 有達官以千緡市之而去。<sup>66</sup>

Besides texts that mention high-priced *qin* that were antique instruments made by famous craftsmen before the Song, records of normal *qin* are mostly no longer extant today. There are poems composed during this period, however, that describe the buying, selling, and pawning of the *qin* by ordinary literati, from which readers get a glimpse of how such exchanges of the *qin* influenced literati’s everyday lives. For example, Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (1187-1260), in “Replying to a Friend” (“Da yousheng” 答友生), states: “My household has added to old debts by purchasing a *qin*; my kitchen has diminished our breakfasts in order to feed the cranes” 家爲買琴添舊債，厨因養鶴減晨炊。<sup>67</sup> Lu You 陸遊 (1125-1210), in “Playfully Composed Poems on Idleness and Leisure” (“Xiyong xianshi” 戲詠閒適), writes: “After pawning my clothes, I immediately buy the materials to mend my *qin*; Knocking on my gate I occasionally hear people coming to request medicine” 典衣旋買修琴料，叩戶時聞請藥人。<sup>68</sup> The Southern Song encyclopedia *Splendid Flower Valley* (*Jinxiu wanhua gu* 錦繡萬花谷) includes a poem by Su Shi with these lines: “Though the garden is narrow, I still grow medical herbs; though life is poor, I still buy a *qin*” 庭園縱窄猶栽藥，活計雖貧亦買琴。<sup>69</sup> None of these poems specifically

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<sup>66</sup> *Dongtian qinglu*, *QSB*, 12. *Min* was the same unit as *guan* in the Song. According to the study of Cheng Minsheng 程民生, with one thousand *guan* one would be able to construct a median-sized boat in 1135 in Jiangnan region and build a Buddhist dharma hall that occupied the area of fifty-seven square meters in 1269 in Chaozhou, Fujian province. See Cheng Minsheng, *Songdai wujia yanjiu* 宋代物價研究 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2008), pp. 605-606.

<sup>67</sup> Xin Gengru 辛更儒, ed. and annot., *Liu Kezhuang ji jianjiao* 劉克莊集箋校 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 1.35.

<sup>68</sup> Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯, and Ma Yazhong 馬亞中 et al., eds. and annot., *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu* 劍南詩稿校注, in *Lu You quanji jiaozhu* 陸遊全集校注, Vol. 9 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2011), 18.458.

<sup>69</sup> *Jinxiu wanhua gu*, in *Siku quanshu* 924, 311.5b.

lists or records the prices of the *qin* in the Song, but all of the three poets associate their purchase or repair of the *qin* with the poverty that they were currently experiencing. For Liu Kezhuang and Lu You, to buy or mend a *qin* might even mean that they had to pawn clothes or take on debt. Whatever the reality of their finances, the image of a man pawning his own clothes to mend a *qin* may have been part of their self-fashioning as someone who was frugal but dedicated, who would rather sacrifice basic necessities of life in order to exchange a *qin*, which represented spiritual and artistic aspirations. It is also apparent that the *qin*, bought and sold at a fair price in the marketplace, was an important household possession, representing not only monetary value but also cultural capital.

### III. Antiquarianism and Famous Brands of the *Qin*

In *Collection of Hundreds of Valuables and All Treasures* (*Baibao zongzhen ji* 百寶總珍集), a Southern Song curio dealer discusses the standards of selecting the *qin* during his time. It begins with a seven-syllable quatrain:

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 絲桐琴阮事更深， | The matters of the <i>qin</i> and <i>ruan</i> <sup>70</sup> are even more abstruse. |
| 古舊包藏貴似金。 | If it is an antique piece, it will be as expensive as gold.                         |
| 新者價低休強識， | Although the price of new <i>qin</i> is low, do not try to appraise it by yourself. |
| 尋師拈弄問緣因。 | You should seek a master, play with it, and ask for details. <sup>71</sup>          |

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<sup>70</sup> Ruan 阮 is a plucked string musical instrument that traditionally attributed to the Six Dynasties scholar Ruan Xian 阮咸 (fl. 3<sup>rd</sup> c.) as its inventor. It is a lute with a fretted neck, a circular body, and four strings.

<sup>71</sup> *Baibao zongzhen ji*, in *Xuanlantang congshu sanji* 玄覽堂叢書三輯, ed. Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸, Vol.31 (Nanjing: Nanjing tushuguan, 1955). Professor Li Min at UCLA has done some research on this text and presented it in the lecture series for China Academy of Art in 2017. He argues that although *Baibao zongzhen ji* mostly served as a guide for the antique dealer and lay people in their market practices, it nevertheless showed the influence of literati culture on folk society and manifested the role that the cult of antiquarianism played in the Song dynasty marketplace.

This short passage captures the key factor in determining the price of the *qin*: its history. If the *qin* was newly made, the price would be comparatively low. That *qin* such as “Ice Clear” and “Frost Bell” sold at such high prices was largely due to the fact that they were antique *qin* made before the Song. The Song dynasty witnessed the emergence of antiquarianism in the literati circle, particularly a new discipline of “the study of bronze and stone” (*jinshi xue* 金石學), which generated collections of items such as bronze vessels and bells, stone steles, and ink rubbings of inscriptions on objects among literati.<sup>72</sup> According to Wu Hung, such an antiquarian movement was “an intellectual practice championed by people who try to rediscover the past from studying ancient remains.”<sup>73</sup> It was during this period that the cataloguing, and studying of antique objects and their inscriptions started to be systematically practiced, and antique *qin* were also regarded as objects of wonder and as embodiments of the fabulous cultural power of previous dynasties that could provide a link of great immediacy with the past.

Even as early as in the Han dynasty, the *qin* was described as a musical instrument that could provoke people’s thoughts of the past and bring the past into the present. Playing some *qin* tunes was regarded as a method of learning that was as important as reading written texts, both of which would make conversing with ancient sages possible: “One should live free and think peacefully, play the *qin* and read books, pursue and observe the remote past and these worthy ministers. With scholarship and learning, day by day he entertains himself” 間居靜思，鼓琴讀

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<sup>72</sup> For scholarship on *jinshi xue* during the Song dynasty, please see Yunchiahn C. Sena, *Bronze and Stone: the Cult of Antiquity in Song Dynasty China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019); Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, chapter 1; Hsu Ya-hwei 許雅惠, “Antiquarians and Politics: Antiquarian Culture of the Northern Song, 960-1127,” in *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspective*, ed. Alain Schnapp et al. (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2014), pp. 230-248.

<sup>73</sup> Wu Hung, ed., *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture* (Chicago: Center for the Art of East Asia, University of Chicago, 2010), p. 12.

書，追觀上古及賢大夫，學問講辯，日以自娛。<sup>74</sup> The “Hereditary Houses of Confucius” 孔子世家 in the *Records of the Grand Historian (Shi ji 史記)* records how Confucius kept practicing the *qin* melody “Tune of King Wen” (“Wenwang cao” 文王操), and finally was able to visualize the image of King Wen: “I finally obtained what he looked like: his skin tone was dark; his figure was tall and lean; his eyes were like gazing afar into distance. He seemed as if he was governing four states. If he was not King Wen, who else could he be?” 丘得其為人，黯然而黑，幾然而長，眼如望羊，如王四國，非文王其誰能為此也？<sup>75</sup> By mastering the *qin* melody that was attributed to King Wen, Confucius was able to communicate with the past and successfully visualize the ideal sage king through music. The acoustic effect of the *qin* allowed the player to give rein to a visual imagination. Van Gulik in *The Lore of the Chinese Lute* quotes from a renowned *qin* musician and collector Yang Zongji 楊宗稷 (1863-1931), who mentioned that antique *qin* was not only an object for appreciative study by cultural connoisseurs, but also stood out for the fact that it could be appreciated and be played, “giving an impression of meeting the ancients in person, in the same room, and talking with them” 如與古人晤談一室。<sup>76</sup> Although it was almost impossible for Song literati to get a *qin* that was dated back to the Han dynasty or earlier as most bronze vessels were, an antique piece from the Tang was sufficient to allow their imaginations to run wild and connect with the past.

Closely associated with the favoring of “*guqin*” was an obsession with certain trademarked or branded *qin*. The Song dynasty was a period when a considerable number of craftsmen started to achieve national recognition, and the addition of their names would add

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<sup>74</sup> He Ning 何寧, ed. and annot., *Huainanzi jishi 淮南子集釋* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 19.1345.

<sup>75</sup> Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145-86 BCE), comp., *Shi ji 史記* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 47.2320.

<sup>76</sup> *The Lore of the Chinese Lute*, p. 18.

value to their products in the marketplace. During this period, a *qin* made by a renowned contemporary *qin* maker was noteworthy, while a piece from a maker from previous dynasties would have even more value. With the full formation of a broadly aestheticized set of criteria, the individuation of the *qin*, made explicit by the signature and seals of the artist, came to the fore. The obsession with trademarked *qin* was especially reflected in people's fervor for instruments made in the Tang dynasty by the Lei family in Sichuan. A number of Lei family members were *qin*-makers, including Lei Yan 雷儼 (fl. 8<sup>th</sup> c.) and Lei Wei 雷威 (fl. 8<sup>th</sup> c.), to name just two. The Lei *qin* had already become famous in the Tang and were even more highly regarded in the Song. According to Su Shi, what was so marvelous about a Lei family *qin* was its special construction and design: "its bridges are low so people cannot insert fingers under the strings, while the strings do not scatter. This is the most marvelous feature of the *qin*, and only a Lei *qin* can achieve this" 其嶽不容指，而弦不散，此最琴之妙，而雷琴獨然。<sup>77</sup> If the bridge of the *qin* is too high, the high tension in the strings will make it difficult for players to press them down, and they will sometimes even hurt the fingers of their left hand; if the bridge is too low, though the strings are easier to pluck, they are loose, so the sound produced is weak and scattered. According to Su Shi, though the bridges of the Lei *qin* are low, the sound is still good, and players can press the strings without sacrificing the musical quality. Yao Kuan 姚寬 (1105-1162), in his *Forests of Words From Western Creek* (*Xixi congyu* 西溪叢語), lists eight *qin* that were exceptionally famous in his time, six of which were made by the Lei family.<sup>78</sup> The "Frost Bell" mentioned in the *Random Jottings from the Ink Villa* was also a Lei *qin*, and its sounds

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<sup>77</sup> Su Shi, "Ten Pieces of Random Writings on the *Qin*" ("Zashu qinshi shishou" 雜書琴事十首), *Su Shi wenji* 蘇軾文集, ed. and annot. Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 71.2243.

<sup>78</sup> *Xixi congyu*, *QSBJ*, 1.16-17.



were “clear and far-reaching, surpasses the volume of several others played together. If it had not been made by the Lei family, it could not easily achieve this” 修成彈之，清越聲壓數琴，非雷氏未易臻此也。<sup>79</sup> What amazed the Song people about the Lei *qin* was their special construction and spectacular musical quality.

Through poems written by Song authors, we can catch a glimpse of how people in the Song treasured their Lei *qin*. Zhou Wenpu 周文璞 (fl. 13<sup>th</sup> c.), in the “Song of the Old *Qin*” (“Guqin ge” 古琴歌), describes how a friend of his discovered a Lei *qin* with surprise and joy in a remote country inn:

山人袖携古琴來，  
形模拙醜腹破穿。

上兩金字亦殘漫，

自云得自十年前。

十年前宿野店間，  
野店岑寂無炊煙。

只將百錢乞翁媪，

回買濕薪煨澗泉。

老翁持出一木段，  
刀痕鑿痕斧痕滿。

秀才望見三嘆羨，

學琴以後何曾見。

此是成都雷氏爲，  
揩摩雷字分明現。

The Mountain man came with an old *qin* in his arms,  
Whose shape and appearance were clumsy and ugly,  
with its belly broken.

Two golden characters on the *qin* were also  
scattered;

The mountain man said that he'd obtained it ten  
years before.

Ten years before, he had lodged in a wild inn,  
A wild inn remote, tranquil, with no smoke from  
cooking fires.

He paid just a hundred coins to the old couple who  
ran the inn,

To buy a piece of wet firewood so he could use it to  
boil the spring water from the valley.

The old man came out with a piece of wood,  
Which was full of cutting marks from knives,  
chisels, and axes.

The scholar sighed in admiration for several times  
after he saw it;

When in his *qin* studies had he ever had the chance  
to see such a great piece?

This one was made by the Lei family of Chengdu;  
After being wiped and polished, the character “Lei”  
was clearly visible.

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<sup>79</sup> *Mozhuang manlu*, 4.55.

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|----------|--|
| 持歸修治調曲成， | He took the <i>qin</i> home, mended it, and successfully tuned it;                         |
| 曲成他人不肯聞。 | When a melody was played on it, (it was so touching that) people could not bear to listen. |
| 初彈羸里可釋憾， | First, when he played the “Tune of Youli,” people’s regrets were eased;                    |
| 再鼓廣陵如雪冤。 | Then, when he played the “Tune of Guangling,” it was as if a wrong was redressed.          |
| 將歸古操次第傳， | Then in sequence he gave the ancient “Tune of Being About to Return;                       |
| 龍入我舟何可憐。 | With a dragon entering my boat, how wonderful it was! <sup>80</sup>                        |

In this poem, Zhou contrasts two stages of the *qin*’s “life:” once discarded and sold as a piece of valueless firewood, later being recognized and treasured as a precious Lei *qin*. As Igor Kopytoff says: “the same thing may be treated as commodity at one time and not at another. And finally, the same thing may, at the same time, be seen as a commodity by one person and as something else by another. Such shifts and differences in whether and when a thing is a commodity reveal a moral economy that stands behind the objective economy of visible transactions.”<sup>81</sup> The mechanism of *qin*’s price fluctuation in the Song did not operate entirely on the basis of its use value, but was determined by its history, material, maker, appearance, musical quality, and most importantly, how people, especially the literati class, viewed and appreciated it. *Qin* lovers such as Shen Zhen could wait for decades to purchase the “Ice Clear,” while for some others, a Lei *qin* could just be discarded like a piece of firewood. After the mountain man in this poem realized that the firewood was in fact a Lei *qin*, the physical deformity could no longer cover up its value. With its value being recognized, and appearance and function restored, numerous *qin* tunes about

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<sup>80</sup> *QSS*, 2832.33722.

<sup>81</sup> *Social Life of Things*, p. 64.

ancient sages were able to be performed on it. Youli was the place where King Wen of Zhou used to be detained, and the “Tune of Youli” (“Youli cao” 羑里操) was traditionally attributed to him. The “Tune of Guangling” (“Guangling san” 廣陵散) was regarded as describing the story of the heroic assassin Niezheng 聶政 (d. 397 BCE) in the Han state during the Warring States Period. This tune was especially renowned also due to the fact that Xi Kang excelled at playing this piece. The “Tune of Being About to Return” (“Jianggui cao” 將歸操) was attributed to Confucius, describing how Confucius at first accepted the invitation from the powerful minister Zhao Jianzi 趙簡子 (d. 476 BCE) to serve in the Jin state, but afterward decided to return to the state of Zheng once learning that Zhao had killed the virtuous official Dou Mingdu 竇鳴犢 (553-494 BCE).<sup>82</sup> The last line of this poem alludes to Han Yu’s poem with the same title of the *qin* tune, in which Han writes: “When I stepped into (the river) when the water was shallow, rocks hindered my feet; when I took occasion when water was deep, a dragon entered my boat” 涉其淺兮，石齧我足；乘其深兮，龍入我舟。<sup>83</sup> These lines on the surface are about how Confucius was hampered by various obstacles in the river so that he decided to not to cross but return, but symbolically they describe his unwillingness to serve in the Jin state. Being valued again, the once discarded *Lei qin* produced music about the ancients so touching that audiences could not bear to listen.

There are more examples of how Song people favored the *Lei qin*. In “Matching the Rhymes of Monk Chongxi’s Poem on Hearing the *Qin*” (“Ciyun seng Chongxi wenqin ge” 次韻僧重喜聞琴歌), Zhao Bian 趙抃 (1008-1084) wrote: “What I used to treasure was a real *Lei qin*;

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<sup>82</sup> All these tunes are collected in Zhu Changwen’s *Qin shi*, in *Zhongguo gudai yinyue wenxian jicheng*, ser.2, vol. 2, pp.79-89.

<sup>83</sup> Han Yu, “Jianggui cao” 將歸操, *QTS*, 336.3761.

it had silk strings, jade pegs, and golden *hui*. I laid it on my knee during the daytime and held it in sleep during night; for all my life long it was the one who knew the sound” 我昔所寶真雷琴，絃絲軫玉徽黃金。晝橫膝上夕抱寢，平生與我為知音。<sup>84</sup> “The one who knows the tone” (*Zhiyin* 知音) alludes to the story of Boya 伯牙 and Ziqi 子期, which was preserved in *Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋):

Boya played the *qin*, and Zhong Ziqi listened to it. When Boya was playing and his intention dwelled on the Mount Tai, Zhong Ziqi said: “How great is the playing of the *qin*, as it is lofty as the Mount Tai.” After a short while, when Boya’s intention dwelled on flowing water, Zhong Ziqi said again: “How great is the playing of the *qin*, as it is rushing as flowing water.” After Zhong Ziqi died, Boya broke his *qin* and tore the strings, and never played the *qin* for the rest of his life, thinking that in the world there was no one who deserved him to play the *qin* for.<sup>85</sup>

伯牙鼓琴，鍾子期聽之，方鼓琴而志在太山，鍾子期曰：善哉乎鼓琴，巍巍乎若太山。少選之間，而志在流水，鍾子期又曰：善哉乎鼓琴，湯湯乎若流水。鍾子期死，伯牙破琴絕弦，終身不復鼓琴，以為世無足復為鼓琴者。

This text describes the mutual understanding of two persons. The image of Ziqi who could truly understand Boya’s intent through the medium of the *qin* music became the epitome of the ideal friend in later literature. The communal experience of the *qin* music became the ground for friendship, while the death of Ziqi forced such communal experience to stop. Regarding his treasured *Lei qin* as the closest friend, Zhao Bian not only played it during the day but also slept with it.

Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (1187-1269) wrote in “Mourning for Recluse Guo” (“Wan Guo chushi” 挽郭處士): “Having ardently loved the *Lei qin*, he should have been buried with it” 雷

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<sup>84</sup> *QSS*, 339.4133.

<sup>85</sup> Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷, annot., *Lüshi Chunqiu xin jiaoshi* 呂氏春秋新校釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 14.744.

葉酷愛應同殉,<sup>86</sup> from which we get a glimpse of how passionately fond of his Lei *qin* the recluse Guo was during his lifetime. Wu Zeli 吳則禮 (d. 1121) wrote in “Presented to Jiang Qibo” (“Zeng Jiang Qibo” 贈江器博): “Master is always fond of playing the *qin*; you prefer the Lei *qin* to the Yue *qin*,” 先生宿昔愛彈琴，不愛越琴愛雷琴。<sup>87</sup> Here the Yue *qin* is a *qin* made by another famous Tang craftsman named Zhang Yue 張越. In the two poems mentioned above, both poets use the verb “love” 愛 to describe the owners’ fondness of their Lei *qin*.

Besides the Lei family, there were also other famous makers of the *qin* that were favored by people in the Song, for example, the Lu family 陸家 and Zhang Yue during the Tang Dynasty were both renowned makers of instruments with great sound quality.<sup>88</sup> In spite of the fact that there were a number of other renowned *qin*-makers before and during the Song, the *qin* that sold at the best prices were still Lei *qin*. Even a *qin* with a long biography, if it was not made by the Lei family, might still be neglected. The *Miscellaneous Records of Awakening Alone* (*Duxing zazhi* 獨醒雜誌), a *biji* written by the early Southern Song scholar Zeng Minxing 曾敏行 (d. 1178), recorded an anecdote of an antique *qin*:

The world values *qin* made by the Lei family. A villager named Dong Shiliang had a *qin* that he thought was an old piece made by the Lei family. I saw it once but could not tell. During the Shaoxing reign period (1131-1162), a ministry commissioner happened to hear of this *qin* and wanted to obtain it to offer it to the Palace Treasury. At that time, Dong did not agree, so the commissioner borrowed it to examine it and then kept it. He paid five hundred taels of silver to Dong, and within the next few days he offered it to the Palace Treasury. The officials there examined it and said: “This *qin* is old and spectacular, but it would be wrong to identify it as a Lei *qin*.” They did not accept the *qin*.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Liu Kezhuang *ji jianjiao*, 2.83.

<sup>87</sup> *QSS*, 1267.14299.

<sup>88</sup> Shen Kuo, *Xin jiaozheng Mengxi bitan* 新校正夢溪筆談, ed. and annot., Hu Daojing 胡道靜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1957), 5.69.

<sup>89</sup> *Duxing zazhi*, in *QSB*, 3.142.

世寶雷琴，鄉人董時亮蓄一琴，以為雷氏舊物。予嘗見之，顧莫能辯也。紹興中，偶一部使者聞之，因願得以供上方。時亮未許，則借觀而固留之，以白金五百兩為謝，即日以獻內府。辨之，曰：「琴古且異，以為雷琴則欺矣。」卻不納。

Although this *qin* was both “old” and “spectacular,” since it was not made by the Lei family, it was still regarded as not being worthy of inclusion in the imperial collection. The missionary in the story thereupon returned the *qin* to Dong. It is apparent that the standard of judging a *qin*'s value here was based not on its history or quality, but mainly on its true maker.

#### IV. Fake *Qin*: Anxiety About Counterfeiting

The Song period saw the development of a commodity market and, at the same time, the beginning of the manufacture of fraudulent versions of real things. Ancient bronzes, paintings, calligraphy, and other kinds of objects for appreciative study by cultural connoisseurs were counterfeited for sale to unwitting consumers at high prices. As Craig Clunas states in his *Superfluous Things*, the high tide of art forging was usually intimately linked with the developed art market, and falsifications of subjects such as bronzes was noted as early as in the Northern Song by authors such as Ouyang Xiu, which show people's anxiety about forgery: “This appears to have happened from the twelfth century, when the first warnings against forgers and the first recipes allowing for the reproduction of antique patina on bronzes of recent vintage appear side by side in a text like *Records on Metal and Stone*.”<sup>90</sup>

As high prices were commanded by antique *qin*, especially those that bore the trademarks of famous craftsmen, a number of fake antique *qin* appeared. *Master Yuli* (*Yulizi* 郁離子), a

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<sup>90</sup> Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p.114.

collection of fables and parables composed by Liu Ji 劉基 (1311-1375) in the latter period of the Yuan dynasty, contains a fable about how a musician constructed a fine *qin* whose excellence was not recognized by court music officials simply because it was not an antique. He therefore took the *qin* home, had a lacquer artisan to add fake *craquelure* on its surface, and asked another artisan to add a fake ancient inscription on it. Afterward, he put the *qin* in a box and buried it for several years. When he disinterred the *qin* and again showed it to the court music officials, they regarded it as a priceless antique. This text, though composed in the Yuan, nevertheless summarizes the crucial steps in the process of forging an antique *qin*: adding tiny cracks, forging the inscriptions on the *qin*, and burying the *qin* to change its texture.<sup>91</sup>

For genuine old *qin*, tiny cracks on the its surface often suggest a long history of its lacquer. In Ouyang Xiu's essay "Account of the Three *Qin*" ("San *qin* ji" 三琴記), he mentions: "The lacquer will start to show tiny cracks only after a century" 其漆過百年始有斷紋.<sup>92</sup> In the "Distinguishing Antique *Qin*" ("Gu *qin* bian" 古琴辨) section of the *Clear Bliss of the Grotto Heaven*, Zhao Xigu mentions that tiny cracks are the manifestation of a *qin*'s history: "The antique *qin*'s tiny cracks are the evidence of its history, as the *qin* will not have tiny cracks unless it is more than five hundred years old. The older the *qin* is, the more tiny cracks it will possess" 古琴以斷紋為證，蓋琴不歷五百歲不斷，愈久則斷愈多.<sup>93</sup> The same text instructs the reader in methods of faking tiny cracks on the *qin*:

Those who fake tiny cracks apply thin rolling paper from Xinzhou to the *qin*, brush a layer of bright lacquer on top of it, and add ashes. When the paper falls apart, the tiny cracks appear. Some people heat the *qin* to a high temperature in a strong blaze in the winter, then cover it

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<sup>91</sup> Wei Jianyou 魏建猷 and Xiao Shanxiang 蕭善薌, eds. and annot., *Yulizi* 郁離子 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 1.3.

<sup>92</sup> Li Yi'an 李逸安, ed., *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 歐陽修全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 64:943-944.

<sup>93</sup> *Dongtian qinglu*, p. 6.

with snow to make a drastic temperature change. Some people use a little knife to scratch the *qin*. In this case, though the cracks may dazzle common peoples' eyes, they lack the strokes that resemble sharp blades and are therefore easy to distinguish.<sup>94</sup>

偽作者，用信州薄連紙，光漆一層於上，加灰。紙斷則有紋。或於冬日以猛火烘琴極熱，用雪罨激烈之。或用小刀刻畫於上，雖可眩俗眼，然決無劍鋒，亦易辨。

Among the three methods mentioned here, the first two involve more complicated techniques, which will produce tiny cracks comparatively harder to distinguish from authentic ones than the third method.

In the treatise “Talks on the *Qin*” (“*Qin shuo*” 琴說), Chen Bokui 陳伯葵 (fl. 12<sup>th</sup> c.) first describes a Lei *qin* that his family owned, and then mentions that many antique *qin* on the market are fake. Sometimes merchants collude with *qin* musicians so as to cheat their consumers:

Alas! People in the world who are fond of the *qin* are not able to distinguish if a *qin* is old or new, discern if the music is empty or solid, know if the sound is clear or dull, or discriminate whether the tiny cracks are real or fake. Everything is up to the *qin* musicians. If they say yes, then people will empty their pockets to pay the price, without knowing that the reason why the musicians say so is because they have secretly taken bribes from the *qin* sellers. If the musicians say no, then people will reject the instrument and refuse to buy it, without knowing that the reason the musicians try their best to dissuade them is that they do not have anything to gain from the *qin* sellers.<sup>95</sup>

噫，世之好琴者不別琴之古今，不辨琴之虛實，不知聲之清濁，不識斷之真偽，是非一決於琴工。琴工曰是，往往傾囊竭橐以償其直，而不知琴工陰與之為地者，以其授賂於鬻琴者也。琴工曰非，往往卻之而不售，然不知琴工力與之為梗者，以其無覬覦於鬻琴者也。

Chen criticizes the *qin* musicians who are supposed to offer impartial professional advice to the buyer. Acting in their own interest, however, they collude with the seller to take bribes, lie to the buyer about the real quality of the *qin*, and finally sell it at extremely high prices. Chen emphasizes that this phenomenon is largely due to contemporary consumers' lack of knowledge

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Jiang Keqian 蔣克謙 (fl.12<sup>th</sup> c.), comp., *Complete Collection of Writings on the Qin (Qinshu Daquan 琴書大全)*, in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 1092, 16.226.



and connoisseurship of the *qin*. In order to tell if a *qin* is good or not, one not only has to discern the quality of the sound by listening to it, but also examine it carefully so as to discern its appearance and inscriptions. Although Chen does not directly mention counterfeiting, he expresses his anxiety about the snares and traps in the market that prevent people from discerning a real antique *qin* from fake ones.

The *the Armrest History* (*Ting shi* 程史), a Southern Song dynasty *biji* written by Yue Ke 岳珂 (1183-1243), records the author's own experiences of encountering a forged "Ice Clear." Yue mentions that one day when he was visiting his friend Li, a curio dealer brought in a *qin* over and claimed it was the "Ice Clear" that was documented in *The Sheng River Banquet Talks*. It caught everyone's attention, as it really looked like an antique: "(It possessed) tiny cracks and patterns like fish scales, and its construction was rare and spectacular. *Qin* connoisseurs and non-connoisseurs alike all believed it had a history of hundreds of years" 斷紋鱗鱗，制作奇崛，識與不識，皆謂數百年物. Moreover, the inscriptions on the *qin* looked exactly the same as what *The Sheng River Banquet Talks* described. Yue's friend firmly believed it was the authentic "Ice Clear" and offered the seller the sum of a million coins in order to buy it (twenty times more than the price that Chen Shengyu paid). Just before Li's purchase, Yue was able to find evidences on the *qin* that proved it was in fact a forged piece:

The character above *yuan* 元 was a taboo character because of Emperor Renzong of this dynasty. In the phoenix pond of the *qin* the character *zhen* 貞 consisted of *bo* 卜 and *bei* 貝, and the part of *bei* lacked one side dot. It was not a complete character because of the writing style of the time. How could Tang people have known this? The Zhenyuan era was two hundred years before the Tiansheng era (the reign period of Emperor Renzong), so it was indeed impossible for the Lei family to know beforehand how to carve the taboo character of the Song period.<sup>96</sup> From this evidence, this *qin* must be a fake one. The maker

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<sup>96</sup> Traditionally the characters in the reigning emperor's personal name and those of one's ancestors were taboo characters (*bihui* 避諱) that one need to avoid using. Usually taboo characters were avoided by using a synonym, leaving the character as a blank, or omitting a stroke in the character

only took words from *The Sheng River Banquet Talks* so as to fake its history, while he was so used to the writing of taboo characters in our dynasty so that he forgot to add a dot.<sup>97</sup>

元字上一字，在本朝為昭陵諱，沼中書貞從卜從貝是矣，而貝字闕其旁點，為字不成，蓋今文書令也。唐何自知之？貞元前天聖二百年，雷氏乃預知避諱，必無此理，是蓋為贗者。徒取《燕談》，以實其說，不知闕文之熟於用而忘益之。

Yue recognized that in the inscriptions on the *qin* there was a character “zhen” using the current writing style of the Song period, which showed that it was impossible that the *qin* was made by a Tang craftsman. Yue’s friend finally paid only one-tenth of the price that he had originally offered the dealer for the *qin*. In the end of this passage, the author sighs that *qin* counterfeiting is so morally wrong that it is the equivalent of “daylight robbery.”

What Chen Bokui and Yue Ke convey to readers is their anxiety about *qin* counterfeiting and warnings against forgery and swindles. At the same time, though, they also represent themselves as cultured men. Compared with those who have the wealth to purchase an expensive *qin* but are not sophisticated enough to assess its authenticity, Chen and Yue are the ones who not only hear the musical quality of the *qin*, but also have knowledge of historical chronology, calligraphic style, philology, and artwork connoisseurship, all skills highly prized among Song literati, and can see through the swindle and choose the authentic *qin*. The ability to discern an authentic *qin* from a fake helps these literati present themselves as versatile and discerning cultural connoisseurs. The more difficult it is to tell an authentic *qin* from the fake ones on the Song market, the more powerful such images of connoisseurship were.

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<sup>97</sup> Wu Qiming 吳啟明, annot., *Ting shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 13.155-156. Zheng Minzhong in the preface of *Gugong guqin* mentioned that it was not uncommon for *qin* craftsmen in the Song dynasty to add fake Tang colophons on contemporary made *qin*. See *Gugong guqin*, p. 24.

## V. *Qin* Owners and Players in Song Texts

*The History of the Qin* by Zhu Changwen, a Northern Song dynasty scholar famous for his writings on calligraphy and music, is modeled on traditional historiographical writings, and includes biographies of famous *qin* makers, musicians, and collectors up to his own era and records how each was associated with the *qin*. If we take a close look at the figures mentioned in this text, we will find that only a few of them were professional musicians. This fact raises a question: on what grounds were notable owners and players of the *qin* regarded as worthy of inclusion in the collection?

In the Song, except for those professional *qin* musicians who were hired by the government or aristocratic families, most people who were known for their achievements in the *qin* were amateurs who had other social roles and careers apart from their musical activities. The first figure in the Northern Song mentioned by Zhu was Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-997). Zhu records that Emperor Taizong commissioned his court music officials to create a *qin* with nine strings.<sup>98</sup> This newly invented nine-stringed *qin* symbolized Emperor Taizong's ideal ideology of governance, with one string representing ruler, minister, ritual, music, orthodox, people and heart respectively, though it did not gain much popularity.<sup>99</sup> Besides *The History of the Qin*, various texts composed during the Song show that many Song emperors were avid fans of the *qin*, and their passion for this instrument seemed especially keen when compared with that of the Tang rulers.

With the Silk Road opening access from the west, many foreign settlers were able to move east to China in the Tang, and the city of Chang'an had a large expatriate

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<sup>98</sup> *Qin shi*, p.79.

<sup>99</sup> See Tuotuo (Toghto) 脱脱, comp., *Song shi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 126.1447.

population. Songs, dances, and musical instruments in foreign styles thrived during this period. It was recorded that Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty (r. 712-756) favored the *jiegu* (*Jie* drum 羯鼓)<sup>100</sup> and viewed it as the “leader among the eight sounds, not to be compared with other musical instruments” 八音之領袖，諸樂不可為比。<sup>101</sup> *The Catalogue of the Jie Drum* (*Jiegu lu* 羯鼓錄) tells how Emperor Xuanzong that he quite disliked the sound of the *qin* compared with the *jie* drum: “The personality of Emperor Xuanzong was bold and uninhibited. He was not fond of the *qin*. One time when he was listening to the *qin*, he scolded the player before the tune had even ended: ‘You get out of here.’ He then told his servant: ‘Hurry and summon Hua’nu to come with his *jie* drum so as to get rid of this filth for me’ ”玄宗性俊邁，不好琴。會聽彈，正弄未及畢，叱琴者曰：待詔出去。謂內官曰：速召花奴將羯鼓來，為我解穢。<sup>102</sup>

Unlike rulers in the Tang, the Song emperors saw the *qin* in a new light. Compared with other musical instruments such as the *jie* drum or *zheng*, both of which originated beyond China, they favored the *qin*, viewing its music as quieter and less rhythmic, but more poetic and elegant. Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r.1100-1126) not only enjoyed listening to the *qin*, but also built the “Hall of Ten Thousand *Qin*” to store his collection of favorite *qin*.<sup>103</sup> He also depicted himself as

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<sup>100</sup> *Jie* were a Yeniseian tribe who lived to the northwest of China. During the period of the Sixteen Kingdoms (304-439), they were known by the Chinese as one of the Five Barbarians (*Wuhu* 五胡) and invaded North China. Under the ruler Shi Le 石勒 (274-333), they established the Later Zhao, which was one state of the Sixteen Kingdoms. The *Jie* drum was an indigenous instrument of *Jie* people and was later imported to China.

<sup>101</sup> *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping guangji* 太平廣記), in *Siku quanshu* 1044, 205.2b.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.3a. Hua’nu was the nickname of Prince Ruyang 汝陽王, whose name was Li Jin 李璡 (d. 750), and he was the nephew of Emperor Xuanzong.

<sup>103</sup> Zhou Mi 周密 (1232-1298), *Record of Clouds and Mists Passing in front of Ones’ Eyes* (*Yunyan guoyan lu* 雲煙過眼錄), *QSBJ*, 2.71.

a scholar playing a *qin* in his “Painting on Listening to the *Qin*” 聽琴圖.<sup>104</sup> In the 1105 music reform commissioned by Emperor Huizong, a new set of music performances called “Dasheng” 大晟 was established as the official court music, and a music bureau was founded under the same name, with the aim of making all state music paraphernalia conform to ancient models. The *qin*, which was regarded as a representative instrument of proper state music, was widely used in the new “Dasheng” music system. Five kinds of *qin* were adopted for the new music system: the one-string *qin*, the three-string *qin*, the five-string *qin*, the seven-string *qin*, and the nine-string *qin*.<sup>105</sup>

Given the Song emperors’ preference for the *qin*, the most valuable *qin* often went to the imperial collection. *The Collection of Hundreds of Valuables and All Treasures* mentions that the *qin* with tiny cracks circulated on the Song market were usually forged, while real ones would most likely end up in court collections.<sup>106</sup> To name a few, “Jade Crane” (*Yuhe* 玉鶴) and “A Hundred Patches” (*Baina* 百衲) were regarded as the best of Emperor Huizong’s *qin*. Of the two *qin*, “Jade Crane” entered the imperial collection in the early Northern Song, while “A Hundred Patches” had been passed down among commoners and was finally offered by its owner to the throne.<sup>107</sup> The same happened with another *qin* named “Water Spring” (*Shuiquan* 水泉). It was

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<sup>104</sup> For scholarship on Emperor Huizong’s self-fashioning as a literatus, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2014). For the study on “Painting on Listening to the *Qin*,” see Wang Zhenghua 王正華, “Ting qin tu de zhengzhi yihan: Huizong chao yuanhua fengge yu yiyi wangluo” 《聽琴圖》的政治意涵：徽宗朝院畫風格與意義網絡, in *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishu shi yanjiu jikan* (2008) 5:77-122.

<sup>105</sup> See Chen Yang 陳旻 (1064-1128), *Yue shu* 樂書 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2004), 114. 40-41. For the scholarly work on Dasheng music system, see Yang Yinliu 楊蔭瀏, *Zhongguo gudai yinyue shigao* 中國古代音樂史稿 (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1981), and Kang Ruijun 康瑞軍, *Songdai gongting yinyue zhidu yanjiu* 宋代宮廷音樂制度研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue xueyuan chubanshe, 2013).

