



The musical characteristics of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China

Xiaobei Zhu

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music
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ABSTRACT

This research The musical characteristics of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China have three objections 1) to investigate the history and development, 2) to analyzed the music characteristics, 3) to examined the transmission process. Used a qualitative research method and musicology. The method of collecting data in field work, interviews and using tools such as questionnaires. The result as follows:

Firstly, the establishment of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan has gone through three historical stages, leading to significant improvements in the development environment for Guqin in Henan. It has become one of the key bases for the contemporary transmission and development of Guqin culture in Henan.

Secondly, the music of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan is characterized by its expression through playing techniques. By examining the application of playing techniques in compositions at three different levels basic play techniques, intermediate play techniques, advanced play techniques, the study has summarized how these techniques contribute to the expression of musical characteristics in the pieces.

Third, the Guqin Wangji School engages in the transmission of Guqin culture through various means. In the actual practice of Guqin music transmission, the focus is not only on promoting the musical characteristics and playing techniques of Guqin, but also on emphasizing the integration of Guqin with contemporary cultural life.

Keyword : Guqin Wangji School, Musical characteristics, Transmission process



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Chapter I

Introduction

1. Research Background

The Guqin has been passed down in China for over a thousand years. For the Chinese, the Guqin is not only a musical instrument, but also a symbol of Chinese culture. Guqin schools play a very important role in the promotion of Guqin music and cultural activities. Among the Guqin music groups, the Henan Guqin Wangji School(忘机琴社) holds a special position, providing a platform and medium for the transmission of Guqin music in Henan Province.

The Guqin is one of the oldest stringed musical instruments in the Chinese nation and has a history of over 3,000 years. As early as over two thousand years ago, it formed an inseparable bond with Chinese culture and cultural scholars. Throughout Chinese culture, the Guqin, as the leader of the “Guqin, Qi, Calligraphy, and Painting” (琴、棋、书、画) has been sustained for thousands of years and has been fully developed. Recently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) listed it as one of the first representative works of human oral and intangible cultural heritage, fully recognizing its artistic value and historical status (Wu Zhao, 2005).

The Guqin school in our country, which was spontaneously formed by Guqin players, is a literary school with Guqin music as the gathering link. The Guqin school has a unique organizational structure, mode of operation, transmission method, and social role, and has become a major stronghold for the transmission of contemporary Guqin music. A deep investigation and study of the Guqin school will enable us to face the Guqin music activities and delve into the cultural connotation of contemporary Guqin music, providing valuable information and a solid platform (Wang Zini, 2018).

Henan, this ancient city with a prosperous economy and culture, also nurtures a Guqin music culture closely related to literati culture. In the oracle bone inscriptions unearthed in the Shang and Zhou dynasties, there were already characters for music, which depicted the image of silk strings stretched and attached to wooden instruments, indicating that stringed instruments such as Guqin and se had been used even before



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the oracle bone inscriptions were produced. In 662 BC, people in the state of Wei had already learned to use materials such as paulownia and catalpa to make Guqin and se in the Chuqiu area. These historical events that occurred in Henan indicate that the ancient Guqin art in the region has a very profound historical accumulation (Cao Xiaoqing, 2014).

Luo Suli (2022, interview) said that as one of the representatives of Chinese traditional culture, the Guqin holds an important position in Chinese history. The Guqin is considered a sophisticated form of artistic expression that not only has performance value, but also embodies rich cultural connotations and historical accumulation. Guqin societies and Guqin music groups play an important role in the transmission and promotion of Guqin culture. They organize various Guqin performances and cultural exchange activities to attract more people to participate in the transmission and development of Guqin culture, promoting its prosperity and development. As one of the representatives of Henan Guqin societies, the Guqin Wangji School actively promotes the development and transmission of Guqin music. The school has accumulated rich experience and resources in Guqin playing techniques, Guqin music transmission, and Guqin music theory. It not only has a high reputation and status in the Guqin community in Henan province, but also has received recognition and praise nationwide. The Guqin Wangji School also actively organizes Guqin music performances and cultural exchange activities, providing opportunities for more people to learn about and study Guqin culture and music. In addition, the school promotes the transmission and development of Guqin culture through offering Guqin music courses and publishing Guqin music textbooks, making outstanding contributions to the prosperity of Guqin culture.

Based on the collection of previous data, researcher found that the development of Guqin music in Henan province lagged behind, and related Guqin societies had disappeared at one point. Therefore, using the research methods of ethnomusicology, the researchers conducted field investigations to study: the history and development of Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China, the musical characteristics of Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China, and the transmission process of Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China. The goal of this research is to provide theoretical support and reference for future studies of Guqin in Henan province.

2. Research Objectives

2.1 To investigate the history and development of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China.

2.2 To analyzed the music characteristics of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China.

2.3 To examined the transmission process of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China.

3. Research Questions

3.1 What is the history and development of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China?

3.2 What are the music characteristics of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China?

3.3 What is the transmission process of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China?

4. Benefits of Research

4.1 By investigating the historical development of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China can help to further summarize the importance of Guqin schools in the cultural and social life of Guqin music.

4.2 By analyzing the musical characteristics of the Guqin from the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China, one can gain a better understanding of the playing techniques employed by the Guqin Wangji School, thus facilitating the transmission and practice of Henan's Guqin performance.

4.3 By understanding the process of music transmission in the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China, is crucial for identifying the modes, elements of Guqin transmission in the region. This understanding holds significant importance for the propagation of Guqin culture in Henan.

5. Definition of Terms

5.1 Guqin Wangji School in Henan Province, and serves as a major platform for the transmission and teaching of Guqin music and culture.

5.2 History refers to to the analysis of the 22-year development history of the Guqin Wangji School: preparation (2000-2007), founding Process (2007-2009), and development stages (2009-2022) three stages.

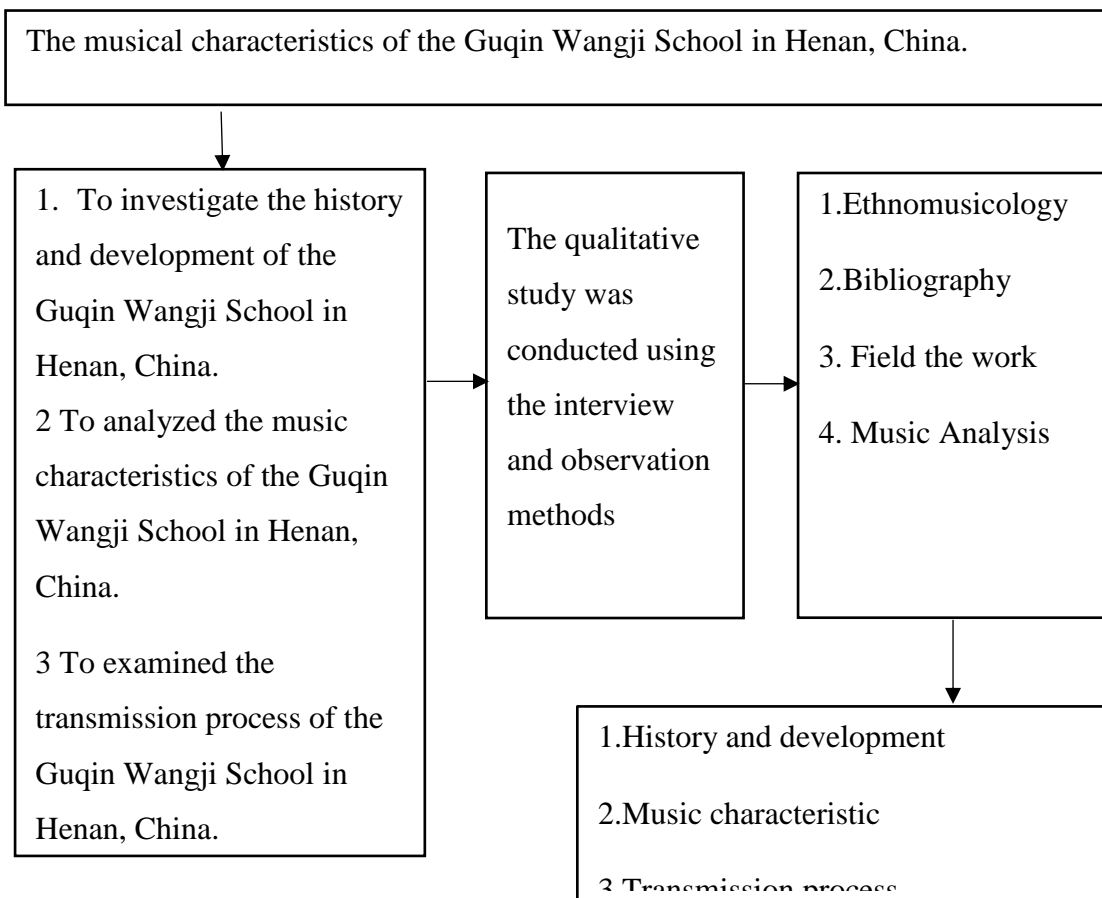
5.3 Development refers to the development of Guqin Wangji School includes personal development of the founder, composition and development of members, development of the music activities.

5.3 Music Characteristics refers to the application of basic, intermediate, and advanced playing techniques of the Guqin in the music works of the Guqin Wangji School.

5.4 Transmission process refers to Guqin Wangji School of transmission modes and transmission elements.



6. Conceptual Framework:



Chapter II

Literature Review

In this research, the researcher reviewed relevant documents to obtain the most comprehensive information that can be used in this research. The researcher reviewed the following topics.

1. The historical development of Guqin
2. The development of Guqin and School's in Henan
3. The play techniques of Guqin
4. The theories used in this research
5. The method and theory to transmission music
6. Documents and Research related to Guqin

1. The historical development of Guqin

The general length of a Guqin is about three feet and six inches, which symbolizes 365 days in a year, approximately 120-125 centimeters. It is about six inches wide (around 20 centimeters) and two inches thick (around 6 centimeters). The upper part of the Guqin is curved and raised while the lower part is flat, symbolizing heaven and earth, with heaven being round and earth being flat. The thirteen frets on the Guqin represent twelve months plus an intercalary month. The overall shape of the Guqin is based on the body of a phoenix, with a head, neck, shoulders, waist, tail, and feet. The two sound holes on the Guqin are called Long Chi and Feng Zhuo, and the supports for the strings are called Yue Shan and Long Ken, with Yue Shan representing high mountains and the strings representing flowing water (Zhang Di, 2021).

The shape of the Guqin is varied, and the shape has different characteristics in different periods. During the Tang Dynasty, the Guqin had a more rounded shape, and the neck and waist were generally rounded. The main shapes included Zhongni style, Fuxi style, Shennong style, Lianzhu style, and Ziqi style, etc. During the Northern Song Dynasty, the Guqin face changed from round to flat; during the Southern Song Dynasty, the style of shoulder raised and narrow shape became popular, and the shape was relatively flat and narrow. In the Ming and Guqing Dynasties, Guqin culture flourished, and new styles were added, such as Luqi style, Zhenghe style, Feipu Lianzhu style,

Jiaoye style, Guqingying style, and so on. It can be said that the Guqin embodies the aesthetic taste and artistic interest of traditional Chinese culture (Yang Yaoyao, 2016).

1.1 The Origin of Guqin

Guqin, also known as seven-stringed zither, is one of the oldest plucked instruments in China. It has been unique since ancient times and has been highly valued by generations of sages. Along with go, calligraphy, and painting, it is a necessary skill for literati and a vital carrier for people to cultivate their moral character, express emotions and feelings, and reflect the essence of Chinese cultural spirit, surpassing the connotation of ordinary musical instruments (Zhang Huaying, 2005).

There is no accurate answer to the earliest origin of the Guqin. The most commonly recorded view in historical literature is that it originated during the “Fuxi” era, which dates back to 6,000 years ago. According to “The Book of Rites”, “Fuxi used leather cords for marriage ceremonies and made Guqin and se instruments for music,” indicating that during the ancient “Fuxi” era, the playing technique of the Guqin had already matured, and Guqin music had become a fundamental part of human spiritual life (Gong Yong, 2016).

Around ten thousand years ago, China entered the Neolithic Age. At that time, the progress of productivity allowed the ancestors to engage more in spiritual and artistic activities. The development of sacrificial activities and the birth of primitive music and dance laid the foundation for the emergence and development of instruments such as the Guqin, Se, Drum, and Xun. Although there is no solid evidence of the specific time period of the appearance of the Guqin, as a representative instrument, its emergence must be limited by social production technology. That is to say, the origin of art comes from practice, and as an art form, the emergence of the Guqin must have gone through a process from non-art to art. Therefore, we should trace its historical origins. When discussing the contingency of the emergence of the Guqin, we often think that it was because the ancients discovered that when the string was shot through the bow and arrow or some kind of textile tool, it would produce a pleasant sound that made people feel joyful, and then they fixed the string on wood and made it into stringed instruments such as Guqin and Se (Xu Jian, 2012).

The most important material foundation for the appearance of stringed instruments is the breeding and production of silkworms for making strings. China is

universally recognized as the birthplace of silk. Archaeological evidence shows that sericulture had already existed during the Liangzhu culture period (approximately 3300-2200 BCE), which roughly corresponds to the era of Yu Shun. Therefore, it can be said that the Chinese had already started raising silkworms around the time of Yu Shun, and ever since then, the strings of the Guqin have been made of silk. The characteristics of silk strings include a rich and mellow tone, a soft and full texture, and a sensitive and delicate response, which cannot be replaced by other materials. For this reason, many experts and scholars in the field of Guqin culture tend to believe that the instrument originated in the time of Yu Shun. Moreover, a large number of ancient texts provide relevant records. According to documents such as the Book of Documents and the Annals of Spring and Autumn, social activities such as sacrificial rites and ceremonial visits were already quite frequent during the era of Yu Shun. Another crucial piece of evidence is that the Chinese had already started raising silkworms around the time of Yu Shun, and due to the tenacity and other properties of silk, it was mostly used to make Guqin strings, thus creating a round and ancient tone. Undoubtedly, the era of Yu Shun provided fertile ground for the birth of the Guqin (Zhang Xiaojuan, 2010)

The mythological origin of the Guqin is full of ancient and primitive mystery, but it still has traceable clues and a certain material basis. It also reflects the awe and admiration of ancient people towards the inventor of the instrument (Lin Xili, 2009).

1.2 The shape and structure of Guqin

The shape of the Guqin has been roughly shaped since the Han Dynasty, maintaining a unified and fixed shape on the whole, but there are also some changes, mainly manifested in the different edge styles of the Guqin, resulting in the emergence of different styles of Guqin. Literati gave these Guqin of different styles very unique elegant names, such as Fuxi style, Zhongni style, etc. Although these different styles of Guqin are different in the head, neck, waist and tail line, there is little difference, and the sound color and basic body structure of the Guqin are not different. The common Guqin styles are as follows: Fuxi style, Zhongni style, Loxia style, Liezi style, Lingji style, and Jiaoye style.

1.2.1 Fuxi Style

The Fuxi Style Guqin According to legend, Fuxi saw a phoenix living in the Tong and cut it into a Guqin to resemble its shape. The shape of Fuxi type is round and simple, and the neck and waist are each half - moon - shaped. The Fuxi Guqin has a generous tone and is as distant as the sound of the world.



Figure 1. The Fuxi Style Guqin

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2022)

1.2.2 Zhongni style

The Zhongni style Guqin is said to have been made for a saint, and its shape is simple and smooth. There are only two concave lines on the waist and head of the Zhongni style Guqin body, and the whole body of the Zhongni style Guqin does not have any other modification. The implicit and generous shape of the Zhongni style Guqin can best reflect the moderation and introverted style of Confucianism.



Figure 2. The Zhongni style Guqin

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2022)

1.2.3 Loxia style

The Loxia styl Guqin has it that Guqin people view the sunset glow with changing posture and wonder, thinking that the shape of the Guqin is the setting of the sunset. Loxia Guqin sound Linlin ringing, vigorous and bright, Loxia Guqin strokes when boating on the vast lake, when the feeling of water and heaven together magnificent.



Figure 3. The Loxia styl Guqin

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2022)

1.2.4 Liezi style

The Liezi style Guqin is very similar to the Zhongni Guqin. The head of the Liezi-style Guqin has an inward arc. Compared with the Zhongni Guqin, the head of the Liezi-style Guqin is more rounded.



Figure 4. The Liezi style Guqin

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2022)

1.2.5 Lingji style

The Lingji style Guqin is rigorous in body, smart in shape, elegant as a scholar, and with a flying state. The legend of the ingenious Guqin is a new Guqin system created by the whim of the ancient literati. Guqin brainwave, wonderful thought into heaven.



Figure 5. The Lingji style Guqin

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2022)

1.2.6 Jiaoye style

The Jiaoye style Guqin is said to have been created by Liu Bowen. The body of the Guqin is like a banana leaf. The leaf stalk of the Guqin head is bent downward, with a stem growing in the middle. The shape is also divided into large and small banana leaves, and there are more leaf edges on both sides of small banana leaves.



Figure 6. The big Jiaoye style Guqin

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2022)



Figure 7. The small Jiaoye style Guqin

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2022)

1.3 Development of the History of Chinese Guqin

1.3.1 The First Stage of the Development of Guqin Art -Before the Han Dynasty

Before the Han Dynasty, the number of strings on the Guqin was not certain. This stage ended with the seven-string Guqin being recognized by the world. The seven-string Guqin first appeared in the Warring States period. A seven-string Guqin was excavated from a Chu tomb in Guodian, Jingmen, Hubei. This Guqin was made of two wooden boards carved and spliced together, with a longer head and a rectangular shape, a curved surface, and a bundle of symbols in the middle and upper part. There is a round hole with a diameter of 1.5 cm and a depth of 1.6 cm on one side of the head and tail adjacent to each other. The tail is short and similar to a trapezoid. The top of the head and the crest are embedded in the grooves of the Guqin surface, with a curved crest surface, 10.5 cm long, 0.8 cm wide, and 0.5-0.9 cm high, seven string holes on the outside, with a hole distance of 1.5-1.7 cm and a hole diameter of 0.3 cm. The cavity is carved into a T-shape, forming a resonating box. The tail has a handle on the back, the handle is round-knob shaped and carved into four dragons winding around. The entire body is lacquered black. The total length is 83 cm, height 7.1 cm, and width 12.6 cm (Wang Chuanfu, 1997).

During the excavation of the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng, a ten-stringed Guqin was unearthed, and it is generally recognized by scholars as a type of Guqin, despite being the earliest known stringed instrument with ten strings. This indicates that in the early development of Guqin music, the number of strings on Guqin instruments was not yet fixed. This phenomenon is partially consistent with the ancient Chinese literature that mentions the number of strings on Guqins, such as “the early Guqin had five strings,” “the seven-stringed Guqin is the five-stringed Guqin with two additional strings,” “the seven-stringed Guqin has a doubling of the interval,” and so on. The coexistence of seven-stringed and ten-stringed Guqins confirms that the number of strings on Guqin was not yet determined at that time (Lin Youren, 1982).

The description of the seven-stringed Guqin can be traced back to the book “Erya Shi Yue”. This document not only reveals the information that the Guqin had seven strings at that time, but also demonstrates the cultural recognition of the seven-stringed Guqin by ancient people. “Erya” was written between the Warring States



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period and the early Han Dynasty, so the recognition of the seven-stringed Guqin should not have been later than the early Han Dynasty. A “seven-stringed Guqin” was also excavated from the Mawangdui Tomb in Changsha. It was made of wood and coated with black lacquer. It is 62.3 cm long and consists of two parts: the top and the bottom. The bottom is 51 cm long, and there is a T-shaped groove between the top and the bottom. The tail is short and narrow, and the head is long and wide, with seven string holes on the head. The strings have rotted and fallen off. There are traces of friction on the surface of the head, indicating that the left-hand playing technique of the Guqin in the early Han Dynasty may have mainly focused on the high-pitched area, or there may have been techniques that are still unknown to us today. Since the number of Guqin strings was not fixed and the “fret positions” were not clearly marked on the Guqin, Guqin playing may have focused mainly on scattered sounds, and the form of Guqin music may have been “more sounds and less rhyme” or even “no rhyme”. The left-hand technique used in modern Guqin playing is for creating rhyme (Wei Yu, 2016).

1.3.2 The Second Stage of the Development of Guqin Art -Han to Northern and Southern Dynasties Period

The seven strings are the stable feature of Guqin, but the size and structure of the body are still evolving. Comparing the structural design of the seven-stringed Guqin in the Western Han Dynasty with that of the Tang Dynasty, the two are vastly different. Based on this, it is inferred that the structural and morphological characteristics of Guqin, such as the body and frets, underwent significant changes during this stage. Therefore, the Han to Northern and Southern Dynasties period should be divided into the second stage of the development of Guqin art. A detailed exploration of the development of Guqin art in this period still awaits the collection, sorting, and further archaeological excavation of relevant literature and materials (Lu Yunfei, 2008).

The Guqin unearthed in the Eastern Han Dynasty from Mianyang, Sichuan, which was played by the music figurines, is regarded as the prototype of today’s seven-stringed Guqin. In Gu Kaizhi’s “ZhuoGuqin Tu” from the Eastern Jin Dynasty, the body of the Guqin is composed of two panels, the bottom and the surface, with a dragon pool and a phoenix pond on the bottom, and the surface is flat throughout. Its body structure is basically the same as that of modern Guqin. The Nanjing Xishanqiao

Southern Qi and Liang Dynasty tomb mural brick “Zhu Lin Qi Xian and Rong Qi Qi” reveals important information such as the number of frets and strings on the Guqin at that time. However, due to the lack of reliable physical materials, it is difficult to determine the specific size of the Guqin at that time (Fu Murong, 2011).

In terms of the shape of the Guqin, the seven-stringed form has been clearly defined, and the frets have gradually evolved to the same form as they are today. The left-hand fingering techniques for playing the Guqin also gradually matured during this period. The musical form of Guqin also developed from the previous stage of “more sound, less rhyme” or “no rhyme” to “sound and rhyme all present,” which enriched the expressive power of Guqin art (Yan Xiaoxing, 2013).

1.3.3 The Third Stage of Guqin Artistic Development - Sui and Tang Dynasty

The establishment of the “seven strings, thirteen frets” form of the Guqin laid the foundation for the development of the Guqin-making industry during the Sui and Tang Dynasty. The development of the Jian Zipu (减字谱) during this period made Guqin notation more convenient, expanded the structure of Guqin music, and enriched the expression of musical ideas (Zha Fuxi, 1954).

During this period, there were many renowned craftsmen who excelled in the art of making the zither. The craft of zither-making became increasingly sophisticated and refined, resulting in the production of high-quality instruments. One of the most famous of these instruments was the “Jiuxiao Huanpei,” made by the Lei family in Sichuan. In addition, even high-ranking officials such as the prime minister Li Mian also took up zither-making, and the participation of the ruling class helped to further advance the development of the industry. Among the surviving ancient Guqins, the oldest can be traced back to the Tang dynasty. Both the Palace Museum in Beijing and the Shosoin Repository in Japan have Tang dynasty Guqins in their collections. It can be inferred from this that the Guqin-making industry during the Tang dynasty was not only well-crafted but also had a much larger scale than before. At that time, the development of Guqin art was flourishing. During this period, the Jian Zipu was introduced. Guqin tablature evolved from Wen Zipu(文字谱) to Jian Zipu, which was further refined and not fully perfected until the Ming dynasty. The reason why score

for the Guqin evolved from Wen Zipu to Jian Zipu was that the Wen Zipu was too cumbersome. For example, the score for the “Youlan” section of the “Jieshi Diao” passed down by Qiu Ming of the Southern Liang Dynasty consists of only four segments, but it requires over 4,000 words to notate. As “Taigu Yiyin” puts it, “the textual notation is extremely cumbersome, with movements of more than two lines without forming a complete sentence,” whereas Jian Zipu is more convenient to use. The emergence and improvement of the Jian Zipu enhanced the ability of score for the Guqin to convey musical information. Compared with the traditional Wen Zipu, Jian Zipu was more concise and carried more musical details within the same amount of space. As a result, the expression of Guqin pieces became more comprehensive and refined, allowing for a fuller and more delicate representation of the musical themes (Wei Yu, 2016).

The flourishing of the lute-making industry contributed to the development of the art of Guqin. The emergence and improvement of the Jian Zipu system further enhanced the ability of score for the Guqin to convey musical information, allowing for a more complete and nuanced expression of the musical ideas in Guqin compositions (Lin Chen, 2009).

1.3.4 The fourth stage of the development of Guqin art - from the Song Dynasty to the Guqing Dynasty.

The invention of printing was crucial to the development of Guqin art during this stage. Its role was reflected in significantly improving the efficiency of disseminating information on Guqin studies, promoting further research in Guqin studies, and facilitating the formation and development of various Guqin styles and artistic styles.

That’s correct. The development of printing technology had a significant impact on the transmission of cultural knowledge, and in China, the art of woodblock printing began in the Tang Dynasty and flourished in the Song Dynasty. The invention of movable type printing in the Song Dynasty further promoted the popularity of this technology. Since the Song Dynasty, the transmission of Guqin music information no longer relied solely on hand-copied materials, and the efficiency of transmission was greatly improved. Scores for the Guqin and theoretical works belong to the category of Guqin music materials, and the improvement in the efficiency of their transmission

broadened the academic horizons of Guqin players. Theoretical works on Guqin studies are a reflection of the research level of Guqin theory, which not only deepen people's understanding of the art of the Guqin, but also enhance its artistic status and highlight the profound cultural heritage of the art of the Guqin (Hu Bin, 2021).

The famous Guqin styles that people are familiar with today, such as the Zhejiang styles, Yushan styles, Shaoxing styles, and Guangling styles, all originated and developed during this period, and have continued to the present day. These Guqin styles have had a profound impact on the development of ancient Guqin music in later generations. However, the emergence and development of Guqin styles were due to the enhancement of the function of Guqin tablature in transmitting the art of playing the Guqin, and this improvement was based on the advent of movable type printing. The score of the Guqin that embodies the artistic characteristics of a Guqin style is an important symbol of the formation of the school and a key evidence for exploring its artistic features. During this period, the number of Guqin music far exceeded that of previous eras. Taking the Zixiadong Pu, a Guqin repertoire of the Song, as an example, it contains as many as 468 Guqin music. Without the help of movable type printing technology, this Guqin repertoire would be almost impossible to spread and propagate. Subsequent scores of the Guqin, such as the "Songxianguan Guqinpu" and "Dahuange Guqinpu" of the Yushan Style and the "Wuzhizhai Guqinpu" of the Guangling style, typically included around 20-30 Guqin music. In addition, some Guqin scores, due to their ancient age and the special feature of "no meter" in Guqin music, make it difficult for scholars to examine the sonic form of these pieces at that time. However, works of aesthetics like "Xishan Guqinkuang" provide a different approach for contemporary scholars to explore the sound and form of Guqin music from that era (Xu Jian, 1982).

The application of printing technology promoted the development of the Guqin art, specifically in terms of improving the efficiency of the transmission of Guqin scores and theoretical works, resulting in a much greater quantity and quality of these works than before. Additionally, the special nature of Guqin notation allows for individualized interpretations of the scores, leaving ample space for Guqin players to express their personal styles, ultimately leading to the formation of distinct Guqin styles of art (Zhang Huaying, 2005).



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1.3.5 The fifth stage of the development of Guqin art - from the Republic of China to the present

The development of Guqin art has evolved mainly through the means of music score. The form of Guqin score has gradually evolved from Jian Zipu to a two-line score that corresponds to Jian Zipu and either music notation or simplified notation. The evolution of music score has had a profound impact on the transmission mode of Guqin art, as well as on Guqin performance and the study of Guqin theory. In the study of the historical stages of the development of Chinese Guqin music, the phenomenon of “all music has rhythm, only the Guqin has no rhythm” has long been a challenge for Guqin players throughout the ages. It wasn't until the end of the Guqing Dynasty that Zhang Jutian first introduced the Gong Chipu (工尺谱) system into Guqin score to indicate the rhythm of Guqin pieces. During the Republic of China period, Xu Lishun clearly marked the beats of Guqin music in his “Meian Guqinpu” and even included a chapter titled “Examples of Marking Beats” to explain how to mark the beats in his Guqin scores. Due to the unique characteristics of the Jian Zipu, the traditional mode of inheriting the art of the Guqin must necessarily rely on oral transmission as the primary means, with the aid of written score of the Guqin as a supplement. For those who wish to learn to play the Guqin without a teacher, they must rely on making their own notations. This practice combines the art of playing the Guqin with music theory into a unified approach (Yan Xiaoxing, 2013).

As the mode of notation evolved, the traditional mode of Guqin art transmission, which relied mainly on oral instruction and supplemented by score of the Guqin, gradually shifted towards one in which audiovisual materials played a more prominent role and written scores played a secondary role. In addition, professional composers and researchers in related fields can now directly or indirectly participate in Guqin music creation, performance, and theoretical research. This has enhanced the expressive power and theoretical research of Guqin music, making the development of Guqin art more prosperous (Lin Chen, 2011).



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2. The development of Guqin and School's in Henan

2.1 Historical and Cultural Background of Henan Province

Henan Province, known as Yu for short name, is one of 23 provinces in China. Its provincial capital is Zhengzhou. Henan is located in the Middle East of China and in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, bordering Anhui and Shandong in the East, Hebei and Shanxi in the north, Shaanxi in the West and Hubei in the south. By the end of 2014, Henan had jurisdiction over 17 prefecture level cities, one county-level city directly under the province, and the provincial capital Zhengzhou. Henan Province has 10.66 million people and a permanent resident population of 94.36 million (Leet, 2023).

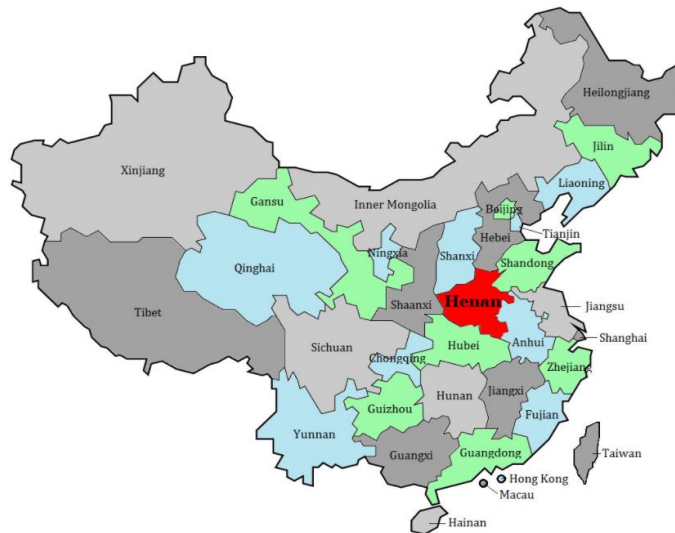


Figure 8. Map of Henan

Source: <https://chinafolio.com/provinces/guangxi-province> (2023)

Henan, one of the cradles of the Chinese civilization and the Chinese nation, was the main place where the Chinese nation lived in the early days. From China's first historical dynasty Xia dynasty in Henan, has the Xia, Shang, western Zhou dynasty (into Zhou LuoYi), eastern Zhou, the western Han dynasty (early), the eastern Han dynasty, Cao Wei, Wei, western Jin, northern Wei, Sui, Tang, Wu Zhou, five dynasties, northern song dynasty and gold more than 20 dynasties in Henan province, so it is the central plains political, economic and cultural center in the history (Zhao Tiangai, 2011).

Henan is located in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, which is one of the earliest areas of agriculture in China. “Peiligang Culture” about 8,000 years ago, it was named because it was found in Peiligang Village, Xinzheng, Henan Province. It is one of the sources of Chinese civilization. The unearthed agricultural production tools provide physical evidence for the development of the early farming culture. During the Warring States Period, the construction of Zheng Canal led by the state of Henan promoted the agricultural production conditions in ancient China. It can be said that the origin and development of Chinese agriculture, the invention and creation of agricultural technology, are related to Henan. Chinese businessmen, commerce and commercial culture also originated from this, the Shang generation of Wang Hai , the first is the ox cart pulling goods to do business, is regarded as the ancestor of business; the first Confucian businessman, Confucius disciple Zi Gong, Junxian, Henan people, not only can serve, and good at doing business; the first business theorist is now Shangqiu people plan; the “Kang million family” in the Guqing Dynasty, wrote down the “rich over the second generation, after 400 years and unbeaten” business myth. Thus, Henan occupies an important position in the commercial culture system of the Central Plains. Due to its geographical location, Henan has a unique advantage in the development of music and culture. From the earliest ritual activities to the primitive totem dance, shamanic dance, and Nuo dance that once appeared on the Central Plains, as well as the “Ge Tian Shi's Music” and the music of “Da Xia” in the song of “The Great Yu’s Water Control”, the germ of folk culture created by human beings transforming nature and creating history has already had the rudiments of music (Cao Xiaoqing, 2014).

In addition, as history progressed and feudalism and culture continued to develop and improve, along with the rise and fall of dynasties and the flow of unique court music into the folk, the exchange and integration of various ethnic cultural music and instruments with Central Plains culture all contributed to the development of traditional music culture in the Central Plains region. Whether it is the sound of “Sang Jian Pu Shang” created by ordinary people in their labor, the record of merchants “dancing and singing in the palace and room” in historical books, or the very folk-spirited “Zheng Wei music”, they are all expressions of the continuous development of music, allowing listeners to “enjoy it endlessly”. Moreover, the comprehensive form of

expression combining poetry, music, and dance gradually formed the expression form of traditional music in the Central Plains. As an inseparable part of music, musical instruments also have a long history in Henan. The musical relics unearthed in Henan are particularly rich and diverse and have captured the attention of the world (Kang Kang, 2014).

The province of Henan, a region of economic prosperity and cultural flourishing, has also nurtured a rich tradition of Guqin music closely tied to literati culture (Cao Xiaoqing, 2014).