<sup>106</sup> *Baibao zongzhenji*.

<sup>107</sup> Cai Tao 蔡絛 (d. 1126), *Gathered Remarks from the Iron-Clad Mountain* (*Tieweishan congtan* 鐵圍山叢談), *QSBJ*, 9.244.

at one time owned by Cui Zundu 崔遵度 (954-1020), a scholar-official renowned for his fondness for the *qin*. Cui treasured “Water Spring” so much that at one point he wanted to be buried with it, but later he decided to give it to his friend named Zheng Zhongxian:

Cui told Yang Dajian: ‘For the *qin*-playing of Zheng Zhongxian, I am afraid that only some ancient players might be comparable, but in the contemporary world he definitely has no peer. In my rattan case there is a *qin* named ‘Water Spring,’ which was once prized in the collection of the Mansion of Clear Wind in the Jiangnan area. Originally, I hoped that I could be buried with this *qin* after death, but now I entrust it to you to give to Zheng as a gift. Please write some words about this matter on the dragon pool of the *qin* for me. The sounds that it produces are able to surpass the entire volume of six or seven of my *qin* together.’”<sup>108</sup>

崔謂楊大年曰：鄭仲賢彈琴，恐古有之，若今則無。吾篋中畜琴朴一琴，號水泉者，乃江南故國清風閣所寶，本欲携葬泉下，託君贈之，為我於龍池題數字記於腹，此琴之聲可蓋余琴六七面。

The only reason for Cui to give away his beloved *qin* was that he would love to let another notable *qin* player, Zheng Zhongxian, keep it. For Cui, Zheng was someone who “knew the sound,” whose expertise in *qin* playing was peerless at the time. After Zheng’s death, however, his son offered “Water Spring” to the throne, where it finally too became part of the imperial collection.<sup>109</sup>

Beside Emperor Taizong, other Song figures that Zhu Changwen mentions in *The History of the Qin* are Cui Zundu, Dou Yan 竇儼 (919-960), Zhu Yi 朱億 (fl. 10<sup>th</sup> c.), Zhu Wenji 朱文濟 (fl. 10<sup>th</sup> c.), Zhao Yi 趙裔 (fl. 10<sup>th</sup> c.), Tang Yi 唐異 (fl. 10<sup>th</sup> c.), Fan Zhongyan, Ouyang Xiu and Zhao Bian. Among these figures, only Zhu Wenji and Zhao Yi were professional musicians employed by the government; Tang Yi was a recluse, and the other figures were all literati.

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<sup>108</sup> Shi Wenying 釋文瑩 (fl. 11<sup>th</sup> c.), *Continuation of Wild Records of Mt. Xiang (Xu Xiangshan yelu 續湘山野錄)*, QSBJ, p. 66.

<sup>109</sup> Jonathan Brown, in his study of European kings as collectors, argues that a ruler’s fetish of collecting would remove many objects from general circulation on the art market, which would cause their prices to rise, and the demand for those objects would increase because of the ruler’s influence on taste. See Jonathan Brown, *Kings and Connoisseurs: Collecting Art in Seventh-Century Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 126-145. Similar dynamics can also be seen in Song dynasty China.

Among them, both Fan Zhongyan and Ouyang Xiu were renowned authors and politicians in the Northern Song and wrote about the *qin* frequently in their literary compositions, describing their experiences of listening to the *qin*, playing the *qin*, and collecting the *qin*. Fan Zhongyan was known for his expertise in playing a *qin* tune named “Treading Upon the Frost” (“Lü shuang” 履霜): “Master Fan Wenzheng (Zhongyan) was fond of playing the *qin*, but he usually played just one tune, ‘Treading Upon the Frost,’ and contemporary people called him ‘Frost-Treader Fan’” 范文正公喜彈琴，然平日止彈《履霜》一操，時人謂之范履霜。<sup>110</sup> “Treading Upon the Frost” is a *qin* tune whose lyrics are attributed to the Tang dynasty poet Han Yu but written in the voice of a filial son named Yin Boqi 尹伯奇 (fl. 9<sup>th</sup> c. BCE). Slandered by his stepmother, Boqi was sent away from his father Yin Jifu 尹吉甫 (852-775 BCE) and had to wander in mountains and tread on frost in winter. In order to prove his filial piety and devotion to his father, Boqi sang the song, “Treading Upon the Frost,” to express his sorrow. Just by playing the *qin* tune with the same title, Fan Zhongyan identifies with the virtues, particularly filial piety and loyalty, represented by the figure Boqi associated with the tune, and therefore derives his own sobriquet from this tune. Ouyang Xiu was no less devoted to the *qin* than Fan Zhongyan. Chapter three of this dissertation traces in detail how the *qin* aids Ouyang Xiu in constructing his memories of the past and building his self-image as the “Drunken Elder” 醉翁.

Besides Fan Zhongyan and Ouyang Xiu, Zhao Bian was another literatus famous for collecting and playing the *qin*. *The Ink Guest Wielding the Rhino Horn* (*Moke huixi* 墨客揮犀) records how Zhao, who was known for his uprightness and impartiality as a government official, was fond of the *qin*:

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<sup>110</sup> Lu You 陸遊, *Brush Notes from Hut of Studying at Old Age* (*Laoxue'an biji* 老學庵筆記), in *QSB*, 9.106.

Zhao Yuedao (Bian) used to serve as Chengdu Fiscal Commissioner. When he went outside of his office, he only brought a *qin* and a tortoise with him. When he was seated, he watched the tortoise and played the *qin*. Once while passing by Mount Qingcheng he encountered a snowfall and lodged in a local inn. The people in the inn did not know that he was a commissioner, so some of them treated him rudely. Zhao only played the *qin* without restraint, paying no attention to them.<sup>111</sup>

趙閱道為成都轉運使，出行部內，唯攜一琴一龜。坐則看龜鼓琴。嘗過青城山遇雪，舍於逆旅。逆旅之人，不知其使者也，或慢狎之。公頽然鼓琴不顧。

The records in *The Ink Guest Wielding the Rhino Horn* is slightly different from that in the official history, since the *History of Song* states that Zhao brought a crane instead of a tortoise besides the *qin* to serve in the Shu region, but at any rate the image of a scholar-official who brought no other possessions with him but a *qin* and a pet was so remarkable that even Emperor Shenzong (r.1067-1085) heard of this and praised Zhao thus: “I heard that you went to Shu on horseback and took with you only a *qin* and a crane. You are indeed governing in a simple way!” 聞卿匹馬入蜀，以一琴一鶴自隨；為政簡易，亦稱是乎！<sup>112</sup> Such an image helps Zhao to achieve a reputation for rectitude and incorruptibility, and also contributes to Zhao’s self-fashioning as a carefree, artistic and unconventional literatus.

In the *History of the Qin*, Zhu Changwen also mentions that Tang Yi, a recluse of his era, was an excellent *qin* player. He used to play the *qin* with Cun Zundu, and was admired by Fan Zhongyan and another famous recluse Lin Bu 林逋 (967-1028) for his outstanding technical expertise. Both Tang Yi and Lin Bu are representatives of another significant group of *qin* players and owners in the Song, “people beyond the worldly realm” (*fangwai ren* 方外人), who did not actively participate in worldly affairs or serve in government, but still read classics, composed literary works, wrote calligraphy, painted, and played the *qin* as literati did. For

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<sup>111</sup> Peng Cheng 彭乘 (fl. 11<sup>th</sup> c.), *Moke huixi*, *QSBJ*, 10.63.

<sup>112</sup> *Song shi*, 316. 10323.



example, Lin Bu, a famous recluse poet known for his verses as well as his fondness for the plum blossoms and cranes, wrote frequently on the *qin*. In the “Second Poem on Reclusion among Mountains and Lakes” (“Hushan xiaoyin qi’er” 湖山小隱其二), he writes:

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| 園井夾蕭森， | The garden wells are flanked by sere forests;                                |
| 紅芳墮翠陰。 | Red petals fall in the emerald shade.  |
| 晝岩松鼠靜， | In the morning, the squirrels are quiet in the rocks;                        |
| 春塹竹鷄深。 | In the spring creek, the bamboo chickens hide deep.                          |
| 歲課非無秫， | It is not that I lack grain for the year’s taxes;                            |
| 家藏獨有琴。 | But all I collect in the house is my <i>qin</i> .                            |
| 顏原遺事在， | The legends of Yan (Hui) and Yuan (Xian) are still with us;                  |
| 千古壯閑心。 | For a thousand years they have strengthened the mind at ease. <sup>113</sup> |

The lines “it is not that I lack grain for the year’s taxes; All I have in the house is my *qin*” suggests that as a recluse, Lin is not too poor to pay taxes, but he views the *qin* as the only possession in his household that he truly treasures. In another poem, “Miscellaneous Stirrings on Reclusive Dwelling” (“Shenju zaxing” 深居雜興), he writes that “in a single room with a *qin* and books one is happy as a matter of course” 一室琴書自解顏.<sup>114</sup> Playing the *qin* is one among the cultural pursuits that Lin favors in his spare time.

A significant phenomenon during the Song was that many religious practitioners became avid *qin* connoisseurs and players, especially Buddhist monks. Though Zhu Changwen does not include any religious practitioners in *The History of the Qin*, after his death, there arose a continuous lineage of Buddhist monks who were admired by literati for the excellence of their *qin*-playing. Monks in this lineage were regarded as the best *qin* players during their times, surpassing even some of professional musicians in the court. Song Buddhist monks not only

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<sup>113</sup> *QSS*, 106.1208. Yan Hui and Yuan Xian are both Confucius’ disciples.

<sup>114</sup> *QSS*, 106.1211.

played the *qin* but also collected *qin*, some of them rare and antique pieces. For example, *The Forests of Words in Western Creek* records that before the famous “Hundred Patches” *qin* entered the imperial collection, it was owned by a Buddhist monk named Shi Zhihe 釋智和.<sup>115</sup> Zhang Bangji in his *Random Jottings from the Ink Villa* records that the monk Shi Zhaokuang was not only a famous *qin* player, but also a *qin* connoisseur. It was he who discovered the antique *qin* known as “Frost Bell” and managed to repair and restore it to its original condition:

Monk Zhaokuang in Qiantang (now Hangzhou), known as Master Jinghui, studied *qin*-playing with Monk Zequan. He became an exquisite player and could attain the styles of the ancients. In the Xuanhe reign era, he lived in Beijing for a long time and often visited the homes of aristocrats. Obtaining an old *qin* and repairing it, he rubbed away more than three layers of lacquer and found traces of characters inscribed on the *qin*. He polished it even more forcefully and discovered the two characters “Frost Bell” carved on the *qin* in seal script. The inscriptions were gilded, and the strokes of the characters were vigorous and marvelous in their regularity.<sup>116</sup>

錢塘僧淨暉子照曠，學琴於僧則全，遂造精妙，得古人之意。宣和間，久居中都，出入貴人之門，嘗得一舊琴修治之。磨去舊漆三數重，隱隱若有字痕，重加磨礪，得古篆霜鏞二字，黃金填之，字畫勁妙有法。

Daoist priests, much like Buddhist monks during the Song, were also recorded as players and collectors of the *qin*. Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045-1105) composed two poems on listening to the Daoist priest Dai Rixiang 戴日祥 (fl. 11<sup>th</sup> c.) playing the *qin*.<sup>117</sup> This same Daoist priest is also mentioned by Su Shi in his “The Account of Traveling to Mount Huan” (“You Huanshan ji” 游桓山記): “I asked the Daoist priest Dai Rixiang to play the lingering sounds of ‘Treading on

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<sup>115</sup> *Xixi congyu*, 1.16-17.

<sup>116</sup> *Mozhuang manlu*, 4.55.

<sup>117</sup> Huang Tingjian, “In Southern Chan Monastery, Listening to Daoist Priest Dai Playing the *Qin*” (“Xichan ting Daidaoshi tanqin” 西禪聽戴道士彈琴) and “Summoning the Daoist Priest Dai to Play the *Qin*” (“Zhao Daidaoshi tanqin” 招戴道士彈琴), in *Shangu waiji bujuan* 山谷外集補卷, 2.1611-1612, 4.1733, in Ren Yuan 任淵, Shi Rong 史容, and Shi Jiwen 史季溫, annot., *Huang Tingjian shi jizhu* 黃庭堅詩集注, ed. Liu Shangrong 劉尚榮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003).

Frost' on a Lei *qin*" 使道士戴日祥鼓雷氏之琴，操履霜之遺音。<sup>118</sup> Lu You writes two poems, both entitled "Sent to Daoliu" ("Zeng Daoliu" 贈道流), praising a Daoist priest of that name for his excellent playing on the *qin*. One of them says: "Seven strings under his fingers produced clear sounds that lingered long; Two sleeves fluttered slantingly" 七弦指下泠泠久，雙袖風中獵獵斜。<sup>119</sup>

To summarize, according to *The History of the Qin* and other Song texts, emperors, literati, and religious practitioners were the most significant groups of *qin* players and owners in the Song. The efflorescence of communication and interaction between literati and religious practitioners during this period made the *qin*, which had started to emerge as an indispensable companion of literati, an important extra-religious cultural pursuit for these Buddhist monks and Daoist priests. Women also played the *qin* during the Song. A Southern Song *biji*, *Dream of the Former Capital* (*Meng Liang Lu* 夢梁錄) by Wu Zimu 吳自牧 (fl. 13<sup>th</sup> c.), mentions that many courtesans in the Southern Song dynasty capital Lin'an 臨安 (now Hangzhou) were *qin* players, though most of their names are now lost.<sup>120</sup> In the genre of *ci* lyrics that became popular in the Song, the *qin* is also frequently mentioned in the setting of a woman's inner chambers. However, in these works, the *qin* serves as a prop that contributes to the poetic setting, but it is not treated as an individual object possessing materiality and its own intrinsic significance.

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<sup>118</sup> *Su Shi wenji*, 11.370.

<sup>119</sup> *Lu You quanji jiaozhu*, 42.224.

<sup>120</sup> *Mengliang lu*, *QSB*, 5.105.

## Conclusion

This chapter explores how literary texts present different phases of the *qin*'s "biography," including its production, circulation, and collection, with a focus on how it moves in and out of the commodity sphere in the Song. Why investigate the social life of the *qin*? The simple answer is that it not only shows various facets of the *qin* itself, but also serves to illustrate the cultural activities revolving around this specific object. The life-stages of a *qin* indicate the social, economic, cultural, and political aspects, and especially show its close interaction with the literati class. The vibrancy of texts on *qin* production and fabrication during this period, which long predate corresponding similar texts on other kinds of craftsmanship, not only shows the trend of professionalism in *qin* making, but also reveals how the material aspects of the *qin* were foregrounded. References to the *qin* in *biji* and other kinds of literary texts carry messages about literati taste and acumen, the trend of antiquarianism that prospered among the literati circle, and the fascination with the historicity of the *qin*. To possess a *qin*, especially an antique *qin*, was to own important cultural capital, one that became more and more like a prerequisite for literati lives.

When we ask what makes a Song literatus a literatus, we usually refer to literary and scholarly achievements, participation in politics and public affairs, the pursuit of wealth, and interest in calligraphy, painting, and art connoisseurship, but we cannot neglect the fact that the *qin*-playing and connoisseurship were no less important in literati self-representations as "cultured men." In comparison with previous periods, the *qin* was no longer regarded only as a musical instrument or as part of the ritual-music system, but *qin*-playing started to be recognized as a cultural pursuit that was associated with literati self-identification and self-fashioning during the Song. It was a primary medium through which a literatus's full-fledged image as a person with comprehensive talents was formed. Yet as the *qin* helped Song literati define themselves,

the Song literati also helped make the *qin* the *qin*. The aesthetic nuances, poetic appeal and philosophical implications that Song people imparted to the *qin* set a paradigm for later periods, establishing it as the most elegant and poetic instrument in Chinese history.

## Chapter Two

### Recalling the Past: The *Qin*, Memories, and Self-Representation in Ouyang Xiu's Literary Writings

The fact that Ouyang Xiu's literary writings possess many extraordinary resonances is indeed due to his knack of retrospection. Retrospection is recalling and cherishing past events. When he was amidst famous mountains and rivers, he described his life and his observation.

Although not as good as Liuzhou (Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 [773-819]), (his writings) reflected the past in the light of the present, and when he contemplated the past and pondered his situation, then there was something that made people become irresistibly immersed.<sup>121</sup>

歐文之多神韻，蓋得一追字訣。追者，追懷前事也。公於名山水中，寫生體物之筆固不如柳州之刻肖，然撫今追昔，俯仰沈吟，有令人涵泳不能自己者。

—Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924), “Comments on Ouyang Xiu's ‘Epitaph Inscription of Gentleman Zhang, Record Keeper of He’nan Prefecture’” 評歐陽修《河南府司錄張君墓表》

Throughout Chinese history, authors from different time periods have captured their memories in literary compositions. Stephen Owen argues that it was the hope of attaining literary immortality that accounted for pre-modern Chinese poets' fascination with writing about the past and memories. Memories link the past to the present and lead people toward fulfilling a lost fullness: “a literature of memory engages a sustained retrospective gaze that struggles to extend itself and encompass those absences surrounding what survives. Classical Chinese poetry remained open to that larger world of the past: the poem was sustained by that world and in recompense returned a specter of the absent past into the present and into art.”<sup>122</sup> Memory was one of the most important themes in the literary writings of Ouyang Xiu, courtesy name Yongshu 永叔, one of the most famous cultural figures in Song dynasty literati circles, who is considered

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<sup>121</sup> Lin Shu, *Lin Shu xuanping guwenci leizuan* 林紓选评古文辞类纂 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1986), p. 345.

<sup>122</sup> Owen Stephen, *Remembrances: The Experience of the Past in Classical Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 3.

a leading figure among the founders of the distinctive Song literary style. The modern translator and scholar Lin Shu argued that the moving power of Ouyang Xiu's essays was mainly due to his frequent use of retrospection in his writing. Lin used the word *zhui* 追 to describe how Ouyang Xiu tried to access and capture his past. In classical Chinese, *zhui* means not only to look back and recall, but also to pursue, chase after, and seek. When seeking the past, the author has a full awareness of remembering and of the intentional mental process of retrieving the past.

In trying to re-capture the past, Ouyang Xiu wrote about his memories of the major locales where he once lived. When he was first demoted, he remembered the days that he had spent with friends in Luoyang; when he was later recalled to the capital, he cherished the memory of his demotion.<sup>123</sup> Although his times in Yiling and Chuzhou were not successful in terms of his political career, later in his life these two sites became spiritual homes that he revisited often in his writings, which were full of nostalgia for their natural beauty and eremitic pleasure.<sup>124</sup> This chapter examines how Ouyang Xiu's days in Yiling and Chuzhou were constructed through his memories and literary works that thematized the *qin*.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> As Stephen Owen has noted, in classical Chinese literary works, sites always function as focal points for revisiting and remembrance: "sites, like texts, are essential for remembrance: they permit rereading, revisiting, and repetition as times do not. Sites and texts are loci of remembrance, bounded spaces in which a plenitude of human history, the complexity of human nature, and human experience are concentrated." See *Remembrances: the Experience of the Past in Classical Chinese Literature*, p. 26. Wang Shuizhao 王水照 argues that Ouyang Xiu's association with the literati circle in Luoyang had a significant influence in the formation of the style of his literary writings, in which he often recalled in his literary writings. See "Beisong luoyang wenren jituan yu diyu huanjing de guanxi" 北宋洛陽文人集團與地域環境的關係, in *Wang Shuizhao zixuanji* 王水照自選集 (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000), pp. 153-173. Chen Xianglin 陳湘琳 also argues that Ouyang Xiu's memories of the city of Luoyang functioned as the site for him to relive old experiences and revisit old places and friends. Instead of being a real place, Luoyang under Ouyang Xiu's pen is rather a literary construction that incorporates both memory and imagination. See Chen Xianglin, *Ouyang Xiu de wenxue yu qinggan shijie* 歐陽修的文學與情感世界 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2012).

<sup>125</sup> There are several scholarly works on Ouyang Xiu and the *qin* in Chinese. Lü Xiaohuan 呂肖煥 briefly introduces Ouyang Xiu's experiences with the *qin*. See "Zhong you wuqiong wangu yin—Ouyang Xiu zhi qinqu yu qinyi" 中有無窮萬古音—歐陽修之琴趣與琴意, *Jiaozuo daxue xuebao* 21.1 (2007):17-20. Shen Dong 沈冬 offers a comprehensive timetable of when each piece of Ouyang Xiu's literary writing on the *qin* was composed, so as to relate these writings to different stages of his life, and examine how Ouyang Xiu's fondness for the *qin* influenced the intellectual culture of the Northern Song. See "Qinyi shei ke ting?—Ouyang Xiu zhi qin yu beisong shifeng" 琴意誰可聽?—歐陽修之琴與北宋士風, *Zhongguo wenxue xuebao* 2 (2011): 179-209.

While several scholarly works have focused on Ouyang Xiu's remembrance of Yiling and Chuzhou, the *qin*—as an important thread that tied these memories together—has often been neglected. As Ronald Egan notes, among the Northern Song literati who were avid connoisseurs of the *qin*, Ouyang stood out for the importance that the *qin* had in his life and poetic persona.<sup>126</sup> Ouyang Xiu was born in 1007 in Mianzhou, Sichuan. He had been fond of the *qin* since early childhood and continued playing and listening to it throughout his life. It is unclear exactly when Ouyang Xiu started to play the *qin*, but in the “Account of the Three *Qin*,” which was composed in 1062, he writes: “Since I was young, I have not been fond of the music of Zheng and Wei, as I have only favored the sound of the *qin*” 余自少不喜鄭衛，獨愛琴聲。<sup>127</sup> In his autobiographical essay, “Biography of the Retired Scholar Six Ones” (“Liuyi jushi zhuan” 六一居士傳), composed in 1070, Ouyang Xiu writes:

When Ouyang Xiu was first demoted to Chu Zhou, he named himself as the Drunken Elder. When he was old, weak and sick, and was going to retire along the Yin River, he changed his artistic name to “Retired Scholar Six Ones.” One guest asked him: “What does ‘Six Ones’ mean?” Ouyang Xiu replied: “In my household I have collected ten thousand scrolls of books, and I have accumulated and recorded one thousand scrolls of surviving inscriptions of bronze vessels and steles from the Three Dynasties onwards, one *qin*, one game of chess, and there is always one pot of wine.” The guest asked: “These are only Five Ones. Why do you say six?” Ouyang Xiu replied: “With me, one old fellow, aging alongside these five others, aren’t we Six Ones?”<sup>128</sup>

六一居士初謫滁山，自號醉翁。既老而衰且病，將退休於潁水之上，則又更號六一居士。客有問曰：六一，何謂也？居士曰：吾家藏書一萬卷，集錄三代以來金石遺文一千卷，有琴一張，有棋一局，而常置酒一壺。客曰：是爲五一爾，奈何？居士曰：以吾一翁，老於此五物之間，是豈不爲六一乎？

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<sup>126</sup> “The Controversy Over Music and ‘Sadness’ and Changing Conceptions of the *Qin* in Middle Period China,” p. 61.

<sup>127</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 64:943-944.

<sup>128</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 44.634–35. In my translation, I have consulted the translation by Ronald Egan, *The Literary Works of Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–72)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 223–224.



Ouyang Xiu stated that the *qin* was one of the most elegant pastimes that he valued at his old age and represented his intellectual pursuits and cultural tastes. He declared that he would like to age with the *qin*, as well as with books, bronze inscriptions, chess, and wine, and he identified himself with the virtue embodied in these objects. The *qin* constituted a part of the poetic persona that Ouyang Xiu had constructed for himself.

For the role a particular object plays in a person's life, Janet Hoskins, in her study of indigenous people in Eastern Indonesia, explores the relationship between people and their most valued possessions, in particular, the ways in which a person may choose to tell a life history by using an object as a pivot for narrative articulation. This object serves as the "biographical object" in the sense that it is endowed with the personal characteristics of its owner and the biography and identity of its owner. The particular life histories of an owner and a designated special object are so closely associated that "people and the things that they valued were so completely intertwined they could not be disentangled."<sup>129</sup>

By applying the concept of "biographical object" to the life of Ouyang Xiu, I explore how his identity and biography are formed around the object known as the *qin*. I argue that he used the *qin* autobiographically, both as the cornerstone of stories about himself when he was demoted to Yiling and Chuzhou, and as a vehicle to reconstruct and redefine his personal identity as the "Drunken Elder" (*Zuiweng* 醉翁), an idling and carefree local magistrate. In his old age, the *qin* became a prop, a storytelling device, and a mnemonic cue for past experiences in his literary writings, and this created an ideal past for which he was always longing but never able to recover. At the same time, by telling his life, Ouyang Xiu not only provided information about

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<sup>129</sup> *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives*, p.2.

himself but also fashioned his identity in a particular way, thus constructing a “self” for public consumption.

### I. Chasing the Memory of Yiling through the *Qin*

Ouyang Xiu passed his first imperial examination in 1029, and earned a degree as a metropolitan graduate in 1030 and was appointed to serve at Luoyang as an administrative assistant of the regency. After his time in Luoyang, he was appointed to the Imperial Academy. At that time, Fan Zhongyan also served in the capital, and soon developed a close friendship with Ouyang Xiu. However, in 1036, Fan Zhongyan was demoted for the third time for criticizing the policies of the administration led by the state councillor Lü Yijian 呂夷簡 (979-1044). At the same time, a special injunction was proclaimed that forbade all officials from speaking on matters outside their jurisdiction. Angered by this proclamation and by the lack of response among his colleagues, Ouyang Xiu attacked Gao Ruone 高若訥 (997-1055), a remonstrance official and one of Lü’s key supporters, by writing him a letter:

If you do not speak up, no one else in the world can. You alone are in an official position to speak, yet you do not; then you ought to resign! ... But still you make your appearance among the scholar-officials in and out of the court, and still you call yourself a remonstrance official. This means you no longer have the sense of shame of any decent human being!<sup>130</sup>

若足下又遂不言，是天下無得言者也。足下在其位而不言，便當去之。...足下猶能以面目見士大夫，出入朝中稱諫官，是足下不復知人間有羞恥事爾！

This letter sent Gao off to court in tears to complain to the emperor about the humiliation he had suffered, and, as a result, Ouyang Xiu was demoted and removed from capital to serve as the

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<sup>130</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 68:988-990. Here I use the translation by James T. C. Liu. See James T. C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh-Century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1967), pp. 33-34.

magistrate of Yiling.<sup>131</sup> He worked in the subprefecture of Yiling for one year and three months, and was sent to Qiande, another county in Anhui province, until he was called back to the capital in 1040.

Generally speaking, as James T. C. Liu mentioned in his study, Ouyang Xiu reacted to this demotion without much self-pity or resentment, and instead devoted his years at Yiling to study and reflection.<sup>132</sup> However, Ouyang Xiu's descriptions of Yiling are not entirely positive, especially those from the time when he had just been demoted. He describes Yiling as a remote place cut off from civilization:

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 樂天曾謫此江邊，<br>已歎天涯涕泫然。 | Letian (Bai Juyi) was once exiled near this river,<br>And with tears flowing he already sighed at being on the<br>edge of the world. |
| 今日始知余罪大，<br>夷陵此去更三千。 | Today, I start to know my crime is serious,<br>As Yiling is three thousand <i>li</i> beyond this place. <sup>133</sup>               |

In this poem, Yiling is described as a remote place extremely distant from the capital, “three thousand *li* beyond” the place to which Bai Juyi was demoted. In that same year, Ouyang Xiu composed an essay entitled the “Account of the Hall of Ultimate Joy in Yiling County” 夷陵縣至喜堂記, which celebrated the building of his residential hall in Yiling. In the essay, he similarly describes Yiling as a tiny rural town: “Living in this state, there is no outer city wall, and the thoroughfare cannot allow carriages and horses (to pass)” 州居無郭郛，通衢不能容車馬。 However, the backwardness and remoteness that Ouyang Xiu felt at the beginning soon gave way to joyfulness and a sense of belonging:

However, what is little known is that the customs of Yiling are simple and unrefined, and there is little robbery or strife. For the provisions of the magistrate there are rice and fish,

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<sup>131</sup> See Tuotuo 脫脫, “Ouyang Xiu zhuan” 歐陽修傳, in *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 2650-2655.

<sup>132</sup> *Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh-Century Neo-Confucianist*, p. 34.

<sup>133</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 56:801-802.

and the tastes of the four seasons: oranges, pomelos, teas, and bamboo shoots. The rivers and mountains are beautiful, and the town residences are well constructed, so there is nothing that is not admirable. For this, not only could those who committed crimes forget their resentments, but also among those who serve as officials here, no one was happy when he first came here, and then everyone cheered up after they had arrived.<sup>134</sup>

然不知夷陵風俗樸野，少盜爭，而令之日食有稻與魚，又有橘、柚、茶、筍四時之味，江山美秀，而邑居繕完，無不可愛。是非惟有罪者之可以忘其憂，而凡為吏者，莫不始來而不樂，既至而後喜也。

The unsophisticated local customs, beautiful landscapes, and rich local products helped Ouyang Xiu forget his grudge about being demoted. In Yiling, he started to compose a new history of the Five Dynasties, that eventually established him as a leading historian in the Northern Song. He also thought about the problems of administration and formulated a new set of administrative principles. According to the Qing Dynasty scholar Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716-1797), during the period in Yiling Ouyang Xiu's career started to reach a new height: "the career of Luling (Ouyang Xiu's hometown) started from Yiling" 廬陵事業起夷陵.<sup>135</sup>

Among the extant works of Ouyang Xiu, only a very few literary writings about the *qin* were composed during the period during which he was demoted in Yiling. His only writings about the *qin* from this period are the sketches preserved in the "Records of Being in Governmental Service" ("Yu yi zhi" 於役志), which were simple descriptions of friends' gatherings at which someone played the *qin*.<sup>136</sup> However, after Ouyang Xiu left Yiling and grew older, his writings about Yiling started to include the *qin*. One of his ways of cherishing the

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<sup>134</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 125:1860.

<sup>135</sup> Yuan Mei, *Suiyuan shihua* 隨園詩話 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1982), 1.31.

<sup>136</sup> In the "Records of Being in Governmental Service," Ouyang Xiu wrote about one of his gathering with friends in which two friends of his him played the *qin*: "Gongqi boiled the tea, Daozi played the *qin*, and I played the Go chess with Junkuang... Not until the second day, Ziye came, and Junkuang, Gongqi, and Daozi came again. Only Ziye returned home, and the rest all got drunk and stayed for the night. Junmo composed poems, Daozi stroke the *fangxiang* (a hanging metallophone that resembled chime bells with rectangular metal plates), and Muzhi played the *qin*" 公期烹茶，道滋鼓琴，余與君貺奕...明日，子野始來，君貺、公期、道滋復來。子野還家，飲皆留宿。君謨作詩，道滋擊方響，穆之彈琴。 See *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 125.1898.

memory of Yiling was by playing the *qin* that he had acquired there and practicing a tune he learned during this period, which was recorded in his essay, the “Account of Three *Qin*.” Ouyang Xiu composed this essay in 1062, twenty-four years after he left Yiling:

In my household, there are three *qin*. One of them is said to have been made by Zhang Yue, one by Lou Ze, and one by the Lei family. All of their designs are delicate and in accordance with the rules, while it is uncertain if their attributions are genuine or not. What matters is how they sound, not who their makers were in history. On the surfaces of these *qin*, there are tiny cracks that resemble the bellies of snakes, and those who know *qin* well in this world all regard them as antique *qin*, because only after one hundred years will the lacquer begin to crack. This is the method to examine the history of the *qin*. One of the *qin* has golden *hui* studs, one stone *hui*, and one jade *hui*. The one with golden *hui* is the Zhang Yue *qin*, the one with stone ones is the Lou Ze *qin*, and the one with jade ones is the Lei family *qin*. The one with golden *hui* has a sound that is fluent and far-reaching; the one with stone *hui* has a sound that is clear, solid and gentle; the one with jade *hui* has a sound that is harmonious and resonant.

吾家三琴，其一傳為張越琴，其一傳為樓則琴，其一傳為雷氏琴，其制作皆精而有法，然皆不知是否。要在其聲如何，不問其古今何人作也。琴面皆有橫文如蛇腹，世之識琴者以此為古琴，蓋其漆過百年始有斷文，用以為驗爾。其一金徽，其一石徽，其一玉徽。金徽者，張越琴也；石徽者，樓則琴也；玉徽者，雷氏琴也。金徽其聲暢而遠，石徽其聲清實而緩，玉徽其聲和而有余。

Contemporary people consider owning any one of them as an invaluable treasure, and I own three instruments. However, only the one with the stone *hui* is suitable for the elderly. People usually use gold, jade, and seashells as the materials for *hui* studs. All these materials will gleam with reflected light of a candle, but the eyesight of the elderly is blurred by them and cannot identify these *hui* studs clearly. Only stone does not reflect light, and when put under candlelight, the black and white can be distinguished, therefore it is fit for the elderly.

今人有其一已足為寶，而余兼有之。然惟石徽者，老人之所宜也。世人多用金玉蚌琴徽，此數物者，夜置之燭下炫耀有光，老人目昏，視徽難準，惟石無光，置之燭下黑白分明，故為老者之所宜也。

Since I was young, I have not been fond of the music of Zheng and Wei, but only favored the sounds of the *qin*, especially the short tune, “Flowing Water.” Throughout my life, I have suffered from worries and disasters and travelled from the north to the south. I almost forgot all the *qin* pieces, with only “Flowing Water” being unforgettable, even in my dreams. Now I am old, but from time to time I still can play this tune. I know only several shorter tunes, which are enough to entertain myself with. There is no need to learn many *qin* pieces, as what matters is suiting oneself. There is also no need to collect many *qin*, but if I already have them, I will not discard them and will not worry that there are too many.

余自少不喜鄭衛，獨愛琴聲，尤愛小流水曲，平生患難，南北奔馳，琴曲率皆廢忘，獨流水一曲，夢寐不忘。今老矣，猶時時能作之，其他不過數小調弄，足以自娛。琴曲不多學耳，要於自適。琴亦不必多藏，然業已有之，亦不患多而棄也。

In the seventh year of the Jiayou reign period, one day after the third day of the third month, I was on sick leave. Studying calligraphy, I wrote at random the “Account of Three *Qin* of Ouyang.”<sup>137</sup>

嘉祐七年上巳後一日，以疾在告，學書，信筆作歐陽氏三琴記。

The “Account of Three *Qin*” is an introduction to the three *qin* that Ouyang Xiu possessed: the Zhang Yue *qin*, the Lou Ze *qin*, and the Lei family *qin*. The essay records when and how he came to possess them, who the makers were, what materials were used, and how each of them sounded. All these *qin* were precious items due to their long histories, and the ones made by Zhang Yue and the Lei family were especially precious. As mentioned earlier, the *qin* made by Zhang Yue and the Lei family were highly valued since the Tang Dynasty. According to the *Significant Records of the Qin Garden*, “What the Tang worthies valued were only the *qin* made by Zhang (Yue) and the Lei (family). The Lei family *qin* are heavy and solid, and their sounds are mild, powerful, and elegant. The Zhang *qin* are firm and clear, and their sounds are loud, sonorous, and mellow” 唐賢取重惟張、雷之琴。雷琴重實，聲溫勁而雅。張琴堅清，聲激越而潤。<sup>138</sup> However, among the three *qin*, Ouyang Xiu’s favorite was neither the one made by Zhang Yue nor by the Lei family, but the comparatively humble *qin* made by Lou Ze, as its *hui* were made from stone. These stones did not gleam in the candlelight and therefore, they were more fitting for the eyes of aged players. As Ouyang Xiu states in the last line of this account, it was written in 1062 when he was sick at home. This seemingly unremarkable narration of his

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<sup>137</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 64:943-944.

<sup>138</sup> *Qinyuan yaolu*, p.67.

favoring of the Lou Ze *qin* can for this reason be seen as his reflection of his old age and physical decline.

Ouyang Xiu also remarks of the Lou Ze *qin* in another essay, “The Sayings about the *Qin* and Pillow” (“Qin zhen shuo” 琴枕說), where he says that he likes it most because it is made from humble material and is easy for elders to see at during the night: “I said if one was to play the *qin* during the night, the one with stone *hui* was the best” 余謂夜彈琴，唯石暉為佳。<sup>139</sup> In old age, what is valued the most in a *qin* is neither the luxuriousness and worthiness of the instrument, nor the reputation of its maker that can be shown off, but the simplicity and minimalism that are suitable for his old age. The *qin* was not only a prized personal possession for Ouyang Xiu, but also brought quiet joy to his mind, and dispelled his worries and sorrows.