2.2. Development of School's Guqin in Henan

2.2.1 The development of Henan's Guqin school

In the mid-1930s, Guqin players Deng Xiaofeng and Xu Yuanbai, among others, jointly organized the “Zhongzhou School's Guqin” in Kaifeng, Henan. Guqin players Chen Zhongsu and Deng Wen were members of the Zhongzhou School's Guqin at that time. Chen Zhongsu had excavated Guqin music scores and played *Guangling San*. In modern times, the transmission of the Zhongzhou style was once interrupted during the Cultural Revolution. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, especially since the reform and opening up, Guqin players Ding Jiyuan and his sister Ding Chengyun in Henan province have been committed to inheriting and promoting the excellent traditions of Zhongzhou Guqin music. From 2003 to 2004, Ding Jiyuan, Song Danian, Han Tingyao, and others excavated and compiled more than ten pieces of Zhongzhou style Guqin music, such as “*Shuilong Yin*” and “*Youjian Quan*” (Cao Xiaoqing, 2014).

Luo Suli (2022, interview) said that in the past ten years, from 1993 to 2003, there were only three Guqin schools in Henan province, with about 50 learners. From 2003 to 2013, in the next ten years, the number of Guqin schools in Henan reached more than 30, with about 300 learners. From 2013 to 2022, there are now 220 Guqin schools in Henan with about 26,400 learners. Through this survey, it was found that the Guqin community in Henan is still very large and has great development potential.

2.2.2 The development of Guqin players

The formation of an artistic style is usually a comprehensive process of the synthesis of an artistic group and its artistic style. The concept of “style” can refer to a certain artistic style, but it is not just a substitute for a certain artistic style; it can also

refer to a group of artists, but it is not just a substitute for a group of artists. It can be said that “style” refers to both a group of people and their artistic style, which is a dual concept. It is not an actual thing in itself, but a attributive concept that refers to two actual things, namely, an abstract name and a symbolic representation that expresses a specific style and a specific group of people (Wang Zini, 2008).



Figure 9. Mentorship with Han Tingyao

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2021)

In this abstract name and symbolic symbol, there are many specific characters, things, events and their complex relations, among which the behavior subject of the Guqin style is the Guqin person. The Guqin people group who maintained the formation and development of the Guqin style often formed a Guqin family with the relationship of teachers. “The teaching relationship is the basis for the transmission of the music style, repertoire and aesthetic thought in the circle of the Guqin players” (Yang Chunwei, 2004).

In the process of the formation and development of each Guqin style, one or several Guqin artists usually pioneered it, and then their unique artistic style and profound Guqin study cultivation were gradually pursued by their disciples, thus forming the group style of the Guqin style. For example, in the mid-1930s in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, Guqin masters Deng Xiaofeng and Xu Yuanbai and others organized the “Zhongzhou School’s Guqin” together in Henan Province. Guqin masters Chen Zhongshi and Deng Wen were both members of the Zhongzhou School’ Guqin at that time. Chen Zhongshi once excavated the ancient music of Guqin music and

played “Guangling San”. In modern times, the transmission of Zhongzhou Guqin style was once interrupted during the Cultural Revolution (Chen Lina, 2012).

The Guqin person group, composed of the founders of the Guqin style and their disciples, has become one of the necessary conditions for the formation of the Guqin style. The study of the teaching relationship and context of the Guqin people group has correspondingly become one of the main contents in the study of the Guqin style. The teaching relationship of teachers is an important basis for the division of blood between the Guqin people and the Guqin style, and also the main standard for the Guqin circle to determine the attribution of the Guqin style. In the process of the development of the Guqin music in the past dynasties, there will be many outstanding musicians, who are of great significance to the development of the Guqin style music style and the creation and transmission of the Guqin music. One of the decisive factors affecting the development or demise of the Guqin school is whether the Guqin style has outstanding Guqin players. Therefore, the history of a Guqin style can also be regarded as a development history of the outstanding Guqin people and the disseminate system associated with it (Guo Shenmo, 2018).

2.2.3 The development of Henan’s Guqin music

Tablatures are tangible carriers of the transmission of Guqin music. Throughout history, various Guqin masters and styles have taken it upon themselves to compile tablatures to pass down their unique understanding of Guqin music, making it one of the excellent traditions of Guqin music. Thanks to the profound cultural literacy of traditional literati, a large number of valuable tablatures, Guqin music theory works, and literature have been left to us by the ancients. Check Fuxi conducted a data analysis of the Guqin tablatures that have been passed down through the ages: there are already as many as 144 types of editions, drafts, and copied versions of tablature collections. Among the materials that have been acquired, after removing duplicates, there are a total of 3,365 different transmitted tablatures, 658 different transmitted Guqin melodies, 1,771 explanations and afterwords to explain the history, expressive content, and performance effect of the Guqin pieces, and 336 sets of Guqin lyrics. The large number of Guqin pieces, tablatures, and Guqin theory works passed down through the ages has also laid a profound documentary foundation for the transmission and development of Guqin music culture (Zha Fuxi, 1958).

The transmission of literati music is mostly through direct oral instruction between teachers and students. Throughout history, due to differences in geography, teachers, and other factors, numerous styles have emerged, and their artistic characteristics are mainly reflected in the transmission of music scores. Taking Guqin music as an example, different styles have different music scores, and even within the same styles, there are multiple versions of scores that have been passed down (Gao Xing, 1999).

Throughout history, each school of Guqin playing has had its own exclusive Guqin scores. Some styles even developed a system of Guqin scores composed of several books, which became a symbol and foundation of the style's development and transmission. The relationship between Guqin players, styles, and Guqin scores is inseparable and has continued to the present day, with famous Guqin players appearing in each generation and their Guqin scores being printed and distributed in school. Examples include Wang Yuanbo, who compiled "Zhixinzhai Guqinxue Lian yao", Wang Fengcai, who compiled "Longyinge Miben Guqinpu", Li Jiao, who compiled "The Yingyang Guqin Score", and Cui Yingjie, who compiled "The Yanlu Studio Guqin Score". In modern times, due to historical and social reasons, some Guqin scores have been lost and forgotten. However, famous Guqin players in Henan Province such as Ding Jiyuan, Han Tingyao, and Luo Sulie have rediscovered and organized ancient Guqin scores and techniques. Through the efforts of these Guqin players, the transmission and transmission of Guqin music has been revitalized and recorded for future generations (Chen Lina, 2012).

history of Guqin, the formation and recognition of Guqin styles mainly occur through the following ways: First, at the beginning of the Guqin style's establishment, there is a clear direction of Guqin style. Second, the evaluation of Guqin style by outsiders is based on a comparison of different styles. Third, Guqin style is gradually recognized and formed by insiders through long-term Guqin music exchange and practice during the formation of Guqin styles (Wang Zini, 2008).

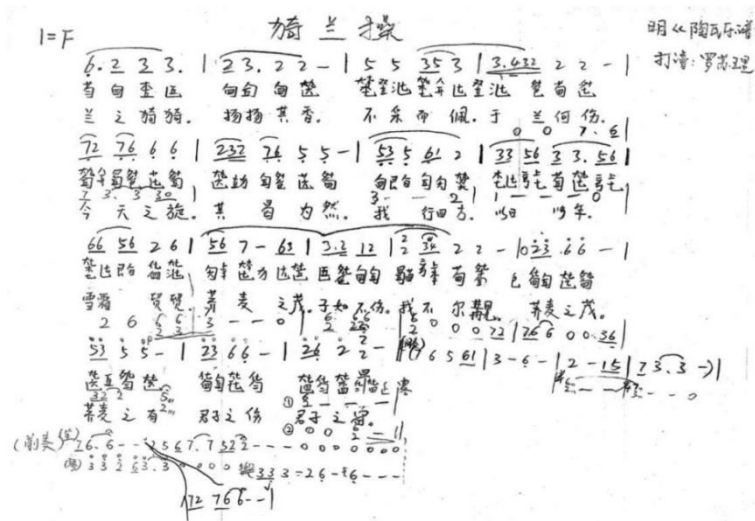


Figure 11. Luo Suli writing manuscript

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2021)

In the process of ups and downs, a Guqin music melody not only has a vivid and rich beat form and timbre combination, but also often develops step by step around the initial starting material. In these development and change, there is a method form is noteworthy: It is different from the variation, spread, derived, contrast, but may contain some variation, spread, derived or contrast, and the most important feature is always in different degrees in different ways to retain some original starting material, with a new connection, the packaging (Kuang Xuefei, 2007).

The development of a Guqin style often starts from the individual practices and stylistic innovations of certain Guqin players. When their unique music is appreciated by others and spreads and is passed down, it becomes a unified style for a group of Guqin players, and a Guqin style is thus formed. These Guqin players who are

renowned for their exceptional Guqin techniques have a significant influence on the development of the Guqin style, as their aesthetic ideas, playing styles, playing techniques, and repertoire are widely disseminated and shape the direction of the Guqin style's development (Yang Chunwei, 2004).

In the concept of Guqin studies in Henan, it should be recognized that only by eliminating the single pursuit and imitation of inherent Guqin style concepts can one create a unique style of Guqin music. The imitation and admiration of their Guqin techniques and styles by the later generation of Guqin players in Henan gradually led to the evolution of their personal Guqin styles into the new style of Guqin music. Through the analysis of the development of Guqin and Guqin school in Henan, including the elements of Guqin players and their lineages, Guqin scores and theories, Guqin music and its styles, it can be seen that as a regional music genre, it has already possessed the necessary conditions for its formation. In the process of the formation and development of Guqin music in Henan, the outstanding Guqin players with remarkable Guqin techniques have played a core and leading role in the formation of Guqin music styles.

3. The play techniques of Guqin

The Guqin is a traditional Chinese plucked instrument with a long history and rich playing techniques. Here are some common Guqin techniques.

3.1 The right hand techniques:

3.1.1 “Tuo” (托) refers to the action of plucking the string with the first finger pointing outward. The support method is the same as “Pi”, using the third and fourth fingers as support four strings apart, while the large thumb does not touch the string but instead pushes forward and rests on the string above the one being plucked.(See Figure 12)

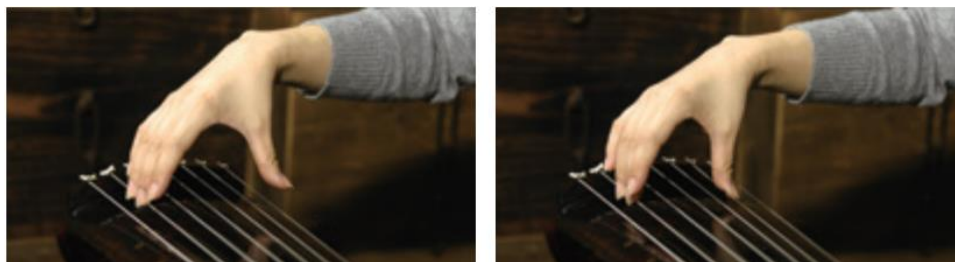


Figure 13. Right hand technique of “Tuo”

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

3.1.2 “Pi” (劈) refers to the action of plucking the string with the first finger pointing inward towards the body. The third and fourth fingers are used to provide support by being spaced four strings apart, while the large knuckle of the thumb is slightly bent and the fingertip is placed on the string above the one being plucked.(See Figure 13)



Figure 14. Right hand technique of “Pi”

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

3.1.3 “Mo” (抹) refers to the action of plucking the string with the second finger pointing inward. The root of the second finger exerts force, causing the finger to naturally curve and pluck the string. After plucking the string, the finger rests on the string below the one that was plucked.(See Figure 14)



Figure 15. Right hand technique of “Mo”

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

3.1.4 “Tiao” (挑) refers to the action of plucking the string with the second finger pointing outward. The third and fourth fingers are slightly bent and used to support the string, with one string in between each finger. The first finger is always kept in contact with the side of the index finger's first joint, and during the preparatory movement, the first and second fingers are bent to form a nearly circular shape. When the string is struck, the second finger naturally extends and pushes downward at an angle, eventually coming to rest on the middle string. (See Figure 15)



Figure 16. Right hand technique of “Tiao”

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

3.1.5 “Gou” (勾) refers to the action of plucking the string with the third finger pointing inward. The root of the third finger exerts force, causing the finger to naturally curve and pluck the string. After plucking the string, the finger rests on the string below the one that was plucked. (See Figure 16)



Figure 17. Right hand technique of “Gao”

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

3.1.6 “Ti” (踢) refers to the action of plucking the string with the third finger pointing outward. Prior to plucking the string, the third finger is slightly bent and used to support the string below the one that will be plucked. When the string is plucked, the third finger naturally extends. (See Figure 17)



Figure 18. Right hand technique of “Ti”

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

3.1.7 “Da” (打) refers to the action of plucking the string with the fourth finger pointing inward. The root of the fourth finger exerts force, causing the finger to naturally curve and pluck the string. After plucking the string, the finger rests on the string below the one that was plucked. (See Figure 18)



Figure 19. Right hand technique of “Da”

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

3.1.8 “Zhai” (摘) refers to the action of plucking the string with the fourth finger pointing outward. Prior to plucking the string, the fourth finger is slightly bent and used to support the string below the one that will be plucked. When the string is plucked, the fourth finger naturally extends and the string is plucked by the middle finger.(See Figure 19)



Figure 20. Right hand technique of “Zhai”

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

3.2 left hand techniques

3.2.1 The first finger has two ways of pressing the strings: finger pressing and knuckle pressing. In finger pressing, the first finger’s knuckle is slightly bent. In knuckle pressing, the highest point of the first finger's knuckle is used to press the string, keeping the first finger straight. When playing two or three strings, both types of pressing should be used together. The first finger is often used for string pressing with the left hand, while the side of the first finger is lightly pressed onto the string for playing harmonics.(See Figure 20)

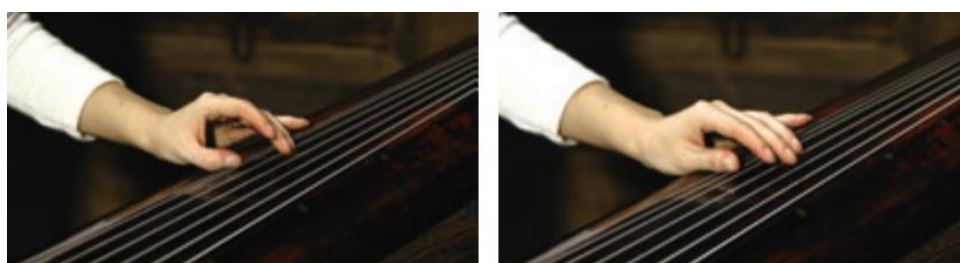


Figure 21. Left hand technique of the first finger

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

3.2.2 The second finger is mostly used for playing harmonics, with the fingertip lightly touching the string using the terminal phalanx, and sometimes the entire finger is used. The second finger is less commonly used for press tone.

3.2.3 The third finger is mainly used for press tone, pressing the string with the fingertip slightly to the left side. When playing harmonics, the fingertip can lightly touch the string with the last joint.(See Figure 21)



Figure 22. Left hand technique of the third finger

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

3.2.4 The fourth finger is used to press the strings with its fingertip slightly to the left, and when playing harmonics, the fingertip of the last joint can lightly touch the string. Sometimes, the whole finger is also used. The fourth finger is used less frequently than the first finger when pressing the strings.(See Figure 22)



Figure 23. Left hand technique of the fourth finger

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

Firstly, the play techniques of the left hand include “Yin(吟),” “Nao(猱),” “Chuo(绰),” “Zhu(注),” “Shang(上),” “Xia(下),” “Jin(进),” and “Fu(复).” These techniques are used in Guqin music to express thoughts and emotions. In Guqin performance, the fingering of the left hand is like the brushstrokes in calligraphy. Different fingering techniques produce different effects, which are crucial in the performance. As a general rule, the “Chuo” technique is often used for ascending notes, with the fingers moving from low to high, gradually increasing in weight. This kind of note-taking produces a deep, mellow, and unique charm. The basic method of “Yin” involves moving the fingers from top to bottom, with a faster frequency, and “Nao” involves moving from top to bottom, with a slower frequency. Both techniques involve a back and forth movement from light to heavy, but the direction and frequency differ, resulting in different effects. Secondly, the main techniques of the right hand include “Tuo(托),” “Pi(劈),” “Mo(抹),” “Tiao(挑),” “Gou(勾),” “Ti(剔),” “Da(打),” “Zhai(摘),” “Cuo(撮),” “Lun(轮),” “Bo(拨),” and “Ci(刺).” The right hand should be firm and powerful, like cutting iron and nails. The application of right-hand techniques plays a decisive role in the purity and quality of the sound. The position, angle, and strength of finger placement on the strings are closely related to the tone and timbre of Guqin music. The right hand's playing and the position, angle, and strength of finger placement on the strings are often inseparable. Lastly, Guqin playing is a comprehensive art form. It requires the skillful coordination of the left and right hands, relaxed arms, and the use of moderate force to pluck the strings at the center point between the bridge and the first position on the soundboard. The sound should be clear, the tone bright, and the organic coordination of the left hand's “Yin” and “Nao” techniques is necessary to produce rich and varied, simple and elegant tones. Guqin playing is a complex art that requires not only the personal temperament and cultivation of the performer but also the proficient application and harmonious coordination of the left and right hand techniques based on natural relaxation. “Open strings, harmonious, and Stopped strings” relies on the coordinated efforts of the shoulder, arm, elbow, wrist, and fingers, with a focus on the hard work concentrated at the fingertips, maintaining a certain

degree of relaxation while producing an ideal elastic sound effect(Xun Shangying&Xun Liang,2013).

Table 1. The representative techniques in the music pieces of different levels

level	Techniques the form
Basic	“Tuo”, “Pi”, “Mo”, “Gou”, “Tiao”, “Ti”, “Da”, “Zhai”,
Intermediate	“Open string”, “Harmonics”, “Stopped string”, “Cuo”, “Gun”, “Fu”, “Shang”, “Xia”, “Tui”, “Fu”,
Advanced	“Yin”, “Nao”, “Chuo”, “Zhu”, “Changsuo”, “Bo”, “Ci”, “Lun”

4. The theories used in this research

4.1 Ethnomusicology

In the academic world, ethnomusicology is generally regarded as a bridge between natural sciences and humanities. Ethnomusicological research is closely related to cultural thought, sociology, ethnology, and history (Wang Xiaonan, 2019).

The application of ethnomusicological methods in this study primarily involves two aspects. Firstly, the study utilizes the methods and techniques of ethnomusicology to investigate the activities of contemporary Guqin schools in Henan, examining the history and development of these schools. Secondly, the study applies some of the research results and theoretical perspectives of ethnomusicology to analyze the relationship between Guqin schools and culture. Through a comprehensive observation and in-depth study of a living entity of ancient Guqin music in Henan, some commonalities in the transmission of contemporary Guqin schools in China may be reflected, which could reveal certain characteristics of the current state of ancient Guqin music culture in China.

4.2 Bibliography

Bibliographic analysis involves researching, analyzing, and clarifying documents in order to discover the essential properties of a phenomenon. Bibliographic analysis involves learning from others' work and using it to build one's own research. It is a method in which researchers search, identify, organize, and analyze records of previous knowledge in language, literature, graphics, symbols, audio, video, and other

media, and use logical reasoning to explore the organic connections between phenomena (Zhang Rui, 2016).

The application of bibliographic analysis method mainly involves the collection and analysis of Guqin studies materials and historical materials related directly or indirectly to Henan province, borrowing the methods and perspectives of field investigation in ethnomusicology. It aims to immerse oneself in historical scenes, combining the epistemological concept of ethnomusicology, to systematically experience and feel historical events, figures and scenes in a more profound and connected way. Bibliographic analysis method mainly includes knowledge and techniques such as historical data retrieval, analysis and interpretation.

4.3 Field the work

Fieldwork mainly refers to researchers conducting on-site inspections through observations, written records, recordings, videos, interviews, and other methods. The purpose of fieldwork is to preserve the true and complete cultural characteristics of the research object and conduct objective cultural exploration based on this. Indeed, any culture will be influenced by the cultural background to varying degrees, so fieldwork records the style of a cultural period and explores the human development, social progress, ethnic continuity, and other aspects behind culture. In other words, the ultimate goal of in-depth research is to return to the study of people (Zhang Rui, 2016).

Deeply researching the living background of a phenomenon, understanding the behavior of the research object and the inherent cultural content contained in their behavior through participatory observation and exploration, thereby gradually achieving an understanding of the research object and their social life. The “immersion” field investigation method is mainly adopted (Cheng fang, 2022 interview).

As a member of the Guqin Wangji School and a researcher, the researcher strives to conduct in-depth, comprehensive, and practical analysis and research on the survival status of the school based on solid, detailed, and objective fieldwork.

4.4 Music Analysis

As a means of understanding the rules of musical thinking, music analysis has developed into an interdisciplinary field that spans music technology theory and musicology in this century (Zhou Ruqin, 1986).

In my research, I will use the method of music analysis to analyze the collected music, analyzing the background, musical structure, melodic characteristics, and performance techniques of the music, in order to better study the musical style characteristics of the Guqin Wangji School.

5. The method and theory to transmission music

5.1 “Kouchuan Xinshou”(口传心授) teaching method

In addition to adhering to tradition in repertoire, the Guqin school also incorporates the advantages of traditional master-apprentice transmission in its teaching methods, specifically the face-to-face oral transmission of knowledge. Through “Kouchuan”, techniques are demonstrated through body movements and verbal instructions, conveying not only musical techniques but also the teacher’s insights and experiences in Guqin music. For example, when Tao Jian demonstrates the basic finger technique “Gou”, he first demonstrates it personally and lets us listen to the sound. He then explains, The finger technique for “Gou” is a downward force at a forty-five-degree angle between the middle finger and the string, with an emphasis on combining force with breathing. After receiving this information, Tao Jian provides one-on-one guidance to help us experience the relationship between finger placement and force. Initially, students may struggle to understand the proper application of force in this finger technique, but Tao Jian compares the sound he produces with the sound we produce, allowing us to discern the difference. His playing produces resonant, deep tones, while ours sound light and airy. Throughout this process, students must achieve a deep understanding and not only master the basic techniques but also repeatedly contemplate the relationship between sound production and force application, fostering a passion for learning. In the subsequent practice sessions, students continuously explore and refine their techniques, aiming to reach the standard of “Xinshou”(Fan Ganghuizi, 2016).

5.2 The folk transmission of Music

There is no strict teacher-inheritance relationship, teacher-inheritance organization, and professional artists. All the singers and accompanists call each other their friends. When singing, the comrades all sit together, or listen to the singing with

interest, or slap in a low voice while enjoying. The singer sits with his eyes closed to show elegance and dignity, and the accompanist cooperates with skilled skills and rich experience. These singing skills and accompaniment skills are all passed on through the participants' preferences from the beginning to listening to words and music, learning from each other, and finally to actively participating in singing or accompaniment, which is a form of group and spontaneous participation (Hu Xiaoqian, 2022).

5.3 The professional transmission of Music

In the teaching process, in order to enable students to better understand and master the artistic conception of the works, most of the teachers will talk about the historical origin, school holdings, musical background, local customs and other theoretical knowledge of the Guzheng. It enables the students to understand the corresponding historical and cultural knowledge and local folk culture, and improves the students' cultural and literary accomplishments, which plays a vital role in cultivating students' appreciation and creativity. At the same time, in the process of playing, students need not only accurate rhythm and error-reading scores, but also a complete artistic accomplishment, with better handling of timbre, intensity and style, in order to make the 121 musical image more vivid and contagious (Hu Xiaoqian, 2022).

5.4 Online teaching resources method

Utilizing online course platforms to share teaching resources, sheet music, practice materials, allowing students to freely access and utilize them. Establishing connections with students and sharing learning experiences can stimulate their interest and facilitate communication and collaboration with other learners.(

6. Documents and Research Related to Guqin

6.1 Relevant Studies in Publications (7 works)

R.H. Van Gulik (1969), "The Way of the Guqin". It first introduced the Chinese ancient musical instrument Guqin and its rich cultural significance to the Western world. Gao Luopei attempted to establish a comprehensive ideological system of Guqin in the book. This is the earliest study on the construction and research of Guqin's artistic ideology system that can be found today, which is related to the Western logical and speculative tradition, but also shows from another aspect the decline of Guqin art in

contemporary China. Gao Luopei's research method is inspiring for the study of Chinese Guqin aesthetics and Guqin dao ideology, but the problems with it are also apparent. As a Westerner studying sinology, Gao Luopei's research also has a cultural and regional bias.

Ye Mingmei (1991), "Guqin Music Art" is mainly compiled in the form of a collection of papers, so there is no overall research system. The book points out that a complete system has been established for the art of Guqin music, including the making of the instrument, aesthetics, performance, notation, and so on. The collection includes papers with innovative research, such as comparing Guqin and calligraphy from the perspective of aesthetic ideas and artistic practices, and viewing the art of scoring for Guqin as a process of imagination and re-creation triggered by "incompleteness," which are very inspiring for contemporary research on Guqin art. The book has higher theoretical reference value for the combination of Guqin aesthetics, performance techniques, and musical characteristics.

Merriam (1964), "Study of music in culture" emphasizes "the study of music in culture" and advocates expanding the study of music to include the three interrelated and interdependent cultural elements of musical behavior, musical concepts, and musical sounds. This tripartite approach to ethnic music research highlights the attention paid to non-material factors such as cultural concepts embedded in music. However, this theoretical research model tends to focus on the interaction between synchronic factors in contemporary music culture, rather than on the relationship between ancient Guqin music and regional culture, which is the focus of this paper. These are not at the same theoretical level, but the latter more clearly points out the relationship and structural characteristics between Guqin music and regional culture.

Xu Jian (1982), "Preliminary Compilation of the History of the Guqin" is an introductory work that provides a relatively comprehensive introduction to the study of ancient Chinese Guqin music. In this book, Xu Jian briefly outlines the Guqin players, Guqin styles, Guqin pieces, Guqin makers and important Guqin theories of the Ming Dynasty. He particularly focuses on Yu Mountain style, Shaoxing style, and the Guqin pieces "Ping Sha Luo Yan" and "Liang Xiao Yin", as well as the Guqin theories of Leng Qian's "Sixteen Methods of Guqin Playing" and Xu Guqingshan's "Qishan Guqin Kuang". Xu Jian also provides his own analysis and insights, making this book a

comprehensive resource for understanding the development of ancient Guqin music and its aesthetic ideas, which provides theoretical support for the analysis of Guqin music pieces in this article.

Ge Hancong (1995), “A Discussion on the Origin and Development of Chinese Guqin Studies” discusses the characteristics and changes of Guqin studies in various dynasties. It uses the historical and cultural development as a guide to examine the musical phenomena within the context of the times, social environment, and academic thoughts. While it focuses more on the cultural aspects of Guqin studies, rather than the actual music, it still provides valuable insight into the characteristics and evolution of Guqin studies.

Cha Fuxi (1958), “An Overview of Surviving Ancient Guqin Scores,” there are a total of 144 surviving ancient Guqin scores, including printed, handwritten, and copied versions, with a total of 3,365 pieces of transmitted scores. Excluding duplicates, there are 658 unique traditional Guqin scores. This is a collection and compilation of materials related to ancient Guqin music, including score transmission, problem-solving, and lyrics. Its content is based on the disordered literature and books on the Guqin, listing over 1,000 surviving ancient Guqin scores, their sections, and string techniques. It also provides comprehensive explanations of the contents of these scores from various collections and literature, as well as the original lyrics of those Guqin pieces with lyrics, marked with punctuation.

Zhang Huaying (2013), “Heritage and Development of Guqin Music in the Past Century” provides a brief overview and introduction of the main schools and their activities in the first half of the 20th century in China. These schools include the “Yueyun Guqin School” in Beijing, the “Yinyin Guqin School” in Changsha, the “Yuan Yin Guqin School” in Taiyuan, the “Guangling Guqin School” in Yangzhou, the “Guqingxi Guqin School” in Nanjing, the “Mei’an Guqin School” in Nantong, the “JinYu Guqin School” in Shanghai, the “Tianfeng Guqin School” in ChongGuqing, and the “Beiping Guqin Study School” in Beijing. Some of these schools have ceased to exist, while others have continued and developed through the storms of social change. Their organization and Guqin-related activities have become the carrier of Guqin music and Guqin studies in China in the first half of the 20th century, laying a solid practical foundation for the development of contemporary Guqin music and Guqin studies. The

article provides valuable information for us to understand the overall situation of these schools from a historical perspective, and provides a brief evaluation of their activities.

6.2 Research on Related Papers (8 Articles)

Sha Chunru (1991), “Guqin cao” the beginning of an ideological system, the researcher with the special identity of the German sinologist, conducted a historical and literary analysis of Cha Yong’s “Guqincao”. The article argues that if one sees Guqin music as a system of thought, then “Guqincao” marks the beginning of this system.

Wang Hongmei (1995), In the implicit romantic artistically ancient book Guqin performance aesthetic concept of a tendency, the article from the perspective of playing aesthetics reveals the ancient players performance aesthetic concept on a orientation, boldly to colorful romantic factors into exquisite implicit style of Guqin art, so the controversial.

Wang Jia (2006), Record of “Double Guqin” Modern Interpretation of the Aesthetic Thought of Chinese Guqin Music Performance, is a comparative study on the aesthetic characteristics of Chinese Guqin art and Guqin music.

Liu Chenghua (2000), The expression of Guqin, analyzes the ways to realize the musical expression of Guqin as a traditional instrument from three aspects: creating deep effect, introverted strength and comparative texture. It is believed that precisely because of its strong musical expression, Guqin can be valued by the literati who represent the mainstream of Chinese culture.

Xu Jian (1980), Comment on Magic Secret Music, first sorts out the writing process of the book, and then summarizes the music into four aspects: the character, the nature, the ancient and the myth, and analyzes the title and title of these songs. At the same time, according to the details of the repertoire arrangement, the catalogue, the title and the end of the score, the music in the book is divided into three categories: tune, tone and manipulation, which are studied respectively. The last part of the article also analyzes the characteristics of the fingering and tune in The Magic Secret Spectrum, affirming the precious value of the score.

Yi hongshu (1988), Dialectics of Guqin Shows, introduces and analyzes Zhao Yili’s Gesture spectrum and The Right-Hand Method of Playing the Guqin in detail, sorts out the formation process of reduced character spectrum, and analyzes the

evolution process of Guqin fingering with Cao Rou's reduced character spectrum, Tang Chen Zhuo finger method and Tang Chen Jushi finger method as typical examples.

Luo Wen (2000), A comparative study on the Version of Guqin Song While discussing the writing background of the music, made a comparative analysis of the existing music from the aspects of tone, body structure, rotation characteristics and performance characteristics.

Zhang Bin (2006), The Guqin Culture and Literature of the Song Dynasty, the doctoral dissertation based on the special historical and cultural background of the Song Dynasty, reveals the unique aesthetic characteristics and cultural implication of the Guqin art in this era through the study of the literature of the Song Dynasty.

6.3 Overview of Research Results on Guqin Studies in Zhengzhou, Henan Province

6.3.1 Three articles about Henan regional related music scores

Zhao Chunting (2009), "The Evolution of Ming Dynasty Court Guqin Music through the Collection of Guqin Scores Compiled by Three Ming Dynasty Eunuchs" starts with three aspects: the Guqin scores compiled by the three Ming Dynasty eunuchs, the relationship between the Ming Dynasty eunuchs and court Guqin music, and the evolution of Ming Dynasty court Guqin music reflected in the scores. The article examines these three aspects by analyzing and studying the sources of the three Guqin scores, the compilers of the scores, and the Guqin pieces included in the scores. It then discusses the origins of the relationship between the Ming Dynasty court Guqin music and eunuchs, as well as the evolution and development of Ming Dynasty court Guqin music. The article provides insights into the evolution and development of the Guqin music scene in Henan.

Xu Ping (2017), In the Ming dynasty fan king Guqin spectrum research. This paper mainly starts from the Guqin scores compiled by the kings of the Ming Dynasty, and then discusses the relationship between the Guqin scores of the five clan kings by combing the Guqin theories and Guqin songs published in the Guqin scores of the five clan kings.

Zhang Zhen (2018), The bamboo seven sages of the artistic value of Guqin culture journal. This paper starts from five aspects: the origin of Guqin, the cultural characteristics and current situation of Guqin, the seven sages of bamboo forest and

Guqin, the Zhongzhou Guqin style and the artistic value of the seven sages of the bamboo forest, mainly taking the seven sages of the bamboo forest in the Wei and Jin dynasties as the research object, starting from the origin of the Guqin, and leading to the historical status of the development of Guqin culture. Furthermore, the influence of the Zhongzhou Guqin genre and the Seven Sages of Bamboo Forest in the Guqin culture and art during the Wei and Jin dynasties is discussed.

6.3.2 Three articles about Zhongzhou Guqin Style

Chen Lina (2012), Guqin ‘Zhongzhou Guqin Genr’ is slightly examined. Through the question of “Zhongzhou Guqin style”, the precursors of the Zhongzhou Guqin style and the decline of the Zhongzhou Guqin style, the Guqin people in the Zhongzhou region from the pre-Guqin to the Song Dynasty and the representative Guqin scores of the Zhongzhou Guqin Genre in the late Ming and early Guqing dynasties and the Qianlong period were briefly introduced, and finally introduced the modern Zhongzhou Guqin people.

Cao Xiaoqing (2014), A preliminary study on the history and artistic style of the Zhongzhou Guqin style. Through the formation process of the Zhongzhou Guqin style and the two major aspects of Guqin scores, Guqin players, Guqin music and artistic style, the development of Zhongzhou Guqin has been talked about since the pre-Guqin period, and it is divided into three peak periods of development. The representative pianists of these periods and the Guqing dynasty Zhongzhou Guqin style pianists were introduced, and then the six Zhongzhou Guqin style Guqin scores were briefly introduced. He also introduced the Guqin music in the six Guqin Schools, and analyzed the key and melody of the Guqin song “Pingsha Falling Goose” published in three of the Guqin scores. After that, the fingering, artistic aesthetics, and special notation in the Guqin score were studied, and finally the relationship between the Guqin and the person in the “Essentials of Guqin Learning and Practice” was sorted out.