In the conclusion, Ouyang Xiu also talks about the piece of *qin* music that he liked to play the most, by stating that among the different tunes that he learned throughout his life, only “Flowing Water” was not forgotten at all and was played repeatedly. If we read this account along with another essay written by Ouyang Xiu, “Inscription after the Account of the *Qin*” (“Shu *qinruan* ji hou” 書琴阮記後), the reason why he favored that Lou Ze *qin* the most becomes clearer. Besides the reason that Lou Ze *qin* had the stone *hui* that were easier for the elderly to see during the night, another important factor for such a preference was due to its association with Yiling:

When I served as the magistrate of Yiling, I got a *qin* from Liu Ji of He’nan, which was an average *qin*. Later, I served as Secretariat Drafter, and I got another *qin*, which was made by Zhang Yue. Later on, I served as Academician and got another *qin* made by the Lei family. The higher my position, the more expensive my *qin* became, while my intention was less joyful. When I was in Yiling, the blue mountains and green waters were before my eyes every day, and there was no more vulgar bonds. Although the *qin* was not fine, my intention was free and relieved. When the time came that I served as Secretariat Drafter and Academician, every day I rushed about in the dust and dirt, and fame and profit disturbed me all around. Even if the *qin* was fine, my mood was diminished and disturbed, then for what reason would

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<sup>139</sup> Ouyang Xiu *quanji*, 130:1976.

I be joyful? Thereupon I come to know that (the joy) is from what is within, and not the instrument. If one has the means to satisfy oneself, even a *qin* without strings will suffice.<sup>140</sup>

余為夷陵令時，得琴一張於河南劉幾，蓋常琴也。後做舍人，又得琴一張，乃張越琴也。後做學士，又得琴一張，則雷琴也。官愈高，琴愈貴，而意愈不樂。在夷陵時，青山綠水，日在目前，無復俗累，琴雖不佳，意則蕭然自釋。及做舍人、學士，日奔走于塵土中，聲利擾擾盈前，無復清思，琴雖佳，意則昏雜，何由有樂？乃知在人不在器，若有以自適，無弦可也。

In this account, Ouyang Xiu explains another reason that why he favors the Lou Ze *qin* the most: it was acquired when he was exiled in Yiling, when he was distant from the vulgar bonds. What this *qin* brings to Ouyang Xiu is a source of serene pleasure that is related to the “blue mountains and green waters” of Yiling in his memory, as well as the reclusive and leisurely lifestyle with which he identifies. The other two *qin*, while they were made by renowned craftsmen, were obtained after he was called back to the capital and was bothered by too much hustle and bustle, and he was therefore unable to enjoy the true happiness that *qin* music could provide.

The comparison between Yiling and the capital is also clear in another poem by Ouyang Xiu, “Longing for Mountains, and Presented to Shengyu” 憶山示聖俞. The poem begins with, “I miss the mountains of Yiling, which have diverse shapes that cannot be exhausted” 吾思夷陵山，山亂不可究. At the ending of the poem, the natural and reclusive landscape of Yiling strongly contrasts with the busy and dusty scenes of the capital:

今來會京師，  
車馬逐塵簪。  
頽冠各白髮，  
舉酒無茜袖。

繁華不可慕，  
幽賞亦難邁。

Now we meet in the capital,  
The horses and carriages chase the dusty elders.  
With shabby hats, we all have white hairs;  
Raising the wine, there are no red sleeves in this company.<sup>141</sup>  
Prosperity is not worth envy,  
The secluded appreciation is a rare encounter.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Ouyang Xiu *quanji*, 155:2575-2576.

<sup>141</sup> Red sleeves refer to beautiful young ladies.

<sup>142</sup> Ouyang Xiu *quanji*, 1:15-16.



In this poem, Yiling, the place that used to be a symbol of disappointment and failure in Ouyang Xiu's life, turns into a utopia that he longs for in old age. The Louze *qin*, which is comparatively unknown and is made from humble materials, epitomizes Ouyang Xiu's memories of Yiling, and represents his preference for a free and simple lifestyle.

At the end of the "Inscription after the Account of the *Qin*," Ouyang Xiu comes to the conclusion that "if one had the means to satisfy oneself, even a *qin* without strings would suffice." For him, what matters in the *qin* music is not the sound. To abandon the strings is to discard the sound, and once the sound is discarded, the material aspects of the instrument are no longer valued, but the atmosphere of the *qin* music and the intent of the player become the true prize. As Hoskin mentions, "it (the biography object) was an extension of his personality into the vehicle of an object, and a use of the thing as a metaphor for the self."<sup>143</sup> What Ouyang Xiu treasured about the Lou Ze *qin* did not lie in the instrument or its sound, but in the memories that it created and was associated with, and that represented the taste and values of its owner.

In the "Account of Three *Qin*," Ouyang Xiu mentions that the *qin* tune he often played in his old age was "Flowing Water." According to the poem "Responding to Yuanfu's Poem that He Showed Me with Favor When He Visited Me" ("Fengda Yuanfu jianguo chongshi zhizuo" 奉答原甫見過寵示之作), Ouyang Xiu learned this tune when he was demoted in Yiling. In this poem, he describes how one day he played the tune of "Flowing Water," a tune which he had not played for almost twenty years. He recalls that when he was in Yiling, he used to play this piece to comfort himself:

不作流水聲，  
行將二十年。

I have not played the music of "Flowing Water,"  
It has been almost twenty years.

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<sup>143</sup> *Biographical Objects*, p.57.

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 吾生少賤足憂患， | In my life, when young and poor, I was full of worries<br>and disasters;            |
| 憶昔有罪初南遷。 | I recall that in the past I was guilty and came to the South<br>for the first time. |
| 飛帆洞庭入白浪， | The flying sail entered the white waves of the Dongting<br>Lake;                    |
| 墮淚三峽聽流泉。 | With tears falling, I listened to the flowing spring in the<br>Three Gorges.        |
| 援琴寫得入此曲， | Holding my <i>qin</i> , I was able to enter the scenery in this<br>piece of music;  |
| 聊以自慰窮山間。 | It comforted me amid these poor mountains. <sup>144</sup>                           |

What is remarkable about the “Flowing Water” is that it was a tune used by Ouyang Xiu to “comfort himself” amid the mountains of Yiling, which later aroused his recollection of his experiences in the past and his longing for the local landscape of Yiling. In this poem, Ouyang Xiu describes how he listened to the sound of flowing springs and managed to put that natural sound into the man-made *qin* music in Yiling. As he grew older, he forgot many other tunes that he once mastered, and yet this piece was unforgettable, even in his dreams. What the *Lou Ze qin* and the tune of “Flowing Water” gave to Ouyang Xiu was his past association with Yiling.

## II. Chuzhou, the *Qin*, and the Drunken Elder

In 1043, when Fan Zhongyan began to implement new policies to reform official institutions and military affairs, Ouyang Xiu participated in these reforms, which were later named the “New Policy of Qingli” (慶曆新政). The reformation was aborted two years later, and Fan Zhongyan was demoted with other officials who had sided with his reforms. At the same time, an enemy of Ouyang Xiu slanderously accused him of incest with his niece and of using her dowry to acquire some land in the name of the Ouyang family. Ouyang Xiu was therefore

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<sup>144</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 1:125-126.

demoted to Chuzhou in Anhui province, where he served as magistrate of one county after another, until he was transferred to Yangzhou in Jiangsu in the year of 1048.<sup>145</sup> Like Yiling, Chuzhou was a place that often appeared in Ouyang Xiu's later literary works on his remembrance of his past.

When Ouyang Xiu was in Chuzhou, he wrote a couple of literary works that mentioned the *qin*. In the poem, “Responding to Yuanfu’s Work that He Showed Me with Favor When He Visited Me,” Ouyang Xiu mentions that his habit of playing “Flowing Water” also continued when he was transferred to a post in Chuzhou: “In the meantime, I also played it in Yongyang (a subprefecture of Chuzhou), when I drunkenly laid down in a secluded valley and listened to the murmuring of water” 中間永陽亦如此，醉臥幽谷聽潺湲。<sup>146</sup> According to Shen Dong’s calculations, from 1046 to 1049, Ouyang Xiu composed nine poems that mentioned the *qin*.<sup>147</sup> More than half of these poems were about how Ouyang Xiu enjoyed the landscape of Chuzhou with his friends, and *qin* playing functioned as a literati cultural pursuit that accompanied their trip to the wilderness.

What is noteworthy about Ouyang Xiu’s years in Chuzhou is that he gave himself a sobriquet that gained a high reputation: the “Drunken Elder.” This image of an old drunken scholar official first appeared in the famous essay, “Account of the Drunken Elder Pavilion,” which was composed when Ouyang Xiu built a pavilion on his estate near the Langya Mountains. This work then became one of the most celebrated in Chinese literature: “When the ‘Account of the Drunken Elder’ was finished, all men under heaven recited it; and it reached every household, and because of it, the price of paper went up” 醉翁亭記初成，天下莫不傳

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<sup>145</sup> *Songshi*, 319.229-233.

<sup>146</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 1:125-126.

<sup>147</sup> “Qinyi shei ke ting? –Ouyang Xiu zhi qin yu beisong shifeng,” pp. 207-208.

誦，家至戶到，當時為之紙貴。<sup>148</sup> This piece fascinated readers, and the image of the Drunken Elder that it created also became a cultural icon that inspired many writings during this period. In his “Account of Rebuilding the Pavilion of the Drunken Elder in Chuzhou” 滁州重建醉翁亭記,

Sun Di 孫覲 (1081-1169) records:

At that time, the achievement and fame of the account shook the whole world. Its lingering influence, like clouds, spread to the fields of Huai and Chu. For one time, the grand Confucian scholars and government officials, who were men of noble character and literati of excellence, all sought spiritual affinity, and a great number of belle letters were produced from their imagination.<sup>149</sup>

當是時，功名震天下，流風餘韻，藹然被於淮壖楚甸間，一時巨儒宗公，高人勝士，聲氣相求，大篇傑句發於遐想。

Zeng Gong 曾鞏 (1019-1083), who was also a prominent scholar and historian of the Northern Song, imitated Ouyang Xiu’s work and composed a similar account which was entitled the “Account of the Pavilion of Awakening Heart” (“Xingxinting ji” 醒心亭記). It is recorded by Sun Di that Zeng felt quite proud when his work was regarded as second only to Ouyang Xiu’s work among various imitations.<sup>150</sup>

With the popularity of the account, the title of Drunken Elder became one of the most famous and frequently used sobriquets of Ouyang Xiu. Later in his life, this sobriquet was mentioned repeatedly by him in various genres of literature, exceeding the numbers of other titles by which he addressed himself, except when writing as Yongshu. For example, in “Having Thoughts when Reciting Shengyu’s Poem on Horseback Silently” 馬上默誦聖俞詩有感, he writes: “Su and Mei, the two masters are dead now; how lonely is the Drunken Elder of Chu

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<sup>148</sup> Zhu Mou 朱牟, *Quwei jiuwen* 曲洧舊聞, in *SKQS*, vol. 863, 3.302.

<sup>149</sup> *Hongqing jushi ji* 鴻慶居士集, in *SKQS*, vol. 1135, 22.222-223.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

Mountains!” 蘇梅二子今亡矣，索莫滁山一醉翁！<sup>151</sup> He composed this poem in 1065, five years after Mei Yaochen’s death. In this poem, he thinks about the fact that two of his best friends, Mei and Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽 (1008-1048), have passed away. Feeling extremely lonely, he calls himself “the Drunken Elder of Chu mountains.” Ouyang Xiu’s friends also addressed him as the “Drunken Elder.” For example, in “Composed on White Rabbit Again” 重賦白兔, Mei praises the talent and moral character of Ouyang Xiu, and compares the Drunken Elder with the Tang poet Han Yu: “Travelling over the Five Sacred Mountains, he (the white rabbit) could not find Han Yu; then arriving in Langya, he hears about the Drunken Elder. It is said that the Drunken Elder is the reincarnation of Han Yu; his literary writings, moral integrity and behaviors are the same as those of Han’s” 遍走五嶽都不逢，乃至瑯琊聞醉翁。醉翁傳是昌黎之後身，文章節行一以同。<sup>152</sup> This piece was composed in 1056, when Ouyang Xiu left Chuzhou and was called back to the capital, and he was still addressed as the Drunken Elder from the Langya Mountain of Chuzhou. The image of the Drunken Elder has become one of the most representative images of Ouyang Xiu, constructed both by himself and people around him, and it is closely tied with the natural landscape of Chuzhou.

What makes the literary image of the Drunken Elder so special and appealing to Ouyang Xiu and the people around him? Besides the appeal of the account that Ouyang Xiu composed, there are other factors contributing to the circulation and construction of this image. Visual materials, for example, reach wider audiences beyond the literary realm.<sup>153</sup> But an even more

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<sup>151</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 14:231.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>153</sup> “The Account of the Drunken Elder Pavilion” was inscribed into steles several times, twice during Ouyang Xiu’s lifetime and once after his death. Song calligraphers loved this piece and wrote it with their brush and ink. The image of the Drunken Elder was also favored by painters, as from the Northern Song through the Qing dynasties, a number of paintings that thematized the Drunken Elder were painted by different artists. For the transmission of the “Account of the Drunken Elder” through stele inscriptions and calligraphical work, see Wang Zhaopeng 王兆鵬 and

notable element that contributes to the spreading and constructing of this image is *qin* music. In 1055, ten years after Ouyang Xiu left Chuzhou, inspired by the *qin* tune by a musician named Shen Zun 沈遵 (fl. 11<sup>th</sup> c.), Ouyang Xiu composed a number of poetic works describing how *qin* music brought the past memories of Chuzhou back to him.<sup>154</sup>

After the “Account of the Drunken Elder Pavilion” was composed, a scholar and musician named Shen Zun was fascinated by the description of the landscape of Chuzhou.<sup>155</sup> He followed Ouyang Xiu’s footsteps and traveled through the mountainous area of Chuzhou. Inspired by the natural beauty of the local landscape, when Shen Zun returned home, he composed a *qin* tune in three sections, entitled the “Tune of the Drunken Elder” 醉翁吟. This piece remained obscure until its composer Shen Zun met Ouyang Xiu and played it for him in a banquet in 1055. The next year, Ouyang Xiu composed lyrics in *chuci* style to company Shen’s music. They read:

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| 始翁之來，  | When at first the (Drunken) Elder came,  |
| 獸見而深伏， | Beasts saw him and hid deep,             |
| 鳥見而高飛。 | And birds saw him and soared high.       |
| 翁醒而往兮， | The Elder went out soberly,              |
| 醉而歸。   | And returned with drunkenness.           |
| 朝醒暮醉兮， | At dawn he was sober, at sunset drunk;   |
| 無有四時。  | It was the same during the four seasons. |
| 鳥鳴樂其林， | Birds chirped and enjoyed their forests; |

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Wang Xing’s 王星, “Zuiwengtingji de shike chuanbo xiaoying” 醉翁亭記的石刻傳播效應, in *Changjiang xueshu* 4 (2009): 88-95. Li Rongjie 李榮傑 discusses the transmission of the account through different media, such as stele inscriptions, music, calligraphy and painting. See Li Rongjie, “Ouyang Xiu zuiwengtingji de kuawenben chuanbo” 歐陽修醉翁亭記的跨文本傳播, in *Jinggangshan daxue xuebao* 5 (2015): 119-126.

<sup>154</sup> Regarding the study of the *qin* melody on the Drunken Elder, see Wang Haiyan 王海燕, “Zuiweng cao—guqin gequ chuangzuo yishu” 醉翁操—古琴歌曲創作藝術, *Yishu pinglun* (12) 2001:29-60; Lü Xiaohuan 呂肖奐, “Cong qinqu dao cidiao —Songdai cidiao chuangzhi liubian shili” 從琴曲到詞調—宋代詞調創制流變實例, *Zhongguo yunwen xuekan*, 22.3 (2008): 66-71; Cheng Yujing 陳宇靜, “Zuiweng cao de yuanqi, yansheng ji wenhua yiyi” 醉翁操的緣起, 衍生及文化意義, *Wenjiao zijiao* 26 (2012): 8-10.

<sup>155</sup> Shen Zun was not mentioned in official history, but in his mother’s epitaph written by Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086), his name and life were briefly mentioned. See Tang Wu 唐武 ed., *Wang Wengong wenji* 王文公文集 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1974), 99.1009.

獸出遊其蹊。  
咿嚶啁哳於翁兮，  
醉不知。  
有心不能以無兮，  
有合必有離。

水潺潺兮，  
翁忽去而不顧；  
山岑岑兮，  
翁復來而幾時？  
風嫋嫋兮山木落，

春年年兮山草菲。

嗟我無德於其兮，

有情於山禽與麋。

賢哉沈子兮，  
能寫我心而慰彼相思。

And beasts came out and wandered in their paths.  
They whispered and cried in front of the Elder,  
While drunk, he was not aware.  
With a heart, he was not without emotion;  
If there was a gathering, there must also be  
departing.  
With water flowing,  
The Elder suddenly left and did not return;  
With mountains high,  
When would be the time that the Elder came again?  
The breeze wafted gently, and mountain trees lost  
their leaves.  
Spring came every year, and mountain grasses  
flourished.  
Sighing that I showed no virtue towards its people  
there,  
But only had affections for the mountain birds and  
wild deer.  
How great was Master Shen!  
He was able to write down what was in my heart  
and comforted my longings.<sup>156</sup>

Between the compositions of the “Account of the Drunken Elder” and this poem, eleven years had passed: Ouyang Xiu left Chuzhou, served as defense commander of Shangqiu in Henan province, and was called back to the capital in 1054 to become an Academician of the Hanlin Academy. Describing how he immersed himself in the landscape of Chuzhou, developed an intimate relationship with the wildlife there, and cherished such memory when he left Chuzhou, this poem can be read as a gradually unfolding condensed memoir triggered by the *qin* music by Shen Zun. It can also be read in several parts, which respectively have their distinctive perspectives and tones. The first part describes when the Drunk Elder just came to the wilderness of Chuzhou, and at first all the birds and beasts fled out of fear, and then afterwards they became accustomed to him and his drunkenness. In this part, Ouyang Xiu describes his own memories as

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<sup>156</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 15:260-261.

if writing about another person's past: he calls himself the Elder, and describes the interaction between the Elder and the animals and plants of Chuzhou from a third-person perspective. He then shifts his tone, and writes from the perspective of the animals and plants in Chuzhou. The next two parallel lines personify the animals and plants and speak in their voices: "With water flowing, the Elder suddenly left and did not return; With mountains high, when was the time that the Elder would come again?" The animals and plants were attached to the Elder, were surprised and sorry at his sudden leaving, and yearned for his return. The strong tie that the creatures of Chuzhou had with Ouyang Xiu reflect his pining for Chuzhou. The ending of the poem turns the perspective to that of the author: speaking as "I," Ouyang Xiu directly expresses his nostalgia toward Chuzhou. Humbly, he states that he showed no virtue toward the people there, while being responsive to the yearning from the animals and plants, he also conveys his affections for them. The ending lines are an exclamation that attribute all the merit to Shen Zun, as he was the one who was able to "write down" Ouyang Xiu's thoughts with *qin* music.

The poem, "Tune of the Drunken Elder," soon circulated among the literati circle and gained wide popularity. Ouyang Xiu's friend, Mei Yaochen, composed a poem with the same title later in 1056. In the "Account of Rebuilding the Pavilion of the Drunken Elder in Chuzhou," Sun Di mentions that a number of contemporary literati, such as Fu Bi 富弼 (1004-1083), Han Jiang 韓絳 (1012-1088), and Wang Anshi, composed poems entitled the "Tune of the Drunken Elder" to imitate the original work of Ouyang Xiu, although none of them are extant now.<sup>157</sup> The only other extant poem titled the "Tune of the Drunken Elder" was written by Wang Ling 王令 (1032-1059). Even though most of these imitational works have not survived until today, the proliferation of imitational works show how Shen Zun's musical composition and Ouyang Xiu's

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<sup>157</sup> *Hongqing jushi ji*, 22.222-223.



literary writing have provoked different authors' interest in adding to the literary repertoire on the Drunken Elder.

### III. The *Qin*, Involuntary Memory, and the Drunken Elder

Compared to the memory of Yiling that Ouyang Xiu reconstructed with a deliberate effort through the description of his favorite *qin* and tune in his old age, his memory of Chuzhou was sometimes retrieved involuntarily by *qin* music, especially by the “Tune of the Drunken Elder” composed by Shen Zun. Involuntary memory occurs when cues encountered in everyday life evoke recollections of the past without conscious effort. The most famous example of involuntary memory in world literature appears in the French novel *In Search of Lost Time*,<sup>158</sup> in which the French writer Marcel Proust describes vividly how involuntary memory brings the past to life. In the so-called “episode of the madeleine,” he presents the embodiment of the “rememberer,” and almost the whole architecture of *In Search of Lost Time* rests on this involuntary memory that is elicited by a few drops of lime tea and a madeleine. In his study of Proust's work, Daniel Schacter singles out the tea and madeleine as memory cues, and argues that memory is linked to self-definition and sense of identity.<sup>159</sup> For Ouyang Xiu, the piece of *qin* music, “Tune of the Drunken Elder,” often worked as the memory cue for him to elicit past memories of Chuzhou, and thus created an ideal past and forming a contrast with his later life that was burdened with government affairs.

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<sup>158</sup> *In Search of Lost Time* (French: *À la recherche du temps perdu*), also translated as *Remembrance of Things Past*, is a French novel in seven volumes, written by Marcel Proust (1871–1922).

<sup>159</sup> Schacter Daniel L, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), p. 28.

In 1055, the same year as Shen Zun composed the “Tune of the Drunken Elder,” Ouyang Xiu wrote another poem in seven-syllable archaic style after listening to Shen Zun playing the melody, which was named “Presented to Shen Zun” 贈沈遵. The poem reads:

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| 羣動夜息浮雲陰，   | At night, when the host of activities ceases, and<br>flowing clouds cast their shadows,                     |
| 沈夫子彈醉翁吟。   | Master Shen plays the “Tune of the Drunken Elder.”  |
| 醉翁吟，以我名，   | The “Tune of the Drunken Elder” is named after me,  |
| 我初聞之喜且驚。   | Upon hearing it, I am overjoyed and surprised.  |
| 宮聲三疊何泠泠，   | Three variations of the <i>gong</i> sounds, how clear they<br>are!  |
| 酒行暫止四坐傾。   | The passing of wine pauses temporarily, and all those<br>seated are enchanted.                              |
| 有如風輕日暖好鳥語， | As if with the gentleness of the breeze and the<br>warmth of the sun, the birds chirp beautifully;          |
| 夜靜山響春泉鳴。   | During the quiet nights amidst resounding mountains,<br>the spring stream gurgles.                          |
| 坐思千巖萬壑醉眠處， | Seated, I think of the place where I used to sleep in<br>drunkenness amidst thousands of rocks and ravines; |
| 寫君三尺膝上橫。   | You have written this with your three- <i>chi</i> long <i>qin</i><br>resting upon your knees.               |
| 沈夫子，       | Master Shen,  |
| 恨君不為醉翁客，   | How regretful that you have never been the guest of<br>the Drunken Elder!                                   |
| 不見翁醉山間亭。   | You have never seen how he was drunk in the<br>pavilion among the mountains.                                |
| 翁歡不待絲與竹，   | His joyfulness did not rely on any musical<br>instruments;  |
| 把酒終日聽泉聲。   | Holding the wine, all day long he listened to the<br>sound of the spring.                                   |
| 有時醉倒枕溪石，   | Sometimes he was drunk and lay down, taking stream<br>stones for pillows;                                   |
| 青山白雲為枕屏。   | The green mountains and white clouds were his<br>pillow’s screen.   |
| 花間百鳥喚不覺，   | Amidst the flowers, the call of hundreds of birds was<br>not be able to awaken him;                         |
| 日落山風吹自醒。   | When the sun set and the mountain winds blew, he<br>naturally woke up.                                      |
| 我時四十猶強力，   | At that time, I was forty and still had some strength;  |
| 自號醉翁聊戲客。   | Naming myself “Drunken Elder” was simply to tease<br>my guests.   |

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 爾來憂患十年間，  | Since then, it has been ten years of worry and hardship;                                    |
| 鬢髮發未老嗟先白。 | Not yet old, I sigh at the fact that my temple hairs have already turned white.             |
| 滌人思我雖未忘，  | Although the Chu people think of me and have not yet forgotten me;                          |
| 見我今應不能識。  | If they were to see me now, they would not be able to recognize me.                         |
| 沈夫子，      | Master Shen,  |
| 愛君一尊復一琴，  | I love your single cup of wine, as well as your single <i>qin</i> ;                         |
| 萬事不可干其心。  | Tens of thousands of affairs are unable to bother your heart.                               |
| 自非曾是醉翁客，  | If (they were) not once the guests of the Drunken Elder,                                    |
| 莫向俗耳求知音。  | You should not seek among those with vulgar ears for one who knows the tone. <sup>160</sup> |

In this poem, the *qin* music by Shen Zun provokes the memory of Chuzhou, helping Ouyang Xiu to recall how the Drunken Elder has changed through the years. The mechanism of involuntary recollection that Proust describes in *In Search of Lost Time*, the sudden and miraculous recovery of the past provoked by sensory cues, is at work here. In the beginning of the poem, Ouyang Xiu describes how surprised and exulted he is when listening to the “Tune of the Drunken Elder” and learning that it is named after him at the banquet. Shen’s music causes the passing of wine to halt, and brings Ouyang Xiu back to the landscape of Chuzhou. Once again, Ouyang Xiu uses the word “write” to describe the power of music to capture the natural beauty, as it successfully captures the scenery of Chuzhou by mimicking the sounds from nature, such as the chirping of birds and gurgling of streams. Then Ouyang Xiu suddenly heaves a sigh, regretting that Shen Zun was not present to see how heavily drunk he was at that moment. The music helps Ouyang Xiu to go back to the ideal past and to achieve the moment of extreme relaxation and joyfulness without any artificial belongings or civilized pursuits. In that ultimate point, the sounds from

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<sup>160</sup> Ouyang Xiu *quanji*, 6:94-95.

nature take the place of man-made music, and rocks, mountains and clouds take the place of pillows and screens. It is a moment when even *qin* music is no longer needed. Elated by the flashback of being drunk in the landscape of Chuzhou, the Proustian experiences become Ouyang Xiu's lost paradise.

In this poem, Ouyang Xiu provides readers with his private recollections, and invites them to dwell on the way they flashed up, unfolded before him, seized him, and formed a narrative: I remember that this happened, that I was alone, that the air was warm and fragrant with the scent of different spring foliage, that my heart was almost intoxicated by the alcohol as well as the warm breeze.... The piece of *qin* music encourages Ouyang Xiu as well as the readers to sustain, for as long as possible, the discoveries and pleasures of an intricate and intimate recollection. Shen's tune invites Ouyang Xiu to create, amid the incessant bustle of court life in his old age, moments with a much-desired aesthetic basis. Music allows him to dwell in his nostalgia, to leave time for introspection and reminiscence, and to think just about himself.

However, the spiritual journey initiated by the *qin* tune does not end at this point. It not only brings Ouyang Xiu back to the past, but also makes him witness the flow of time from past to present. In the second half of the poem, Ouyang Xiu mentions that he was not yet old when the "Account of the Pavilion of the Drunken Elder" was composed. He confesses that the image of the Drunken Elder was self-constructed and was not a serious historical, political, or even artistic image; its main purpose was to "tease," but through the music Ouyang Xiu notices that from an energetic young man who feigned old age and careless drunkenness, he has become the exact old man that he described. With his body feeble and effete, he feels that even the local people of Chuzhou who have been missing him will not recognize him. Whether it is expected or not, in the ending part of the poem, the music brings Ouyang Xiu back to reality. The *qin* music

is like a time-machine that leads him to the past and brings him back to the present. Through the duration of a piece of *qin* music, he witnesses what he has experienced in the past decade.

In 1057, on the occasion of a farewell banquet to send off Shen Zun with Mei Yaochen and Liu Chang, Shen Zun once again played the “Tune of the Drunken Elder” on the *qin* for Ouyang Xiu and his friends. Thereafter, Ouyang Xiu composed another poem entitled, “The Song Presented to Erudite Shen” (“Zeng Shen boshi ge” 贈沈博士歌), which starts with a rhetorical question: “Master Shen, why are you playing the ‘Tune of the Drunken Elder?’” 沈夫子，胡為醉翁吟? By answering that the Drunken Elder does not understand Shen’s music, the poetic scene suddenly shifts from reality to an imaginary sphere, as the banquet scene changes into the landscape of Chuzhou, which constitutes a nostalgic streak in the rememberer. Although this poem was composed only one year after the previous poem, “Presented to Shen Zun,” the overall atmosphere is quite different. The memories of Chuzhou being provoked this time are no longer peaceful and serene, as Ouyang Xiu describes the steep mountains and deep rivers of Chuzhou, which aroused mixed feelings of terror and amazement:

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 滌山高絕滌水深， | The mountains of Chu were precipitous and the rivers of Chu were deep.           |
| 空巖悲風夜吹林。 | In the night, the melancholy wind from the empty rocks blew through the forests. |
| 山溜白玉懸青岑， | Mountains cataracts as the white jade clung to the green peaks.                  |
| 一瀉萬仞源莫尋。 | Once pouring down ten thousand feet, its origin cannot be found.                 |

However, Ouyang Xiu was still strongly attracted to such scenery and got drunk in front of such a landscape, and even lost his hairpin: “in drunkenness, I lay down on the rock and left my hairpin” 醉倒石上遺其簪. After recalling the past, the poem switches back to reality, and once again Ouyang Xiu describes how well Shen Zun used his *qin* to “write” his own melancholy thoughts and precipitous landscape. With a deep sigh, Ouyang Xiu requests that Shen Zun stop

the music, as the memory it has brought is unbearable. Again, as in the previous poem, Ouyang Xiu states that he was in fact a young man when he first named himself the Drunken Elder. However, with the passing of years and the events that have occurred in life, he has gradually become the elder he once pretended to be. Witnessing the death of a good friend and the ups and downs of political affairs, he finds that his appearance has collapsed and asks with his “heart inebriated with sorrow, how can one know happiness?” 心以憂醉安知樂?<sup>161</sup>

In both of the poems, the “records” of past times would never be created were it not for the unexpected discoveries that are opened up by the *qin*. In the absence of this instrument, the autobiographical memories of Ouyang Xiu would have been greatly impoverished. It is because of the *qin* that retrieves what would have been irrecoverably lost. Shen Zun’s *qin* music subconsciously transports Ouyang Xiu back to the landscape of Chuzhou in his younger age: he becomes someone who is drunk amid the mountains and rivers again. The cadence of sounds beckons him and he remembers. As the old sensations are revived, the past comes back to life. The *qin* leads to the point when the past and the present appear to meet. Then Ouyang Xiu, the aged, gray-haired, jaded official, encounters the young carefree magistrate that he used to be. As an exemplary architect of memory, Ouyang Xiu reveals the artifices of memories that have brought the past to life. The memories can be consciously constructed and imagined, or maybe retrieved by a piece of *qin* music without deliberate effort. The memories recalled can be very different: they may be of a warm spring day with pleasant sunshine and breeze, or of a chilly day blown with desolate wind. The remembering mind stitches together complex combinations of thought, emotion, and words, from a single sound to a past scene, and even to a period of time.

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<sup>161</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 7:105-106.

When thinking about the past, the enervating feelings of old age become the most unbearable. The true paradise is the one that one has lost, and pleasure is always a thing of the past.

#### IV. Imagining the Drunken Elder Through *Qin* Music by Ouyang Xiu's Friends

Ouyang Xiu's literary circle also participated in the construction of his memory of the past, as well as his image as the Drunken Elder. Ouyang Xiu's literary circle included many other prominent figures of the era, such as Liu Chang 劉敞 (1019-1068), Mei Yaochen, and Su Shi. The marriage of Shen Zun's *qin* music with Ouyang Xiu's poetic works attracted the attention of both Liu Chang and Mei Yaochen, who each composed poems about the Drunken Elder, the *qin* and Chuzhou. As Owen mentions in *Remembrances: The Experience of the Past in Classical Chinese Literature*, the action of remembering itself is worth being remembered: "And as we discover and commemorate the remembers of the past, it is easy to conclude that in remembering we ourselves will be remembered and will be worthy of memory."<sup>162</sup> When Ouyang Xiu constructed his memory of Yiling and Chuzhou through his writings on the *qin*, at the same time other authors also remembered, imagined, and constructed Ouyang Xiu as the Drunken Elder in Chuzhou through the *qin*. Their literary constructions of the Drunken Elder were provoked not only by *qin* music directly, but also by how Ouyang Xiu remembered the past through the music.

In the farewell banquet to send off Shen Zun in 1057, besides Ouyang Xiu, two other guests were also present: Mei Yaochen and Liu Chang, both of whom were renowned authors and good friends of Ouyang Xiu, and composed poems after listening to Shen Zun playing the "Tune of the Drunken Elder" on the *qin*. Although their poems were composed on the same

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<sup>162</sup> *Remembrances: The Experience of the Past in Classical Chinese Literature*, 17.

occasion, Mei's poem "To Send Off Controller-General Erudite Shen of Jianzhou" ("Song Jianzhou tongpan Shen taibo" 送建州通判沈太博), is a more vivid description of the music performance itself and emphasizes the affective quality of the music, while Liu Chang's poem, "Sent to Erudite Shen with Yongshu" ("Tong Yongshu zeng Shen boshi" 同永叔贈沈博士), is more similar to Ouyang Xiu's two archaic style poems in the way that it relates the music with Ouyang Xiu's experiences in Chuzhou. Instead of retrieving or constructing a memory of the past, Liu Chang's poem is about his imagination of the Drunken Elder in Chuzhou. The poem reads:

我不識醉翁亭，  
又不聞醉翁吟。  
但見醉翁詩，  
愛彼絕境逢良琴。

上多高峰下流泉，  
後有芳草前茂林。

玄猿黃鵠翩翩共悲鳴兮，  
白雲翠靄倏忽而陽陰。

此間真意不可盡，  
未遇知者猶荒岑。

醉翁昔時逃世紛，  
戀此醕酌遺朝簪。

心雖獨醒迹彌晦，  
舉俗莫得窺浮沈。

邇來十年定誰覺，  
獨沈夫子明其心。

I don't know the Pavilion of the Drunken Elder;  
Nor have I heard the "Tune of the Drunken Elder."  
I only read the poem about the Drunken Elder,  
And love how in extreme difficulties he met the  
excellent *qin*.

Upward, there were numerous high mountain peaks,  
and downward, there were flowing springs;  
Behind, there were fragrant grasses, and in front, there  
were vibrant forests.

Black apes and yellow swans that were flying lightly  
cried sadly together;  
The white clouds and the emerald green fog all of a  
sudden changed from bright to dark.

Amidst all this place, the true meaning could not be  
exhausted;  
Having not yet met the one who understood it, it was  
still a wild hill.

At that time, the Drunken Elder escaped from the  
world's bindings;  
Being fond of this inebriation, he left behind his court  
hairpin.

Although his heart was the only one who was awake,  
his appearances became even rarer in the world;  
All the vulgar people did not get a glimpse of his ups  
and downs.

From that time, who will realize that ten years have  
passed;  
Only master Shen clearly knows his heart.



|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 寫之絲桐寄逸賞，   | Describing it with the <i>qin</i> , he entrusts the music with<br>Elder's free appreciation; |
| 曲度寥落含高深。   | The scale of the tune is spare, yet it contains both<br>heights and depths.                  |
| 絕調衆耳多不省，   | For the most fantastic tunes, the common ears always<br>cannot appreciate;                   |
| 醉翁一聞能別音。   | After hearing it once, the Drunken Elder is able to<br>distinguish the tone.                 |
| 乃知精識自有合，   | Then it can be known that the purest sincerity<br>naturally has someone to appreciate it;    |
| 何必相與凌崎嶇。   | Why should they be both present, upon the precipitous<br>hills?                              |
| 伯牙鍾子期，     | Boya and Zhong Ziqi,   |
| 目擊意已歆。     | After their eyes met momentarily, their meanings were<br>joyful.                             |
| 蓬萊三山蕩析不可見， | The three mountains of Penglai collapsed and<br>dispersed, and can never be seen again;      |
| 惟有水仙之操傳至今。 | Only the "Tune of Shuixian" has been passed down to<br>present times. <sup>163</sup>         |
| 安知後世萬千歲，   | How can it be known that after tens of thousands of<br>years—that                            |
| 此地不爲水火侵。   | this place will not be invaded by water and fire?  |
| 但存君詩與君曲，   | Just preserve your poem, sir (Ouyang Xiu), and your<br>music, sir (Shen Zun);                |
| 雖遠猶可期登臨。   | Although it will be far, you can still hope to climb the<br>mountains and face waters.       |
| 沈夫子，與醉翁，   | Master Shen, and the Drunken Elder,  |
| 斯言至悲君更尋。   | These words are extremely sorrowful, and you should<br>think more about them. <sup>164</sup> |

This poem begins with a seeming denial of both Ouyang Xiu and Shen Zun, as the poet mentions that he has neither travelled to the Pavilion of the Drunken Elder, nor heard of the "Tune of the Drunken Elder." However, the situation soon has a stark reversal when he reads the "Poem of the Drunken Elder," and, at the same time found how "how in extreme difficulties he met the excellent *qin*." Liu uses the verb *feng* 逢 (to meet) to personify music, turning Ouyang Xiu and

<sup>163</sup> The *qin* tune "Shuixian cao" was not been recorded until Zhu Changwen's *Qin shi*, 2.143.