Huo Kun (2016), Zhongzhou Genre of Guqin’s Yingyang Guqin score. Briefly introduces the contents of the Yingyang Guqin score, such as the composer of the Guqin score and the collected Guqin music.

6.3.3 Two master’s theses in section

Wang Xiaoting (2011), Guqin home, theorist Ding Jiyuan research. Article mainly around the modern Henan Guqin home Ding Jiyuan discusses, the full text is

divided into four chapters, from Ding Jiyuan in Guqin music, research, yan le le music research, baishi Taoist music research, discusses Ding Jiyuan contributions in the Guqin music and music theory, etc.

Ru Yi (2020), *Guqin Hai* traces the origin of the great elegance “Music of Lou Guqin along the Road”. “Da Ya” to play the postscript Mainly focuses on the Guqin music “Daya” included in the Guqing Dynasty. The full text is divided into five chapters. The first chapter mainly introduces “Music of Lou Guqin along the Road” and its researcher. The second to fourth chapters mainly study the music, tone and composition of the music “Da ya” contained in Yanlou Guqin Music. Discuss the music, melody and composing process of the Guqin music “Da Ya”, and discuss the many opinions generated in the composition of the music.

I have collected nearly 30 relevant papers, and through literature review, the researcher mainly analyzed the research results of ancient Guqin in the whole country and Henan region. It was found that the existing historical materials on ancient Guqin are very rich and complete, but previous studies on Guqin music theory and its performance aesthetics were often too focused, mostly on research on certain periods, Guqin scores, Guqin styles, and Guqin players. However, research on Guqin schools from a regional perspective is relatively weak. In the systematic sorting, collation, comparison, and induction of ancient Guqin literature in Henan region, the current research on Guqin music and Guqin schools in Henan region is relatively weak, and research results that deeply explore its music ontology are extremely rare. In recent years, research on ancient Guqin music culture has not only received widespread attention from scholars in the Guqin and music fields, but also in the entire social and cultural field. Compared with the research results and methods of other humanities disciplines, further broadening the academic horizons, enriching research methods, strengthening research depth and expanding research coverage, and improving the academic content of research results by conducting regional Guqin history review, Guqin piece analysis, and introduction of Guqin players and Guqin styles, exploring and constructing a Guqin music cultural research system with contemporary music disciplinary characteristics.

Chapter III

Research Methods

This chapter describes the research methodology used in the study, including the criteria for selecting the study area and informants, as well as the process of designing the questionnaire and interview.

1. Research Scope
 - 1.1 Scope of Content
 - 1.2 Scope of Research Site
 - 1.3 Scope of Time
 - 1.4 Methodology
2. Research process
 - 2.1 Research tools
 - 2.2 Data Collection
 - 2.3 Data Management
 - 2.4 Data Analysis

1. Research Scope

1.1 Scope of Content

This part includes the construction of history and development of the Guqin Wangji School, the musical characteristics research and transmission process of the Guqin Wangji School.

1.2 Scope of Research Site:

Henan has a long and rich history of Guqin study, with a large number of Guqin scores published and a concentrated group of Guqin players formed.

However, the development of the Henan Guqin music was interrupted in the mid-1930s after the appearance of Guqin schools. After the year 2000, Henan Guqin culture began to revive, and the Guqin Wangji School emerged and quickly grew.

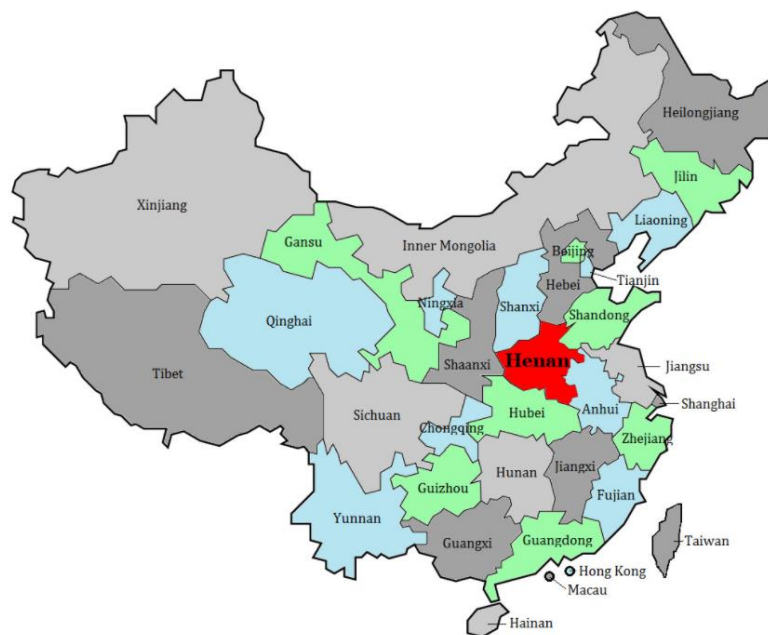


Figure 24. Map of Henan

Source: <https://chinafolio.com/provinces/guangxi-province> (2023)

1.3 Scope of Time

From March 2021 to December 2022

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Observation Method

Observation method refers to a method where researchers directly observe the study subjects using their senses and auxiliary tools based on certain research objectives, research outlines, or observation forms to obtain data. In the field of humanities and social sciences, field surveys conducted around the research objects are called observation method in the methodological framework of disciplines such as cultural anthropology. On the one hand, researchers obtain information through verbal communication, and on the other hand, they obtain information through observation.

In this article, the observation method is mainly used to conduct interviews and exchanges with the musicians, teachers, and learners of Guqin Wangji School, to understand and sort out the history and development of Guqin Wangji School, and to prepare for the first research objective. The activities and performances of Guqin Wangji School, recordings of their performances, and interviews in their classes are

organized to sort out their Guqin music and playing techniques, and to collect information for the second research objective. Effective information is accumulated for the third research objective, which is the transmission process of Guqin Wangji School, through verbal communication and observation to obtain valid information.

1.4.2 Literature analysis

Literature analysis is a method of researching a topic by collecting and analyzing literature, and is suitable for qualitative research. In this study, literature analysis mainly includes two aspects: first, collecting and analyzing literature on the development of Guqin in Henan Province to understand its history and background; second, sorting and analyzing actual data on the history and development of Guqin Wangji School to understand its development process and key factors. Literature analysis can provide reliable basis and support for research by collecting a large amount of information and data.

In this study, a large amount of literature on the development of Guqin in Henan Province was collected and analyzed by searching library and online databases, including historical literature, musicology research, and cultural anthropology research. By analyzing these literatures, the history and characteristics of Guqin development in Henan Province can be understood, providing theoretical basis for the research.

At the same time, the researcher also sorted and analyzed actual data on Guqin Wangji School, including its development stages, number and composition of musicians and students, and school activities. By analyzing these data, the development process and key factors of the school can be understood, providing references for the school's development and transmission. In addition, the researcher also selected three works for analysis of basic, intermediate, and advanced techniques to understand the elements and teaching methods of the school's transmission, and provide feasible suggestions and plans for the school's development and transmission.

1.5 Key informants

1.5.1 The criteria for selecting key informants are :

- 1) They were born and raised in Henan Province and is a local.
- 2) They have knowledge of the history and development of the Guqin.

3) They are important figure in the transmission of the Henan Guqin style and a key member of the Henan Guqin Association. He has made outstanding contributions to the transmission and development of Guqin music.

4) They are of the founders of the Guqin Wangji School.

Based on the selection criteria mentioned above, the main sources of information that I have chosen are Han Tingyao and Luo Suli. This is because Luo Suli founded the Guqin Wangji School, and he is also a successor of Han Tingyao, who is a third and fourth generation disciple of the Jiuyi Style.

1.5.2 The criteria for selecting casual informants are :

1) They have experience in teaching and playing the Guqin at the Guqin Wangji School;

2) They have studied the Guqin at the Guqin Wangji School.

Based on the above selection criteria, the main information providers I have chosen are the Guqin teachers of the Guqin Wangji School: Cheng Fang, Wang Yue, Ren Shizhou, Liu Xuran, and Ding Xiangyang.

1.5.3 Luo Suli



Figure 25. Luo Suli

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2022)

The current president of the Henan Guqin Research Association resides in Zhengzhou, Henan. He studied under Han Tingyao, the fourth-generation musician of the Jiuyi Style, and founded the Guqin Wangji School.

1.5.4 Han Tingyao



Figure 26. Han Tingyao

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2022)

Born in 1934 in Beijing and currently living in Henan, He is a third-generation disciple of the Jiuyi Style of Guqin and studied under the renowned Guqin master Guan Zhonghang.

1.5.5 Casual and general informants

Table 2. Shows the statistics of casual informants

Name	Gender	Birth year	Site	Profession	Positional title
Cheng Fang	female	1974	Zhengzhou, Henan	Guqin performer	Professor
Wang Yue,	female	1970	Zhengzhou, Henan	Guqin performer	Professor
Ren Shizhou,	female	1987	Zhengzhou, Henan	Guqin teacher	lecturer
Liu Xuran,	female	1982	Zhengzhou, Henan	Guqin teacher	lecturer
Ding Xiangyang.	male	1989	Zhengzhou, Henan	Guqin teacher	lecturer

Table 3. Shows the statistics of general informants

Name	Gender	Birth year	Site	Profession	Positional title
Luo Jintian	male	2013	Zhengzhou, Henan	Guqin student	Musician
Guan Xiaoyan,	female	1991	Zhengzhou, Henan	Guqin student	Enthusiast
Ma Chenchang,	female	2005	Zhengzhou, Henan	Guqin student	Apprentice
Sha Chenyi,	female	1953	Zhengzhou, Henan	Guqin student	Apprentice
Liu Dongyang.	male	1977	Zhengzhou, Henan	Guqin student	Enthusiast

2. Research Process

2.1 Research tools

Field research is an important research method in this dissertation. The research tools of this paper are mainly interview method and observation method. The researcher designs corresponding interview forms and observation forms according to different interview objects and observation objects. Process of making the questionnaire.

- 1) Design questions based on research objectives.
- 2) Checking the appropriate content.
- 3) Bring it to the advisor to examine.
- 4) Be modified according to advisor editing.
- 5) Modified according to specialist advice before being used in the field.

2.2 Data collection

In the process of data collection, the researcher collects data based on the research objectives. First, data collection is conducted on the historical development of the Guqin Wangji School. Initially, literature retrieval is conducted to collect preliminary information, followed by interviews with the teachers and students of the Guqin Wangji School to collect oral data. Finally, interviews with peripheral members of the school are conducted to collect data on the historical development of the school.

Second, data is collected on the techniques of the Guqin Wangji School. Initially, literature retrieval is conducted to collect preliminary information, and attention is also given to conducting field investigations and interviews with students, teachers, and others to obtain more comprehensive data. Third, data is collected on the transmission process of the Guqin Wangji School. Initially, literature retrieval is conducted to extract literature data, followed by field investigations and interviews to collect oral data. This is to prepare for data management in the future.

2.3 Data Management

In data management, the researcher conducts data management based on the research objectives. Firstly, the historical data collected is managed. The data is classified according to different time periods and summarized for different data to prepare for data analysis. Secondly, the technical data of the Guqin Wangji School is managed. Different techniques are classified and summarized for data analysis preparation. Thirdly, the data management of the transmission process. Firstly, the collected data is classified, and the information of different stages and types is summarized for data analysis preparation.

2.3.1 Video

The research objective is to establish the basis for video data management. Firstly, according to the first research objective, the video data is classified and transformed into text data. Secondly, based on the second research objective, the video data is also transformed into text data, which is then submitted to key informants to confirm whether the text data conforms to the actual situation of the Guqin. Thirdly, for video management during the transmission process, the video data is transformed into text data, and relevant viewpoints of different groups of people are summarized and categorized, providing a data foundation for subsequent data analysis.

2.3.2 Books

Book data management is based on research objectives to classify book data. Some books analyze the development process of the Guqin Wangji School, some analyze the performance techniques of the Guqin Wangji School, and some analyze the transmission process of the Guqin Wangji School. Through book data management, relevant literature data can be extracted to prepare for later data analysis.

2.3.3 Audio

According to the research objectives, the corresponding audio materials are classified and managed, and then converted into text data for data analysis. First, for the management of audio data related to the historical development of Guqin Wangji School, the audio data should be classified and converted into text data to prepare for later data analysis. Second, for the management of audio data related to “Wangji” School’s playing Guqin techniques, the audio data should be converted into text data according to the research objectives, and the converted text data should be saved to support later data analysis. Third, the audio data should be classified according to the research objectives and then converted into text data to prepare for later data analysis.

2.3.4 Musical Scores

Data There are 72 pieces of ancient Chinese music scores that were transcribed by the Guqin Wangji School.

2.3.5 Image Data

There are over 1000 photos that include portraits, teaching photos, music score photos, activity photos, performance photos, and more.

2.3.6 Electronic Data

There are 15 types of electronic resources, including electronic music scores, electronic literature materials, online music scores, online photos, and more.

The researchers analyze all the data based on the collected grouping information.

2.4 Data Analysis

In data analysis, the researcher uses ethnomusicology to analyze the data based on the results of data management, focusing on the development process of the Guqin Wangji School and the impact of social factors on its development. Through data analysis, the researcher prepares for drafting the fourth chapter of the dissertation.

For the data analysis of the Guqin Wangji School techniques, the researcher relies on the results of data management. By interviewing relevant informants and conducting a classification analysis, the researcher can gain a more intuitive understanding of the different categories of Guqin Wangji School techniques and presentation styles.

For the data analysis of Guqin Wangji School transmission process, the researcher uses the results of data management. The data from different transmission

stages is analyzed, focusing on the elements, functions, and specific transmission processes. Through data analysis, the researcher draws conclusions to prepare for the writing.

2.5 Data presentation

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Literature Review

Chapter III: Research Methods

Chapter IV: The History and Development of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China

Chapter V: The musical characteristics of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China

Chapter VI: The transmission process of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China

Chapter VII: Conclusions, discussions, and suggestions



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Chapter IV

The History and Development of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China

This chapter mainly applies field research and literature review methods to analyze the history and development of the Guqin Wangji School, and to sort out the historical development of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan Province.

1. The history of the Guqin Wangji School
2. The development of the Guqin Wangji School
3. Summary

1. The history of the Guqin Wangji School:

The Guqin Wangji School is one of the most rapidly developing and well-known Guqin schools in the Henan region, established in 2007 by its founder, Luo Suli. Luo Suli, as a representative musician of the Henan Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage “Guqin Art”, the business director of the Huaxia Ancient Music Orchestra of the Henan Museum, the president of the Henan Guqin Research Association, and the president of the Guqin Professional Committee of the Henan National Orchestra school, has been committed to the professional transmission of Guqin art. Over the years, he has trained a large number of outstanding professional Guqin players. With the support of the local government, the size of the school’s Guqin has continued to grow in recent years.

1.1 Preparation of the Guqin Wangji School (2000-2007)

Luo Suli began working in the field of Guqin in 2000. While studying Guqin performance, he began exploring the craft of making Guqin. In 2003, he founded the Hu Ming Guqin Fang workshop specializing in handmade Guqin. Each Guqin was personally crafted by Luo Suli. With years of performance experience and comprehensive research and practice in Guqin making, he strived for perfection in every aspect of the process, from material selection, workmanship to lacquer art. The resulting sound of the Guqin was clear and mellow, with a serene and distant tone, while the shape was antique and reserved with classic style. For many years, it has been

widely collected by Guqin enthusiasts from all over the world. During this period, Luo Suli began to have a studio to showcase his Guqin, attracting many Guqin enthusiasts to come and learn about his Guqin. During the process of buying Guqin, many enthusiasts learned about Luo Suli's Guqin techniques and hoped that he would have his own Guqin school.

1.2 Founding Process of the Guqin Wangji School (2007-2009)

1.2.1 Original Intention of Establishment

During the interview, when asked about the initial intention for founding the Guqin school, Luo Suli mentioned his first encounter with the Guqin.

Han Tingyao said Luo Suli came to me to learn the Guqin, and I asked him why he wanted to learn the Guqin. He told me that he majored in vocal music in college, but he had always wanted to learn a musical instrument. After graduating, he started working at the Henan Museum's Huaxia Ancient Music Orchestra. When he heard the sound of the Guqin for the first time in the orchestra, he felt that it was something he loved and began to learn to play the Guqin. Without a musical instrument, he found a way to make his own. He persisted in this way and I felt that he had a special connection with the Guqin, so I decided to take him as my disciple.