<sup>164</sup> *QSS*, 476. 5765-5766.

the *qin* into a couple of close friends, which corresponds to the allusion to Boya and Ziqi that appear later in the poem. The meeting between the Drunken Elder and the *qin* soon attracts his interest and provokes his imagination, which leads him to tread upon the landscape that he has never been to: it was in Chuzhou, where the pavilion of the Drunken Elder was built. The time was more than ten years ago, when Ouyang Xiu was demoted there as magistrate. Liu Chang hears animals crying and sees clouds changing colors, and finds the thirty-nine year old Ouyang Xiu heavily drunk. The imagination provoked by Shen's music and Ouyang's poem is a vehicle by which its audience travels not only across space, but also time, to a sphere that Liu Chang has never personally entered.

Liu then describes how the local landscape is related to Ouyang Xiu: "Having not yet met the one who understood it, it was still desolate." The natural landscape of Chuzhou is personalized as someone awaited the appreciation from a friend who could truly understand him. Liu also describes Ouyang Xiu as someone who was immersed in inebriation to avoid the hassles of the vulgar world and was also waiting for someone who could know him. Here Liu senses paradoxical emotions and intentions beneath Ouyang Xiu's outward drunkenness and used a pair of antonyms to describe him: "being fond of this inebriation" and "the only one whose heart was awake."<sup>165</sup> He characterizes the Drunken Elder as a man of detachment, who was always inebriated but "awakened" in heart, and whose spontaneous behavior was the external sign of his inner purity. While the first half of the poem focuses more on the image of the Drunken Elder and his encounter with Chuzhou, the second half of the poem describe Shen Zun as a musician

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<sup>165</sup> Xianda Lian in his article argues that the inebriation was a gesture made by Ouyang Xiu to show his intellectual and moral superiority: "Ouyang Xiu differs from Qu Yuan in that he separates himself from the mundane political world not by asserting his moral integrity and good political sense, by celebrating his seemingly amoral and apolitical qualities. So while Qu Yuan is known for his obsession with moral sobriety ('Everyone is drunk, I alone am sober,' as he himself claimed), Ouyang Xiu prides himself on being the only drunkard among a world of sober men." See Xianda Lian, "The Old Drunkard Who Finds Joy in His Own Joy-Elitist Ideas in Ouyang Xiu's Informal Writings," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, 23 (2001): 8.

who fully understands the Drunken Elder, and creates a musical sphere that adheres to and conveys Ouyang's inner purity—a purity that is not appreciated or understood by the vulgar world. After a flashback to the imaginary Chuzhou, the poetic scene returns to reality, and the topic is brought back to Shen Zun and his *qin*. By describing Shen as the one who truly knows the Drunken Elder, there is another layer of the relationship of “one who truly knows the tone” at work.<sup>166</sup> The Drunken Elder is described in previous lines as one who could understand the true meaning of nature in Chuzhou and put it into poetic language. Shen Zun understands Ouyang Xiu's affections for Chuzhou and esoteric link with it, and describes it in his music. In response to Shen, the Drunken Elder also knows what Shen's *qin* music truly conveys, which the common ears generally cannot appreciate. Their mutual understanding is beyond the medium of oral speech, as their intentions turn joyful after they merely glance at each other. The line of “after their eyes met momentarily, their intentions were joyful” not only alludes to the ideal friendship between Boya and Ziqi, but also to the meeting of Confucius and Tian Zifang 田子方 in

*Zhuangzi*:

Confucius also went for an interview with Wenbo Xuezi but returned without having spoken a word. Zilu said: “You have been wanting to see Wenbo Xuezi for a long time. Now you had the chance to see him; why didn't you say anything?” Confucius said, “With that kind of man, just meeting his eyes tells you that the Way is there before you. What space does that leave for any possibility of speech?”<sup>167</sup>

仲尼見之而不言。子路曰：吾子欲見溫伯雪子久矣，見之而不言，何邪？仲尼曰：若夫人者，目擊而道存，亦不可以容聲矣。

Just as Confucius did not need to speak to Wenbo Xuezi to understand his Way, Ouyang Xiu and Shen Zun's mutual understanding is also beyond speech.

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<sup>166</sup> For scholarship on friendship in pre-modern China, see Anna Shields, *One Who Knows Me: Friendship and Literary Culture in Mid-Tang China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015).

<sup>167</sup> I use the translation by Burton Watson with slight revision. See Burton Watson, tran., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 167.

In the final part of the poem, Liu rejoices that this idealized mutual understanding between Ouyang Xiu and Shen Zun will survive the passage of time. In spite of the fact that the three mountains of Penglai were sacred, with the passing of time, they collapsed and cannot be seen again. Boya and Ziqi are dead, but the “Tune of Shuixian” that symbolizes their friendship remains and will be passed down to later generations. The ideal companionship of Ouyang Xiu’s poem and Shen Zun’s *qin* tune will transcend time and space. Liu also imagines that the readers of later periods will still have the chance to peek into the beauty of the landscape of Chuzhou and the spirit of the Drunken Elder by climbing the mountains and facing waters.

The ending of the poem touches upon an important poetic theme that is represented by the *qin*: how the *qin* music epitomizes the mutual understanding between Ouyang Xiu and Shen Zun, and how the combination of music and poetry helps them overcome the anxiety of being overlooked or forgotten and finally attain literary immortality. Through both musical and literary compositions, Ouyang Xiu and Shen Zun’s friendship will transcend the vicissitudes of the world, and be remembered by later generations.

Besides Liu Chang, Su Shi also contributed to the construction of Ouyang Xiu’s image as the Drunken Elder. In 1082, ten years after Ouyang Xiu had passed away, Su Shi composed *ci* lyrics to a *qin* tune, “Song of the Drunken Elder” (“Zuiwen yin” 醉翁吟). From his preface to the lyrics, we can tell that at that time, the original *qin* tune composed by Shen Zun was either lost or changed. Since the extant *qin* melody at Su Shi’s time did not match Ouyang Xiu’s lyrics, a *qin* player from Lu Shan named Cui Xian 崔閑 (fl. 11 c.) composed a new *qin* tune with a very similar title, “Ballad of the Drunk Elder” (“Zuiweng cao” 醉翁操), and Su Shi’s lyrics follow Cui’s *qin* notation.

Su Shi’s lyrics start with a description of sound:

琅然,

Tinkling,

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 清圓。      | Clear and round.  |
| 誰彈？      | Who is playing?   |
| 響空山。     | Resounding in empty mountains.                                |
| 無言。      | No words.   |
| 惟翁醉中知其天。 | Only the Elder in his drunkenness knows<br>its nature.        |
| 月明，      | The moon is bright;   |
| 風露娟娟，    | Wind and dew are beautiful and mellow.                        |
| 人未眠。     | People are not yet asleep.                                    |
| 荷蕢過山前，   | A carrier of straw basket passes in front<br>of the mountain, |
| 曰有心也哉此賢。 | Saying “He does have great sentiments,<br>this worthy man.”   |

With no words to specify the exact location and time, Su Shi creates a serene and implicit poetic scene. He does not state where the sounds come from: they may be from flowing water in nature, or from *qin* music when harmonics are produced. The resonant sound infatuates the author and urges him to find out who the player is, but there is no answer. Su Shi then continues to write about the Elder, the one who truly knows the nature of the sound in his drunkenness. The Elder encounters a man who carries straw basket, who eulogizes him as a worthy man. Here Su alludes to an anecdote included in the *Analects*, in which Confucius played music and was praised as containing “great sentiments” by a recluse who carried a straw basket.<sup>168</sup>

In the second half of this piece, Su Shi writes:

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| 醉翁嘯詠，   | When the Drunken Elder whistles and sings,                                   |
| 聲和流泉。   | The sounds harmonize with the flowing<br>spring.                             |
| 醉翁去後，   | After the Drunken Elder leaves,  |
| 空有朝吟夜怨。 | In vain there are chanting during the day<br>and lamenting during the night. |
| 山有時而童顛， | Mountains sometimes collapse;  |
| 水有時而回川。 | Rivers sometimes reverse their course.                                       |
| 思翁無歲年，  | The longing for the Elder is timeless.                                       |
| 翁今爲飛仙。  | The Elder now being a flying immortal,                                       |

<sup>168</sup> Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, ed. and annot., *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 14.39.

此意在人間，

試聽徽外三兩弦。

While his sentiments are still in the human world.

Just try to listen to sounds from two or three strings beyond the *hui* studs.<sup>169</sup>

Su points out the fact that the Drunken Elder no longer lives in the mundane world, but his thoughts and sentiments linger on, which are preserved in the music of the *qin*. Compared to *qin* music, even the power of time seems tiny: music stops the flow of time and freezes both memory and imagination in notes. Even if in reality, Ouyang Xiu, the real historical figure represented by the Drunken Elder, has passed away and the original music of the “Tune of the Drunken Elder” has been lost, it still does not matter at all, as a new version of the music is created and thereupon calls back the spirit of the Drunken Elder, who now transforms into an immortal. When the strings are plucked again, the color, image, temperature, smell, touch, taste, all come back; at the same time, the person who used to live in memory also comes back to life again.

## Conclusion

In *Architexts of Memory: Literature, Science and Autobiography*, Evelyne Ender makes a philosophical argument about the relation between memory and subjectivity, stating that memory makes each individual human unique. When an individual remembers, that person possesses a whole realm of being that is constituted not only from presence, but also from the past experiences of how he or she has come to this presence. When a person loses his or her memory, their life dissolves into an immediate and purposeless present, in which he or she is therefore unable to grasp the meaning of existence and will lead an increasingly centerless life.

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<sup>169</sup> Zou Tongqing 鄒同慶 and Wang Zongtang 王宗堂, annot., *Sushi ci biannian jiaozhu* 蘇軾詞編年校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), pp. 451-452.

“The ‘rememberer,’” Ender argues, “by contrast, who knows how to craft autobiographical memories, is ever ready to grasp and shape a history made of pleasures and pains, as well as of ideas, actions, and projects. Rememberers thus emerge as the heroic figures of this story because of the remarkable feat they accomplish daily, often thoughtlessly and effortlessly: with every memory they construct, they keep the biographical thread that defines their existence and assert their agency as subjects against the force of biological determinism.”<sup>170</sup>

The *qin*, which was the instrument that accompanied Ouyang Xiu for most of his life, was not simply an object of pastime or tool for self-cultivation. In Ouyang Xiu’s old age, the *qin* helped him to either purposefully retrieve or unintentionally recall the memories of the past. Just as the madeleine cake and tea transported the narrator of *In Search of Lost Time* back to the village of his childhood, the occasions of playing or listening to the *qin* constituted the specific moments in Ouyang Xiu’s old age when the remembering process of Yiling and Chuzhou began, and when his literary works also started to unfold. The *qin* also served as a foil for self-definition and an anchor for the self-historicizing subject. It was where the remembrance, imagination, the ideal of reclusion, and self-representation all converged. Through the *qin*, Ouyang Xiu’s past in Yiling and Chuzhou were scripted and reworked in present memory, helping him to make his own existence stressing the history of his personality and fashioning his identity.

Just as the *qin* allowed Ouyang Xiu to revisit and refine his sense of connection to the past and tell his life through an integrated narrative, his friends such as Liu Chang and Su Shi also participated in the narrative creation of Ouyang Xiu’s self through the vehicle of the *qin*. They imagined his past when they heard *qin* music and wrote about it. With many literary pieces composed on the same topic, the *qin* that provoked Ouyang Xiu’s own memory echoed in other

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<sup>170</sup> Evelyne Ender, *Architexts of Memory: Literature, Science, and Autobiography* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), p. 3.

authors' memories and imagination about him, which altogether contributed to the transformation and canonization of the image of the Drunken Elder of Chuzhou into the representative persona of Ouyang Xiu. The involvements of Ouyang Xiu's close friends in the establishment of his biography and identity also illustrates how *qin* and *qin* culture influenced the formation of literary circles in the Northern Song.



## Chapter Three

### Constructing A Musical Instrument of the Ideal Past: Aesthetics and Conceptions of the *Qin*

I regard the *qin* as the greatest of musical instruments. It puts a stop to evil thoughts and nourishes a virtuous character.<sup>171</sup>

予謂琴，樂之大者，禁邪心，養德性。

—Cheng Xun 程洵 (fl. 12<sup>th</sup> c.), “The Account of the *Qin* Hall and the Go Chess Pavilion” (“Qintang qixuan ji” 琴堂棋軒記)

An examination of aesthetic reflections on, and conceptions of, the *qin* that are found in literary works composed during the Song dynasty reveals the gradual process by which the *qin* came to be considered “the greatest of musical instruments.” Although scholars of Chinese literature, history, and ethnomusicology have recognized that the *qin* was regarded as a highly spiritual musical instrument favored by scholars and the literati for its great subtlety and refinement in premodern China, only a few are devoted to the way this view was constructed.

In his article, “The Controversy Over Music and ‘Sadness’ and Changing Conceptions of the *Qin* in Middle Period China,” Ronald Egan argues that in the Tang dynasty, poets like Bai Juyi redefined the *qin* as an ancient instrument and its music as classical and refined, thereby elevating it as the epitome of scholarly high-mindedness. From the latter part of the Tang and continuing into the Song, playing the *qin* became an indispensable literati diversion, and the instrument became a ubiquitous accoutrement of the refined scholar.<sup>172</sup> Building upon Egan’s study, this chapter further explores the development of the *qin*’s conception in the Song dynasty

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<sup>171</sup> *QSW*, 5832.240.

<sup>172</sup> See Ronald Egan, “The Controversy Over Music and ‘Sadness’ and Changing Conceptions of the *Qin* in Middle Period China.”

further. In her *Song Dynasty Musical Sources and their Interpretation*, Pian Chao Rulan notes that from the beginning of the Song period, music theorists in the court were much preoccupied with the revival of ancient Zhou music and regarded the foreign music favored during the Tang as one that had a corrupting influence.<sup>173</sup> In this chapter, I argue that, in addition to music officials in the court, the literati played an important role in the effort to revive music of the Confucian tradition, and a significant part of this effort was devoted to classicizing the *qin*, associating it with sages of the Confucian tradition, and applying the standards of the Zhou dynasty's ideal music to define and describe the *qin*'s aesthetics.

### I. The Controversy Over Han Yu's "Listening to Reverend Ying Play the *Qin*"

Among a number of poems about the *qin* composed during the Tang dynasty, one of the most famous is Han Yu's "Listening to Reverend Ying Play the *Qin*," which reads:

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 暱暱兒女語，   | Intimately, a boy and girl talking together;                            |
| 恩怨相爾汝。   | Whether tender or bitter, each calls the other<br>"darling."            |
| 劃然變軒昂，   | Then cutting off abruptly, he changes to the<br>haughty,                |
| 勇士赴敵場。   | Valiant warriors going off to the field of combat.                      |
| 浮雲柳絮無根蒂， | Then floating clouds and willow floss without<br>roots,                 |
| 天地闊遠隨飛揚。 | Through the vastness of Heaven and Earth,<br>continuing soaring upward. |
| 喧啾百鳥羣，   | Or as amid chattering flocks of all kinds of birds,                     |
| 忽見孤鳳凰。   | Suddenly one perceives the solitary phoenix.                            |
| 躋攀分寸不可上， | Or climbing up—can't go even an inch, even a<br>mite higher,            |
| 失勢一落千丈強。 | Then, strength failing, one long fall, over a<br>thousand feet down.    |
| 嗟餘有兩耳，   | But unfortunately, these two ears,                                      |
| 未省聽絲篁。   | I have never listened to such music.                                    |

<sup>173</sup> *Song Dynasty Musical Sources and Their Interpretation*, p.1.

自聞穎師彈，  
起坐在一旁。  
推手遽止之，  
溼衣淚滂滂。  
穎乎爾誠能，  
無以冰炭置我腸！

Since I've heard Reverend Ying play,  
I'm transfixed in this single corner.  
I push his hand away and abruptly stop him—  
Streaming tears have sopped my clothes.  
Ying—you're really a master at this,  
But don't go setting ice and charcoal together in  
my heart!<sup>174</sup>

Because this poem does not mention anything about the performance's time, location, or occasion, it leaves readers with a large opening for interpretation. It begins directly with a series of metaphors that describe the music. The first is an intimate conversation between a young couple, which compares *qin* music to soft, murmuring whispers of love. The musical impression of lovers does not last long, as the mellow music becomes courageous and valiant suddenly, leading to the second metaphor: warriors marching to the battlefield. The third and fourth metaphors then shift from the human world to nature and compare the music to floating clouds and willow floss that fly freely in the universe. These two metaphors may describe the free movements of Reverend Ying's hands, and the music's unlimited changes of volume, pitch, rhythm, and tone. The next metaphor is that of a lonely phoenix among a crowd of birds, followed by an image of someone climbing a precipitous mountain. It is difficult to climb even a little bit higher, but when the fall comes, it is a thousand feet down. This metaphor's actual reference is difficult to grasp, and may refer to the delicate movements of the hand in the high register, followed by a drastic change of musical scale from the high register to the low. At the poem's end, Han Yu describes the powerful effects of Reverend Ying's music, which not only made him weep, but also put "ice and charcoal" in his heart, the opposite and incompatible extremes of emotions.

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<sup>174</sup> Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯, ed. and annot., *Han Changli shi xinian jishi* 韓昌黎詩系年集釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1957), pp. 441-442. Here I use the translation by Stephen Owen. See Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of Meng Chiao and Han Yu* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 235.

This poem, although entitled “listening to the *qin*,” aroused debates during the Song dynasty about which musical instrument it actually describes. In the second piece of “Ten Miscellaneous Pieces on the *Qin*” (“Za shu qin shi shishou” 雜書琴事十首), Su Shi records an anecdote about his teacher and friend, Ouyang Xiu, who asserted that this poem should be played on *pipa* rather than the *qin*:

Lord Wenzhong, Ouyang Xiu, once asked me: “Among the poems on the *qin*, which piece do you think is the best one?” I replied by saying that it would be Han Yu’s piece. Lord Wenzhong said that although this poem is spectacular and magnificent, it is in fact a piece on listening to the *pipa*, not the *qin*.<sup>175</sup>

歐陽文忠公嘗問仆：“琴詩何者最佳？”余以此答之。公言此詩固奇麗，然自是聽琵琶詩，非琴詩。

Ouyang Xiu’s statement prompted different reactions from authors, both during his time and after. While some sided with him, including Su Shi, others disagreed. However, what I want to discuss here is not whether Han originally had in mind the *qin* or *pipa*, but why Ouyang Xiu would make such an argument and the way this argument was related to his conception of the *qin*. With respect to this controversy about Han Yu’s poem, Ronald Egan argues that it reflected the conflict between two approaches to responding to and representing music in middle period China. The first was a sentimental approach, which emphasized the emotive powers that a musician imparted to music, thereby arousing similar emotions in the listeners; the second was an approach that considered that music does not possess any intrinsic emotions, an idea Xi Kang 嵇康 (223-262) proposed first in his essay, “Music Has No Sorrow or Joy” (“Sheng wu aile lun”

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<sup>175</sup> *Su Shi wenji*, 71.2243-2244. Although in the Tang dynasty, the *qin* and *pipa* were clearly distinguished from each other in most writings, in some rare cases *pipa* was called *qin*. See Jao Tsung-I 饒宗頤, “Dunhuang pipa pu duji” 敦煌琵琶譜讀記, in *Dunhuang pipa pu lunwen ji* 敦煌琵琶譜論文集, ed. Jao Tsung-I (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1991), p. 50. Gao Shentao 高慎濤 and Zhai Min 翟敏 argues that Ouyang Xiu’s view reflects the revival of Confucianism in the early Song, See Gao Shentao, and Zhai Min, “Lun Han Yu ‘Ting Yingshi tanqin’ yinfa de tingqin yu tingpipa zhizheng jiqi neihan” 論韓愈〈聽穎師彈琴〉引發的「聽琴」與「聽琵琶」之爭及其內涵, *Fengjia renwen shehui xuebao* 13 (Dec. 2006): 95-106.

聲無哀樂論). Egan proposes that the second approach influenced the conception of the *qin* deeply in the middle period. As Han Yu's poem focuses on drastic changes of emotions, it belongs to the sentimental approach in representing music, and what Ouyang Xiu opposed was its emphasis on the music's provocative power in arousing extreme emotions in the listeners.<sup>176</sup> Building upon Egan's insights, I argue that the emphasis on emotional stimulation in Han Yu's piece is only part of the reason that Ouyang Xiu rejected this poem as a work on the *qin*. His rejection also was attributable to the distinction between the *pipa*'s aesthetics and those of the *qin* and, above all, to his conception and construction of the *qin* overall as the musical instrument that represented ancient Confucian music ideals.

For Ouyang Xiu, Han Yu's poem did not qualify as a proper poem about listening to the *qin*, as the aesthetics this piece reflected more properly belong to the *pipa*. One may wonder, then, what the *pipa* is and how people perceived it in pre-modern China. According to John E. Myers' study on the *pipa*, three different kinds of lute were imported into China from 200 BCE to 617, all of which were referred to as *pipa*. The first, a pike-lute made by adding strings to a membranophone, is referred to as the Qin *pipa* because it originated from the Qin region. The second is the four-stringed, pear-shaped lute, which is related most directly to the modern *pipa*. The third is the five-stringed *pipa*, which originated from India and is associated with Buddhism and narrative singing.<sup>177</sup> Myers also notes that *pipa* music's classical repertoire generally is divided into two thematic categories: the pacific *wen* and military *wu*. In performance, the *wen* pieces are relatively stable and restrained, and the *wu* pieces show more rhythmic freedom and

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<sup>176</sup> See "The Controversy Over Music and 'Sadness' and Changing Conceptions of the *Qin* in Middle Period China," pp. 54-66.

<sup>177</sup> John E. Myers, *The Way of the Pipa: Structure and Imagery in Chinese Lute Music* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1992), pp. 9-10. Myer notes that by the end of Sui Dynasty (581-619) the word *pipa* had come to mean specifically the four-stringed, pear-shaped lute.

higher dynamic levels. It also is common for a single piece of *pipa* music to include both *wen* and *wu* themes, as “the dynamic range of the *pipa* makes it possible to express both moods with precision and authority.”<sup>178</sup> The distinctions between *wen* and *wu* in *pipa* were not articulated until the Ming dynasty, but as early as the Tang dynasty, the poet Bai Juyi, in his renowned “The Ode of the *Pipa* Player” (“*Pipa xing*” 琵琶行), had described the contrast between the *pipa*’s portrayal of the clashing of swords and the light, gentle tones of people whispering.<sup>179</sup> The first two metaphors in Han Yu’s poem, an intimate conversation between a young couple and valiant warriors marching to the battlefield, are quite similar to Bai Juyi’s descriptions of the *pipa*, which can be interpreted as a change from the *wen* to *wu* themes in *pipa* playing.

Such drastic changes in musical styles were not prized highly in the appreciation of *qin* music, at least as Ouyang Xiu understood it. His conception of the *qin* can be seen in his essay, “A Farewell to Yang Zhi” (“*Song Yang Zhi xu*” 送楊真序), composed in 1047. He wrote this essay to offer encouragement to his friend, Yang Zhi, who was at that time being assigned to a low official position in southeastern China.<sup>180</sup> In it, Ouyang Xiu writes that, when he experienced depression as a young man, no medicine could cure him but *qin* playing. He advises Yang to learn to play the *qin* and argues that it will be the best way for him to cultivate himself and stay healthy. These effects come from the remembrance of ancient sages and loyal ministers that are implicit in *qin* music:

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-33.

<sup>179</sup> *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (hereafter *QTS*) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 435.1075-1076.

<sup>180</sup> Yang Zhi was a friend of Ouyang Xiu, who earned first place on the list for the civil examinations in the provincial capital, national capital, and palace in succession. Although the success in exams soon won him recognition from the emperor, he was never assigned any important position in the central government. His biography is contained in *Song shi*, 443.13100.

When worries are deep and concerns are far-reaching, they are the lingering sounds of Shun, King Wen, and Confucius; when there are grievance, sorrowfulness, feelings and resentfulness, they are the sighing of Boqi, Guzi, Qu Yuan, and other loyal officials.<sup>181</sup>

其憂深思遠, 則舜與文王、孔子之遺音也; 悲愁感憤, 則伯奇孤子、屈原忠臣之所嘆也。

Playing the *qin* helps the player contemplate the ancients' concerns and emotions and therefore, harmonizes one's uneven emotions and calms one's mind.

By presenting the *qin* as a tool that conveys ancient sage kings and loyal ministers' profound thoughts and sorrowful emotions in the Confucian tradition, Ouyang Xiu classicizes the *qin* as the instrument that represents the Zhou dynasty's ideal music. He even assigns *qin*-playing a role as important as reading the classical texts these ancient sages composed or to whom they were attributed:

Its joy, anger, anguish, and happiness move people's hearts deeply. Moreover, it is pure, ancient, bland and plain, and in this way, it does not differ from the words of Yao and Shun from Three Dynasties, the writings of Confucius, the worry and sorrow conveyed in the *Book of Changes*, and the lament and critique from the *Classic of Poetry*.<sup>182</sup>

喜怒哀樂, 動人心深。而純古淡泊, 與夫堯舜三代之言語、孔子之文章、《易》之憂患、《詩》之怨刺無以異。

Here, playing *qin* tunes is regarded as a method of learning that does not differ from reading written texts, as both activities allow players to converse with ancient sages. Although imbued with strong emotions that move people deeply, with respect to the actual acoustic effect, *qin* music is “pure, ancient, bland, and plain,” and does not display any of the virtuosic musical techniques or drastic changes that *pipa* music does.

Another poem by Ouyang Xiu, “Playing the *Qin* on the River” (“Jiangshang tanqin” 江上弹琴) also represents similar notions of *qin* music. The last section of this poem reads:

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<sup>181</sup> Ouyang Xiu *quanji*, 44. 628-629.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 629.

詠歌文王雅，  
怨刺離騷經。  
二典意澹薄，  
三盤語丁寧。  
琴聲雖可狀，  
琴意誰可聽。

For reciting and singing, the King of Wen is elegant;  
For lamenting and critiquing, the *Li Sao* is a classic.  
The meanings of the Two Canons are bland and  
plain;  
The language of the Three *Pan* is verbose.  
Though the sound of the *qin* can be conveyed,  
Who can hear its meaning?<sup>183</sup>

Again, *Qin* music here is compared with classical texts attributed to the King of Wen and Qu Yuan that convey these authors' concerns for their states, governance, and people. The "Two Canons" are the "Canon of Yao" ("Yao dian" 堯典) and "Canon of Shun" ("Shun dian" 舜典) in the *Book of Documents*, which relate the deeds of Yao and Shun, who were sage kings of the legendary Xia dynasty (ca. 21<sup>st</sup>—17<sup>th</sup> c. BCE). The "Three *Pan*" are the three sections of "Pangeng" ("Pangeng" 盤庚) in the *Book of Documents* related to the Shang king Pangeng's (ca. 1300 BCE) deeds, who moved the Shang capital to Yin and restored the regime's prosperity. Ouyang Xiu uses "elegant" and "classical" to describe *qin* music, which thereby becomes another form of sages' "text" or teachings in the Confucian tradition. What is important is not the sound, but the extramusical associations that stimulate the feelings and reflections on past sages on the part of both the performer and audience.

Ouyang Xiu's conception of the *qin* as an instrument associated closely with ancient sages influenced many other authors during and after his time, including his student and friend, Su Shi. In response to Ouyang Xiu, Su Shi composed a poem on listening to the *qin*:

I retreated and composed a poem entitled "Listening to Hangzhou Monk Weixian Playing the *Qin*:"

"The greater strings produce sounds that are spring-like and warm, harmonious, and stable;  
The lesser strings produce sounds that are high and sonorous, bright and clear.  
All my life I haven't been able to distinguish the tones of *gong* and *jue*,  
But I have heard oxen lowing in the pit and pheasants perching on a tree.  
A tapping at the gate: who is knocking?"

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<sup>183</sup> Ouyang Xiu *quanji*, 51.725.



The mountain monk is not at leisure: please do not get angry.  
When you return home, please find a thousand *hu* of water;  
With it you can wash your ears that are accustomed to listening to the *zheng* zither and flute in  
the past.”

After the poem was composed, I intended to send it to Lord Wenzhong, but he passed away,  
and I regret it to this day.<sup>184</sup>

余退而作《聽杭僧惟賢琴》詩云：“大弦春溫和且平，小弦廉折亮以清。平生未識宮與角，  
但聞牛鳴盎中雉登木。門前剝啄誰扣門，山僧未閑君勿嗔。歸家且覓千斛水，淨洗從前  
箏笛耳。”詩成欲寄公，而公薨，至今以為恨。

Su Shi’s poem shows the influence of Ouyang Xiu’s conception of the *qin*. The “greater strings” are those that produce sounds in the lower register, while the “lesser strings” are those that produce sounds in the higher register. The descriptive words Su Shi uses, such as “spring-like and warm,” “harmonious,” “stable,” “high,” and “sonorous” originally were from the “Hereditary Houses of Tian Jingzhong Wan” (“Tian Jingzhong Wan shijia” 田敬仲完世家), in the *Records of the Grand Historian*. In this biography, the Qi official Zou Ji 鄒忌 (fl. 4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE) compared the greater strings’ sounds to the ruler, and those of the lesser to the officials. Both “spring-like and warm” and “high and sonorous” describe the correct music that symbolizes proper governing and a harmonious relationship between ruler and officials.<sup>185</sup> Although Su Shi does not relate *qin* music to ancient sages directly in this poem, as Ouyang Xiu does, he uses expressions and descriptions from classical texts to describe *qin* music and views the *qin* as a representation of the ideal Confucian ruler-official relationship.

A comparison of Su Shi’s description of the *qin* with Han Yu’s shows the differences in their perceptions and ideals of the *qin*. The most significant characteristic of Han’s poem is a number of extreme shifts, one contrasting image following another. A loving couple’s whispering is followed by the sounds of soldiers marching; climbing higher on the mountain is

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<sup>184</sup> *Su Shi wenji*, 71.2243-2244.

<sup>185</sup> See *Shi ji*, 46.1889.

followed by a sudden fall of a thousand feet; ice is followed by charcoal. The music's drastic changes that a rapid succession of metaphors represents startle and impress the audience and show Reverend Ying's superb technique. In contrast, Su Shi's poem does not describe virtuosic techniques of *qin* playing that move the audience intensely, but contains only generic descriptions of the sounds the *qin*'s different strings produce. "Oxen lowing in the pit" and "pheasants perching on a tree" in the third and fourth lines describe the tones of *gong* and *jue*, which are produced when the *qin*'s first and third string is plucked, respectively. These two metaphors can be traced back to the late Warring States and early Han period text *Guanzi* 管子, in which *gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *zhi*, *yu*, the five tones of the pentatonic scale, are compared to the utterances of animals in nature: oxen lowing in a pit, a stray sheep bleating, pheasants perching on trees and squawking, sows crying as their piglets are taken away, and horses neighing in wild fields, respectively. These metaphors refer to the timbres of the sounds the greater and lesser strings produce, which do not incorporate any emotions from the performer or the melody itself.<sup>186</sup> By composing this poem, Su Shi describes the *qin* as an instrument that retains the instrumentation of early ceremonial music. Neither excellent techniques of *qin* playing nor strong expressions of emotions should have more importance than correlations with the ideal music of the Zhou dynasty. At the same time, the *zheng* zither and flute are considered regional and vocal styles, rather than Chinese music in a canonical sense.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Li Xiangfeng 黎翔鳳, ed. and annot., *Guanzi jiaozhu* 管子校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 19.1080.

<sup>187</sup> Whether the first *qin* originated in central China is still under academic debate. Bo Lawergren's article, "Western Influences on the Early Chinese Qin-Zither," discusses foreign influence on the *qin* from evidences chiefly concern the shape of the *qin*, its tuning keys, and some pre-Han texts. The discussion clarifies how foreign traits mixed with indigenous ones for the construction of early Chinese *qin*. He argues that in the case of the ancient *qin*, the changes brought by its migration were complex. Only some features of the *qin* transferred from the steppe harps buried at the edge of the vast Eurasian steppe zone, while others belonged to the local heritage of zithers. See Bo Lawergren, "Western Influences on the Early Chinese Qin-Zither," in *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 75 (2003): 79-109.

During the same period, the *qin*'s function in prohibiting or purging "evil thoughts" (*xiexin* 邪心) received greater emphasis. From the Han dynasty on, the *qin* was endowed with the function of prohibiting evil thoughts. This idea was expressed first in Huan Tan's 桓譚 (43 BCE-28 CE) punning formulation: "The *qin* is to prohibit," 琴者, 禁也.<sup>188</sup> Xue Yijian, 薛易簡 (ca. 725- ca. 800), a leading Tang dynasty *qin* player whose talents won him a place in the imperial Hanlin academy, also claims in his "Key Methods of the *Qin*" ("Qin jue" 琴訣) that the *qin* was an instrument of inhibition, which not only could prevent people from wrongdoing, but also cultivate one's morality: "The sounds of the *qin* are correct and not disorderly, and are sufficient to prohibit evil and stop licentiousness" 其聲正而不亂, 足以禁邪止淫也.<sup>189</sup> In this text, Xue states that artistic technique must be secondary to the *qin*'s moral and social functions. In his "Presented to Daoist Priest Li from Wuwei Military Prefecture" ("Zeng wuwei jun Li daoshi" 贈無為軍李道士), Ouyang Xiu writes: "Moreover, he (Li) said that bringing order to the body was just like tuning the *qin*, in that the correct sounds should not be fouled with evil" 又云理身如理琴, 正聲不可幹以邪.<sup>190</sup> The *qin* not only produces correct music, but also serves as the exemplar that people should imitate in their self-cultivation. The prominent Southern Song philosopher, politician, and writer, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), who founded what later would be known as the "rationalist" school of Neo-Confucianism (*lixue* 理學), incorporated his philosophical ideas to frame the conception of the *qin* as well. Zhu held that the supreme

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<sup>188</sup> Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之, ed., *Xinjiben Huan Tan xin lun* 新輯本桓譚新論 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 15.65. For scholarly work on Huan Tan and his view on the *qin*, see Timothy Pokora, *Hsin-lun (New Treatise) and Other Writings by Huan T'an (43 B.C. - 28 A.D.): An Annotated Translation with Index* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1975).

<sup>189</sup> *Qin shi*, p. 263.

<sup>190</sup> *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 4.59.

regulative principle of people's morals was good and that thus, one should cultivate one's morals to act in the right way. *Qin*-playing would help one achieve clarity of mind and purity of heart by stilling evil thoughts and inappropriate desires. In "Inscriptions on the Ziyang *Qin*" ("Ziyang qinming" 紫陽琴銘), he writes: "Cultivate the upright character of centrality and harmony, and prohibit your evil thoughts of resentment and desire. The universe does not speak but things have rules; with you alone, the *qin*, I plumb its depths" 養君中和之正性, 禁爾忿欲之邪心。乾坤無言物有則, 我獨與子鈎其深.<sup>191</sup> Zhu Xi advocated the "investigation of things" (*gewu zhizhi* 格物致知) as a means of discovering moral principles, and the *qin* is the thing that he regarded as a particular manifestation of the universe's rules.

Another Southern Song dynasty scholar, Liu Ji 劉籍 (fl. 13<sup>th</sup> c.), also argues in his "*Qin yi*" ("Discussion of the *Qin*" 琴議) that the *qin*'s function is to prevent corrupt thoughts and induce moral conduct: "It prohibits evil and brings back correctness, in this way harmonizing people's hearts" 禁邪歸正, 以和人心. Liu regards *qin* music as "...elegant and unimpeded, joyful and not licentious" 雅而能暢, 樂而不淫.<sup>192</sup> The expression "joyful and not licentious" appears in both the *Analects* and the *Book of Documents*, and originally was used to describe the poem "Guanju" and poems in the *Airs of Bin* ("Bin feng" 豳風) section of the *Classics of Poetry*. By using the same expression to describe the *qin*, Liu compares *qin* music to the great pieces in the *Classic of Poetry*, which in the Confucian tradition, represent the "right" emotions and sentiments.

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<sup>191</sup> Zhu Xi, "Ziyang qin ming" 紫陽琴銘, in *QSW*, 5660.166.

<sup>192</sup> *Taiyin daquan ji* 太音大全集 (*The Entire Collection of Grand Music*), comp. and annot. by Yuan Junzhe 袁均哲 (fl. 16<sup>th</sup> c.), in *Qinqu jicheng* 琴曲集成 (*Grand Anthology of Qin Music*), vol.1 (Beijing: Wenhua bu wenxue yishu yanjiuyuan yinyue yanjiusuo, 1980), pp. 73-74.

## II. Key Aesthetic Terminology for *Qin* Music

### *Gu* 古

*Gu* (古) means “old,” “ancient,” or “aged,” and describes something from a past age or antiquity. In his study of material culture in Ming and Qing China, Craig Clunas offers a detailed discussion of its meaning and social context in late imperial China. From the Tang dynasty on, *gu* was lauded typically as the flavor or character that the *qin* in particular possesses.<sup>193</sup> For example, Meng Jiao 孟郊 (751-814) writes in his “Autumn Thoughts” (“Qiu huai” 秋懷): “If losing the intention of *gu* (ancientness), the sword will break off; if losing the intention of *gu* (ancientness), the *qin* will be pitiful” 失古劍亦折, 失古琴亦哀.<sup>194</sup> Here, *gu* does not refer to actual historicity, but the connection with the historical past’s people, events, styles, or meanings.

During the Song, the word *guqin* (“antique/old *qin*”) began to appear frequently in poetic works, and became an established term that referred to a valuable *qin*. In *Complete Tang Poems*, *guqin* is mentioned in only ten poems. In *Complete Song Poems*, *guqin* appears in thirty-eight poems. In some cases, *guqin* serves only as a prop that constitutes the entire poetic setting, such as in Lian Wenfeng’s 連文鳳 (b. 1240) “Inscribed on the Painting of Reclusion by Lu Jiefu” (“Ti Lu Jiefu yinju tu” 題陸介夫隱居圖): “The old *qin* has hung on the wall for a long time; the spring ale naturally fills the goblet” 古琴長挂壁, 春酒自盈樽.<sup>195</sup> In this poem, the *guqin* may not really possess a long history, but helps frame the secluded atmosphere. However, in certain

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<sup>193</sup> *Superfluous Things*, pp. 80-82.

<sup>194</sup> *QTS*, 375.932.

<sup>195</sup> *QSS*, 3620.43356.

other poems, *guqin* are real antique objects whose appearance and music arouse people's longing for the past. The obsession with the *qin*'s historicity was attributable to the trend in antiquarianism that flourished in literati circles, and to possess a *qin*, particularly an antique, symbolized an important form of cultural capital for the literati. For example, in "Composed in Appreciation of Ye Shanfu for Graciously Sending Me an Old *Qin*" ("Ti Ye Shanfu jianhui guqin zoubi yixie" 題葉山甫見惠古琴走筆以謝), Hu Zhonggong 胡仲弓 (fl. 13<sup>th</sup> c.) writes: "That it is inscribed in large and small seal script is not to be marveled at, when I think of how the ancients prized it and kept it close. One cannot meet the ancients; but seeing the *qin* is just like seeing their faces" 籀文篆古未爲奇, 我思古人珍秘時。古人不可得而見, 見琴如見當時面。<sup>196</sup> The reason Hu favors his *qin* is that it is an antique that stimulates his yearning for the past, and allows him to meet its earlier owners in his imagination. Another example is Mei Yaochen's "Responding to Monk Pu's Poem with the Same Rhymes on Receiving an Antique *Qin*" ("Yiyun he Pu shangren guqin jianzeng" 依韻和普上人古琴見贈). This poem describes both the *qin*'s appearance and material, and the way it helps the poet envision the ancient sage kings:

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| 獨璽絲爲絃， | Its strings are made from the silk of a single cocoon;                   |
| 九竅珥爲軫。 | Its pegs are made from nine-holed jewels.                                |
| 彈風松颼颼， | When played, its sound resembles the whistling of<br>wind through pines; |
| 聽水流泯泯。 | To hear it is like listening to the flowing of water.                    |
| 欣者舉袖舞， | Revelers raise their sleeves to dance,                                   |
| 悲者欲涕隕。 | While the sorrowful are moved to tears.                                  |
| 若此輒動人， | In this way it indeed moves people;                                      |
| 干時固能準。 | For governing the world, it is accords perfectly with the<br>standard.   |
| 虞舜今在上， | Shun is now on the throne;   |

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<sup>196</sup> QSS, 3332.39746.

南薰思無盡。

Our longing for the “Southern Warmth” is inexhaustible.<sup>197</sup>

In this poem, “the silk from a single cocoon” is an allusion to a legend in *Biographies of Immortals* (*Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳), which describes how an immortal named Yuanke grew silkworms from a single cocoon in his garden, each of which could produce so much silk that it would not be used up after sixty days’ spinning,<sup>198</sup> while the nine-holed jewels resemble the shape of a human being. Both lines add mystical touches to the *qin* and demonstrate its rarity and delicacy. The next several lines describe the true descriptive and moving power of *qin* music. In the last two lines, encountering the antique *qin* reminds Mei of the *qin* tune “Southern Wind” traditionally attributed to Shun, and allows Mei to relate the ancient sage kings to the ruler of his time. Under Mei’s brush, the *guqin* completely incorporates the *qin*’s historicity, materiality, and aesthetic appeal.

### *Dan* 淡

Another aesthetic standard that Song authors associated with the *qin* often is *dan*, which usually is translated as “bland” or “blandness.” Originally, *dan* referred to the blandness or tastelessness of food, with extended meanings that described not only taste, but also colors that are pale or light and sounds that are mild and tranquil. In *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, *dan* begins to gain positive connotations including “...tranquil, unconcerned, contented with simplicity, indifferent to desire, happy only with what is plainly necessary, without strong emotions.”<sup>199</sup> The French

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<sup>197</sup> Zhu Dongrun 朱東潤, ed. and annot., *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu* 梅堯臣集編年校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 21.576.

<sup>198</sup> *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳, in *SKQS*, vol. 1058, 500.4a-b.

<sup>199</sup> Paul Kroll, *A Student Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p. 76.

sinologist, François Jullien, mentions in his study of blandness that the music that affected ancient Chinese people most profoundly does not consist of the fullest possible exploitation of different tones, but something that is not delivered to its fullest extent and leaves the audience space for imagination and anticipation.<sup>200</sup> Although it lacks any type of pronounced flavor, blandness possesses great potential.

The experience of tastes also holds true for the experience of *qin* music. As its potential is not exploited fully, something that is *dan* in music promises a tone that may linger on long after the playing is done. In the seventh of his “Autumn Longings” (“Qiu huai” 秋懷) poems, Han Yu laments the fact that “The sounds of ancient times have long been buried in oblivion” 古聲久埋滅, and extols the *qin* as the only instrument that can help audiences return to the past ages, because, “The sound is blander still when it is strummed for a second time” 再鼓聽愈淡.<sup>201</sup> Bai Juyi was another important Tang poet who associated the *qin*’s sounds with blandness. In his “Five-string *Qin*” (“Wuxian tan” 五弦彈), he writes: “The melody [of the *qin*] is bland, its rhythms are sparse, and its sounds are not many” 曲澹節稀聲不多.<sup>202</sup> Another poem of Bai’s, “A *Qin* at Night” (“Ye qin” 夜琴), reads: “When it [the music of the *qin*] enters the ears, it is bland and possesses no flavors; the satisfied heart has its own hidden feelings” 入耳澹無味, 愜心潛有情.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> François Jullien, *In praise of blandness: proceeding from Chinese thought and aesthetics*, trans. Paula Versano (New York: Zone Books), p. 67.

<sup>201</sup> *QTS*, 336.830.

<sup>202</sup> *QTS*, 426.4697.

<sup>203</sup> *QTS*, 430.4752.



In the Song dynasty, *dan* assumed even greater importance as an aesthetic standard for the *qin*. Ouyang Xiu and Mei Yaochen promoted “even and bland” (*pingdan* 平淡) as a style of expression in poetry suited to the ideal of genuineness advocated by the ancient prose movement. Literati artist Mi Fu 米芾 searched for a *pingdan* manner to display in his calligraphy.<sup>204</sup> In “Listening to Monk Huayi Playing the *Qin* On A Moonlit Night” (“Yueye ting seng Huayi tanqin” 月夜聽僧化宜彈琴), Zhao Bian says of the *qin*, “Being bland, it fears that ordinary hearts will be displeased” 淡恐時心厭.<sup>205</sup> Zeng Ji 曾幾 (1085-1166), in the first of “Five Poems at the Scene of a Small Room in the Eastern Platform” (“Dongxuan xiaoshi jishi wushou” 東軒小室即事五首), writes that one day when he was seated in his studio, a clear breeze blew and he began to play the *qin*: “Describing the scene with my unornamented *qin*; its sounds and rhythms are as bland as water” 寫之以素琴, 音節淡如水.<sup>206</sup> During this period, the aesthetic sensibility of *dan* was associated further with the upright and noble morals *qin* music reflected. In “Sending off Pan Shaobai to Serve in the Lianshan Official Residence” (“Song Pan Shaobai fu Lianshan guan” 送潘少白赴連山館), Shu Yuexiang 舒嶽祥 (1219-1298) writes: “The old *qin* remains hanging on the wall; its intent is bland and lacks evil” 古琴留掛壁, 此意淡無邪.<sup>207</sup> In this poem, *dan* not only describes the *qin*’s aesthetic sensibility, but also relates to its character as resistant to any kind of evil and corruption. Zhu Xi also mentions that *qin* music will attain the state of *dan* if the player is honest and virtuous: “If it is someone honest to play the *qin*, then the sounds

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<sup>204</sup> See “The *Pingdan* Aesthetic,” in *Mi Fu: Style and the Art of Calligraphy in Northern Song China*, pp.121-149.

<sup>205</sup> *QSS*, 340.4142.

<sup>206</sup> *QSS*, 1653.18512.

<sup>207</sup> *QSS*, 3439.40963.

will be gentle and smooth, peaceful and bland. Naturally it is very nice to hear” 如誠實底人彈，便雍容平淡，自是好聽。<sup>208</sup>

## *He* 和

Like *dan*, *he* in pre-Qin texts refers originally to the taste of food, or even a way of preparing food, and generally is translated as “balanced,” “tempered,” or “balanced in flavor through the addition of seasonings.” Unlike *dan*, which is the lack of pronounced flavors, *he* is the harmonization of different tastes. In the *Zuo Tradition* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳), the loyal official Yan Ying 晏嬰 (578-500 BCE) of the state of Qi explains the concept to Lord Jing of Qi 齊景公 (548-490 BCE.):

Harmony (*he*) is like a stew. Water, fire, jerky, mincemeat, salt, and plum vinegar are used to cook fish and meat. These are cooked over firewood. The master chef harmonizes them, evening them out with seasonings, compensating for what is lacking, and diminishing what is too strong. The noble man eats it and calms his heart.

和如羹焉，水火醯醢鹽梅，以烹魚肉，燂之以薪，宰夫和之，齊之以味，濟其不及，以洩其過，君子食之，以平其心。<sup>209</sup>

According to Yan Ying, *he* does not refer to any specific flavor, but is the overall equilibrium that the combination of every element contained in the preparation of the stew produces. It is seasoned neither too heavily nor too lightly, and the resulting taste is not only pleasant to the palate, but also harmonizes and stabilizes one’s heart.

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<sup>208</sup> Li Jingde 黎靖德 (fl. 13<sup>th</sup> c.), comp., *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, ed. Wang Xingxian 王星賢 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 39.1008.

<sup>209</sup> Here I adopt the translation of Stephen W. Durrant, Wai-ye Li, and David Schaberg. See Stephen W. Durrant, Wai-ye Li, and David Schaberg, trans., *Zuo tradition* (University of Washington Press, 2016), pp. 1586-1587.

As understood in the context of music, *he* also describes a balanced combination of different elements, and generally is translated as “harmonious,” “pleasant,” or “gentle.” In the same text, Yan Ying explains the musical *he* in the following way:

The single breath, the two forms, the three genres, the four materials, the five tones, the six pitches, the seven notes, the eight airs, the nine songs—these are used to complete one another. The clear and the muddy, the piano and the forte, the short and the long, the presto and the adagio, the somber and the joyous, the hard and the soft, the delayed and the immediate, the high and the low, the going out and coming in, the united and separate—these are used to complement each other. The noble man listens to it and thus calms his heart. When the heart is calm, the virtue is in harmony. Thus, as it says in the *Odes*, ‘The sound of his virtue is unblemished.’

一氣，二體，三類，四物，五聲，六律，七音，八風，九歌，以相成也；清濁大小，長短疾徐，哀樂剛柔，遲速高下，出入周疏，以相濟也，君子聽之，以平其心，心平德和，故詩曰：德音不瑕。<sup>210</sup>

In this text, *he* covers two major semantic areas: first, it refers to the harmonious effect each musical instrument and vocal in the music ensemble produce, in which all of the individual music elements, including notes, pitches, timbres, etc., coordinate with and complement each other, and second, it describes not only the music’s quality, but also its psychological and transformational effect on people. This ideal music pleases the ear and also transforms people’s emotions and nourishes their characters. Yan Ying emphasizes further that this harmonious quality and the music’s stabilizing psychological effects are the result of coordination among different musical instruments. Simply amplifying any single musical instrument’s sound would not be *he*: “If only the *qin* or *se* dominates, who would listen to it?” 若琴瑟之專壹，誰能聽

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid. Durrant, Li, and Schaberg also give a detailed translation of the Wei-Jin scholar Du Yu’s 杜預 (222-285) exegesis of this passage: “the ‘two forms’ are *wen* 文 (‘civil’) and *wu* 武 (‘martial’), two distinct types of dance. The ‘three genres’ are the three major sections of the *Odes*, the ‘Airs,’ the ‘Elegantiae,’ and the ‘Hymns.’ The ‘four materials’ come from the four quarters of the world and are used in the making of musical instruments. The ‘five tones’ are the notes of the pentatonic scale. The ‘six pitches,’ with their changed forms, make up the twelve half steps of the octave. The ‘seven notes’ are the notes of the heptatonic scale. The ‘eight airs’ are the winds arising from the four cardinal directions with the added half points. Finally, the ‘nine songs’ are songs for the nine endeavors.”

之?<sup>211</sup> Yan Ying also extends the meaning of *he* to refer to ideal interpersonal relationships, in which people interact harmoniously without necessarily agreeing with each other or forming cliques. In the “Record of Music” (“Yue ji” 樂記) in the *Book of Rites* (*Li ji* 禮記), the word *he* appears more than forty times. In slight contrast with the *Zuo Tradition*, in this text, *he* is seldom used to describe the quality of the actual music that musical ensembles produce, but is emphasized as music’s fundamental function, which transforms people’s morals, molds their behavior, and thereby harmonizes society.

From the pre-Qin period on, *he* has been used continuously to describe music. Different texts have mentioned and discussed both aspects of its meaning as articulated in the *Zuo Tradition*. In poetic works composed from the Han dynasty through the Tang, it referred frequently to the ideal agreement when two instruments, the *qin* and *se*, were played together.

During the Song dynasty, *he* began to be used to describe the sound a single instrument, the *qin*, produced. In one poem on *qin* music presented to his friend Ouyang Xiu, Liu Chang writes: “The perfect harmony moves the many creatures; this kind of music does not exist in our world” 至和動殊類, 此則今世無.<sup>212</sup> By saying that *qin* music can be perfect harmony, something that cannot be found in the contemporary world, Liu is comparing it with the ideal music of the ancient past. Similarly, Su Shi also describes the *qin*’s sound as one that possesses “perfect harmony:”

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| 至和無攬醜, | The ultimate harmony ( <i>he</i> ) lacks tension or relaxation; |
| 至平無按抑。 | The ultimate evenness lacks pressing or restraining.            |
| 不知微妙聲, | That delicate, subtle sound—                                    |
| 究竟從何出? | Who can know where it comes from after all?                     |

<sup>211</sup> Here I did not use the translation by Durrant, Li, and Schaberg: “If zithers and dulcimers hold to a single sound, who can listen to it?” See *Zuo Tradition*, p. 1588. I view Yan Ying here as not opposing holding to a single sound produced by the *qin* or *se*, but rejected the idea of only making one or two popular instruments dominate in the concert.

<sup>212</sup> Liu Chang, “A Matching Poem to Yongshu’s Second Piece of ‘Seated Playing the *Qin* in the Evening’” (“He Yongshu yezuo guqin ershou qi’er” 和永叔夜坐鼓琴二首其二), *QSS*, 475.5747.

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 散我不平氣，<br>洗我不和心。<br>此心知有在，<br>尚復此微吟。 | It scatters my uneven <i>qi</i> ,<br>And washes my unharmonious heart.<br>This heart, if knowing its existence,<br>Would repeat this delicate chant. <sup>213</sup> |
|--------------------------------------|---|

According to Su, *qin* music's harmony does not require coordination from any other musical instrument, and is not achieved by matching the different tones, pitches, notes, etc. Rather, it rests in the fact that *qin* music lacks violent changes or pompously complex techniques and is simple, delicate, and subtle instead, and has a cathartic and psychologically calming effect on audiences. Wang Yang 王洋 (1087-1154), in "The Hall of Strings and Songs" ("Xian'ge tang" 絃歌堂), also states that *qin* music is able to harmonize one's heart: "The magistrate preserves this musical instrument (the *qin*), which constantly keeps his heart harmonious (*he*) and stabilized" 令君保此器, 常得心和平.<sup>214</sup> The Southern Song poet Pan Fang 潘昉 (1204-1246) describes the *qin*'s music as possessing a harmony that resembles the *Classic of Poetry*: "Clear and fragmented, it (*qin* music) resembles ancient cursive script; harmonious (*he*) and stable, it is similar to the *Airs*" 清碎如章草, 和平似國風.<sup>215</sup>

From the *Zuo Tradition* to the poems on the *qin* written by Song poets, the meaning of *he* underwent certain changes when it described music. In the *Zuo Tradition*, *he* refers to the harmonization of sounds various musical instruments and vocals in the ensemble produce, as well as the coordination among different musical elements. It also refers to music's harmonizing effect on people's psychology and behavior. During the Song dynasty, *he* began to be mentioned

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<sup>213</sup> Su Shi, "Listening to Monk Zhao Playing the Unadorned *Qin*" ("Ting Seng Zhao suqin" 聽僧昭素琴), Wang Wengao 王文誥 (b. 1764), annot., *Su Shi shiji* 蘇軾詩集, ed. Kong Fanli (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 12.576.

<sup>214</sup> *QSS*, 1686.18921.

<sup>215</sup> Pan Fang, "*Qin*" 琴, *QSS*, 3289.39210.

consistently as one of the *qin*'s positive characteristics. Its reference to the physical musical quality produced by the ideal concert was understated, while its meaning as a stabilizing psychological effect was emphasized greatly. Together with other terminologies, such as *dan*, *gu*, *qing*, and *jing*, *he* helped Song authors construct the *qin* as the ideal musical instrument that represented the harmonious musical ensembles of the ancient past. Although its actual sounds did not resemble the music ensembles, it was still *he* in the sense that it calmed one's mind, nourished one's character, and had a transforming effect both on individuals and society as a whole.

### ***Qing* 清**

*Qing* usually is translated as “clear” or “pure.” The Han dynasty dictionary, *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* (*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字) relates *qing*'s original meaning to the clarity of water: “*Qing* is brightness, the appearance of limpid water” 肅也。澗水之兒。<sup>216</sup> Extended from its original meaning, *qing* also is used to denote sounds: compound words that combine *qing* and the five tones of the pentatonic scale, such as *qingshang* 清商, *qingjue* 清角, and *qingyu* 清羽, refer to the upper six notes of the twelve-note gamut of pitches. *Qing* also refers to the voiceless sound. Its antonym, *zhuo* 濁, which originally refers to the Zhuo River and describes the muddiness and turbidity of water, has an extended meaning that indicates the voiced sound.

From the Han and Six Dynasties on, *qing* began to describe clear and silvery sounds, and frequently was used to describe *qin* music. For example, the Han dynasty poet Qin Jia 秦嘉 (fl.

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<sup>216</sup> Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 58—ca. 147), *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), 11A.231a.

2<sup>nd</sup> c.) writes in the third of his “Poems Sent to My Wife” (“Zeng fu shi” 贈婦詩): “As a sweet fragrance dispels filth, the simple *qin* has its clear sounds” 芳香去垢穢, 素琴有清聲.<sup>217</sup> The Jin poet Lu Ji’s 陸機 (261-303) poem, “An Imitation of ‘How High the Eastern City Wall’” (“Ni dongcheng yi he gao” 擬東城一何高, reads: “On an idle evening I play my *qin*; its gentle sounds are clear and sorrowful” 閑夜撫鳴琴, 惠音清且悲.<sup>218</sup>

During the Song, *qing* was enshrined as one of the *qin*’s most important attributes. Fan Zhongyan, in “A Letter Sent to Scholar Tang” (“Yu Tang chushi shu” 與唐處士書), writes that one day he asked Cui Zundu, a famous *qin* player and scholar of his era, to describe the ideal *qin* music. Cui replied that “...it should be *qing* (clear), melodious, and tranquil; harmonious, mellow, and far-reaching” 清麗而靜, 和潤而遠.<sup>219</sup> Cui’s answer encapsulates the *qin*’s ideal aesthetics and gives *qing* priority of place.

Cui’s synopsis had an enormous influence on writings about the *qin* in later periods. Leng Qian 冷謙 (fl. 13<sup>th</sup> c.), a Daoist priest known for his expertise in the *qin* during the Yuan and Ming transition period, composed “Sixteen Rules of *Qin* Music” (“Qinsheng shiliu fa” 琴聲十六法). In this essay, Leng lists these rules on different aspects of *qin* music, among which *qing* is emphasized as “the dominating rule of sounds” 音之主宰.<sup>220</sup> The “Moods of the *Qin* of Creeks and Mountains” (“Xishan qinkuang” 谿山琴況), Xu Shangying 徐上瀛 (1582-1662), an

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<sup>217</sup> Lu Qinli 逯欽立 ed., *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Neibeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), p. 187.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., p. 688.

<sup>219</sup> *QSW*, 381.298.

<sup>220</sup> Leng Qian, “Qinsheng shiliu fa,” in Xiang Yuanbian 項元汴 (1525-1590), *Jiaochuang jiulu* 蕉窗九錄, in *Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編, Vol. 1557 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), pp. 53-57.

important *qin* musician of the Yushan school<sup>221</sup> during the Ming and Qing transition period, lists twenty-four words as the *qin*'s key aesthetic standards, including harmony, quietness, remoteness, antiquity, etc. Among these, *qing* is regarded as the *qin*'s key principle and the very quality that distinguishes it from other instruments, such as the *zheng*: “If the *qin* playing is not *qing* (clear), then it is not as good as playing the *zheng*” 彈琴不清, 不如彈箏.<sup>222</sup> Here, *qing* not only refers to the sounds, but also describes the *qin*'s noble character.

It is difficult to define the meanings of *qing* during the Song dynasty, as it gained connotations that extended to almost every aspect of *qin* playing and was used to describe the location, furnishings and decorative objects, as well as the entire ambience and environment in which one played the *qin*.<sup>223</sup> Zhao Xigu, in the “Distinguishing Antique *Qin*” (“*Gu qin bian*” 古琴辨) section of *The Clear Bliss of the Grotto Heaven*, provides a detailed discussion of the way to apply the standard of *qing* in playing the *qin*. He mentions that, to maximize *qing*'s aesthetic effect, one should first choose a room that is *qing*: “If the place is *qing* and spacious and the atmosphere is secluded and tranquil, with the superb natural beauty of spring and rock, then sounds produced by the *qin* will become even more *qing*. Then what is the difference between this place and the Palace of Grand Coldness on the moon?” 清曠地幽寂境, 更有泉石之勝, 則琴

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<sup>221</sup> The Yushan school was one of the major *qin* schools that originated in Jiangsu province during the Ming dynasty. For secondary works on different *qin* schools, see Zhang Huaying, *Songdai guqin yinyue yanjiu*, chapter 4.

<sup>222</sup> Xu Shangying, *Dahuaige qinpu* 大還閣琴譜, in *Qinqu jicheng*, vol.10, p. 319.

<sup>223</sup> For the meaning of *qing* in the Song dynasty, modern scholar Chen Yuan-Peng states that *qing* was emphasized by a Southern Song author Lin Hong 林洪 (fl. 13<sup>th</sup> c.) in *Shanjia qingong* (*Pure Provender from the House in the Mountains* 山家清供) to refer to a taste that was healthy, original, and economical. Chen argues that Lin's preference of the palate of *qing* is related to his self-identification and self-fashioning as a cultured literatus, and also shows his endeavor to make a distinction from other social groups. See Chen Yuan-Peng 陳元朋, “Zhuiqiu yinshi zhiqing—yi Shanjia qingong wei zhuti de ge'an guan cha” 追求飲食之清—以《山家清供》為主體的個案觀察, *Zhongguo yinshi wenhua*, 3.1 (2007): 1-40.



聲愈清，與廣寒月殿何異？<sup>224</sup> In these few lines, the first *qing* portrays a spot that is free from anything that dims, darkens, or obscures, which amplifies the second *qing*, which refers to the clarity of *qin* music. Zhao also notes that furnishings should be *qing* when one plays the *qin*: “Only use incenses whose fragrance is *qing* and which produce less smoke” 惟取香清而煙少者。 The flowers used to decorate the environment where the *qin* is played also must be *qing*: “Only these flowers whose fragrances are *qing* and colors are not flamboyant are truly marvelous. Those bewitching reds and gaudy purples do not belong here” 香清而色不艷者方妙。若妖紅艷紫，非所宜也。<sup>225</sup> When used with reference to the fragrance of incenses and flowers, *qing* is a quality that is not associated with romantic affections and feminine allure. Zhao Xigu’s conception of *qing* in *qin* playing illustrates his idea that *qin* music is closely related with the cosmos, and each sound it produces may find its counterpart in nature. To maximize the music’s beauty, the universal rule of *qing* should be applied to everything related to the *qin*. Zhao’s views of *qing* in *qin*-playing also exerted a significant influence on later writings on the *qin*. In the analysis of *qing* in “Sixteen Rules of *Qin* Music,” Leng Qian writes: “When the spot is secluded, then it is *qing*; when the heart is tranquil, then it is *qing*; when the breath is solemn, then it is *qing*; when the *qin* is solid, then it is *qing*; when strings are clean, then it is *qing*. One should accumulate all kinds of *qing* and only then one can seek the sounds from the fingers” 地僻則清。心靜則清。氣肅則清。琴實則清。弦潔則清。必使群清咸集。而後可求之指上。<sup>226</sup> It is scarcely possible to find an equivalent word in English to translate *qing* in this passage. *Qing*

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<sup>224</sup> *Dongtian qinglu*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>226</sup> *Jiaochuang jiulu*, p. 54.

here is crystalized as an aesthetic rule that permeates nearly every aspect of the literati artistic life, and helps construct the ideal scenario in which to play the *qin*.

### *Jing* 靜

Usually, *Jing* is translated as “quiet” or “tranquil,” and it has been used to describe music since pre-Qin times. The earliest treatise devoted to music in ancient China, the “Record of Music” chapter of the *Book of Rites*, has detailed discussions of the origin of music, its relation with nature, and its influence on human psychology, behavior, and society as a whole. It states that music is the natural and spontaneous expression of human beings’ inner nature, and parallels music with ritual, positioning both of them as prerequisites in moral education and governing: “Music comes from within, and ritual is produced from without. Since music comes from within, it is quiet; since ritual is produced from without, it has pattern” 樂由中出，禮自外作。樂由中出故靜，禮自外作故文。<sup>227</sup> Music provides people with an outlet for emotions and has great transformative effects on their emotions and characters. Correct music is quiet and tranquil, and because it generates responses similar to its own qualities, it can be used to persuade people to follow moral codes. Rather than describing the *qin*’s timbre directly, in “Record of Music,” *jing* describes its tranquil nature and the peaceful atmosphere it produces.

Tang poets often described *qin* music as *jing*. In “Sending off Li Zhi to Serve as the Magistrate of Yanling” (“Song Li Zhi fu Yanling ling” 送李摯赴延陵令), Liu Changqing 劉長卿 (fl. 8<sup>th</sup> c.) writes: “Facing the water, play the *qin* tranquilly (*jing*); having seen mountains, the time to pick chrysanthemums is late” 向水彈琴靜，看山采菊遲。<sup>228</sup> In this poem, *jing* describes

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<sup>227</sup> *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), 37.1266.

<sup>228</sup> *QTS*, 147.342.

the soothing and calming psychological effect that the *qin* produces. Xue Yijian, in “Key Methods of the *Qin*,” writes that the *qin* not only prevents people from wrongdoing, but also allows them to cultivate peace by “calming the spirit and its worries” (*jing shenlü* 靜神慮). For Xue, the ideal *qin* player must possess many attributes, and among them, “tranquility of intention and uprightness of *qi*” 志靜氣正 is especially important.<sup>229</sup> Artistic techniques are secondary to the tranquil mind, which is intrinsic to music.

Song authors continued to sing the praises of the characteristic of *jing* in *qin*-playing. Fan Zhongyan, after hearing Cui Zundu’s synopsis of the *qin* sound (“clear, melodious, and tranquil; harmonious, mellow, and far-reaching”), replied that “Even if the *qin* is clear and tranquil, if it is not *jing*, then it will fail for impatience; even if the *qin* is harmonious and mellow, if it is not far-reaching, then it will fail for craftiness. Neither impatient nor crafty—is that not the Way of Centrality and Harmony?” 清麗而弗靜其失也躁。和潤而弗遠其失也佞。不躁不佞其中和之道歟?<sup>230</sup> In this text, Fan argues that *jing* and *yuan* (“far-reaching”) are the prerequisites for any *qin* music that is intended to meet other aesthetic standards. During the Song, when it was used to describe music, *jing* referred only to the sounds of the *qin*, and never to that of other instruments. It also was during this period that *jing* in *qin* music took on religious associations. The image of the stringless *qin*, influenced by Chan Buddhism, developed during the Song and symbolized an object that was deficient in its physical form, but still able to convey meanings that were beyond the limitations of form. Such an instrument could not produce any concrete sound in reality, but only quietness and tranquility, and these qualities symbolized a liberation from all physical and conceptual constraints.

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<sup>229</sup> Fan Zhongyan, “Letter to Private Gentleman Tang” (“Yu Tang chushi shu” 與唐處士書), *QSW*, 381.298.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

*Gu*, *dan*, *he*, *qing*, and *jing* were the key aesthetic terms used in relation to the *qin* during the Song dynasty, but this list is not comprehensive. In addition to the words discussed above, *yuan* (far-reaching 遠), *ya* (elegant 雅), and other descriptors were also often associated with the *qin*. *Yuan* describes sounds' lingering effect, and refers to the way music can extend and deepen itself in the minds of its hearers even when the sound itself has ended. The word evokes the *qin*'s potential and inexhaustible values. *Ya* relates the *qin* to ideals of ancient Zhou dynasty governance. All of these words describe and define the *qin*'s aesthetics during the Song and construct the instrument as one that represents the ideal music of the ancient past, the political implications, poetic appeal, and philosophical associations of which are far more important than its concrete sounds.

### III. Classicizing the *Qin* by Debasing its Rival: The Literary Construction of the *Zheng* from the Wei-Jin through the Song Periods

Classicizing the *qin* in the Song was not an isolated phenomenon, but was accompanied by relegating other musical instruments to a relatively lesser position. An examination of the *zheng*'s historical evolution in literati culture shows that Song writers constructed the *zheng* as a rival to the *qin*, delimiting its sphere to the women's quarters and adding erotic and exotic touches in a way that framed the instrument as inferior and its sounds as the corrupted music of "Zheng and Wei." This contrast drawn between the *qin* and *zheng* built on the *qin*'s unique charms.

Like the *qin*, the *zheng* is also a plucked string instrument with a more than two-thousand-year history. The modern *zheng* commonly has twenty-one strings, while in the Tang and Song periods, the prevalent form had thirteen. There are varied accounts of the *zheng*'s

origins, the most popular of which is found in the *Records of the Grand Historian*, which introduces the *zheng* as an indigenous musical instrument of the Qin state during the Warring States Period (475-221 BCE). However, archaeological finds date the instrument back to the Spring and Autumn Period (771-476 BCE).<sup>231</sup> Usually, it is referred to as the Qin *zheng* after the region in which it originated.

During the Six Dynasties period, the *zheng* was mentioned in a number of poetic works and positioned in parallel with the *qin*. For example, Ruan Xiu 阮修 (270-311), in “Poetry Gathering on the Shangsi Day”<sup>232</sup> (“Shangsi huishi” 上巳會詩), writes: “Pluck the *zheng* and play the *qin*; the new sounds drift upwards” 彈箏弄琴, 新聲上浮.<sup>233</sup> Both the *qin* and the *zheng* were played in the poetry gathering at the Shangsi festival. In his “Three Poems Sent to Xi Kang” (“Zeng Xi Kang shi san shou” 贈嵇康詩三首), Guo Xiazhou 郭遐周 (fl. 3<sup>rd</sup> c.) writes the lines, “We take along a *zheng* and playing a sounding *qin*; Hand in hand we visit the empty room together” 援箏奏鳴琴, 攜手遊空房.<sup>234</sup> Both the poet and his friend Xi Kang played the *qin* and *zheng*, and such an ensemble symbolized the close friendship between them. In this poem, the *qin* and *zheng* are not represented as two different instruments with mutually opposing characters and aesthetical associations.

In addition to the *qin*, the *zheng* also was mentioned together with the *se* 瑟, during this period. The *se* is a plucked instrument of 25-50 strings with moveable bridges and a range of up

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<sup>231</sup> See Sun Zhuo, *The Chinese Zheng Zither: Contemporary Transformations* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

<sup>232</sup> Shangsi was a traditional Chinese festival that was on the third day of the third month of the lunar calendar. On the day of Shangsi, people usually went to rivers or lakes to take a bath, and young men and women would have trysts in the wilderness. It was also a day on which literati would gather and compose poems together.

<sup>233</sup> *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Neibeichao shi*, pp. 729-30.

<sup>234</sup> *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Neibeichao shi*, p. 475.

to five octaves that was regarded as a representative instrument of the Confucian ritual music system. Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232) positions the *zheng* in parallel with the *se* in his poems on banquets: “The Qin *zheng* disseminates its western air, and the Qi *se* spreads its eastern song” 秦箏發西氣，齊瑟揚東謳;<sup>235</sup> “how vehement and strong the Qin *zheng* sounds; the Qi *se* is harmonious and tender” 秦箏何慷慨，齊瑟和且柔。<sup>236</sup> While the *zheng* is thought to derive from the Qin state of the Zhou period, an area encompassing present-day Shaanxi and extending into Sichuan, the Yangtze River valley, and the north China plain, the *se* is described as originating in the state of Qi, farther to the east in present-day Shandong and parts of Hebei and Henan. When they are placed in parallel in poems, they stand for two different forms of indigenous music, from western and eastern China, respectively, and the music the *zheng* produced is described as full of masculinity and heroic spirit, which is “sorrowful but strong.” This quality contrasts with the “harmonious and tender” music the *se* produces, which is softer and more feminine. In the Northern and Southern dynasties period, the *se* was described as an indigenous instrument from the state of Zhao (present-day Henan, Shanxi, and Shaanxi), not Qi, but still was placed in parallel with the *zheng*. For example, Wang Jian 王暕 (585-618), in “Observing Music and Composed in Acknowledgement of Imperial Command” (“Guanyue yingzhao shi” 觀樂應詔詩), writes: “The Zhao *se* keeps clear sounds within; the Qin *zheng* holds unrestricted resonance frozen in place” 趙瑟含清音，秦箏凝逸響。<sup>237</sup> “Unrestricted” describes the free and vibrant sounds the *zheng* produced.

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<sup>235</sup> Cao Zhi, “Presented to Ding Yi” (“Zeng Ding Yi” 贈丁翼), *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Neibeichao shi*, p. 452.

<sup>236</sup> Cao Zhi, “The Tune of *Konghou*” (“Konghou yin” 箏篴引), *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Neibeichao shi*, p. 425.

<sup>237</sup> *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Neibeichao shi*, p. 1593.

During the Northern and Southern dynasties period, the *zheng* was sometimes associated in literary works with Huan Yi 桓伊 (d. 391), a loyal military general of the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420) who helped Jin win the Battle of Fei River under the leadership of Xie An 謝安 (320-385). Huan also was known as a famous player of the *di* (笛 the Chinese transverse flute) and the *zheng*. According to the *History of the Jin*, Emperor Xiaowu (r. 372-396) once summoned Huan Yi to play the *di* at a banquet, but he declined and asked a servant to play it, and played the *zheng* himself instead in a way that warned the emperor about treacherous court officials' slander of Xie An, the statesman who had led Jin through the crisis of the attack by the Former Qin:

Once his servant had played the *di*, Huan Yi plucked his *zheng* and sang a “Poem of Resentment”:

“To be a ruler is not easy,  
And to be an official is indeed difficult.  
When one's deeds of loyalty and good faith are not manifest,  
Then along come doubt and misfortune.  
Zhou Dan assisted Kings Wen and Wu,  
But the merit stored in in the “Golden Rattan” was not shown.  
But even as he was extending his own heart to support royal governance,  
The two uncles were responding with slanderous rumors.”