This is the charm of the Guqin, and its impact on people is heartfelt. Afterwards, Luo Suli began his journey of learning the Guqin, studying under both Li Mingzhong and Ding Jiyan, and exploring Guqin-making while studying Guqin performance. Luo Suli has been engaged in Guqin-related work since 2000. In 2007, he initiated the establishment of the Guqin Wangji School, which started in a studio located in a residential area. The studio has three Guqin rooms with Guqins, paintings, and calligraphy hanging on the walls. One of the rooms is furnished with a tea table, flowers, and incense burner. The studio brings together various functions, such as transmission and gathering activities. The Guqin Wangji School aims to inherit and promote the Chinese Guqin culture, and to enable more people to appreciate the music of the instrument. According to the founder, Luo Suli, Guqin art is an important part of Chinese traditional culture, with a profound historical and cultural significance. However, due to the fast-paced lifestyle and diversified entertainment options in modern school, people's understanding and awareness of Guqin culture is insufficient.

Therefore, he hopes to establish the Guqin school to pass down the culture of the Guqin and to help more people understand and appreciate the music of the instrument.

1.2.2 The origin of “Wangji”

Luo Suli said, “wangji” is a Taoist term that means eliminating the mentality of being cunning and crafty. I have a Guqin called “Wangji”. In fact, the process of learning Guqin also helps me grow as a person. The Guqin contains many views on the unity of man and nature and on life. It is the same with being a person. By having a calm and peaceful state of mind and removing restlessness, one can better reflect on oneself and gain insight. The reason why I like the Guqin and am willing to constantly practice this traditional culture is that it indeed contains profound philosophical concepts. In the process of continuously learning Guqin, we constantly gain sublimation and insight.

Han Tingyao said, “Wangji” is a term derived from Taoist philosophy, which means to eliminate the heart of cunning and return to simplicity, returning to nature. In ancient times, practitioners often used “Wangji” as a kind of mental state in their practice, achieving the state of being focused, inner calmness and simplicity by abandoning the complexities of worldly schemes, as well as the pursuit of material gains. In the art of the ancient Guqin, “Wangji” is also extended to a state of mind, which is to play the ancient Guqin to elevate one's state of mind, not affected by external interference, to settle one's emotions and thoughts, and to achieve inner calmness and peace. When Little Luo studied the Guqin with me, he was more persistent than other students. At that time, he did not have his own Guqin yet, but when he sat at the Guqin, he was like a different person, he couldn't stop playing. I think this is also the reason why he named his Guqin school “Wangji”.

The Guqin Wangji School was originally just a place for Luo Suli to practice and make Guqin instruments. As his research on Guqin-making deepened, he moved the “Huming Guqinfang” to Xinmi, which made Guqin-making more convenient. Naturally, this became a place for Luo Suli and his Guqin friends to communicate and showcase their Guqin-making. Before 2009, it was not open to the public, and there was no recruitment or promotion. It was just a gathering place for friends. However, as more and more people came to visit Luo Suli, in 2009, the Guqin Wangji School was officially established as an organization dedicated to the transmission of Guqin art. It

opened its doors to the public and the number of students learning Guqin rapidly increased to 87, with a total of 500 participants in training and performances. The Guqin Wangji School is a cultural space that embodies the lifestyle of Guqin, integrating creation, communication, and transmission. The aim of the Guqin School is to incorporate the Guqin lifestyle into the exchange of learning and to promote the interaction between the experience of learning Guqin and other forms of art. It is committed to the joint transmission of Guqin culture by enthusiasts and regularly organizes public welfare activities related to Guqin throughout the year.

1.3 Development stages of the Guqin Wangji School (2009-2022)

From 2009 to 2022, Luo Suli has trained over 30 disciples, including 3 inheritors at the municipal level, 2 inheritors at the county level, and 1 inheritor at the district level. The “Wangji” has established five “Luo Suli Guqin Art” studios in different locations, namely Jinshui District of Zhengzhou City, Beilonghu in Zhengdong New District, Xinmi City, and Xingyang City. They have organized more than 100 special concerts and facilitated the opening of 15 independent Guqin art studios by their students. During this period, the Guqin Wangji School has also established several new branch institutions and partnerships in different regions of Henan. These collaborations have provided opportunities and facilitated the society’s expansion into new markets. In addition, the Guqin Wangji School actively participated in various online cultural activities and events, including live performances, lectures, and forums. Through cooperation with other cultural organizations and platforms, the Guqin Wangji School expanded its influence and enhanced its reputation in the cultural and artistic fields.

In 2010, the Huming Guqin Workshop was invited to participate in the 3rd “China Guqin Youlan Yangchun” and the 2nd National Guqin Mingfang Instrument Exhibition. They were honored with the title of “Outstanding Instrument Workshop.” In 2012, during the National Day holiday, the Henan Museum held the exhibition “Harmony of the Flourishing Age: Symphony of Heaven and Earth - transmission and Innovative Art of Chinese Culture,” which showcased twelve classic-style Guqin instruments made by Luo Suli from the Huming Guqin Workshop. In 2015, the Henan Guqin Research Association was initiated and established, and Luo Suli was honored as its president. Since 2018, they have been hosting the Guqin grading examinations for the Guqin Professional Committee of the Henan Ethnic Orchestra Association

annually. In November 2016, they were invited to participate in the “2016 2nd Weifang Guqin Art and National Guqin Academic Symposium.” In April 2017, they took part in the co-hosting of the “China (Kaifeng) Qingming Cultural Festival, 1st Chinese Guqin Masters’ Gathering Cultural Week Concert and Seminar.” In October 2017, they were invited by the Singapore-China Friendship Association and Nanyang Technological University to hold the “Huaxia Zhengsheng: Appreciation of Guqin, Xiao, and Strings” concert and deliver a special lecture in Singapore. They also participated in the “Gathering Together under the Same Moon: A Concert of Elegant Music” held at the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre Theater. In January 2019, they were invited by the Nanyang Technological University Chinese Heritage Centre to host the “New Year Music Appreciation: Guqin, Aesthetics of Sound and Humanities” event. On January 25, 2019, they were invited to participate in the 5th National Charity Spring Festival Gala. In November 2019, they hosted the “Eagle City Melodies” - Pingdingshan City's First Guqin Art Festival. On August 15, 2020, they held the Gongyi Cultural Public Lecture “Silk and Paulownia: Luo Suli Guqin Concert” at the Gongyi Cultural Center. On September 13, 2020, they held the “Master's Appointment: Stepping into the Art Palace Series Elegant Melodies of Clear Strings: Luo Suli Guqin Concert” at the Henan Art Center Concert Hall. On May 29, 2021, they were invited to participate in the “Listening to the Grand Era of Guqin Music, Celebrating the Centenary Birthday” Henan Luohe Thousand-Person Guqin and Zheng Performance, organized by the Propaganda Department of the Luohe Municipal Committee. From October 1 to 3, 2021, they were invited to participate in the 2nd China (Guqin) String and Song Conference and National Famous Studio Guqin Exhibition. On October 31, 2021, they held the “Huaxia Zhengsheng - Dayoutaicheng Guqin & Xiangexin Appreciation” event as part of the activities to connect and guide social organizations in serving workers at the Zhengzhou Workers University.

The Guqin Wangji School actively participates in various online cultural activities and events, including live performances, lectures, and forums. Through collaborations with other cultural organizations and platforms, the Guqin Wangji School has expanded its influence and enhanced its reputation in the cultural and artistic community. In 2020, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in China led to the suspension of many performance activities, which also affected the development of

Guqin in Henan province. Many Guqin school had to cease their operations due to the pandemic-induced restrictions. Faced with similar challenges, the Guqin Wangji School began exploring new teaching approaches and introduced an online course platform, enabling students to learn Guqin anytime, anywhere. The online courses, video tutorials, and other interactive features provided a convenient and flexible learning and practice method for Guqin learners.

Through the analysis of the history of the Guqin Wangji School mentioned above, it can be seen that its efforts to promote Guqin performance and traditional culture have been widely recognized and appreciated, and it has become a leading organization in the promotion and education of Henan culture.

2. Development of Guqin Wangji School

2.1 Personal development of the founder of Guqin Wangji School

Luo Suli is a representative musician of Henan Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage “Guqin Art”, the General Manager of Huaxia Ancient Music Ensemble of Henan Museum, the President of Henan Guqin Research Association, the President of the Guqin Professional Committee of the Henan Ethnic Orchestra Society, an artistic advisor and visiting scholar at the Chinese Heritage Centre at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, a professional level evaluator for Guqin practitioners (teaching position) at the Talent Center of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and a master of Zhengzhou Arts and Crafts. He studied under teacher’s Li Mingzhong and Ding Jiyuan, and later became an apprentice of Han Tingyao and Zhang Zisheng, the fourth-generation musicians of the Jiuyi Style.

Luo Suli founded the “Huming Qin Fang” workshop in 2003, specializing in handmade Guqin instruments. In 2007, he established the “Wangji” Schools’ Guqin, which has trained numerous professional and exceptional Guqin players over the years. He has been invited on multiple occasions to visit regions and countries such as Hong Kong, the United States, Thailand, South Korea, Turkey, Cambodia, Italy, and Singapore, engaging in cultural exchanges and showcasing the artistic charm of Guqin to audiences both domestically and internationally.

2.2 Composition and development of Guqin Wangji School members

In 2007, the membership of Guqin Wangji School was only 10 people. However, with the revival and prosperity of traditional culture, especially after the Guqin was recognized as an intangible cultural heritage by the United Nations, the development of Guqin Wangji School in Henan province has been thriving. The number of school members has reached 87, with 500 individuals participating in training and performances. As an amateur Guqin school, their efforts in promoting and popularizing Guqin music have been remarkable, contributing to the revival of Guqin music in Henan province.

In 2009, there were 87 registered members in the Guqin Wangji School. Out of these, 14 members discontinued their Guqin studies at a later stage, while the rest remained committed to learning Guqin in the School. However, due to various constraints such as transportation and work, and the relatively loose management of the School, not all members were able to participate in every Guqin gathering. Not all members are able to attend the various school activities due to transportation, work, and other constraints, and the school's daily management is relatively loose. In order to have a more specific and clear understanding and analysis of the composition of the school members, the researchers conducted a statistical analysis of the basic information of 35 members who are currently participating in school activities due to the epidemic, based on the registration form of the club members. A random sampling questionnaire survey was conducted, with 35 questionnaires distributed and 30 returned, of which 30 were valid. The specific content includes the respondents' basic information, learning experiences in other art forms, motivation for learning the Guqin, their current status of learning the Guqin, and their achievements in learning the Guqin. The data is as follows:

2.2.1 Geographic Distribution

The members of the Guqin school are mainly from Zhengzhou, with a few members from other counties and cities in Henan Province and other provinces. This shows that although transportation is extremely convenient and developed, the school's activities are still largely limited by geography. In various activities of the school, there are still few Guqin friends who can leave work and daily life to participate in Guqin meetings in other places. The strong regional limitations in the school's daily Guqin music activities also make Guqin music exchanges and transmission still reflect the

regional characteristics of Guqin music centered on Zhengzhou. Due to living conditions, communication and learning among local Guqin players are still the main ways of contemporary Guqin music activities. In a normalized environment of Guqin music activities, it is easy to cause the homogeneity of Guqin players in Guqin music style and Guqin music concept within the same school, which is also a suitable environment for the development of Guqin style.

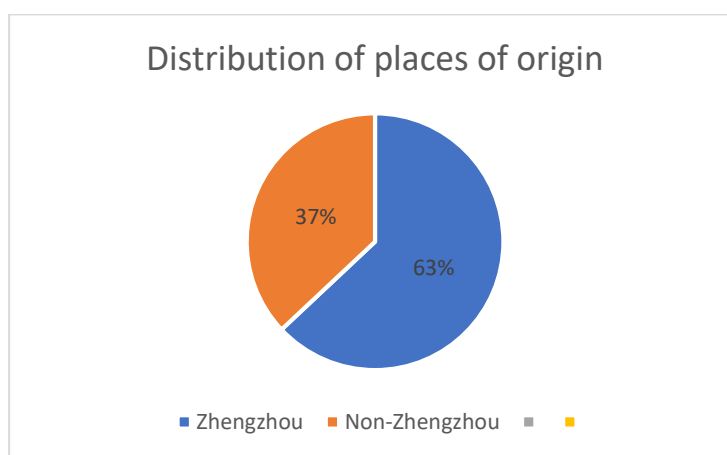


Figure 27. The distribution of the places of origin of the members of the Guqin Wangji School
Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

2.2.2 Gender Composition

Looking at the gender composition, there are currently 22 female members and only 8 male members, which is very different from the historical situation in which male Guqin players were the main body in China. The change in the gender composition of members in the Guqin Wangji School also shows that women have become a strong force in contemporary Guqin music, and gender differences will inevitably have a certain impact on Guqin music aesthetics, performance, and artistic style. As more and more women begin to learn the Guqin, the literati and scholarly temperament in traditional Guqin music culture will inevitably weaken, and the traditional culture of literati in Guqin music will gradually evolve.

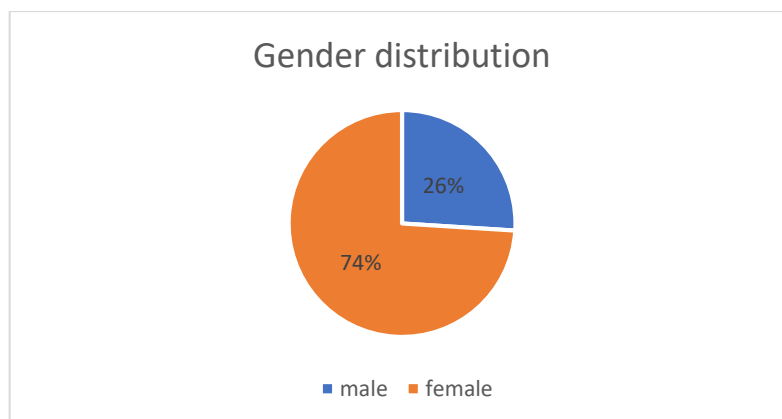


Figure 28. The gender distribution of the members of the Guqin Wangji School

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

2.2.3 Age distribution

The members of the Guqin Wangji School are mainly composed of elderly members over 60 years old and young members between 20 and 40 years old, reflecting an imbalance in age distribution. Among these two groups of Gin players, the elderly have relatively less pressure in their daily lives and have enough time and energy to learn the Guqin and cultivate their mind and spirit; the young are in a period of strong desire for knowledge accumulation and have a higher pursuit of personal cultural literacy and quality of life, so they have more enthusiasm to devote to the study of Guqin music culture.

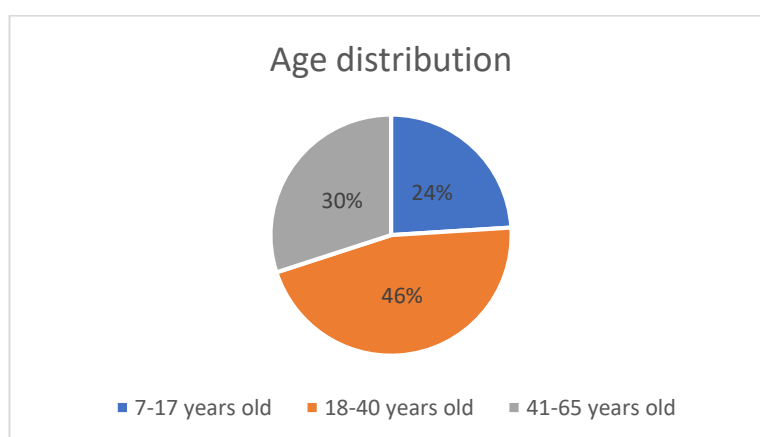


Figure 29. The age distribution of the members of the Guqin Wangji School

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

However, the situation of young people learning the Guqin is currently not ideal. Firstly, young people who lack learning and understanding of traditional culture find it difficult to deeply understand the profound traditional cultural nature and aesthetic pursuit of Guqin music. Secondly, the heavy cultural tradition of literati culture makes the situational and cultural characteristics of Guqin music culture far from the cultural psychology of young people, making it difficult to resonate with them. In addition, the teaching methods and corresponding teaching research for young people learning the Guqin are far from enough, which has led to a serious lack of young Guqin players. In November 2022, the Guqin Wangji School began to try out specialized work for young people learning the Guqin, with the main learning target being the son of Luo Suli, in order to pass on the tradition while exploring teaching methods for young people.

2.2.4 Educational background

Looking at the current educational background of the members of the Guqin schools, those with college degrees or above are mainly the young members who are still studying. Considering the differences in age and time, it can be said that the overall cultural level of the members of the Guqin Wangji School is relatively high. This also indicates that in modern school, Guqin music still retains some characteristics of literati music, with high cultural groups as the main behavioral subject.