Huan's sounds and rhythms were heroic and strong, and his deportment was admirable. Xie An shed tears that soaked his clothes, and then he came across the seating mats to approach Huan. He touched his moustache and said: “Sir, you are indeed excellent at this!” The emperor felt quite ashamed.<sup>238</sup>

奴既吹笛，伊便撫箏而歌《怨詩》曰：“為君既不易，為臣良獨難，忠信事不顯，乃有見疑患。周旦佐文武，《金縢》功不刊。推心輔王政，二叔反流言。”聲節慷慨，俯仰可觀。安泣下沾衿，乃越席而就之，捋其須曰：“使君於此不凡！”帝甚有愧色。

Rather than using the *di* flute for which he was most renowned, Huan Yi chose to play the *zheng* to admonish the emperor and demonstrate Xie An's loyalty. In his song, Huan mentioned the Duke of Zhou, who played a major role in consolidating the kingdom his elder brother, King Wu

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<sup>238</sup> For Huan Yi's biography, see Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (579-648), comp., *Jin shu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), 81.2117-19.

(r. 1046-1043 BCE), established and assisted his nephew, King Cheng (r. 1042-1021 BCE), as a loyal and capable regent. According to the *Book of Documents*, Guan Shu and Cai Shu slandered Duke Zhou, but his loyalty finally was manifest to King Cheng after he discovered his loyal letter contained in a gold box.<sup>239</sup> With his *zheng*, Huan sang a song that compared Xie An to the Duke of Zhou, expressed his criticism of the slanderers, and compared them to the treacherous officials Guan Shu and Cai Shu. This anecdote of Huan Yi and the *zheng* contributed to the early literary construction of the *zheng* as an instrument imbued with heroic spirit and masculinity.

However, beginning in the Tang dynasty, the *zheng* became frequently with female players, particularly girls in the demimonde, and its origins in the Qin region contributed to its exotic appeal. For example, Li Duan 李端 (737-784) writes, in “Listening to the *Zheng*” (“Ting *zheng*” 聽箏):

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|--------|--|
| 鳴箏金粟柱， | Plucking the <i>zheng</i> with its bridges of osmanthus, |
| 素手玉房前。 | She moves her fine fingers in front of the jade room.    |
| 欲得周郎顧， | Wanting to get Zhou Yu to turn his head,                 |
| 時時誤拂弦。 | From time to time she plays a wrong note. <sup>240</sup> |

The main character of this poem is a female *zheng* player, who plays her instrument in a luxurious dwelling. “Fine fingers” describe her beautiful hands, and the way she plays the *zheng* shows her affections. The male listener is compared to Zhou Yu 周瑜 (175-210), who was a military general in the Three Kingdoms period and an expert on music. As Zhou would turn his head to see the musician whenever he heard a wrong note, this player plays wrong notes intentionally from time to time to attract his attention.

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<sup>239</sup> *Shangshu jiaoshi yilun*, pp. 1222-1260.

<sup>240</sup> *QTS*, 287.729.



Bai Juyi 白居易 (175-210) also wrote a number of poems on the *zheng*, in all of which the players are female figures, primarily courtesans. In these poems, these players' beautiful appearance is described in detail, and this description constitutes as significant a part of the poem as are the musical descriptions. For example, the poem "Zheng" (*Zheng* 箏) begins with four lines that delineate the female player's appearance: "Her cloudlike sidelocks are charmingly dark; her flowerlike face is tenderly flushed. Her two pupils are as if cut from autumn water; her ten fingers look like peeled spring scallions" 雲髻飄蕭綠，花顏旖旎紅。雙眸剪秋水，十指剝春蔥。<sup>241</sup> In these lines, different metaphors describe the *zheng* player's hair, face, eyes, and fingers. What is special is the description of her fingers: "peeled spring scallions" depicts them as white, lustrous, and tender, good for plucking the strings, but also liable to arouse sensual or even erotic feelings in listeners as well as readers.

It also is under Bai Juyi's brush that the *zheng*, together with the *di*, begins to be described as a "rival" of the *qin*, and a cause of its unpopularity. In "Abandoned *Qin*" ("Fei *Qin*" 廢琴), Bai writes:

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| <p>絲桐合為琴，<br/>         中有太古聲。<br/>         古聲淡無味，<br/>         不稱今人情。<br/>         玉徽光彩滅，<br/>         朱弦塵土生。<br/>         廢棄來已久，<br/>         遺音尚泠泠。<br/>         不辭為君彈，<br/>         縱彈人不聽。<br/>         何物使之然？<br/>         羌笛與秦箏。</p> | <p>Combining silk and paulownia wood to make a <i>qin</i>,<br/>         Within which dwell the sounds of antiquity.<br/>         Ancient sounds are mild and flavorless,<br/>         Not matching the preferences of men today.<br/>         The jade studs' luster has faded,<br/>         Dust gathers on the red strings.<br/>         Although abandoned long ago,<br/>         Its lingering notes are still clear and bright.<br/>         I will not decline to play it for you,<br/>         But even if I play, no one will listen.<br/>         What has caused it to be so?<br/>         The Qiang <i>di</i> and the Qin <i>zheng</i>.<sup>242</sup></p> |
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<sup>241</sup> *QTS*, 454.1146.

<sup>242</sup> *QTS*, 424.4656. Here I use the translation by Ronald Egan with slight revision. See Ronald Egan, "The Controversy Over Music and "Sadness" and Changing Conceptions of the *Qin* in Middle Period China," p. 54.

No longer pairing the *zheng* with the *qin* or the *se* from the Qi or the Zhao state, this poem matches the *zheng* with the Qiang *di*. The Qiang are, and were, a minority group that dwelled in the southwestern region of China and had close contact with western nomads.<sup>243</sup> By mentioning the *zheng* from Qin and the *di* from the Qiang together, Bai positions the two as indigenous musical instruments from China's periphery. At the same time, he draws a contrast between the Qiang *di* and the Qin *zheng* on the one hand and the *qin* on the other. Although neglected by contemporary people for its unassuming nature, the *qin* is an instrument that represents the mild and flavorless "sounds of antiquity." Although the *zheng* and *di* are popular and trendy, they nevertheless lack the delicate and elegant *qin* flavors that can link people with the ancient.

The *zheng*'s association with female sensitivities and peripheral regions frames it as the equivalent of an instrument of "Zheng and Wei," a tool of unsanctioned music. In another poem, "Composed on Deng Fang and Zhang Che Failing the Examination" ("Deng Fang Zhang Che luodi" 鄧魴張徹落第), Bai writes: "All ears rejoice in the music of Zheng and Wei, while the *qin* still does not change its sounds" 衆耳喜鄭衛, 琴亦不改聲.<sup>244</sup> In these two lines, Bai compares both his friends, Deng Fang and Zhang Che, to the *qin*, and laments the fact that they failed the imperial examination despite their literary talents and upright characters. This misprision is just like that of the *qin*, ignored in favor of the more popular *zheng*: "Speeding their carts they go to see the peonies; galloping their horses they go to listen to the Qin *zheng*" 奔車看牡丹, 走馬聽秦箏. Although Deng and Zhang failed the examination, they retain their moral

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<sup>243</sup> For the scholarly work on the Qiang, see Wang Mingke 王明珂, *Qiang zai Han Zang zhijian—yige huaxia bianyuan de lishi renleixue yanjiu* 羌在漢藏之間——一個華夏邊緣的歷史人類學研究 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban gongsi, 2003).

<sup>244</sup> *QTS*, 424.1038.

integrity with no change in their character, just as the *qin* never changes its sounds despite being neglected by the public.

Another Tang poet, Rong Yu 戎昱 (744-800), in “Listening to Mountain Man Du Playing the Tune of Hujia” (“Ting Du shanren tan Hujia” 聽杜山人彈胡笳) compares the *zheng*’s prominence to the *qin*’s unpopularity: “Nowadays in this world the airs of elegance wane, and who knows deeply the wonders of this sound? That the world likes *zheng* and dislikes *qin* makes it clear that it is difficult to find someone who truly knows the tone” 如今世上雅風衰, 若箇深知此聲好。世上愛箏不愛琴, 則明此調難知音。<sup>245</sup> Rong promotes the *qin*’s value by describing the *zheng*’s rise as a result of the waning of an older elegance.

During the Song dynasty, although allusions to Huan Yi and the *zheng* still appeared in poetic works, the mainstream literary construction of *zheng* emphasized its associations with female sensibilities. The Southern Song poet Yao Mian 姚勉 (1216-1262), in “Listening to the *Zheng*” (“Ting zheng” 聽箏), describes the way a beautiful young woman plays the *zheng* just as she wakes up from her midday nap: “The beautiful girl behind her drapes has just awoken from a nap at noon; her hairpin balks, her side-locks dangle, and limply she puts on her makeup. Under the patterned window, delicate and demure, she wears a green silk gown. Laying back, she presses the strings of an old *zheng*, lying there like lacquered jade” 美人帳中午睡起, 釵橫鬢髻慵添粧。文窗窈窕鮫綃綠, 卧按古箏橫漆玉。The laziness after the noon nap adds to the erotic atmosphere. Before she begins to play the *zheng*, the girl “slightly rolls up her green sleeves and shows her scallion-like fingers” 微揜翠袖露春葱, an allusion to Bai Juyi’s poem “Zheng.” The end of the poem reads: “In the building, the partner blows the *xiao* flute with Nong Yu; together

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<sup>245</sup> *QTS*, 270.67

they learn the language of phoenixes in Dan Mountain. Phoenixes, phoenixes, will they come? Where is the Flowing Cloud of Xiao Shi” 樓中弄玉吹簫侶, 同學丹山鳳凰語。鳳凰鳳凰來不來, 蕭史行雲在何許?<sup>246</sup> These lines allude to the love story of Nong Yu and Xiao Shi. Xiao was a master of *xiao* (the Chinese vertical flute), and could summon phoenixes and cranes by playing it. Nong Yu was one of the daughters of Duke Mu of the Qin 秦穆公 (683-621 BCE), and she fell in love with Xiao and married him. He taught her how to play the *xiao*, and she was able to draw auspicious birds thereafter. Finally, both Xiao Shi and Nong Yu flew off with flocks of phoenixes. “Flowing Cloud” in the last line alludes to the Lord of Chu’s romantic encounter with a goddess from Mountain Wu. The allusions to the two love stories suggest the romantic sensitivities and affections *zheng* music aroused, which correspond with descriptions of the female player’s appearance in the beginning and together create a sensual ambience through both visual and acoustic imagery.

In the popular genre of *ci* lyrics during the Song, the *zheng* was used particularly frequently as a prop when the theme was courtesan girls. Zhang Xiaoxiang 張孝祥 (1132-1169), in “To the Tune of Bodhisattva Barbarian” (“Pusa man” 菩薩蠻), writes: “Her slender fingers are as if chiseled from red jade; on thirteen strings she tunes the sounds of spring water” 琢成紅玉纖纖指, 十三絃上調新水.<sup>247</sup> Liu Guo 劉過 (1154-1206), in “To the Tune of the Four-Word Song” (“Si zi ling” 四字令), writes: “Her feelings are deep and her affections are sincere. Her eyebrows are long and her side locks black. In the small tower, under a bright moon, she tunes her *zheng*. In her music, she conveys many sounds of the spring breeze” 情深意真。眉長鬢

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<sup>246</sup> QSS, 3408.40522.

<sup>247</sup> Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋, comp., *Quan Song ci* 全宋詞 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 3.1706.

青。小樓明月調箏。寫春風數聲。<sup>248</sup> Both Zhang's and Liu's *ci* lyrics on *zheng*-playing associate musicality with female sexuality, in which *zheng* music is the medium by which the girl conveys her sentiments and affections.

Because of the *zheng*'s association with female sexuality and the demimonde, some literary works describe the *zheng* demeaningly. For example, Jiang Teli 姜特立 (1125-1204), in "Listening to *Zheng*" ("Ting *zheng*" 聽箏), writes: "Now I face the Qin *zheng*; though I listen to it, I hold it in slight regard. For an old man like me, to spare a day is difficult; I just use it as a consolation in my loneliness" 我今對秦箏，聽之亦藐藐。老人難遣日，藉此慰牢落。<sup>249</sup> Although the poet listens to the *zheng*, he does not regard it as a noble pursuit, but only as a way to relieve boredom.

The word *zheng* appears frequently in *Complete Song Poems* together with other characters. The most common combinations are "Qin *zheng*" (*qin zheng* 秦箏), "sorrowful *zheng*" (*ai zheng* 哀箏), "jeweled *zheng*" (*bao zheng* 寶箏), "silver *zheng*" (*yin zheng* 銀箏), "embroidered *zheng*" (*jin zheng* 錦箏), "chalcedony *zheng*" (*yao zheng* 瑤箏), "phoenix *zheng*" (*feng zheng* 鳳箏), "simurgh *zheng*" (*luan zheng* 鸞箏), "gold-inlaid *zheng*" (*dian zheng* 鈿箏), "cloud *zheng*" (*yun zheng* 雲箏), "long *zheng*" (*chang zheng* 長箏) and "wild goose *zheng*" (*yan zheng* 雁箏). Among these compounds, "Qin *zheng*" emphasizes the *zheng*'s origin; "sorrowful *zheng*" focuses on plaintive emotions in *zheng* music; "wild goose *zheng*" refers to the strings' arrangement, which resembles the pattern of wild geese when they soar in the sky, and "long *zheng*" refers to its length. All of the other compound words, such as "jeweled *zheng*," "silver

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<sup>248</sup> *Quan Song ci*, 4.2647.

<sup>249</sup> *QSS*, 2146.24192.

*zheng*,” and “embroidered *zheng*,” describe its material or decorations and patterns. In these words, *zheng* is characterized as an instrument that has luxurious ornamentation made from valuable materials, such as gold, silver, and chalcedony, and is decorated with magnificent patterns that resemble embroidery, phoenixes, simurghs, or clouds. These modifying words also are found in the vocabulary that describes women’s clothing, decorations, and dwellings, and imbue the *zheng* with feminine characteristics and associations.

While the *zheng* is delineated as a lavishly adorned musical instrument that female players favor, the most common compounds of the word *qin* are “unadorned *qin*” (*su qin* 素琴), “clean *qin*” (*jing qin* 淨琴), “quiet *qin*” (*jing qin* 靜琴), and “old *qin*” (*gu qin* 古琴). In stark contrast to the *zheng*, the *qin* is constructed as a high literati pursuit insulated from material extravagance and vulgar desires.

During the Song, praising the *qin* often meant disparaging the *zheng*. Su Shi’s poem “Listening to Hangzhou Monk Weixian Playing the *Qin*” ends by declaring *qin* music superior to *zheng* and *di* music and suggesting that those who have heard this *qin* music should go home and wash the sounds of *zheng* and *di* from their ears. “Ears accustomed to *zheng* and *di*” develops into a fixed expression that refers to vulgar taste in music. In the second poem in “Listening to Daoist Luo Play the *Qin*” (“Ting Luo daoshi qin” 聽羅道士琴), Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236-1283) writes: “I hear sounds of musical stones from banks of the Si River, which implicitly contain the tones of *jue* and *zhi*. I also hear the Spring of Heavenly Music, which thoroughly cleanses my ears accustomed to *zheng* and *di*” 吾聞泗濱磬, 暗含角與徵。又聞天樂泉, 淨洗箏笛耳。<sup>250</sup> Wen compares *qin* music first to the sounds musical stones from the banks of the Si River produce, a precious tribute from Xuzhou mentioned in the “Tribute of Yu” (“Yu gong” 禹

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<sup>250</sup> QSS, 3595.42951.

貢) chapter of *The Book of Document*, and to the spring that produces heavenly music. The *qin* music cleanses his ears of the sound of vulgar music. Ma Tingluan's 馬廷鸞 (1222-1289) "Inscribed on Wang's Hall of Clear *Qin*" ("Ti Wangshi qinqing tang" 題王氏琴清堂), also contrasts the sounds of the *zheng* and *di* with that of the *qin*: "When the guest comes, we wash with *qin* music our ears accustomed to *zheng* and *di*; clear, round and tinkling, it dissipates a hundred kinds of worries" 客來洗予箏笛耳, 清圓琅然散百憂.<sup>251</sup> Ma's poem alludes to two of Su Shi's poems. While the first line alludes to "Listening to Hangzhou Monk Weixian Playing the *Qin*," the second alludes to the "Ballad of the Drunken Elder," composed in memory of Ouyang Xiu. Unlike the *zheng* and *di*, the *qin*'s sound is clear and full and allows listeners to set aside their concerns and worries.

## Conclusion

Ouyang Xiu's disagreement about the *qin*'s aesthetics in Han Yu's poem can be seen as an endeavor to classicize the *qin*. Ouyang initiated a trend in the Song that constructed the *qin* as a musical instrument that connected people with ancient sages in the Confucian tradition and represented Zhou Dynasty musical ideals. This trend helped the *qin* gain meaning, aesthetic value, and sensibilities beyond the musical sphere. The emphasis on the *qin*'s role in moral cultivation made it distinctive from other popular instruments during this period. The *qin*'s construction as a representative of the Confucian ideals of social harmony and respect for the past reinforced and developed such aesthetic values as *gu*, *dan*, *he*, *qing*, and *jing*.

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<sup>251</sup> QSS, 3461.41239.

Meanwhile, musical instruments such as the *zheng* and *di* correspondingly were devalued in literary works during the Song dynasty. In poetic works composed before the Tang, the *zheng* was often mentioned with the *qin* and the *se* with no specific distinctions made among them. The three often were played in the same setting as parts of an orchestra, and no specific gender was associated with the *zheng*. In some poems, *zheng* music was even described as possessing strong masculine power. Although it was described as originating in Qin and was associated with the western frontier, it was not regarded as an outlandish or inferior musical instrument. Beginning in the Tang and continuing into the Song, however, the *zheng* became associated in literary works with the demimonde and with female allure and sensibilities, as well as with unorthodox exotic flavors from peripheral regions. *Qin*-playing could not be established as a noble literati pursuit without a new antithesis between the *qin* and the *zheng*, which was constructed as unorthodox, like the music associated in ancient times with Zheng and Wei.



## Chapter Four

### The Stringless and Broken Instrument: Buddhism and the Representation of *Qin* Monks and the *Qin*

This chapter will focus on how literary works composed during the Song represented Buddhist monks who were *qin* players. Due to the literati's interest in Buddhism and their close relationship with Buddhist monks, writings of this kind were related to the development and prosperity of Chan Buddhism, at least in part. Gregory has remarked that: "if any period deserves the epithet of the 'golden age' of [Chinese] Buddhism, the Song is the most likely candidate."<sup>252</sup> During this period, the Chan School arose to a dominant position within Chinese Buddhism. It not only changed the whole religious picture of that time but also exerted considerable influence on literati culture and literature. On the one hand, Chan monks were influenced by literati culture; adopting and practicing literati pursuits in their daily lives, numerous Chan monks have been remembered as excellent belletristic writers, painters, and musicians. On the other hand, they used these pursuits as tools to interact with literati, and they expressed their own religious thoughts through these tools so as to exert their influence on the literati class. The *qin* was one such pursuit that attracted the attention of Buddhist monks.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Peter N. Gregory, "The Vitality of Buddhism in the Sung," in Gregory and Getz, eds., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), p. 2.

<sup>253</sup> Scholarship on Chan Buddhism in North America mainly emphasizes its development in the Song dynasty and influence on the educated elite. Morten Schlütter's book, *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), emphasizes the role the educated local elite played in the transmission of the Chan School. Mark Halperin's work, *Out of the Cloister: Literati Perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 960–1279* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), shows that engagement with Buddhism became a part of everyday literati life in the Song. Albert Welter's book, *The Linji lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), examines the genre of *yulu* 語錄 and the establishment of the image of Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (fl. 9<sup>th</sup> c.) against the religious and cultural backgrounds of Song dynasty China. Gregory and Getz's edited volume, *Buddhism in the Sung*, collects articles that focus largely on elite figures, elite traditions, and interactions among Buddhists and literati. However, there have been few works devoted to the phenomenon of Chan monks who actively engaged in literati cultural pursuits during this period, especially music playing.

During the Northern Song dynasty, the number of *qin* monks (*qinseng* 琴僧) grew rapidly, and a continuous lineage of Buddhist monks who were good at the *qin* appeared and were admired by literati.<sup>254</sup> I regard this group of monks as belonging to a continuous lineage because they passed on the technique of *qin* playing between generations and transmitted it through master-disciple relationships. Numerous authors, such as Ouyang Xiu and Mei Yaochen, mentioned interactions with *qin* monks in their compositions. Some of the monks' names were relatively unknown, while some were famous practitioners of the *qin*. This chapter examines the roles the *qin* played in the interaction and interrelationship between literati and Buddhist monks in the Song.

Literary writings on the *qin* composed during the Song dynasty manifested the influence of Buddhism through two images: the “stringless *qin*” and the “broken *qin*.” Although both images derived from literary texts that had no overt religious meaning, they were nonetheless used to convey soteriological teachings. The image of a “stringless *qin*” originated from Tao Qian's biography and was developed as a new musical metaphor in Chan texts. The image of the “broken *qin*,” found first in one of Bai Juyi's poems, provoked Su Shi to think about the impermanence of human life, names and forms. Later, it was also imbued with Buddhist implications. By tracing how the religious and philosophical associations of these two images evolved as they moved from their original settings into Song dynasty contexts, this chapter sheds light on how Chan Buddhism influenced and shaped both literati and Buddhist monks' thinking on and representations of the *qin*.

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<sup>254</sup> The term *qinseng* in the Song context, to my understanding, did not refer to monks who took up *qin* playing as their profession; rather, it described monks who were fond of and good at *qin* playing as amateurs.

## I. Representation of *Qin* Monks and the *Qin* before the Song

Buddhism has long held a tradition of expressing Buddhist meanings through music. Since the *qin* was played and favored by literati as an instrument of great subtlety and refinement, translators of Buddhist sutras found the highly interpretable character of *qin* music useful for conveying the subtle meanings and philosophies of Buddhism. In sutras that had been introduced to China and translated before the Song, various examples can be found that use *qin* music as a tool to convey Buddhist ideas. *The Sutra of Forty-two Chapters* (*Sishi'er zhang jing* 四十二章經), traditionally regarded as the first Indian Buddhist sutra to have been translated into Chinese, contains a chapter in which the Buddha compares the learning of the Buddhist way with playing a musical instrument.<sup>255</sup> The translators of this sutra, Kasyapa Matanga 迦葉摩騰 (fl. 1st. c. CE) and Dharmaratna 竺法蘭 (fl. 1st. c. CE), adopted the word *qin* as a translation for one of the musical instruments mentioned in the passage; the passage notes that playing the *qin* can help people harmonize their minds so as to attain the way to Enlightenment:

There was a *śramaṇa* who was reciting surviving sutras of Kāśyapa Buddha one evening, but his voice was plaintive and strained as if he were regretful and vacillating. The Buddha summoned that *śramaṇa* and asked him, “When you dwelled at home, what did you do?” He answered, “I was fond of playing the lute [*qin*].” The Buddha asked, “What happened when the strings were too slack?” “They wouldn’t sound.” “What happened if the strings were too taut?” “Their sounds were clipped short.” “What happened if the strings were tuned just right?” “Their sounds were all perfectly resonant/sonorous.” The Buddha said: “A *śramaṇa* studying the Way is exactly the same. Keep your mind properly tuned and dwell in purity; then the Way can be attained.”<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> It is controversial whether *The Sutra of Forty-two Chapters* in fact originated from India, since some texts contained in this collection may have appeared sometime after the first attested translations, and it may even have been compiled in Central Asia or China. See Robert Sharf, “The Scripture in Forty-two Sections,” in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 360-364.

<sup>256</sup> *Sishi'er zhang jing* 四十二章經, in the *Sinsan Dainihon zokuzōkyō* 新纂大日本續藏經, ed. Kosho Kawamura et al. (Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975–1989) [hereafter *X*], 37, 0669:0664c11–14. This version of the Buddhist canon is available online through *Zhonghua Dianzi Fodian Xiehui* (cbeta.org), and I cite passages from these electronic editions.

沙門夜誦迦葉佛遺教經，其聲悲緊，思悔欲退。佛問之曰：汝昔在家，曾為何業？對曰：愛彈琴。佛言：弦緩如何？對曰：不鳴矣！弦急如何？對曰：聲絕矣！急緩得中如何？對曰：諸音普矣！佛言：沙門學道亦然，心若調適，道可得矣。

Although we do not know what musical instrument is mentioned in the original Sanskrit recension, the translators borrow the name of the Chinese instrument *qin* to help readers understand the meaning of the passage. In the paragraph quoted above, the *qin* is compared with the human mind; in particular, to have an ideal state of mind is just like a *qin* with appropriately tightened strings. The implication is that the mind should always be maintained in the Middle Way, between the extremes of tautness and looseness; in Buddhist terms, these are the two mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) of restlessness and lethargy. These are two of the five hindrances to the deep states of concentration called “meditative absorptions” (*dhyāna*).

In the second chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* (*Fahua jing* 法華經; Sanskrit: *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra*), one of the most popular and influential Mahayana sutras, the Buddha reveals that the ultimate purpose of his teaching of the true dharma is to bring all sentient beings to nirvana through skillful means, and music played with various instruments was one of most effective of these means:

If they should employ persons to make music, striking drums or blowing horns or conch shells, playing pipes, flutes, *qin*, harps, *pipa*, cymbals, and gongs, and if these many kinds of wonderful notes are intended wholly as an offering; or if one with a joyful mind sings a song in praise of the Buddha’s virtue, even if it is just one small note, then all who do these things have attained the Buddha Way.<sup>257</sup>

若使人作樂，擊鼓吹角，貝，簫，笛，琴，箜篌，琵琶、鐃、銅鈸，如是眾妙音，盡持以供養。或以歡喜心，歌唄頌佛德，乃至一小音，皆已成佛道。

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<sup>257</sup> *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經, in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al. (Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932) [hereafter *T*], 50, 2061:0007c09- 0009b20. This version of the Buddhist canon is also available online through *Zhonghua Dianzi Fodian Xiehui* (cbeta.org) and the SAT Daizōkyō Text Database (<http://21dzklu-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/>), and I have used these electronic editions. Here I use the translation by Burton Watson. See Burton Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 40.

This excerpt from the *Lotus Sutra* emphasizes that seemingly different teachings are all actually various skillful applications of the one dharma, and music played by the *qin* and other instruments can evoke people's Buddha nature and help them to understand the essence of Buddhism.

Since the Six Dynasties period, both Buddhist texts and secular writings started to include Buddhist monks who excelled at playing the *qin*. The earliest record of this kind appears in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳), which was completed around 530 by the Liang dynasty monk Shi Huijiao 釋慧皎 (497–554):

Shi Daowen, surnamed Huangfu, was from Anding Chaona. He was a descendant of the noble man [Huangfu] Mi. When he was young, he was fond of the *qin* and books and was renowned for serving his parents with filial piety.<sup>258</sup>

釋道溫，姓皇甫。安定朝那人。高士謚之後也。少好琴書，事親以孝聞。

However, in this text, Shi Daowen's expertise with the *qin* is only mentioned briefly and is not given any elaboration. With the development of Buddhism in the Tang dynasty, more and more Buddhist monks who possessed expertise in literati pursuits such as composing poems, painting, and performing music appeared and were recorded in contemporary texts.<sup>259</sup> In the *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳), the first draft of which was completed around 650 by Shi Daoxuan 釋道宣 (596–667), with later additions in the 660s, there is a record of a monk in the Shu region named Shi Wei Yuansong 釋衛元嵩 (fl. 6<sup>th</sup> c.), who was said to have been especially good at playing the *qin*: "He personally composed *qin* music, such as 'Sorrows of the Heavenly Maiden' and the 'Tune of the Wind from the Heart.' There were

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<sup>258</sup> *Gaoseng zhuan*, T 50, 2059:372b.28.

<sup>259</sup> See Sun Changwu 孫昌武, *Tangdai wenxue yu fojiao* 唐代文學與佛教 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1985), p. 126.

also people who passed on his music” 自制琴聲，為天女怨、心風弄，亦有傳其聲者。<sup>260</sup>

Compared to the very simple record in *the Biography of Eminent Monks*, the description of Shi Wei Yuansong’s skill on the *qin* in *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks*, although still brief and terse, contains much richer information. It not only mentions the titles of two *qin* tunes that Shi Wei Yuansong composed, but also records their circulation and transmission. Although Shi Wei Yuansong was active in the Northern Zhou dynasty (557–581), since the *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* was compiled one century later than the first *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, it reflects the subtle changes in the selection and organization of the materials in the composition of biographies of Buddhist monks in the Tang.

During the Tang dynasty, records of Buddhist monks who were good at playing the *qin* appear not only in religious texts but also in secular literary writings. Several famous poets mentioned the *qin* in poetic texts. Li Bai’s 李白 (701–762) “Listening to Monk Jun of Shu Playing the *Qin*” (“Ting Shuseng Jun tan qin” 聽蜀僧濬彈琴) is one of the most famous of them.<sup>261</sup> This poem is renowned for its vivid description of the sound that Monk Jun of Shu was able to produce with the *qin*, and of the feelings the sound evoked in the audience. Although Li Bai mentions the name of the monk, due to a lack of historical records and other supporting evidence, the details of Monk Jun’s biography cannot be known.

As a reference to Buddhist monks who had expertise in *qin* playing, the term *qinseng* first appeared in poetic texts composed in the Tang. The earliest records of this term can be traced to two of Zhang Ji’s 張籍 (fl. 767-830) poems, “Responding to the Ten Verses on Mid-Autumn Dwellings by the Secretary of the Left Office of the Ministry of Revenue” (“He zuosiyuanlang

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<sup>260</sup> *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, T 50, 2060:657c12.

<sup>261</sup> *QTS*, 183.1868.

zhongqiu ju shishou” 和左司元郎中秋居十首) and “To Guest Linghu” (“Ji Linghu binke” 寄令狐賓客). In the first poem, the *qin* monk is mentioned in parallel with “bookish guests,” who had eagerly sent letters to meet the host: “Bookish guests often presented their letters/ *Qin* monks helped to tune the strings” 書客多呈帖，琴僧與合弦。<sup>262</sup> In the latter poem, the *qin* monk is mentioned together with “wine immortals”: “His glorious reputation has spread throughout in the country/ When retired, he entertains *qin* monks and wine immortals” 勛名盡得國家傳，退狎琴僧與酒仙。<sup>263</sup> The word *xia* 狎, which means “to entertain and become intimate with,” has a connotation of flippancy and frivolity. Paralleling the *qin* monk with “bookish guest” and “wine immortal,” as well as using the verb *xia* to describe how the host treated the *qin* monk, implies that the author Zhang Ji did not regard the *qin* monk as possessing equal social status with the host in the poem, who was a high official in the court. Instead, the *qin* monks mentioned in these two poems were more like anonymous performers who sought to entertain their hosts.

During the Tang period, except for Li Bai and a few other poets, most authors generally did not specify the names of *qin* monks they mentioned. In Tang texts *qin* monks were mainly literary foils rather than historically significant and verified figures. Rather than persons who deserved respect and admiration, they were mentioned only in passing by their contemporaries; they were not given the opportunity to make their own voices heard.

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<sup>262</sup> Li Dongsheng 李東生, ed. and annot., *Zhang Ji jizhu* 張籍集註 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1989), p. 151.

<sup>263</sup> *Zhang Ji jizhu*, p. 202.

## II. Representation of *Qin* Monks and the *Qin* during the Song dynasty

The golden period of *qin* music is associated with the Song dynasty. As we have seen, numerous instructional works devoted to the *qin* were written during this period. The composition of many of the best-known *qin* pieces also dates to this dynasty. The fashion of playing the *qin* within the literati circle also spread to the religious field. Buddhist monks played the *qin* and interacted with literati in different situations, which were recorded by various authors. To take Mei Yaochen as an example, more than thirty poems of his refer to the *qin*, and eight of them mention that the player was a Buddhist monk. Three of the eight poems address the player simply as a “monk” (*seng* 僧), while the rest all recorded players’ names, such as *Qin* Monk Zhibai (*qinseng Zhibai* 琴僧知白), Venerable Master Yue (*Yue shangren* 月上人), Venerable Master Zhi (*Zhi shangren* 芝上人), Venerable Master Ne (*Ne shangren* 訥上人), Venerable Master Liangyu (*Liangyu shangren* 良玉上人), etc.<sup>264</sup> Fan Zhongyan in “Memorial-Stele Biography of Great Master Riguan of Tianzhu Mountain” (“Tianzhushan Riguan dashi taji” 天竺山日觀大師塔記) praises Chan Master Riguan 日觀大師 (fl. 11 c.) as an excellent *qin* player:

The Master [Riguan] excelled at the *qin*. I used to listen to it, and loved the fact that when he played, his spirit was placid and his *qi* stable; he was seated as firmly as a rock; his fingers did not make even the slightest mistake, and his touching of the studs never had the slightest error; slow and fast, heavy and delicate, every sound was exactly right.<sup>265</sup>

師深於琴。余嘗聽之，愛其神端氣平，安坐如石，指不纖失，徽不少差，遲速重輕，一一而當。

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<sup>264</sup> See Mei Yaochen *ji biannian jiaozhu*.

<sup>265</sup> *QSW*, 386.423.



Such a memorial-stele would typically record the major religious activities of a Buddhist monk, but Fan Zhongyan spent one third of his biography of Riguan describing how good Riguan was at playing the *qin*; he clearly regarded it as an invaluable merit of Buddhist practitioners.

It is possible to discern in various literary writings a continuous lineage of excellent *qin* monks whose musical activities during this period were eulogized and recorded. Zhu Wenji 朱文濟 (fl. 10<sup>th</sup> c.), the very first person in such a lineage, was not a Buddhist monk but a musician hired by the imperial court. Zhu imparted all of his knowledge and techniques of *qin* playing to Shi Yizhong 釋夷中 (fl. 11<sup>th</sup> c.), a monk living in the capital. Shi Yizhong had two famous students, Shi Yihai 釋義海 (970–1025) and Shi Zunshi 釋遵式 (964–1032). Both Shi Yihai and Shi Zunshi taught Shi Zequan 釋則全 (fl. 11<sup>th</sup> c.), who composed the *The Finger Techniques of Preceptor Zequan* (*Zequan heshang zhifa* 則全和尚指法), which was collected and preserved in the *Essential Records of the Qin Garden*. Shi Zequan then passed his teachings to another monk, Shi Zhaokuang 釋照曠 (fl. 11<sup>th</sup> c.). Besides Shi Zequan, Shi Yihai had another two students, Shi Yuanzhi 釋元誌 (fl. 11<sup>th</sup> c.) and Shi Fanru 釋梵如 (fl. 11<sup>th</sup> c.), and both of them were recorded as the best *qin* players during their times.<sup>266</sup>

Among these monks, Shi Yihai and Shi Zunshi were especially renowned, and their activities were widely recorded in various texts. Shi Yihai, also known as Chan master Ruiyan Yihai 瑞巖義海, was a Chan monk in the Fayan school and was the disciple of Chan master Yunju Daoqi 雲居道齊 (929–997).<sup>267</sup> Unlike his predecessors in the Tang, Yi Hai's talents in

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<sup>266</sup> For this lineage of *qin* monks in the Song dynasty, see Xu Jian 許健, *Qin shi chubian* 琴史初編 (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 2009); Si Binglin, *Zhongguo gudai qinseng ji qi qinxue gongxian*; Zhang Huaying, *Songdai guqin yinyue yanjiu*, chapter 3.

<sup>267</sup> For the biography of Yihai, see Li Guoling 李國玲, *Songseng lu* 宋僧錄 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2001), p. 791.

both musical performance and literary writings were admired. According to Shen Kuo, when Yihai went to Fahua mountain, he studied the *qin* with Yizhong. During this period, “he denied himself to visitors and did not descend from the mountain for over ten years. Day and night, his hands did not leave the strings until he had exhausted its marvelousness.” 謝絕過從，積十年不下山。晝夜手不釋弦，遂窮其妙。<sup>268</sup> Compared to other lay players, Yihai’s *qin* music was praised as if possessing meaning beyond the sound: “the meaning and appeal (of his *qin* music) were detached and unhampered, transcended the sound itself, and were something that ordinary players could not duplicate” 其意韻蕭然，得於聲外，此眾人所不及也。<sup>269</sup>

Besides being a famous *qin* player, Yihai was also described as being on intimate terms with contemporary literati and was active in their circles. He was remembered as a Chan monk who was not only a *qin* master, but also skilled at composing literary works; literati and officials all wanted to spend time with him. Yihai also participated in the famous debate over Han Yu’s poem “Listening to Master Ying Playing the *Qin*.” *Poetic Talks of Xiqing* (*Xiqing shihua* 西清詩話), compiled by Cai Tao 蔡條 (fl. 12<sup>th</sup> c.), the son of the high official and renowned calligrapher Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047–1126), records the following debate between Yihai, Ouyang Xiu, and Su Shi. Yihai disagreed with both Ouyang Xiu and Su Shi, and regarded Han Yu’s poem as definitely being on *qin* music:

The Monk Yihai in the Wu region was the grandson of Zhu Wenji, and he had inherited the expertise on the *qin* from Zhu and had achieved great fame. Ouyang Xiu used to ask Su Shi, “Which poem is the best work on the *qin*?” Su answered, “Han Yu’s ‘Listening to Master Ying Playing the *Qin*.’” Ouyang replied, “That was just on listening to the *pipa*.” When someone asked Yihai about this anecdote, he replied: “Ouyang Xiu is an outstanding figure of his generation, but how could such a person make such a mistake!”<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> *Xin jiaozheng Mengxi bitan quanyi*, p. 291.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>270</sup> Cai Tao 蔡條, *Xiqing shihua* 西清詩話, in *Zhongguo shihua zhenben congshu* 中國詩話珍本叢書, ed. Cai Zhenchu 蔡振楚 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2004), pp. 317–318.