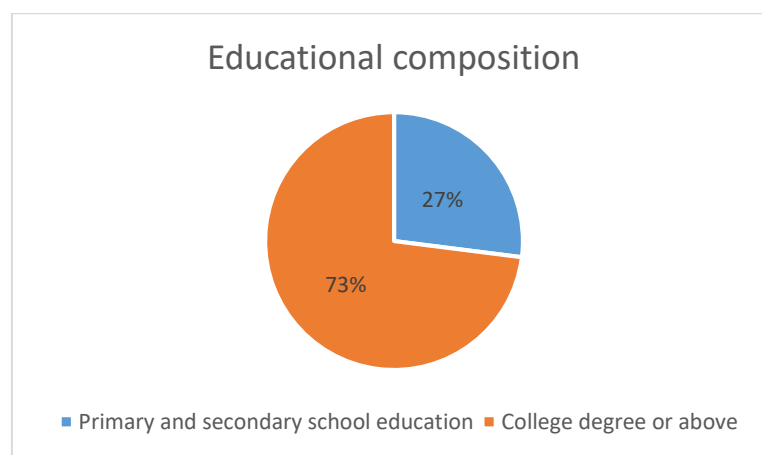


Figure 30. The age distribution of the members of the Guqin Wangji School

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

2.2.5 Occupational composition

Looking at the occupational composition of members in the Guqin Wangji School, the majority of Guqin players are non-music professionals. There are 8 students and the rest are employees and teachers, and there are no music professionals in the school. The Guqin school has no restrictions on enrollment and anyone interested in learning the Guqin can apply. This indicates that the Guqin player community in contemporary school still has the characteristic of “non-professionalization” and the purpose of learning the Guqin is for self-cultivation and personal enrichment, and generally does not involve utilitarian motives. However, in terms of techniques mastery, non-professional Guqin players are far inferior to professional ones. This means that the community of Guqin music musicians still embodies the “non-professionalization” characteristic, which is also a tradition of Guqin music. Generally speaking, both ancient and modern Guqin players are mostly non-professionals and would not perform in any paid performance like those who play the Xiao, Sheng or Di.

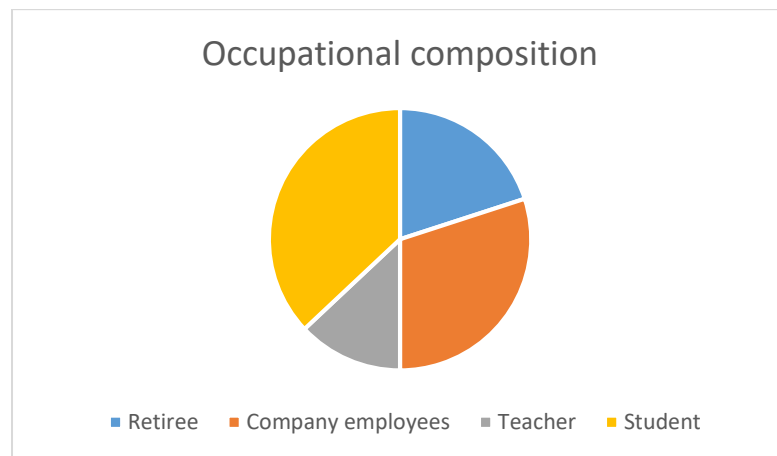


Figure 31. The Occupational composition of the members of the Guqin Wangji School

Source: Xiaobei Zhu (2023)

From the perspective of Guqin music disseminate, the non-professional characteristic of the Guqin player community has led to the fact that the Guqin, unlike other traditional instruments, has not been fully incorporated into the school music education system and has not been widely promoted in various ways. The weak position of professional Guqin players has also led to a relatively slow process of

professionalization in the art of Guqin music. If this continues for a long time, it will have a negative impact on the transmission and development of Guqin music. Without a strong community of professional Guqin players as the main force, the musical performance of the Guqin may not be fully realized, and this may lead to the Guqin being less appreciated in terms of its artistic value.

2.3 Development of the music activities in Guqin Wangji School

According to field survey data, the Guqin study activities of the Guqin Wangji School are as follows: salon events, lectures on Guqin study, concerts, domestic and international conferences, and public welfare activities.

Based on field survey data, the incomplete statistics of music activities in Guqin Wangji School from 2009 to 2022:

Table 4. 2009-2022 The “Wangji” School’s Music Activities Statistics

Time	Category	Topic	Remark
2009	Yaji	January, Wuhan Iron and Steel 2009 New Year Collection	Commonweal
	Lecture	May, Lecture at Nanyang Normal University	Luo Suli
2010	Concert	January ,2010 New Year's Concert	Luo Suli and Guqin teacher of the Guqin Wangji School
	Yaji	August, Luohe Yaji Guqin Exhibition	Commonweal
2011	Lecture	January, Nanyang University of Technology gave a lecture at the Chinese Pavilion	Singapi, Luosuli
	Yaji	September, Xin Mi Jiuli Mountain Collection	Commonweal
2012	Concert	January, Guqin and guzheng music appreciation meeting	Singapore Esplanade

	Training	September, Mid-Autumn Festival Guqin Class	Guqin Wangji School, 100 RMB per person
2013	Public welfare activities	January, The 5th National Charity Spring Festival Gala	Zhengzhou TV Station, Luo Suli
	Training	October, Yunnan training	Kunming, 1500 RMB per person
	Lecture	November, Pingdingshan Guqin Art Festival	Commonweal
2014	Concert	December, Hebi lecture concert	Luosuli, Commonweal
	Concert	December Hua County Concert	Guqin Wangji School, Commonweal
2015	Concert	January, Shangqiu Double Order Guqin Academy concert	Luo suli
	Public welfare activities	June, Xinzheng City Culture and Heritage Day	Commonweal
2016	Concert	January, Hongtang Guqin Concert	Commonweal
	Training	May, "Wangji" training class	Guqin Wangji School, 100 RMB per person
	Lecture	August, Gongyi Cultural Center lecture	Luo Suli Commonweal
2017	Consert	September, Guqingxian Yayun - Luo Suli Ancient Guqin String Song Concert	Commonweal
	Consert	December, Pingdingshan concert	Commonweal
2018	Conference	January Xian Ge Yi Xiang Press Conference	Luo suli

	Lecture	June, Guqin Exhibition in Hebi Lecture	Commonweal
	Lecture	September the “Thousand-year-old Guqin Talk” lecture at the museum	Commonweal
2019	Consert	May, Luohe Guzheng and Guqin Music Concert	Commonweal
	Exhibition	October, the Second Xiang Festival and Guqin Exhibition	Guqin Wangji School
2020	Consert	Lean on Strings and Enjoy the Beauty of Luo Suli’s Guqin Art	Luo suli
		April, Interview with Zhengzhou Radio and Television Station	Luo suli
2021	Consert	May, Guqingming-themed Ancient Music Cloud Listening	Commonweal
	Consert	June, Talks on the Origins of the Guqin	Commonweal
	Exhibition	August, Xiaoxiang Guqin Culture Exhibition.	Commonweal
2022		July, Luo Sulie Guqin Art Museum (Dongrun Taihe Hall) opened	Guqin Wangji School
	Consert	September, he Mid-Autumn Festival Guqin appreciation event	Commonweal
	Yaji	October, Luming Mountain Villa Guqin Yaji	Commonweal

Although belonging to the Henan Guqin Research Association, the main activities of the Guqin Wangji School include Yaji (雅集) of Guqin players, Guqin performances, Guqin study exchanges, and Guqin music transmission. As a mass organization, like other spontaneously formed groups, the Guqin Wangji School lacks government funding and relies mainly on membership fees, Guqin teaching and

performance income, donations from Guqin friends, and some corporate sponsorship to sustain various activities. The school's daily gatherings are often combined with traditional Chinese folk festivals, such as the Lantern Festival, Tomb-Sweeping Day, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, Double Ninth Festival, and Year-End Gathering. The choice of traditional festivals as themes for Guqin gatherings reflects the Guqin players' identification with and pursuit of traditional culture. Traditional festivals are an important part of Chinese folk culture and have special symbolic meanings. Choosing to gather and play Guqin music with friends during traditional festivals also reflects the good wishes of Guqin players to achieve emotional integration among each other, as if they were family members. Using traditional festivals as the theme for Guqin gatherings enriches the content of the gatherings and imbues the Guqin music activities with deeper traditional cultural significance.

Daily Yaji are hosted by the Guqin school, usually at a pre-arranged time and location selected by the host, who is responsible for distributing notices to members. The notices are usually sent by mail to the members. With the rich cultural atmosphere in Zhengzhou, the Guqin school usually chooses elegant and quiet tea houses by the lake as the location for the Yaji, or sometimes chooses beautiful outdoor scenery to play the Guqin and enjoy tea. The gathering time is usually scheduled for weekends and avoids overlapping with work hours to ensure that more Guqin enthusiasts can participate. The Yaji generally starts at 9:30 in the morning, with a special lecture and related discussions first, followed by a light meal at noon and then continuing to play the Guqin and exchange ideas. The end time of the Yaji is generally flexible and subject to the participants' interest.

2.3.1 Lecture on Guqin Theory

The content of the Guqin school's Yaji is mainly focused on Guqin research and Guqin art exchange. Whenever possible, the school arranges for experts to give lectures on Guqin theory. The lecturers are mainly experienced Guqin players within the school, and sometimes other Guqin schools and well-known Guqin players from around the country are invited to give lectures as well. There is no specific limit on the content of the lectures, and the topics are free and broad.

The researcher has recorded the situations of the Guqin theory lectures in various Yaji of the Guqin Wangji School (2009-2022) as follows:

Table 5. 2009-2022 The Guqin theory lectures in various Yaji of the Guqin Wangji School

Time	Place	Activity type	Report content	Speaker
2011.08	Wangjitang	Guqin studies Communication	“Analysis of Guqin Music<Guang ling san>”	Likongyuan
2014.10	Liuxintang	Guqin studies Communication	“Analysis of Guqin Music<Liu shui>”	Zhangzisheng
2016.12	Shangqiu Concert Hall	Conference	“Guqin Basic Course”	Lishuangxu
2017.08	Zhengzhou Concert Hall	Guqin studies Communication	Zhongzhou Guqin Style transmission	Dingjiyuan
2018.03	Gongyi	Yuanxiao Guqinhui	Yuanxiao Guqinhui “Talk on Guqin Learning”	Luosuli
2019.10	Xinmi	Chongyang Guqinhu	Chongyang Guqinhui “Guqin Notation”	Chengfang
2020.04	Shengda Art Gallery	Guqingming Guqinhui	Guqingming Guqinhui “Research on the Guqin Pedagogy of Han Tingyao”	Hantingyao
2021.6	Luming Villa	Duanwu Guqinhui	“Yangguansandie of Poetry Research”	Wangyue
2022.12	Guqin Wangji School	Suimo Guqinhui	Guqin sound Guqin system	Luosuli

From the above table, it can be seen that in recent years, the Guqin Wangji School theory lectures have covered areas such as Guqin teaching, Guqin music

analysis, transcription, and Guqin theory research. The content is relatively rich and targeted, with certain learning and reference value. Through these Guqin theory lectures, it can be seen that the school attaches great importance to the study of Guqin theory. These regular Guqin theory lectures are beneficial to the improvement of the members' Guqin theory level. In addition to the Guqin theory lectures, Guqin players will also exchange and discuss recent pieces they have been practicing. Through relaxed and informal performances, Guqin friends have the opportunity to showcase, exchange, and study Guqin techniques, and in mutual learning and inspiration, jointly promote and improve.

2.3.2 Performance Events

The following is a record of the pieces played by Guqin players at the Guqin gathering on September 3, 2022:

Table 6. 2022 The Mid-Autumn Festival Guqin appreciation event i of the Guqin Wangji School

Performance format	Track name	Performers
Chao hua chui ge	“Guqing he ling”	Transcendent Blowing Band
Chao hua chui ge	“Shijing.Zhengfeng.Guqinwei”	Transcendent Blowing Band
Guqin music	“Shen ren chang”	Qian Wangcan
Guqin music	“Liu shui”	Luo Suli
Guqin song	“Guqing kong yue er ming”	Luo Suli
Guqin music	“Mei hua san nong”	Cheng Fang
Guqin music	“Pao xiu luo lan.Shui”	Wang Yue
Guqin music	“Long xiang cao”	Du Ke
Guqin music	“Ai nai”	Wang Yaozong
Guqin music	“Ping sha luo yan”	Liang Chunjie
Guqin music	“San xia chuan ge”	Wang Xiandong
Guqin song	“Wo long yin”	Luo Suli

The daily Guqin gatherings in the form of a Yaji may seem ordinary, but in fact, they hold great significance. Currently, the community for exchanging and promoting Guqin art is still relatively small, and the daily Guqin Yaji of Guqin Schools

have become the main platform for Guqin players to exchange and learn about music. In this platform constructed by the Guqin school, the Guqin players' techniques and artistry can be displayed and resonated with, achieving interaction and communication within the playing group in artistic practice. In this Guqin music environment constructed by the Guqin players, they may absorb a large amount of information and news about Guqin music, and this contributes to the improvement of their individual Guqin techniques and knowledge in a way that cannot be achieved by practicing alone in a quiet room. The various Guqin-related activities in the daily Yaji, as well as the Yaji exchange events that are similar to small-scale performances, have become the main ways of inheriting and promoting Guqin art in the Guqin Wangji School, and an important channel for many Guqin music enthusiasts to get in touch with and understand Guqin music.

2.3.3 Analysis of Activities in 2019

In addition to the regular daily Yaji, the activities of the Guqin Wangji School also include organizing and participating in various special performances and exchanges with other Guqin players and Guqin schools from other cities. These usually events are held in the form of thematic concerts or lectures. They often commemorate important events or figures in the Guqin world, reflecting the Guqin players' respect and tribute to their predecessors and their attention and support for major Guqin events. These events are usually held in concert halls or small theaters, with performance styles similar to other types of concerts, aiming to promote and promote the art of Guqin. The performers are mainly members of the Guqin school, and sometimes Guqin players from other places are invited to perform together. The organization of large-scale themed Guqin Yaji not only effectively improves the Guqin techniques of school members and expands the social influence of the Guqin school, but also realizes the Guqin study ideal of promoting Guqin culture on a larger scale. Overall, the Guqin study activities of the Guqin Wangji School are relatively rich, and the planned activities for each year are basically carried out as scheduled.

The following is a list of the Guqin school's activities in 2019 to further understand its activity status:

Table 7. 2019 The activities of the Guqin Wangji School

Time	Place	The theme of the event	Note
2019.1.1	Wugang	Wugang Iron and Steel 2019 New Year Collection	Yaji
2019.1.3	Zhengzhou	2019 Guqin New Year Concert	concert
2019.1.11	Singapore	Lecture by the Chinese Pavilion of Nanyang University of Guqin music aesthetics and humanistic spirit lecture	lecture
2019.1.12	Singapore	“Thousand-year-old rhyme” Guqin and zither concert	concert
2019.1.25	Zhengzhou	The 5th National Charity Spring Festival Gala	perform
2019.3.29	Beijing	Guqin practitioners (teaching positions) professional level training class	Training of teachers
2019.5.1-5.7	zhengzhou	Luo Suli Guqin Training Class	lecture
2019.5.27	Nanyang	Luo Suli classic Guqin song appreciation meeting	Lecture&concert
2019.8.7	Singapore	Singapore Pictorial Music Competition	Judges
2019.8.25	Luohe	Luo Suli classic Guqin music and poetry Mid-Autumn Festival appreciation meeting	Meeting
2019.9.13	Xinmi	Xinmi Jiuli Mountain Yaji	Yaji
2019.9.15	Xuzhou	Mid-Autumn Festival Guqin Music Training	Training
2019.10.1	Zhengzhou	Yunnan Guqin Training Camp	Training
2019.11.1	Pingdingshan	Pingdingshan Guqin Art Festival	Festival

As mentioned in the previous section on the main types of activities of the Guqin Wangji School, the 2019 Guqin-related activities mainly included daily Yaji, Guqin-

related exchanges, and Guqin concerts. Among them, daily gatherings were the mainstay, while Guqin study exchanges and Guqin concerts were the highlights, reflecting the continuity and richness of the Guqin music activities. It can be seen that in addition to regularly hosting daily Yaji, the Guqin Wangji School actively participated in various related social activities, and vigorously hosted various large-scale Guqin-related exchange activities, demonstrating its main position and significant influence in the Henan region's Guqin world, as well as its unity and Yaji of Henan's Guqin people to carry forward the local Guqin tradition and Guqin music ideals. For an amateur Guqin player group that lacks funding sources and has extremely limited human resources, it is not easy to organize these Guqin-related activities throughout the year, and it reflects the vitality and energy of their Guqin music organization.

3. Summary

Through the analysis and research of the Guqin Wangji School in the contemporary new cultural environment, its history and development can be divided into the following three stages: 1) Preparatory stage, 2) Establishment stage, 3) Development stage.

During the preparatory stage, which was the personal development period of the founder of the Guqin Wangji School, Luo Sulie, he began engaging in guqin-related work and performances in 2000. Luo Sulie quickly became a leading figure in this professional field and established the "Huming Guqin Fang" professional handcrafted Guqin workshop. The workshop was invited multiple times to visit regions and countries such as Hong Kong, the United States, Thailand, South Korea, Turkey, Cambodia, Italy, Singapore, for cultural exchanges, showcasing the artistic charm of the Guqin to audiences both domestically and internationally.