三吳僧義海，朱文濟孫，以琴世其業，聲滿天下。歐陽文忠公嘗問東坡：琴詩孰優？坡答以退之穎師琴。公曰：此只是聽琵琶耳。或以問海，曰：歐陽公一代英偉，何斯人而斯誤也！

After faulting Ouyang Xiu for mistaking the *qin* in Han Yu's famous poetic piece for *pipa*, Yihai then gave a detailed explanation by incorporating his actual expertise of *qin* playing into the interpretation of the poem:

“Intimately, a boy and girl talking together; whether tender or bitter, each calls the other ‘darling.’” This describes the tenderness and delicacy when the true feelings were aroused. “Then cutting off abruptly, he changes to the haughty, valiant warriors going off to the field of combat.” This describes the overflowing of spirits and emotions, which amazed the eyes and ears. “Then floating clouds and willow floss without roots, through the vastness of Heaven and Earth, continuing soaring upward.” This describes the unhindered moving and changing of the music, whose extensiveness did not lack naturalness. “Or as amid chattering flocks of all kinds of birds, suddenly one perceives the solitary phoenix.” This describes the uniqueness of the music, which did not side with popular or vulgar music. “Or climbing up—can’t go even an inch, even a mite higher; then, strength failing, one long fall, over a thousand feet down.” This describes the cadence and melodiousness of the music, which did not follow a constant pattern. The poem’s description is devoted entirely to the subtlety and delicacy of plucking the strings with the fingers, and only the *qin* can achieve such effects. The *pipa* does not allow sudden changes of sound from low to high, so how could it produce such a sound? Han Yu had a deep knowledge of the essence of the *qin*, and people should not lightly make fun of him.<sup>271</sup>

昵昵兒女語，恩怨相爾汝，言輕柔細屑，真情出見也。劃然變軒昂，勇士赴敵場，精神餘溢，竦觀聽也。浮雲柳絮無根蒂，天地闊遠隨飛揚，縱橫變態，浩乎不失自然也。喧啾百鳥群，忽見孤鳳凰又見穎孤絕，不同流俗下俚聲也。躋攀分寸不可上，失勢一落千丈強，起伏抑揚，不主故常也。皆指下絲聲妙處，惟琴為然。琵琶格上聲，烏能而邪？退之深得其趣，未易譏評也。

Yihai's explanations showed his broad knowledge of music and demonstrated the fact that he was well versed in poetry. Furthermore, Yihai criticized Su Shi's poem, “Listening to Hangzhou Monk Weixian Playing the *Qin*,” as lacking a true understanding of the aesthetics of the *qin*:

[Yihai said:] “The song lyrics of Su Shi possess a power that can topple mountains and overturn seas, and yet he does not really know the *qin*. He wrote: ‘The greater strings produce sounds that are spring-like and warm, harmonious and stable,’ but all sounds produced by stringed instruments can be described in this way, why alone the *qin*? Moreover he only described specifically those sounds produced by greater and lesser strings, without

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

mentioning anything about the ornaments played under fingertips. ‘Oxen lowing in a jar and pheasants perching on a tree’ summarizes the sounds of *gong* and *jue* tones, but instruments of the eight sounds are all like so—why alone stringed instruments?’” People who heard his comments all considered Yihai as knowing words.<sup>272</sup>

“東坡詞氣倒山傾海，然亦未知琴。‘春溫和且平，廉折亮以清’，絲聲皆然，何獨琴也；又特言大小弦聲，不及指下之韻。‘牛鳴盎中雉登木’，概言宮角耳，八音宮角皆然，何獨絲也。”聞者以海為知言。

Yihai’s criticism toward Su Shi mainly lies in the fact that Su Shi’s descriptions were too generic and could apply to any musical instrument, which did not point out the unique character and style of *qin* playing.<sup>273</sup> Cai Tao first cites Yihai’s observations on Su Shi’s poem, and then quotes contemporary people’s positive comments on Yihai’s remarks. Yihai’s active role in intellectual conversations on music and literature provides evidence that *qin* monks in the Song were no longer being described as passive participants. They clearly had the opportunity to freely express their own ideas and opinions and to see their comments valued by contemporary literati.

Shi Zunshi, another student of Shi Yizhong, was an important figure in the development of the Tiantai school, which had been one of the leading schools of Chinese Buddhism since the Sui dynasty (581-618) and had had an important influence on both the schools of Chan and Pure Land. Also known under the names Zhibai 知白, Ciyun Chanzhu 慈雲懺主, and Chanzhu Chanhui 懺主禪慧, he was the author of various Tiantai texts, such as *Rules for Confession and Repentance of the Dharma-Flower Samādhi* (*Fahua sanmei chanyi* 法華三昧懺儀), and played an important role in the reviving of Tiantai school during the Song.<sup>274</sup> Beyond contemporary Buddhist texts, Shi Zunshi was also mentioned frequently in poetic texts written by his literati

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Yihai’s opinion won support among many other critics, such as Xu Yi 許顛 (fl. 12th c.). For a detailed discussion on the debate, see Gao Shentao, and Zhai Min, “Lun Han Yu ‘Ting Yingshi tanqin’ yinfa de ting qin yu ting pipa zhizheng jiqi neihan,” pp. 95-106.

<sup>274</sup> For the biography of Shi Zunshi, see *Songseng lu*, pp. 989–990.

friends. Mei Yaochen wrote a poem “Presented to *Qin* Monk Zhibai” (“Zeng qinseng Zhibai” 贈琴僧知白), which describes a night during which Zunshi paid him an unexpected visit and played the *qin* for him:

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| 上人南方來， | The Venerable Master came from the South;      |
| 手抱伏犧器。 | His hands held the <i>qin</i> of Fu Xi.        |
| 頽然造我門， | Compliantly, he came to my gate                |
| 不顧門下吏。 | Without paying any attention to my gate guard. |
| 上堂弄金徽， | He ascended the hall and played with the       |
|        | golden <i>hui</i> studs,                       |
| 深得太古意。 | And deeply attained the meaning of grand       |
|        | antiquity.                                     |
| 清風蕭蕭生， | Whistling, the clear wind arose;               |
| 修竹搖晚翠。 | Slender bamboos waved their evening emerald.   |
| 聲妙非可傳， | The marvelousness of the sound could not be    |
|        | conveyed in words;                             |
| 彈罷不復記。 | After the playing stopped, no one could        |
|        | remember the melody.                           |
| 明日告以行， | The next day he bid farewell;                  |
| 徒興江海思。 | In vain arousing my yearning for rivers and    |
|        | seas. <sup>275</sup>                           |

The image of Zunshi in this poem is very different from that of the *qin* monk in Zhang Ji’s poems. Zunshi was self-motivated; his sudden visit made Mei pleasantly surprised, and his departure left Mei melancholy. It was not Mei Yaocheng, the host, but Zunshi, the monk, who played the dominant role in the narrative. When Zunshi came, he paid no attention to the gate guard, directly ascended the hall and played the *qin*. In Buddhist texts, “ascended the hall” (*shangtang* 上堂) is a term for a formal dharma sermon. Here Mei Yaochen is using an interesting allusion, suggesting that Shi Zunshi could speak the dharma through his *qin* playing. The music that he played was so marvelous that it was neither able to be described in words, nor

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<sup>275</sup> QSS, 240.2786.

be remembered in the mind, possessing mysterious power that was similar to the transmission of dharma.

Ouyang Xiu's poem "Sending off *Qin* Monk Zhibai" ("Song qinseng Zhibai" 送琴僧知白) provides another example of the esteem contemporary literati showed to Zunshi. He writes:

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 吾聞夷中琴已久， | I have heard of Yizhong and his <i>qin</i> for a long time,  |
| 常恐老死無其傳。 | And I always worried that he might age and die without any descendent to whom to pass on his technique;  |
| 夷中未識不得見， | Not knowing him, I never got the chance to meet Yizhong;   |
| 豈謂今逢知白彈。 | How could I have known that now I am able to encounter Zhibai and listen to him playing the <i>qin</i> ? |
| 遺音彷彿尚可愛， | It resembles the sounds left by Yizhong and is rather loveable;  |
| 何況之子傳其全。 | Especially since Zhibai has passed on all of Yizhong's techniques.                                       |
| 孤禽曉警秋野露， | The lonely bird in the morning is startled by the dew in autumn field;                                   |
| 空澗夜落春岩泉。 | Into the empty stream at night falls the spring cavern water.  |
| 二年遷謫寓三峽， | For two years, I was demoted and temporary lived in the region of Three Gorges;                          |
| 江流無底山侵天。 | The river flowed bottomlessly and the mountains encroached upon the sky;                                 |
| 登臨探賞久不厭， | Climbing mountain and facing water, I was never tired of exploration and appreciation;                   |
| 每欲圖畫存於前。 | Each time I desire to paint such scenery so as to preserve them in front of me;                          |
| 豈知山高水深意， | How could I have known that such sentiments of high mountains and deep water—                            |
| 久以寫此朱絲絃。 | Would be put into music by strings made of red silk a long time later.                                   |
| 酒酣耳熱神氣王， | Mellow with drink, the spirit is high;   |
| 聽之為子心肅然。 | Listening to the <i>qin</i> tune, my heart turns solemn for you;   |
| 嵩陽山高雪三尺， | The Mountain of Songyang is high with three <i>chi</i> of snow;  |
| 有客擁鼻吟苦寒。 | There are guests holding their noses and reciting the "Poem of Bitter Coldness;"                         |

負琴北走乞其贈，  
持我此句為之先。

Carrying his *qin* to head to the north, all beg for his  
gifts;  
Who holds this poem of mine will be given the  
priority.<sup>276</sup>

In this poem, Ouyang Xiu praises the master hand of Zunshi by comparing his *qin* music to the art of painting and declares that it is able to capture the true meaning of high mountains and the deep sea. When Zunshi plays a piece of music about snow, the guests feels cold and cannot help rubbing their noses. In the end of the poem, Ouyang Xiu writes that when Zhibai carried his *qin* to head to the north, all who meet him will beg presents from him. The word “beg” (*qi 乞*) here implies Zunshi’s prestige and popularity among the literati circle, since everyone wants to have something from him and will even “beg” it from him. In the final line, Ouyang Xiu boasts of his unusually close relation with Zunshi, as who has this poem of Ouyang Xiu will be given consideration first.

The changing images of *qin* monks from the Six Dynasties to the Northern Song can be viewed as epitomizing the development of Buddhism in its close relations with literati culture during this period. Unlike the *qin* monks described by earlier authors, *qin* monks in the Song, especially Shi Yihai and Shi Zunshi, were no longer merely mentioned in passing. As a literati cultural pursuit, the *qin* became a part of their lives and shaped their identities as Buddhist monks. The various texts on them and their interactions with the literati showed that the *qin* monks in the Song were not only influenced by literati culture, but also played an active role in the construction of that culture.

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<sup>276</sup> QSS, 298.3746.

### III. The Stringless *Qin*: An Enigmatic Mode of Chan Expression

As mentioned in the previous section, Buddhism from early on had a tradition of using musical instruments as metaphors for its teachings. In the Northern Song period, influenced by literati culture, Chan monks started to use a new musical metaphor in their writings: the “stringless *qin*” (*wuxian qin* 無弦琴 or *meixian qin* 沒弦琴), which was borrowed from literary texts.

The origin of the “stringless *qin*” can be traced to “Biographies of Recluses” (“*Yin yi liezhuan*” 隱逸列傳), which was collected in the *History of the Liu Song Dynasty* (*Song shu* 宋書) by Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513). It records that “Tao Qian was not good at music, but he had a plain *qin* without any strings. Whenever he was drunk, he played it in order to convey his sentiments” 潛不解音聲，而蓄素琴一張，無弦，每有酒適，輒撫弄以寄其意。<sup>277</sup>

Tao Qian 陶潛 (ca. 365–427), also known as Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, was a renowned poet in the Six Dynasties period. He famously withdrew from civil service and lived most of his life in reclusion. The image of Tao Qian, who played an instrument that could not produce any physical sound but conveyed rich spiritual and philosophical aspirations, attracted the interest and admiration of many later authors, especially in the Song. As a devoted fan of Tao Qian, Su Shi mentions him and his stringless *qin* many times in his poetic collections.<sup>278</sup> In the second piece of “Three Poems in Reply to Reserve Department Director Cai, for Being Invited to Travel on West Lake” (“He Cai zhunlangzhong jianyao you xihu sanshou” 和蔡準郎中見邀遊西湖三首), he writes: “Do you not see how the magistrate of Pengze, who withdrew from his

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<sup>277</sup> *Song shu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 93.2288.

<sup>278</sup> For an examination of Su Shi’s favoring of Tao Qian, see Wendy Swartz, *Reading Tao Yuanming: Shifting Paradigms of Historical Reception (427–1900)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 191–194.



governmental post, had a *qin* with no strings and a cap full of wine. When he was drunk and desired to sleep, he would send his guests away so he could rest” 君不見拋官彭澤令，琴無弦，巾有酒，醉欲眠時遣客休。<sup>279</sup> Huang Tingjian also mentions a stringless *qin* in the poem “Sending off Chen Xiaoxian” (“Song Chen Xiaoxian” 送陳蕭縣): “Desiring to retain you by throwing the wheel linchpin into the well like Chen Zun/ was not as good as sending you the stringless *qin* of Magistrate Tao [Qian]. With wine one regrets that after we part the breeze will blow us sober/ only when the *qin* became stringless would he then see his mind” 欲留君以陳遵投轄之飲，不如送君以陶令無弦之琴。酒嫌別後風吹醒，琴為無弦方見心。<sup>280</sup> Huang’s poem shows a Chan influence, as “see the mind” (*jianxin* 見心) is a common Chan term for awakening. In both Su’s and Huang’s poems, to play a stringless *qin* represents Tao’s free and true spirit, unlimited by material restrictions. The stringless *qin* contributed to the Song authors’ representation of Tao Qian’s image as a reclusive figure who did not care in the least about worldly concerns and was always indulging in wine drinking and exploring his true nature. To imitate Tao Qian and play a stringless *qin* became part of Song literati’s self-fashioning in poetry as people who were not encumbered by vulgar concerns.

In the Song it was not only literati authors but also Buddhist monks themselves, especially those from the Chan School, who used the image of a stringless *qin* in their writings. By focusing on a form of enlightenment that was direct and unmediated, Chan portrayed itself in Song texts as having a special pedigree within Buddhism, as was suggested in the Chan’s classic

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<sup>279</sup> Tao Qian records that he once used his cap to drain wine. See *Song shu*, 93.2288.

<sup>280</sup> Chen Zun 陳遵 (fl. 1<sup>st</sup> c.) was a figure that appeared in the “Biographies of Knight-Errands” (“Youxia liezhuan” 遊俠列傳) in the *History of Han* (*Han Shu* 漢書). He used to throw the wheel linchpins of his guests into the well so as to retain them for a drink. See Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 92.3710.

characterization of itself as “a special transmission outside the scriptures” (*jiaowai biechuan* 教外別傳),<sup>281</sup> which did not rely on words and letters, but pointed directly to the human mind so that one might see the true nature and achieve Buddhahood. In contrast with other schools of Buddhism, Chan did not see enlightenment as something that could be accomplished either by studying canonical texts and commentaries or by cultivating or mastering a specific set of practices. On the contrary, those who wanted to achieve enlightenment should not be attached to any concepts or practices and simply allowed the inherent enlightened nature of the mind to manifest itself. To play a *qin* without strings symbolized a liberation from all physical and conceptual constraints that had enforced one’s ignorance about one’s true nature, and it was a liberation that did not require extensive study or training. It could be accomplished here and now, in the midst of one’s own day-to-day life.

The *Biographies of Eminent Monks compiled during the Song Dynasty* (*Song Gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳), completed in 982 by Shi Zanning 釋贊寧 (919–1001), records the teachings of Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠 (675–775), who was one of the five most prominent disciples of the Sixth Patriarch of Chan, Huineng 慧能 (638–713), and the personal teacher of the Tang emperors Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756–762) and Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779). On the occasion of giving a sermon in the imperial palace, he mentions a *qin* that could produce sound without being played: “the *qin* of the *asuras* [demigods] can resonate without being plucked.” 修羅之琴不撫而韻.<sup>282</sup> Although the *asuras*’ *qin* had strings, they did not have to pluck them to make sounds.

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<sup>281</sup> This expression is attributed to the founder of Chan, Bodhidharma, but dates from no earlier than the 10th century *Patriarch’s Hall Anthology* (*Zutang ji* 祖堂集). For one easy source, see Robert Buswell and Donald Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 386, s.v. “*jiaowai biechuan*.”

<sup>282</sup> Shi Zanning 釋贊寧, *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, T 50:206.0761a20.

*Essentials of the Linked Records of the Lamp Transmission (Liandeng huiyao 聯燈會要)*

compiled by Monk Wuming 悟明 (fl. 12<sup>th</sup> c.), is another Song Buddhist text that mentions the stringless *qin*. It records a conversation between Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788) and the layman Buddhist practitioner Pang:

Layman [Pang] asked Great Master Mazu: “The undimmed original person. Master, please lift your eyes.” Mazu immediately looked downwards. The layman said: “There is a kind of stringless *qin* that only you can play well.” Mazu immediately looked upwards. Pang paid his respects and Mazu returned to his sleeping quarters.

居士問馬大師。云：不昧本來人。請師高著眼。馬祖直下覷。士云：一種沒絃琴。唯師彈得妙。馬祖直上覷。士作禮。祖便歸方丈。<sup>283</sup>

The Layman Pang in the text was the famous Buddhist adherent, Pang Yun 龐蘊 (740–803). Mazu was an influential Chan abbot in the Tang dynasty and was from the Hongzhou lineage, which ultimately matured into the Linji school (Japanese: Rinzai). Without saying a word, Mazu only lifted his eyes and showed satisfaction when practitioner Pang compared his dharma to the stringless *qin*. From beginning to end, Mazu never spoke a word, but the movement of his eyes implied that he agreed that Pang’s metaphor truly captured his teaching of Chan.

Shi Yinfeng 釋隱峰 (707–806), a Chan monk who was a disciple of Mazu Daoyi, composed a deathbed verse mentioning a *qin* with only one string:

獨絃琴子為君彈，  
松柏長青不怯寒。

金礦相和性自別。

I play for you on a *qin* with a solitary string;  
The pine and cypress trees are evergreen and do not  
fear the cold weather.

The gold and the ore, although being in harmony,  
have different natures;

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<sup>283</sup> *Liandeng huiyao 聯燈會要*, X 79:1557.0055c06-10. This anecdote is also found in the *The Recorded Sayings of Layman Pang (Pang jushi yulu 龐居士語錄)*, X 1336:69.0131a19. For scholarship on and translation of *The Recorded Sayings of Layman Pang*, please see Ruth Fuller Sasaki, Yoshitaka Iriya, and Dana R. Fraser, trans., *A Man of Zen: The Recorded Sayings of Layman P’ang* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1971).

任向君前試取看。

Please feel free to take a look right in front of you.<sup>284</sup>

In this poem, the *qin* has only a single string, so it cannot produce sounds as a normal *qin* can. A *qin* with only one string evokes the stringless *qin* for its lack of enough strings to play real tunes. What the poet values is not the sound, but the freedom that is unbound by any constraints: efficacy without agency.

Since a stringless *qin* could not in fact produce a sound, it was also adopted by Chan masters in the Song to refer specifically to their practice of silence in seeking a profound understanding of Chan. As Dale Wright proposes in “The Discourse of Awakening: Rhetorical Practice in Classical Ch’an Buddhism,” there were various kinds of rhetorical practices of Chan, among which the rhetoric of silence was one of the most frequently used: “So important was the absence of discourse in Chan that silence soon became a sign or ‘saying’ on its own. Many Chan stories of ‘encounter dialogue’ describe how a particular meeting between two Chan masters reaches its climax in an expression of silence. Other narratives explicitly figure silence as an understandable response or answer to a question.”<sup>285</sup> In the metaphor of a stringless *qin*, strings are compared to words. Just as in some other traditional Buddhist similes for skillful means, such as the simile of the raft, there is no point in continuing to carry the raft once the journey has been completed and the raft’s function fulfilled. What matters in understanding *qin* music is not the sound but the true intent and meaning of the player. To abandon the strings is to discard speech; since speech is the vocalization of conceptualization, once speech is discarded, ineffable wisdom will be achieved.

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<sup>284</sup> *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T 50:2061.0847a19-20.

<sup>285</sup> Dale Wright, “The Discourse of Awakening: Rhetorical Practice in Classical Ch’an Buddhism,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 1 (1993): 30.

The *Discourse Records of Ancient Worthies* (*Guzunsu yulu* 古尊宿語錄), which was compiled by the Chan monk Zezangzhu 蹟藏主 (fl. 13<sup>th</sup> c.) in the Southern Song, is a compilation of the teachings of thirty-seven Chan masters from the Mid-Tang to the early Southern Song dynasty, mainly focusing on the development of the lineage of Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744). This text frequently mentions the stringless *qin*. The eighth fascicle of the *Discourse Records of Ancient Worthies* records the sermons and dialogues of Chan master Shoushan Shengnian 首山省念 (926–993), who was the eighth-generation successor to the sixth Chan patriarch Huineng 慧能 (638–713) and himself the fifth patriarch of the Linji school. In one conversation with his disciples, Shoushan was asked: “I have carried the stringless *qin* for a long time; master, please play a piece of music for me.” 久負無弦琴，請師彈一曲。 Shoushan replied: “There are no words that manifest the great way” 無言顯大道。<sup>286</sup> This dialogue suggests that the great Way did not rely on language to be made manifest, just as the *qin* did not rely on concrete sounds to be heard. “There are no words manifest the great way” appeals not only to the importance of immediacy but also to assertions about the limits of language and the ultimate irrelevance of reflection and thinking to the realization of truth.

There are also a number of poems composed during the Song dynasty mentioning the stringless *qin*, among which some were Buddhist *gāthās*. Shi Zhengjue 釋正覺 (1091–1157), also known as Hongzhi Zhengjue 宏智正覺, whose conception of silent illumination was of particular importance to the Caodong School of Chan Buddhism, in the “Two Hundred and Fifth *Gāthā*” 偈頌二百零五首, writes:

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<sup>286</sup> Zezangzhu 蹟藏主, *Guzunsu yulu* 古尊宿語錄, X 68:1315.0048a11.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>萬里西來坐少林，<br/>燈燈相續至如今。<br/>泥牛鬥里同歸海，<br/>玉線聯時妙契針。<br/>未墜綿綿吾祖緒，<br/>不忘切切老婆心。<br/>風前一弄無弦曲，<br/>會有叢林人賞音。</p> | <p>He [Bodhidharma] traveled ten-thousand <i>li</i> from the west to sit at Shaolin Temple,<sup>287</sup><br/>Lamp after lamp the dharma was continuously transmitted down to the present.<br/>Clay bulls fought and returned to the sea together,<sup>288</sup><br/>When jade threads were connected, it marvelously tallied with the needle.<br/>Not yet fallen, my ancestral career is long-lasting;<br/>I will not forget the urgent wish of the old lady.<sup>289</sup><br/>A tune by the stringless instrument before the wind,<br/>Will find its way to someone in the monastery who can appreciate the tone.<sup>290</sup></p> |
|--|--|

In this poem, Shi Hongzhi expresses his hope of continuing the lineage established by Bodhidharma. In the last two lines, he mentions that he would love to play a tune on a stringless instrument, while he is certain that there must be someone who will be able to understand it. In other words, the task that Shi Hongzhi feels obliged to achieve, which is to transmit and spread the teachings of Chan, is epitomized in the last two lines as playing a tune on an instrument that does not possess any strings.

Shi Zichun 釋子淳 (d. 1119), in one of the “Three Poems Sent to Attendant Officer Master Xiang” (“Ji Suishou Xiang dafu sanshou” 寄隨守向大夫三首), writes:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>無弦琴上有希聲，<br/>此遇知音作證明。<br/>不犯指端彈一曲，</p> | <p>On the stringless <i>qin</i> there was an inaudible sound;<br/>This was clear proof of meeting someone who knew the tone.<br/>There was no need to pluck a tune with one’s fingertips,</p> |
|---|---|

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<sup>287</sup> The first two lines refer to Bodhidharma, who traveled to China from India to transmit Buddhism and was regarded as the first patriarch of the Chan School.

<sup>288</sup> Clay bulls is a reference to a Chan term, which means that although one has done something, he leaves no trace about it, just as a bull made of clay instantly melts away when it is thrown into the sea. See the *Record Sayings of Master Yuanwu Foguo* (*Yuanwu Foguo chanshi yulu* 圓悟佛果禪師語錄), T 1997:47.7.747b6.

<sup>289</sup> Old lady refers to the famous Chan gong’an [Japanese: kōan] of the old lady of Wutaishan. See *Wudeng huiyuan*, X 80:1565.017.0351c09.

<sup>290</sup> *QSS*, 1780.19759.

碧琉璃界月三更。

In the realm of green beryl, the moon was just in in the third watch.<sup>291</sup>

One who knows the tone means an intimate friend by extension. The *qin*'s silence is valued as a state of having someone who truly understands its philosophy. To play a tune is not as good as not playing, which will spontaneously lead to the state of enlightenment that resembles the full moon at midnight, when the third watch is struck.

Influenced by Chan monks, the Song literati circle also incorporated Chan ideas involving this image of the stringless *qin*. It was no longer solely associated with and informed by the image of Tao Qian, but referred to Chan Buddhism as well. For example, Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011–1077), a philosopher and poet influential in the development of New-Confucianism, writes in the poem, “Ballad of Cleansing the Mind” (“Xi xin yin” 洗心吟):

人多求洗身，  
殊不求洗心。  
洗身去塵垢，  
洗心去邪淫。

塵垢用水洗，  
邪淫非能淋。  
必欲去心垢，  
須彈無弦琴。

Most people seek to cleanse their bodies,  
But few seek to cleanse their minds.  
Cleansing one's body removes dust and dirt.  
Cleansing one's mind removes perversity  
and depravity.  
Dust and dirt can be washed away with  
water,  
But not so perversity and depravity.  
One who perforce wishes to remove the dirt  
in his mind,  
Must play the *qin* without strings.<sup>292</sup>

In this poem, the stringless *qin* functions as a tool for people to clean their hearts so as to attain inner purification. Here the stringless *qin* is no longer solely an instrument that formed part of literati self-fashioning, but under Shao Yong's brush becomes a tool that has a practical function. It helps people to clean away evil and perverse thoughts in an effort to attain inner purification.

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<sup>291</sup> QSS, 1214.13848.

<sup>292</sup> QSS, 378.4651.

The function of the stringless *qin* in this poem is similar to its function in Chan texts—it is a tool that can help people reach the state of enlightenment.

The Southern Song poet, Wen Tianxiang, in “Matching the Rhymes with Zhu Zhupo” (“He Zhu Songpo” 和朱松坡) writes: “Carefully examining the ineffable Samādhi of Chan; quietly facing a *qin* that has no strings.” 細參不語禪三昧，靜對無弦琴一張。<sup>293</sup> The stringless *qin* here is placed in parallel with the Samādhi (concentration) of Chan. To experience Samādhi, one needs thorough penetration that is free from conceptualization. Similarly, playing the stringless *qin* also involves no words and even no actions. Reflecting on the Samādhi of Chan and facing the stringless *qin* both helps Wen to experience life with meditative insight.

To conclude this section, the emergence of the new metaphor of a “stringless *qin*” not only demonstrates that Chan monks during this period were largely influenced by literati culture, it also manifests their endeavor to use their cultural pursuits as tools to convey Chan philosophy and teachings. The literati poetry and prose that employed the expression of a stringless *qin* represented this instrument in complex fashion. Whereas writers in the Tang or earlier wrote about a stringless *qin* solely in terms of Tao Qian’s influence, Song writers deployed this image in multiple ways. Song examples incorporated ideas derived not only from the image’s original literary usage but also from Buddhist texts that used the stringless *qin* as a metaphor. While the earlier image of a stringless *qin* helped the literati to fashion themselves as reclusive figures like Tao Qian, the later image of the stringless *qin* functioned more as a tool or a rhetorical device that could help people to purify their minds and achieve enlightenment. This change grew out of developments taking place within Chan Buddhist discussions of this term that afterward expanded to literati circles. As such, it was a manifestation of the interaction between the two.

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<sup>293</sup> QSS, 3596.42969.



#### IV. The Broken *Qin*

Besides a stringless *qin*, another poetic image of the *qin* imbued with Buddhist philosophy also appeared in Song texts: the “broken *qin*.” This “broken *qin*” was not a real *qin*, but a special *qin* with thirteen strings that appeared to Su Shi in a dream. As one of many *qin*-enthusiasts in the literati circles of the Northern Song dynasty, Su wrote about his experiences of playing and listening to the *qin* in literary compositions, and he often associated these experiences with religious ideas, especially Buddhist thought.

Buddhism pervaded the life of Su Shi. As a child, he first encountered the religion while hearing his mother chant sutras. In Hangzhou, he came to know and befriended several monks such as Shi Zhongshu 釋仲殊 (fl. 12<sup>th</sup> c.) and Shi Weilin 釋維琳 (d. 1119). During his exile, he found companionship and shelter in Buddhist monasteries. Even on his deathbed, his friend, the monk Weilin, stayed with him until he passed away. This lifelong association with Buddhism and Buddhists profoundly affected Su Shi’s experience, and many of his literary works express Buddhist ideas.<sup>294</sup> Su’s “Broken *Qin* Poem with a Preface” (“Poqin shi bing yin” 破琴詩並引) is complicated by its association with a number of different Buddhist motifs.

In the preface, Su Shi discusses how he came to write this poetic piece:

There is a story from former times: Fang Guan administered the Lu clan in the Kaiyuan period [713-741]. He went out with a Daoist priest named Xing Hepu.<sup>295</sup> They passed Xiakou

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<sup>294</sup> For scholarly works that focus on Su Shi and Buddhism, see Beata Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited: Buddhism in the Life and Writings of Su Shih* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994); Ronald Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*, chapter 6; Wei Qipeng 魏啟鵬, “Su Shi chanwei ba ti” 蘇軾禪味八題, in *Dongpo shi luncong* 東坡詩論叢, ed. Su Shi yanjiu xuehui, Vol. 2 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1983); Liu Naichang 劉乃昌, “Lun fo lao sixiang dui Su Shi wenxue de yingxiang” 論佛老文學對蘇軾文學的影響, in *Su Shi wenxue lunji* 蘇軾文學論集 (Ji’nan: Qilu shushe, 1982). An extensive work on how Su Shi’s poetic works represented the influence by the philosophy of Chan Buddhism has been carried out by Korean scholar Pak Yǒng-Hwan 樸永煥 in his *Su Shi chanshi yanjiu* 蘇軾禪詩研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1995).

<sup>295</sup> Fang Guan 房琯 (697–763), with the courtesy name Cilü 次律, used to serve as the chancellor during the reigns of Emperor Xuanzong and Emperor Suzong. Xing Hepu 邢和璞 (fl. 8<sup>th</sup> c.) was a renowned Daoist priest at Fang Guan’s time. He was famous for fortune telling, and could save people from severe sickness or revive people from death. Stories about him are recorded in *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*. See *Taiping guangji*, 13b–14a.

village, entered a deserted Buddhist temple, and sat under an ancient pine tree. Hepu asked someone to dig in the ground to retrieve a jar buried in the ground that contained a letter that Lou Shide had sent to Chan Master Yong. He smiled and asked Fang Guan: “You certainly remember this?” Fang Guan thereupon was lost in thought, realizing that in his previous life he was Master Yong.<sup>296</sup> My old friend Liu Ziyu treasured a painting [of Fang Guan and Xing Hepu] and claimed that it was an imitation of a Tang painting by Song Fugu.

舊說：房瑄開元中嘗宰盧氏，與道士邢和璞出游，過夏口村，入廢佛寺，坐古松下。和璞使人鑿地，得甕中所藏婁師德與永禪師書，笑謂瑄曰：「頗憶此耶？」瑄因悵然，悟前生之為永師也。故人柳子玉寶此畫，云是唐本，宋復古所臨者。

On the nineteenth day of the third month of the sixth year of the Yuanyou period (April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1091), when I was on my way back to the capital from Hangzhou, I lodged near Wusong River and had a dream that Venerable Zhongshu brought a *qin* and visited me.<sup>297</sup> When [Zhongshu] played the *qin*, it had a spectacular sound. I looked at it closely and saw that it was quite damaged and that it had thirteen strings. Just when I couldn't help sighing, Zhongshu said: “Although it is broken, it can be mended.” I asked: “How to deal with the thirteen strings?” Shu didn't reply but recited a poem, which reads: “The measure, number, form and name are originally by chance, and the broken *qin* now has thirteen strings. If in this life you will be able to meet Xing Hepu, just then you will believe the sound of the *zheng* from the Qin is actually the Resonating Spring.”<sup>298</sup> In the dream I clearly understand what Zhongshu was talking about. After I woke up, I forgot it. The next day when I took a nap, I once again dreamed that Zhongshu came to explain his previous words and recited his previous poem again. Just when I was startled awake, Zhongshu arrived, so I realized it was not a dream. I asked him about this, but he did not know anything.

元祐六年三月十九日，予自杭州還朝，宿吳淞江，夢長老仲殊挾琴過予，彈之有異聲，就視，琴頗損，而有十三弦。予方嘆惜不已，殊曰：「雖損，尚可修。」曰：「奈十三弦何？」殊不答，誦詩云：「度數形名本偶然，破琴今有十三弦。此生若遇邢和璞，方信秦箏是響泉。」予夢中了然識其所謂，既覺而忘之。明日晝寢復夢，殊來理前語，再誦其詩，方驚覺而殊適至，意其非夢也。問之殊，蓋不知。

In the sixth month of that year I saw Ziyu's son Ziwen in the capital. I asked him for the painting and composed a poem and inscribed it on the painting along with what I had dreamt.

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<sup>296</sup> Lou Shide 婁師德 (630–699), with the courtesy name Zongren 宗仁, was a government official in the Tang dynasty. It is not certain who the Master Yong refers to in this text, and probably refers to Zhiyong 智永 (fl. 6–7<sup>th</sup> c.), who was the seventh-generation grandson of Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303–361) and also was a renowned calligrapher. Zhiyong was especially famous for his calligraphic work *Cursive Style Thousand Character Classic* (*Caoshu qianzi wen* 草書千字文).

<sup>297</sup> Zhongshu was a monk who was remembered for his expertise in literary composition, especially the *ci* lyrics. He was a good friend of Su Shi.

<sup>298</sup> According to Li Chuo 李綽 (d.862), in the Tang, “Resonating Spring” was the name of a famous *qin* made from young branches of paulownia trees. See Li Chuo, *Shangshu gushi* 尚書故實, in *Siku quanshu* 862, 471b.

Ziyu's name was Jin, and he was good at composing poems and writing semi-cursive calligraphy. Fugu's name was Di, and his landscape painting and paintings of plants and flowers were incomparable in his time. Zhongshu used to be a scholar, and he abandoned his family to study Buddhism. They were liberated and lacked attachment, and were all marvelous literati.<sup>299</sup>

是歲六月，見子玉之子子文京師，求得其畫，乃作詩並書所夢其上。子玉名瑾，善作詩及行草書。復古名迪，畫山水草木，蓋妙絕一時。仲殊本書生，棄家學佛，通脫無所著，皆奇士也。

This preface is intriguing in the way it includes several layers of narrative each with their own implications, all correlated with each other through a common symbol, the *qin*. The anecdote of Fang Guan and Xing Hepu is recorded in detail in *Miscellaneous records of Emperor Ming* (*Minghuang zalu* 明皇雜錄), a collection of stories about Emperor Tang Xuanzong 唐玄宗 (r. 712–755) compiled by the late Tang period scholar Zheng Chuhui 鄭處誨 (fl. 9<sup>th</sup> c.) and is included in the *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*. In the anecdote, Fang visited a temple with a Daoist priest named Xing Hepu, discovered a letter in a jar, and realized that in his past life he was Chan Master Yong. After recounting Fang Guan's story, Su Shi continues to record his own experiences with a broken *qin*. He describes how he came to see the painting and had a strange dream of his friend Monk Zhongshu bringing in a *qin* with thirteen strings. He was surprised by its special construction, as in the Northern Song the construction of the *qin* was quite fixed as having only seven strings. The instrument that had thirteen strings was a *zheng*, which was regarded as coming from the western Qin region and was not seen as an instrument normally played by central Chinese people. Although in appearance the *qin* resembled a *zheng*, it produced spectacular *qin* sounds that made Su Shi bemoan its brokenness. In the dream, Monk Zhongshu recited a poem to answer Su Shi's question on how to make use of the broken *qin*. He said measure, number, form, and name are all matters of chance, implying that the form and name of

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<sup>299</sup> Feng Yingliu 馮應榴, ed. and annot., *Su Shi shiji hezhu* 蘇軾詩集合注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001), 33.1684.

*qin* and *zheng* were not fixed but randomly assigned. He then remarked that if in this life Su would be able to meet Xing Hepu, who had revealed to Fang Guan the secrets of his past life, he would know that the strange *zheng*-shaped *qin* was in fact the “Resonating Spring,” which was a renowned *qin* in the Tang.

When Su Shi woke from his dream, he composed a poem on the broken *qin* he had seen in his dream. It reads:

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| 破琴雖未修， | The broken <i>qin</i> , although not mended;                        |
| 中有琴意足。 | In it the meaning of the <i>qin</i> is sufficient.                  |
| 誰云十三弦， | Who will say that the thirteen strings                              |
| 音節如佩玉。 | Are able to produce sounds and rhythms like jade pendants?          |
| 新琴空高張， | The new <i>qin</i> in vain is tautly strung;                        |
| 弦聲不附木。 | The sounds of strings do not adhere to the wood.                    |
| 宛然七弦箏， | It is just as a <i>zheng</i> with seven strings;                    |
| 動與世好逐。 | At every turn, it chases after the fashion of the world.            |
| 陋矣房次律， | How coarse Fang Cilü was!   |
| 因循墮流俗。 | He followed the trend and fell into mundane custom.                 |
| 懸知董庭蘭， | Then it can be known that Dong Tinglan                              |
| 不識無弦曲。 | Did not recognize the tune played by the stringless. <sup>300</sup> |

In this poem, Su Shi describes how the broken *qin* contrasts with the new *qin* in terms of both appearance and sound. Toward the end of the poem, Su Shi makes an analogy between the new *qin* and Fang Guan and Dong Tinglan 董庭蘭 (fl. 695–765). According to the *Old Book of Tang* (*Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書), Dong Tinglan was a renowned *qin* player during the reign eras of Kaiyuan and Tianbao, and he was blamed for causing Fang Guan to be demoted. Since Dong excelled at *qin* playing, Fang Guan not only invited Dong to be his retainer, but also asked Dong to play for his guests whenever he held a banquet. Reckoning on the favor of Fang, Dong started

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<sup>300</sup> *Su Shi shiji hezhu*, 33.1685–1686.

to take bribes from those who wanted to meet Fang in person. As a result, he was reported by a critic-advisor to the throne. When Fang Guan tried to defend Dong in front of the emperor, he was seriously scolded and demoted.<sup>301</sup> In the poem, Su Shi criticized Fang as a man who knew only how to follow the trendy fashions of the world and who therefore failed in his career. Su also describes Dong as a musician who was not able to understand the tune played by the stringless instrument, which conveyed deep philosophical meaning beyond the physical sounds.

The Qing dynasty scholar, Liu Xizai 劉熙載 (1813-1881), in *Synopsis on Art* (*Yigai* 藝概) remarks: “Dongpo’s poetry was good at emptying all existing things and was also good at creating being out of non-being. His spiritual impulse was in fact derived from Chan awakening.” 東坡詩善於空諸所有，又善於無中生有，機括實自禪悟中得來。<sup>302</sup> Consistent with Liu’s remarks, “Broken *Qin* Poem with Preface” is imbued with Su’s awakening and addresses with philosophical intensity the different motifs that it touches on, such as the reincarnation of sentient beings and the impermanence of name and form.

The story of Fang Guan’s past life manifests the Buddhist theory of the reincarnation of sentient beings. The Tang dynasty Chan master Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (784–841), who was the fifth patriarch of the Huayan school, dealt with the subject of the basis of human existence in his work, *Origin of Humanity by the Huayan School* (*Huayan yuanren lun* 華嚴原人論). He criticized Confucian and Daoist ideas on the basis of human existence, stating that human existence did not come from *qi*:

In addition, if life is an endowment of *qi* and suddenly comes to existence, and death is the dissipation of *qi* and sudden disappearance, then what are ghosts and spirits? Furthermore, if in the world there are those who can examine their previous lives and recall the past, then it is

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<sup>301</sup> See Liu Xu 劉昫, *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 111.3323.

<sup>302</sup> Liu Xizai 劉熙載, *Yi gai* 藝概 (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1969), p. 10.

clear that the continuation of lives are not an endowment of *qi* that suddenly comes into existence.<sup>303</sup>

又若生是稟氣而歎有，死是氣散而歎無，則誰為鬼神乎？且世有鑒達前生追憶往事，則知生前相續非稟氣而歎有。

In Su Shi's poem, he describes Fang Guan's previous life as a Buddhist master. The reincarnation of Chan Master Yong in Fang Guan corresponds with the "reincarnation" of the renowned Tang dynasty *qin* "Resonating Spring" as a broken strangely-shaped *qin*.

Importantly, both the preface and poem develop around one paradox: the name and the form of the "broken *qin*" do not accord with each other. The interrelationship of name and form has inspired prolonged discussions in Chinese history. One of earliest examples may date back to the Warring States period text, *Yin Wenzi* 尹文子, which belonged to the School of Names. Yin Wen argued that since name (*ming* 名) was used in regulating things, the name itself needed to be analyzed first. He indicated that the natural or physical form and condition of things (*xing* 形) was the source of names. Names, when they came into being, became means and standards of identifying and judging things, and the conflicts between *xing* and *ming* came from the misuse of names, which was mainly due to either social-political disorder or semantic misunderstanding.<sup>304</sup> The topic of name and form also was discussed by other philosophical schools, although at times the relationship under discussion is between *ming* and *shi* 實 (essence). Mohists argued that it

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<sup>303</sup> T 58, 1032:0746c16-0747a08. For the translation of this text, see Peter N. Gregory, *Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity: Translation of Tsung-mi's Yüan jen lun* (Honolulu: Kuroda Institute, University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), pp. 43–62.

<sup>304</sup> Zhenbin Sun, *Language, Discourse, and Praxis in Ancient China* (Berlin; Heidelberg: Springer, 201), p. 23.

should not be that the name that determined the essence, but vice versa.<sup>305</sup> Confucius also emphasized the importance of rectifying names in accordance with reality.<sup>306</sup>

For Su Shi, however, it was not *xing* that determined *ming*. The thirteen-stringed *qin* in his dream, although it resembled a *zheng* in shape, was in fact named a *qin* and produced the sounds of the *qin*. Su's discussion of the *qin* and the *zheng* might remind readers of Bai Juyi's poem on the abandoned *qin*: "I will not decline to play it for you; But even if I play, no one will listen. What has caused it to be so? The Qiang *di* and the Qin *zheng*."<sup>307</sup> As was mentioned in the previous chapter, during the Tang dynasty, imperial families favored instruments brought from Central Asia. Emperor Xuan of Tang, in particular, favored instruments such as the drum and *zheng*, which could produce louder sounds and were more suitable for playing in musical ensembles. This was one reason the *qin* lost its popularity during this period. As a result, authors in the Tang sometimes wrote about a discarded *qin* and used it as a poetic metaphor to describe how a talented man was not recognized. In these poems, authors usually blamed the prevalence of the *zheng* for causing people to abandon the *qin*. In the "Abandoned *Qin*," Bai expresses his sympathy toward the *qin*: although it had sounds passed down from antiquity, it was no longer in favor because of the degradation of common taste and if had been superseded by other instruments, such as the *zheng*.

In Bai's poem, the distinction between the *qin* and the *zheng* is clear. In Su Shi's dream, however, the boundaries between the *zheng* and the *qin* are quite blurred. The *qin* that had thirteen strings strongly resembled a *zheng*, but was it indeed a *qin*, or a *zheng*? If it was a *qin*, its

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<sup>305</sup> See Wu Yujiang 吳毓江, annot., *Mozi jiaozhu* 墨子校注, ed. Sun Qizhi 孫啓治 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), 19.100.

<sup>306</sup> Mao Zishui 毛子水, *Lun yu jinzhu jinyi* 論語今注今譯 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2009), 13.232.

<sup>307</sup> *QTS*, 424.4656.

shape violated the basic construction of the *qin* because of its extra strings. If it was a *zheng*, why was it called a *qin* and how could it produce sounds that resembled those of a *qin*? Compared with the new *qin*, Su Shi favored the thirteen-stringed *qin*; in spite of its peculiar construction and broken condition, its sounds conveyed sufficient meanings of the *qin*, and it was therefore called a *qin*. The new *qin*, although it had the shape of the *qin*, was indeed a *zheng* that pursued the fashion of the world.

Similar to the broken *qin* in Su's poem, Fang Guan's identity is also indistinct and hazy. Was he really Fan Guan or the Chan Master Yong? According to Wang Shipeng's 王十朋 (1112-1171) exegesis, in the poem Su Shi compares Fang Guan with the new *qin* and associates his previous life with the thirteen-stringed *qin*: "The broken *qin* had thirteen strings but possessed sounds and rhythms resembling jade pendants. It functioned as a metaphor for Fang Guan's pure body in a previous life, when he was Chan Master Yong. The new *qin* that was tautly strung, on the contrary, was a *zheng*. It functioned as a metaphor for when Fang lost his previous body and fell into the dust of rank and fame" 破琴之十三弦而音節如佩玉，則房次律前生清淨之身為永禪師之譬也。新琴高張反箏耳，則房次律失前身而墮功名塵埃之中之譬也。<sup>308</sup> Fang Guan is considered coarse because he lost his pure body in a previous life and fell into a pattern of dusty mundane custom. As Su Shi expresses through Zhongshu's voice in the dream, "measure, number, form, and name are originally by chance," nothing is fixed, and everything is driven by causes and conditions. The fluid nature of the *qin* and *zheng* as well as Fang Guan's identity manifest the idea that name and form might be similarly contingent and impermanent.

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<sup>308</sup> *Su Shi shiji hezhu*, 33.1685.



The other poem by Su Shi, “Written after the Broken *Qin* Poem, with a Preface” 書破琴

詩後並序, also concerns the broken *qin* and manifests a similar theme of the impermanence of physical form. It reads:

I composed the “Broken *Qin* Poem,” and sought the painting of Xing Hepu by Song Fugu from Liu Zhongyuan. Zhongyuan asked Wang Jinqing to copy this painting to a short scroll and named it *Painting of Xing and Fang’s Enlightenment in a Previous Life*. I compose a poem and inscribe it on the painting.

余作《破琴詩》，求得宋復古畫邢和璞於柳仲遠，仲遠以此本托王晉卿臨寫為短軸，名為《邢房悟前生圖》，作詩題其上。

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 此身何物不堪為，<br>逆旅浮雲自不知。 | This body, whatever can it not become?<br>In the traveling lodge, the floating clouds do not<br>know themselves.                 |
| 偶見一張閑故紙，<br>便疑身是永禪師。 | Accidentally seeing a random piece of old paper,<br>He then had a suspicion that he had been Chan<br>Master Yong. <sup>309</sup> |

Both of the first two lines in this poem allude to *Zhuangzi*: The mention in the opening line that this body could be turned into anything in the world corresponds to the chapter “The Great and Venerable Teacher” (“Da zongshi” 大宗师) from *Zhuangzi*. In this chapter, the fictional figure Master Lai is sick and about to die. Instead of feeling sorrowful for him, his friend Master Li leans on the doorway and says: “How marvelous is creation! What is he going to make of you next? Where is it going to send you? Will he make you into a rat’s liver? Will he make you into a bug’s arm?” 偉哉造化，又將奚以汝為，將奚以汝適以汝為鼠肝乎？以汝為蟲臂乎？<sup>310</sup> The physical body of human beings is regarded as temporary, perishable, and prone to transformation after death. At the end of this passage, Master Lai expresses his willingness to become anything

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<sup>309</sup> *Su Shi shiji hezhu*, 33.1686.

<sup>310</sup> Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Zhuangzi jijie* 莊子集解, ed. Shen Xiaohuan 沈嘯寰 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), pp. 64–65. Here I adopt the translation of Burton Watson with slight revision. See *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p.85.

that the Creator assigns him to be, and describes this life as sleep and death as waking from the dream. The word “inn” (*nilü* 逆旅) alludes to the chapter “Knowledge Wandered North” (“Zhi bei you” 知北遊) of *Zhuangzi*. In the passage, Confucius says to his disciple Yan Hui, “Alas, the men of this world are no more than travelers, stopping now at this inn, now at that, all of them run by ‘things.’ They know the things they happen to encounter, but not those that they have never encountered” 悲夫，世人直為物逆旅耳！夫知遇而不知所不遇，知能而不能所不能。<sup>311</sup> The life of a human being in this passage is compared with a journey, and a person’s body is compared with an inn, in which one lodges only for a short time.

Another important image in this poem is the floating cloud, an image that appears frequently in Buddhist texts. In the *Dasheng ru lengqie jing* 大乘入楞伽經, for example, the Buddha says: “Whatever is created by the illusions, mantras and mechanisms are like floating clouds, dreams, and flashes of lighting. Observing this world, it has always been so, so one should eradicate forever the three consequences” 幻呪機所作，浮雲夢電光；觀世恒如是，永斷三相續。<sup>312</sup> Together with other images that symbolize impermanence, such as dreams and lighting, floating clouds function as a metaphor that Buddha required his believers to reflect on so as to realize the evanescence of human life and thereupon attain enlightenment. A passage in the *Weimojie suoshuo jing* 維摩詰所說經 also describes the body as impermanent that resembles a floating cloud: “This body is just like floating cloud, which changes and disappears in an instant” 是身如浮雲，須臾變滅。<sup>313</sup> A passage in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* 大方廣佛華嚴經

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<sup>311</sup> *Zhuangzi jijie*, p. 195. Here I also use the translation by Burton Watson. Please see *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 247.

<sup>312</sup> T 16, 672:0030601c07. Here I use the translation by D. T. Suzuki. See *The Lankavatara Sutra* (Lulu.com, 2011). “Three consequences” are (a) the worlds with their kingdoms, which arise from the karma of existence; (b) all beings, who arise out of the five skandhas; (c) rewards and punishments, which arise out of moral karma causes.

<sup>313</sup> T 14, 0475:0539b10.

mentions that the Buddha's own body is just like floating clouds: "Tranquil extinction is signless and non-manifesting; one sees that the form of the Buddha's body is like floating clouds" 寂滅無相無照現，見佛身相如浮雲。<sup>314</sup> In all these texts, the physical body or the life of people is regarded as resembling drifting clouds, which change constantly and vanish easily. The floating clouds, together with the previous image of the inn, express the impermanence of human life.

## Conclusion

The development of Buddhism in the Northern Song dynasty, especially Chan Buddhism, contributed to the efflorescence of communication and interaction between literati and Buddhist monks. The *qin*, traditionally regarded as an indispensable companion of literati, gradually attracted the attention of monks and became part of their extra-religious cultural pursuits. This led to the emergence of a lineage of monks who were excellent *qin* players in this period. They earned praise and even admiration from literati circles. At the same time, the *qin* also started to appear in Buddhist texts in the form of an instrument that lacked any strings. This image was used as a metaphor for the spiritual freedom that transcended all conventional bounds. Fondness for the *qin* in both actual practice and in its theoretical applications show how Buddhist monks during this period adopted the *qin* not only to interact with literati, but also as a means of conveying their own sense of identity and their philosophical ideas.

Influenced both by the literary tradition and by Buddhist philosophy, the broken *qin* under Su Shi's brush evoked the stringless *qin*. Both instruments were deficient in their physical

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<sup>314</sup> T 9, 278:0399a27.

form, while still being able to convey meanings that were beyond the limitations of their form.

As Su Shi states in his “*Qin Poem*” (“*Qin shi*” 琴詩):

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 若言琴上有琴聲，<br>放在匣中何不鳴？ | If one says a <i>qin</i> 's sound derives from the <i>qin</i> ,<br>Why is it that the strings do not sing when it<br>is in its case? |
| 若言聲在指頭上，<br>何不於君指上聽？ | If one says sound lies in the fingers,<br>Why is there no sound emanating from your<br>fingers? <sup>315</sup>                       |

Neither strings nor fingers produce the *qin* sound. Rather, the true sound of the *qin* is produced beyond any material or physical forms. With the *qin*, the lives and thoughts of Song literati and Buddhist monks were intertwined.

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<sup>315</sup> *Su Shi shiji hezhu*, 21.1103.

## Coda

The fondness of Chinese literati for the *qin* can be dated back to the pre-Qin period, when it was crystallized in the expression in the *Book of Rites* that “literati should not cast aside their *qin* and *se* for no reason” 士無故不撤琴瑟,<sup>316</sup> with the corresponding implication that the *qin* was a *sine qua non* in the life of a Confucian scholar. As an instrument that was played in musical ensembles in various formal occasions and which appeared in ancestral temples, court, and banquets, the *qin* was also regarded as playing a key role in the self-cultivation of early Confucian scholars. Starting from the Han and the Wei-Jin periods, it was associated with literati figures such as Cai Yong and Xi Kang and started to be played in more private settings, such as in literati studios or small gatherings of friends. In the Tang dynasty, poets such as Bai Juyi constructed the *qin* as a literati pursuit symbolizing high culture and transcendental joy.

It was not until the Song dynasty though, that the favor literati felt for the *qin* came together with connoisseurship and collecting. The flourishing of the market economy and circulation of a plethora of cultural products and artifacts during this time also turned the *qin* into a commodity. Just like ancient bronze vessels, stele inscriptions and paintings, *qin* instruments also came to be prized by literati involved in collecting and appreciating. It became a vogue to own a *qin*, marking the difference of literati from other social groups. Due to the cult of antiquarianism, instruments made by famous craftsmen of earlier periods, especially those made by the Lei family during the Tang dynasty, were treasured by Song literati. Owning a *qin* and being able to play it demonstrated one’s musical competence, while the ability to choose an authentic antique *qin* from the throng of fakes required knowledge of historical chronology,

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<sup>316</sup> Liji Zhengyi, 4.140.

calligraphic style, philology, and artwork, a broad cultural competence highly prized among literati. Because *qin* connoisseurship depended upon an ability to assess both the *qin*'s materiality and its historicity, it demonstrated this competence and helped literati consolidate their standing in society.

During this period, the ancient notion that literary writings spoke of what was intently on the mind (*shi yan zhi* 詩言志) was extended to cover the appreciation of music and particularly spread to the art of the *qin*. A number of Northern Song literati played an important role in the effort to revive music of the Confucian tradition, and a significant part of their effort was devoted to classicizing the *qin*, associating it with sages of the Confucian tradition, and applying the standards of the Zhou dynasty's ideal music to define and describe the *qin*'s aesthetics. For instance, throughout his life, Fan Zhongyan loved only the tune "Treading Upon the Frost"; he identified with the virtues, particularly filial piety and loyalty, represented by the figure Boqi associated with the tune, and therefore derived his own sobriquet ("Frost-Treader Fan") from this tune; Ouyang Xiu raised the status of the *qin* to unprecedented heights, assigning *qin*-playing a role as important as that of reading classical texts in the Confucian tradition; Su Shi, in the poem "Listening to Hangzhou Monk Weixian Playing the *Qin*," described the *qin* as an instrument that retains the instrumentation of early ceremonial music; Zhu Xi incorporated his philosophical ideas to frame the conception of the *qin*, holding that the supreme regulative principle of human morality was good and that *qin*-playing would help one achieve clarity of mind and purity of heart by stilling evil thoughts and inappropriate desires. These writers' fondness for the *qin* served as an outlet for personal ideas and a vehicle for self-expression. Their passion toward the *qin* was not only the spontaneous impulse of a particular nature, but a purposeful self-fashioning and a studied act of self-cultivation in accordance with cultural and historical changes.

The *qin* also played a crucial role in the interaction and interrelationship between literati and religious practitioners in the Song. The efflorescence of communication and interaction between literati and Buddhist monks and Daoist priests during this period made the *qin*, which had started to emerge as an indispensable companion of literati, an important extra-religious cultural pursuit for these religious practitioners. The images of stringless *qin* and broken *qin* were used as metaphors for the spiritual freedom that transcended all conventional bounds. Fondness for the *qin* in both actual practice and in its theoretical applications show how Buddhist monks during this period adopted the *qin* not only to interact with literati, but also as a means of conveying their own sense of identity and their philosophical ideas.

Literati in the Song also focused on their intimate associations with the *qin* in their everyday life. Ouyang Xiu used the *qin* as a memory cue and biographical object in constructing his memories of exile in Yiling and Chuzhou, and he fashioned himself as a literatus who collected the *qin*, played the *qin*, listened to the *qin*, and grew old with the *qin*. Embedded in the context of the reclusive pleasures and idealized life style associated with the *qin*, the particular life histories of Ouyang Xiu and of the *qin* that he valued are so thoroughly intertwined that they cannot be disentangled.

Ouyang Xiu's and other Song writers' self-fashioning as keen *qin* fans and connoisseurs had a far-reaching influence on later generations. For instance, such influences are particularly clear in the case of a Yuan dynasty literatus, Yelü Chucai 耶律楚材 (1190 - 1244), who was a statesman of Khitan ethnicity but became a vigorous adviser and administrator of the early Mongol Empire. He fashioned himself as a Confucian scholar who took the *qin* as his daily accoutrement, and even described himself as having an addiction to or obsession with (*pi* 癖)

*qin* playing.<sup>317</sup> For example, in the poem “Improving in my Qin-playing on a Winter Night, I Clumsily Composed Thirty Rhymes to Present to Lan” (“Dongye tanqin po you suode luandao zhuoyu sanshi yun yi youzi lan” 冬夜彈琴頗有所得亂道拙語三十韻以遺猶子蘭), he writes: “I have an addiction (*pi*) to the *qin* and am not fond of common silk or bamboo music. From a very young age I set my mind on the *qin*, and since reaching adulthood I have been even more diligent in learning it” 湛然有琴癖，不好凡絲竹。兒時已存心，壯年學愈篤。<sup>318</sup> In four lines, Yelü Chucai describes how he started to develop a single-minded fixation with the *qin*, which resonates with Ouyang Xiu’s “Account of Three *Qin*” in the way that both authors stated that starting in their youth they were not fond of any music but *qin* music. In another poem, Yelü Chucai describes how he loves *qin* playing: “Amidst those sounds of emerald jade is the song ‘Walking under the Moonlight’; I play it again and again and never get tired of it. No matter how other people make fun of me, saying that I have an addiction to the *qin*, I play the fool and do not listen to them” 碧玉聲中步月歌，彈來彈去不嫌多。從教人笑成琴癖，老子佯呆不管他。<sup>319</sup> *Pi* suggests a self-aware excessiveness and imperviousness, as Yelü Chucai expresses indifference about how people around him joked about his passion. The Song fondness for *qin* collecting and connoisseurship also influenced Yelü Chucai. His favorite *qin*, named “Spring Thunder” (*Chunlei* 春雷), was made by the Lei family and had been in the collection of Emperor Huizong of the Song. He favored this *qin* and regarded it as his most treasured possession:

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<sup>317</sup> Judith Zeitlin, in “The Petrified Heart: Obsession in Chinese Literature, Art, and Medicine,” explains that the Chinese term *pi* gained popularity among literati in late imperial China, and is charged with a strong emotional quality and has a wide range of implicit meanings, and in English it has been translated into different words, such as “addiction, compulsion, passion, mania, fondness for, weakness for, love of, fanatical devotion, craving, idiosyncrasy, fetishism, and even hobby.” See Judith Zeitlin, “The Petrified Heart: Obsession in Chinese Literature, Art, and Medicine,” *Late Imperial China* 12.1 (1991): 3.

<sup>318</sup> Yelü Chucai, *Zhanran jushi ji* 湛然居士集, in *Siku quanshu* 1191, 11.593.

<sup>319</sup> “Two Poems on Playing the Tune, ‘On An Autumn Evening Walking under the Moonlight’” (“Tan qiuxiao buyue erqu” 彈秋宵步月二曲), *Zhanran jushi ji*, 11.594.



“Since I have my Master Spring Thunder, why would I worry that there is no meat in my meals?” 有我春雷子，豈憚食無肉？<sup>320</sup> Just as Ouyang Xiu was fond of the Lou Ze *qin* he obtained in Yiling, Yelü Chucai could find his true friend in his “Spring Thunder” *qin*, regarding it as imbued with human sentiments and capable of providing him with spiritual nourishment.

The image of a Song literatus who valued no worldly material possessions but the *qin* also influenced the construction of the image of Yelü Chucai in “Spirit Path Stele Inscriptions of Secretariat Director Master Yelü” (“Zhongshuling Yelü gong shendao bei” 中書令耶律公神道碑) by Song Zizhen 宋子貞 (1185-1266):

All his life Yelü Chucai never managed his family fortune. When he passed away, someone slandered him, saying, “This gentleman had served as the prime minister for twenty years, and all that tribute coming from around the world entered his private gate.” The empress sent servants to check on the fortune he had left behind, and they found only a number of famous *qin* and several hundred scrolls of inscriptions on bronze vessels and steles.

平生不治生產，家財未嘗問其出入。及其薨也，人有譖之者曰：「公為相二十年，天下貢奉，皆入私門。」后使衛士視之，唯名琴數張，金石遺文數百卷而已。<sup>321</sup>

This passage may remind readers of Ouyang Xiu’s “Biography of the Retired Scholar Six Ones,” in which Ouyang Xiu enumerated the things that were especially important to him and that he identified himself with in old age: books, wine, chess, bronze and stele inscriptions, and the *qin*. The image of a high-status government official who had no other possessions but several *qin* and other cultural artifacts also reminds the reader of another Song literatus, Zhao Bian, who when he took office in Sichuan carried with him only only a *qin* and a tortoise. For Yelü Chucai and the Song literati figures he imitated, devotion to the *qin* symbolized a willingness to endure

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<sup>320</sup> *Zhanran jushi ji*, 11.593.

<sup>321</sup> Song Zizhen, “Zhongshuling Yelü gong shendao bei,” in *Guochao wenlei* 國朝文類, *juan 57*, *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, vol. 2056 (Shanghai: Hanfenlou, 1929).

physical privation, rejection of material wealth, fame, and profit, and incorporation of the virtues and transcendental joys embodied in the *qin* and its music.

The key terms used by Song literati in connection with the *qin*, such as *gu*, *dan*, *he*, *qing*, and *jing*, described and stipulated an idealized aesthetics of the *qin* and its music. All of these words helped to define and construct the *qin* as a highly spiritual, poetic, and refined instrument that produces an ideal, ancient music whose political implications, poetic appeal, and philosophical associations are far more important than its concrete sounds. Based on these ideas, Yuan, Ming, and Qing authors developed their conception of the *qin* and its aesthetics in anthologies of scores, handbooks, and catalogues devoted to the *qin*. In these texts, these late imperial authors often include passages of theoretical discussion on *qin* aesthetics, creating a more refined ideological justification for the *qin* but firmly tying the pursuit of the *qin* to Song literati. For example, in the *Lore of Chinese Lute*, Van Gulik translated two passages composed during the Yuan and Ming periods. Although authors of these two texts, Wu Cheng 吳澄 (1249-1333) and Yang Biaozheng 楊表正 (1520-1590), differed greatly in their social backgrounds and uses of language and styles, both of their discussions of *qin* playing show Song literati's aesthetic reflections on and conceptions of the *qin*. In *Ten Rules for Playing the Qin* (*Qin yan shi ze* 琴言十則), Wu Cheng writes:

When applied to *qin* playing, the ninth saying “observe the rites by respecting the Way” means that one should not play when there is wind or rain, or in a market covered with dust. But if one meets someone who understands the deeper meaning of music, or if one has ascended a multistory building or a mountain, or if one rests in a valley, sits on a rock, or tarries by a stream, or when the two principles are in harmony, then all these conditions are to be called excellent and suited for the *qin*. On the other hand, the presence of a vulgar man, a courtesan, or an actor, or a drunken or noisy atmosphere, all are bad conditions for playing the *qin*. Therefore one should be discreet in choosing the time and place to play the *qin*.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Wu Cheng, *Qin yan shi ze*, in *Congshu jicheng chubian* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), p.3. Here I use the translation of Van Gulik with slight revision. See *the Lore of The Chinese Lute*, p.75.

九曰盡禮以尊其道，如風雨市塵不彈是也，至遇知音，升樓閣，登山，憩谷，坐石，遊泉，值二氣之清朗，皆際勝而宜於琴者。反是而對俗子，娼優，與夫酒穢塵囂，皆惡景也，自當善藏其用。

In this passage, Wu Cheng tried to classicize the *qin* just as Song literati had done. Song literati drew a distinction between the *qin* and other popular instruments such as the *zheng*. They constructed the *zheng* as a rival to the *qin*, delimiting that instrument's sphere to the women's quarters and adding erotic and exotic touches in a way that framed the instrument as inferior and its sounds as the equivalent of the corrupted "music of Zheng and Wei." By confining *qin*-playing to the realm of literati and excluding vulgar players and courtesans, Wu Cheng imitated his Song predecessors and further stipulated rules that one should follow in order to play the *qin*: one should find or construct a clean environment with good weather and natural scenery to create a quasi-religious ambience and a space for reflection and judgment.

Yang Biao Zheng's "Miscellaneous Remarks on Playing the *Qin*" ("Tanqin zashuo" 彈琴雜說) was contained in his *Reprinted Qin Scores in the Correct Transmission* (*Chongxiu zhenchuan qinpu* 重修真傳琴譜), which was a popular anthology of *qin* music scores containing 105 *qin* tunes and had been published in different versions for several times during the Ming dynasty. In "Miscellaneous Remarks on Playing the *Qin*," Yang has a very similar description of the environment that one should choose when playing the *qin* as did Wu Cheng:

Whosoever plays the *qin* must choose a pure dwelling or a spacious hall; or he must ascend a multistory building; or he may tarry by trees and rocks, or climb a steep cliff; or again he may ramble along the verdant bank of a stream, or he may dwell in a monastic abode.<sup>323</sup>

凡鼓琴，必擇淨室高堂，或升層樓之上，或於林石之間，或登山顛，或游水湄，或觀宇中。

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<sup>323</sup> Yang Biao Zheng, *Chongxiu zhenchuan qinpu*, in *Qinqu jicheng*, vol. 4, p. 270. Here I also use the translation of Van Gulik with slight revision. See *The Lore of The Chinese Lute*, p. 76.

Yang further stipulates that there are six criteria that one should meet in order to be a qualified player of the *qin*:

In the first place one's personality should be aloof and still elegant, and one's bearing must be pure. Further, the finger technique should be correct, the touch should be correct, the mouth should be bearded and the belly full of ink. Only when these six criteria are all met may one take part in the Way of the *qin*.<sup>324</sup>

先要人物風韻標格清楚，又要指法好、取音好、胸次好，口上要有髯，胸中要有墨：六者兼備，方與添琴道。

Yang even lists more rules regarding the attire of the *qin* player: “One should first see to it that one is dressed correctly, either in a gown of crane-feathers or in a ceremonial robe. Only if one knows the appearance of the ancients will one be able to appreciate the instrument of the sages” 要先須衣冠整齊，或鶴氅，或深衣，要知古人之象表方可稱聖人之器。<sup>325</sup> Yang Biaozheng specifies a whole set of protocols regarding the aesthetics of the *qin*. The insistence that the “mouth should be bearded and the belly full of ink” recalls the precise image of the literati and ties the pursuit of *qin*-playing to the continuation of Song literati culture.

The protocols of *qin* playing stipulated by Yang continued to influence Gao E 高鶚 (1758-1815) in his description of the *qin* in chapter 86 of the *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢), “Bribery Induces an Old Mandarin to Tamper with the Course of Justice, And a Discourse on the Qin Provides a Young Lady with a Vehicle for Romantic Feelings” 受私賄老官翻案牘，寄閑情淑女解琴書, in which Daiyu explains to Baoyu the rules of *qin* playing:

“The essence of the *qin*,” replied Daiyu, “is restraint. It was created in ancient times originally to help one purify himself and lead a gentle and sober life, to quell all licentiousness and to curb sumptuous impulse. If you wish to play, then you must first seek out a quiet chamber, a studio with a distant view, or upper room; or some secluded nook among rocks and trees, on craggy mountain-top, or by water's edge. Let the weather be clear and calm, a gentle breeze, a

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

moonlit night. Light some incense, and sit in silent meditation. Empty the mind of outward thoughts. Poise blood and breath in perfect harmony. Your spirit may now commune with the Divine and enter into that mysterious harmony with the Way.”

黛玉道：“琴者禁也。古人制下，原以治身，涵養性情，抑其淫蕩，去其奢侈。若要撫琴，必擇靜室高齋，或在層樓的上頭，在林石的裏面，或是山巔上，或是水涯上。再遇著那天地清和的時候，風清月朗，焚香靜坐，心不外想，氣血和平，才能與神合靈，與道合妙。”

“As the ancients said, ‘one who knew the tone’ has always been few. If there is no one able to share your music’s true delight, then sit alone, and play for the breeze and moonlight, the ancient pines and spectacular rocks, wild apes and old cranes, rather than the vulgar mob, to lodge your intentions, so that dull ears would not sully the precious virtue of the *qin*.”

所以古人說：‘知音難遇。’若無知音，寧可獨對著那清風明月蒼松怪石野猿老鶴撫弄一番，以寄興趣，方為不負了這琴。

“The next two essential are finger-technique and touch. And before you think of playing, be sure to dress in a suitable style—preferably in a gown of crane-feathers or in a ceremonial robe. Assume the dignified manner of the ancients first and then one can be in keeping with the chosen instrument of the sages. Wash your hands, light the incense, and approach the edge of your couch. Place the *qin* on the table before you and sit with your chest opposite the fifth *hui* stud. Raise both hands slowly and gracefully. You are now ready, in body and mind, to begin.<sup>326</sup>

“還有一層，又要指法好，取音好。若必要撫琴，先須衣冠整齊，或鶴氅或深衣，要如古人的象表，那才能稱聖人之器。然後盥了手，焚上香，方才將身就在榻邊，把琴放在案上，坐在第五徽的地方兒，對著自己的當心，兩手方從容擡起：這才心身俱正。”

Daiyu’s remarks on *qin* playing to a large extent can be seen as rephrasing Yang Biao Zheng’s “Miscellaneous Remarks on Playing the *Qin*,” as her essential conceptions of the *qin*, such as that the *qin* was an instrument that purified one’s mind and cultivate one’s morals, one should choose an overall clean, natural and poetic environment to play the *qin*, as well as the detailed requirements on *qin* player’s attire, position and manner, overlapped with Yang’s ideas and linked tightly with Song literati culture. As novels sometimes are where ordinary people get first

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<sup>326</sup> Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹 and Gao E 高鶚, *Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1981), pp. 1134-1135. Here I use the translation of John Minford with revisions. See David Hawkes and John Minford trans, *The Story of the Stone: A Novel in Five Volumes* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), vol. 4, pp. 154-155.

instructions of art, this passage shows that the Song ideas and aesthetics of *qin* playing remained in full force and influential in the Qing dynasty, and was popularized and spread to popular culture.

To conclude, in the Song dynasty, *qin*-playing and connoisseurship became an important pursuit that had penetrated deeply into literati life and exerted a far-reaching influence on later periods. The definitive activities of literati had included literary and scholarly achievements, participation in politics and public affairs, the pursuit of wealth, and interest in calligraphy, painting, and art connoisseurship, but during the Song *qin*-playing and connoisseurship came to constitute an important part of literati self-representations. As Judith Zeitlin has argued, “As objects became increasingly associated with certain qualities and certain historical figures, a person’s choice of obsession became dictated by those qualities and figures. By loving a particular object, the devotee was striving to claim allegiance to a specific virtue or to emulate a certain personality.”<sup>327</sup> During the Song, the *qin* acquired an identity associated with high antiquity and Confucian ideals; it acquired a quasi-human presence, even though it remained throughout an inanimate object. The aesthetic nuances, poetic appeal, and philosophical implications that Song people imparted to the *qin* set a paradigm for later periods, establishing it as the most elegant and poetic instrument in Chinese history. By associating and identifying themselves with this musical instrument, the Song literati used the *qin* as a primary medium through which they formed their full-fledged image as human beings with specific intellectual and artistic talents. While the Song literati made the *qin* the *qin*, the *qin* simultaneously helped Song literati define themselves as “cultured men.”

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<sup>327</sup> “The Petrified Heart: Obsession in Chinese Literature, Art, and Medicine,” p. 10.

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