During the establishment stage, the membership of the Guqin Wangji School grew rapidly. Here are some key observations: 1) Members mainly come from the Zhengzhou area, indicating that the interaction and learning between local Guqin enthusiasts are the primary means of engaging in Guqin music activities. This contributes to a more consistent Guqin music style and philosophy. 2) The majority of members are female, which has influenced the aesthetic and performance styles of Guqin music. As a result, the traditional scholarly and refined characteristics of Guqin

music culture have transmission to some extent.3) The age distribution of members is not balanced, which makes it difficult for some to deeply understand traditional culture and aesthetic pursuits. The majority of Guqin learners fall within the age range of 20-40, as well as individuals aged 60 and above.4) All members have educational backgrounds at the college level or higher, indicating that there is still a presence of literati music within modern enterprises, with a focus on a highly cultured group as the main participants.5) The occupational composition of members shows that the qin community in contemporary school still retains non-professional characteristics. The disadvantaged status of professional Guqin players has resulted in a relatively slow process of professionalization in Guqin art. The limited presence of professional Guqin players has certain limitations in inheriting the musical characteristics of Guqin, which will inevitably have a negative impact on the transmission and development of Guqin music culture. Overall, these observations highlight some of the characteristics and challenges within the membership of the Guqin Wangji School during its establishment stage.

Through these three stages of development, the Guqin Wangji School has gradually matured and become a significant presence in the local Guqin community. In the contemporary new cultural environment, the school, through continuous exploration and innovation, is dedicated to the transmission and promotion of Guqin music, actively contributing to the flourishing development of Guqin music culture in the region.

Chapter V

The musical characteristics of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China

This chapter applies field research and music analysis methods are used to analyze the school's basic, intermediate, and advanced difficulty techniques, analyzing representative pieces for each level.

1. The Guqin Wangji School basic playing techniques
2. The Guqin Wangji School intermediate playing techniques
3. The Guqin Wangji School advanced playing techniques
4. Summary

1. The Guqin Wangji School basic playing techniques

1.1 The playing techniques of “Gou Tiao” (勾挑)

The “Gou” technique is one of the most commonly used right hand finger techniques in playing the Guqin. It is characterized by producing strong sound with sensitivity. In addition to focusing on the quality of sound production, players should also pay attention to the transition between “Gou” and “Tiao”, as well as the feeling of finger crossing over two strings. However, the process and details of the transition between “Gou” and Tiao cannot be ignored, and players should practice strictly according to the requirements, with a moderate speed to produce clean, full, and powerful sound. “Gou” and “Tiao” is the most common and important combination of finger techniques, in which “Gou” goes inward and “Tiao” goes outward. The coordination between the two is crucial and should be fully mastered by players from the very beginning of learning.



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Cai Yun Zhui Yue
彩云追月

Guqin Wangji School
Xiaobei Zhu (Collect)

♩ = 60

Figure 32. Cai Yun Zhui Yue

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 31, a section is played using “Gou Tiao”.

When practicing and performing, it is important to play the melody smoothly and pay attention to the instantaneous transition between “Gou” and “Tiao” as well as the accuracy of finger placement. It can be helpful to sing while playing. The technique should be clean and efficient without dragging. Each sentence in the score is separated by a period, so when playing, please break the sentences apart and aim to play by memory.

1.2 The playing techniques of left hand first finger

The technique of the left hand first finger requires the tiger's mouth to support it, with the nail facing the surface of the instrument vertically, and the center of gravity on the thumb. The other four fingers should be relaxed, forming a slight arch shape with the palm, as if holding an elliptical object. When the first finger crosses multiple strings continuously, the joints are used for all except the last string, where the tip of the finger is used. The thumb remains in a straight state, with the support of the palm joint of the little finger on the surface of the instrument. After crossing the string, the thumb is lifted, and the whole process is like a turn of a seesaw.

Qiu Feng Ci
秋风词

Guqin Wangji School
Zhu xiaobei(Collect)

Figure 33. Xian Weng Cao

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 32, a section is played using hand first finger.

The left hand thumb creates a smooth transition between notes by sliding along the string. This technique enhances the fluidity and coherence of the piece. Depending on the performer's personal playing style and interpretation, these techniques can be flexibly applied to express the emotions and artistic qualities of the music.

1.3 The playing techniques of left hand forth finger

The technique of the left fourth finger requires that when pressing the string, the end of the finger, near the little finger, should be used instead of the flat surface of the fingertip. When pressing the string, one should avoid using the middle finger to borrow force by resting it on the index finger. However, the ring and pinky fingers can be used to sandwich the index finger with the middle and index fingers to make it more powerful. At this time, the tiger's mouth and the thumb can be slightly stretched to the right, which should be relaxed and natural, and not tightened.

Feng Qiu Huang
凤求凰

Guqin Wangji School
Xiaobei Zhu(Collect)

Figure 34. Xian Weng Cao

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 33, a section is played using hand forth finger

The left hand ring finger by choosing the appropriate position and applying the right amount of pressure on the strings, a clear sound effect can be produced. Additionally, by sliding the index finger along the strings, a gliding effect can be achieved, creating smooth transitions between the notes.

2. The Guqin Wangji School intermediate playing techniques

2.1 The playing techniques n of Open string

Open strings also known as the empty string sound of the Guqin, is the lowest sound of the Guqin and has the longest resonance and most fully vibrating sound. In general string instrument playing techniques, “Open string” is often just a type of fingering notation, and not treated as a distinct sound. In fact, open string sounds are more relaxed and sustained compared to pressed notes. Ancient Chinese music notation distinguished “Open string” and “Stopped string” notes with different characters, which reflects the importance of sound quality in Guqin music.

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Liu Shui' (流水). The score is written on a single staff with a bass clef and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a tempo marking of ♩=44. The music consists of several measures, including a sequence of eighth notes and a series of sixteenth notes. Above the staff, the title 'Liu Shui' and its Chinese characters '(流水)' are written. To the right of the score, there is a QR code and the text 'Guqin Wangji School Xiaobei Zhu (Collect)'. The entire score is enclosed in a light gray border.

Figure 35. Liu shui

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 34, a section is played using Open string.

When playing Open strings on the Guqin, emphasis is placed on the tone and sound quality, striving to achieve a soft yet not hollow, strong yet not impetuous effect. The result is characterized by a deep, mellow, and solid sound. The playing speed is slow, and the range of notes is broad and expansive, as if one is immersed in misty mountains and the sound of flowing water seems to come and go.

2.2 The playing techniques of Harmonics

Harmonics in Guqin music have a decorative and colorful effect, and are not occasional, but frequent, often appearing as standalone sections, and serving as connections and transitions between paragraphs. In addition, different combinations of strings and fingerings can be used to express a wide variety of playing techniques. In most ancient Guqin pieces, harmonics are used at the beginning and end of sections. Therefore, compared with other string instruments, Guqin harmonics are more expressive and play an important role in Guqin music.

Liu Shui
(流水)

Guqin Wangji School
Xiaobei Zhu(Collect)

♩=72

Harmonics

Figure 36. Liu shui

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 35, a section is played using Harmonics.

While striking the strings with the right hand, the left hand lightly touches the strings at the frets, creating a smooth and rhythmic division of musical phrases. When listening to the recording of Flowing Water played by the Guqin Wangji School, there may be slight differences in timing and notation between the score and the actual performance, but these differences are not significant. This is because when playing harmonics, their timing and pitch are generally fixed, and any slight variations are due to the human factor that occurs when striking the strings. These subtle differences can also reflect the personal improvisation of the Guqin player. The entire piece of music creates a feeling of ethereal and elusive beauty.

2.3 The playing techniques of Stopped string

Stopped strings is the sound produced by the left hand pressing the strings in the playing of the Guqin. Different fingers and pressing positions of the left hand can create differences in timbre. The most commonly used fingers for pressing are the middle finger and thumb, and the pressing positions can be either the entire finger pad

or close to the fingernail. Generally speaking, the sound produced by pressing with the fourth finger is warm and stable, while that produced by the first finger is clear and bright. Pressing with the entire finger pad results in a warm and stable sound, while pressing close to the fingernail produces a clear and bright sound.

Liu Shui
流水

GuqinWangji School
Xiaobei Zhu(Collect)

Figure 37. Liu shui

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 36, a section is played using Stopped strings.

During performance is required to maintain stability in the left hand and ensure a steady sound production. This is achieved by relying on the natural weight of the hand, as if it were sinking in water, to naturally press down on the strings. It is important not to use excessive force with the fingers. At the beginning, you can relax the hand and let it naturally hang down, then place it flat on the fingerboard with the exception of the first finger which should be naturally curved, the palm slightly concave. Gradually relax the wrist, elbow, arm, and shoulder to let the hand naturally press down on the fingerboard. The resulting sound is gentle and round, with a solid attack on each note. The sound quality also varies in different areas of the fingerboard, with the low notes being powerful and rich, the middle notes being broad and mellow, and the high notes being sharp and delicate. Sliding notes are soft and melodic, like a flowing stream, and the different sound qualities in different areas of the fingerboard reflect the intricate and subtle expressiveness of the music.

2.4 The playing techniques of “Cuo” (撮) technique

In Guqin playing, there are many double-string techniques, which involve “Gou” or “Tuo” two strings at the same time, and the two strings usually produce a perfect octave or unison interval. When played as non-harmonics, the two strings are typically played with one string pressed and the other open. The technique is divided into two types, “Dacuo” and “Xiaocuo”, depending on the distance between the two strings. “Dacuo” is used when the distance between the two strings is three or more strings, while “Xiaocuo” is used when the distance between the two strings is two or fewer strings.

Liu Shui
流水

GuqinWangji School
Xiaobei Zhu(Collect)



Figure 38. Liu shui

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 37, a section is played using “Cuo”

The performance here requires a “Dacuo”. First, place your index and third fingers on the corresponding strings, with the index finger vertical, the joints straight, and the hand spread out. Then, simultaneously “Gou” and “Tuo” the two strings, and after “Cuo”, place the index and third fingers on the next string respectively. When “Cuo”, the two sounds should be in unison, with a neat and powerful tone, expressing the magnificent meaning of flowing water with a grand momentum.

2.5 The application of “Gun Fu” (滚拂) technique in “Liu Shui”

“Gun Fu” are a combination technique for the right hand in playing the Guqin. Gun is the continuous Zhai of the strings from the seventh string to the second string, which is from high to low, using the fourth finger finger. When playing, attention should be paid to using the finger from deep to shallow, from heavy to light, and with varying degrees of speed. “Fu” is exactly the opposite of “Gun”, using the index finger to continuously brush the strings from the first string to the sixth string, which is from low to high.

“Gun Fu” are combined techniques of the right hand in Guqin playing. “Gun” is a continuous plucking of strings from the seventh string to the second string, that is, from high to low, using the fourth finger. When playing, one should pay attention to using the finger from deep to shallow, from heavy to light, and with a sense of urgency and slowness. “Fu” is the opposite of “Gun”. It is a continuous brushing of strings from the first string to the sixth string, that is, from low to high, using the second finger.

Liu Shui
流水

GuqinWangji School
Xiaobei Zhu(Collect)



Figure 39. Liu shui

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 38, a section is played using “Gun Fu”.

The melody is mainly based on a fast-pentatonic scale going up and down. When playing, it is required to use the fingers from shallow to deep, from light to heavy, and from slow to fast. Both techniques can be used alone or in combination, sequentially or simultaneously. This technique vividly depicts the surging water and waves, which is the highlight of the entire piece.

2.6 The playing techniques of “Shang, Xia”

The “Shang, Xia” technique is the most frequently used technique in the Guqin piece “Liu Shui”. It belongs to the pitch gliding technique of the Guqin, which means that the pitch of the note played by the right hand, while the left hand is pressing the string, moves upward or downward to the designated pitch.

The “Shang, Xia” technique is the most commonly used technique in the Guqin piece “Liu Shui”. It belongs to the technique of “Zoushouyin” (走手音) in Guqin playing, where the left hand presses the strings and the right hand plays the notes “Shang” or “Xia” to the specified position.

Liu Shui
流水

Guqin Wangji School
Xiaobei Zhu (Collect)

♩ = 80

Figure 40. Liu shui

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 39, a section is played using Shang Xia.

The “Shang, Xia” technique can be used alone or in combination. When playing, it is required to press the strings firmly with the left hand and play the notes clearly with the right hand. Generally, when the melody progresses from low to high, “Shang” is used, and when the melody progresses from high to low, “Xia” is used. The “Shang, Xia” technique is used multiple times in the fifth section of the piece in the low pentatonic scale of the second voice melody, and is also used in the other sections of the piece. The technique highlights the backbone of the melody and gives people a feeling of simplicity and purity.

2.7 The playing techniques of “Tui Fu” (退复)

The “Tui Fu” technique refers to the movement of the left hand after pressing the string and the right hand playing the note to a designated pitch by moving downward to a specific interval of a second or a minor third for “Tui”, and then moving back to the original position for “Fu”, generally used in combination.

Liu Shui
流水

Guqin Wangji School
Xiaobei Zhu (Collect)

♩ = 44

Figure 41. Liu shui

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 40, a section is played using “Tui Fu”.

When playing, the left hand presses the string and moves to the left after playing the note, then returns to the original position, which is called “Tui Fu”. With the addition of embellishments like *appoggiatura* and *continuant* while preserving the melody, the music progresses in a cyclical manner, and the melody becomes more fluid.

Through above documents, I found that in the intermediate level repertoire of the Guqin Wangji School, a combination of “Harmonics, Open strings, and Stopped strings” is often used. The right-hand technique in Guqin Wangji School music is rich, and it is good at using a combination of continuous and sparse point-like sounds to express music, with compact melodies and full of dynamism. The left-hand decorative techniques are also rich, with subtle and long melodies that have movement within stillness. Through rich techniques and varied tonalities, the beauty of the Guqin’s sound is reflected, cultivating the aesthetic ability of Guqin performance.

According to the performance techniques, the Guqin Wangji School recommends “Liu Shui” as a representative piece for intermediate-level techniques. In a field survey, it was found that the School retained the harmonic techniques in the second and third sections, strengthened the stopped strings of melodic playing in the fourth and fifth sections, and added the “Gun” and “Fu” techniques in the climax of the sixth and seventh sections. The final eighth and ninth sections reproduce the melody of the fourth and fifth sections, and feature the “Shang, Xia” and “Tui,Fu” techniques. By adding these performance techniques, the piece vividly depicts the ever-changing state of the stream.

3. The Guqin Wangji School advanced play techniques

3.1 The playing techniques of “Yin” (吟)

The “Yin” technique in performance requires coordination between the left- and right-hand fingerings. After playing the basic fingering with both hands, the fingers of the left hand pressing the strings continue to stay in place on the same fret, and are gently rocked back and forth on the fret using the arm and wrist, with a distance of approximately two frets and a back-and-forth motion of about four to five times, with the first time slightly larger and the subsequent times slightly smaller. Finally, return to the original position to end the technique. The sound produced by the “Yin” technique

is charming and mellow, with relatively slow and weak resonance, and overall presents a natural and relaxed feeling, without any sense of redundancy, while also adding a soft and beautiful musical line to the performance.

Xiao Xiang Shui Yun
潇湘水云

Guqin Wangji School
Xiaobei Zhu(Collect)



Figure 42. Xiao Xiang Shui Yun

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 41, a section is played using “Yin”.

The left hand immediately adds the “Yin” technique. The left-hand fingers remain on the string and, after the right hand plays the scattered notes on the second string, the left hand quickly and softly slides up to the sixth Hui. Then, play the Yin technique. This creates a complete and smooth musical line, emphasizing the main note “Re”. Adding the Yin technique can effectively control the pitch and tone of the music, making the music more flowing, and gradually presenting the water and cloud scenery depicted by the composer to the listeners.

3.2 The playing techniques of “Nao” (猱)

The “Nao” technique in performance also requires the coordination of left- and right-hand finger movements to complete. Similar to the playing method of “Yin”, the arm and wrist slowly sway left and right on the string, but the amplitude of the swaying is larger than “Yin” and the speed and strength are also greater. The sound of “Nao” is ancient and strong, with a slightly faster speed and a stronger residual sound.

Xiao Xiang Shui Yun
潇湘水云

Guqin Waneii School
Xiaobei Zhu(Collect)

Figure 43. Xiao Xiang Shui Yun

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 42, a section is played using “Nao”

Playing the “Nao” technique with the right thumb inward, the left thumb lightly touches the string and slides down from the eighth to the tenth fret, adding the “Nao” technique with strong force and a deep sound at the tenth fret. The left hand remains on the string and goes through five “Zoushouyin” before sliding down to the tenth fret again using the “Huan Nao” technique. The use of Nao twice makes a deep impression of the main note “Sol”. The beginning of the phrase is clear and gentle, without any abrupt feeling, and the melody of the Guqin piece is connected smoothly, making people naturally immersed in the artistic conception of the Guqin piece, seamlessly blending the author’s profound emotions with the music. The musical rhythm here is long and gives people unlimited space for imagination.

3.3 The playing techniques of “Chuo” (绰)

The “Chuo” technique is used by lightly pressing the string with the left hand about 5mm below the playing position while playing with the right hand, and sliding up towards the playing position. At the same time, the left arm and wrist move upwards, gently lifting the forearm and guiding the finger to slide towards the playing position. The pitch changes from false to real. “Chuo” is the most basic ornamentation in the ancient Guqin playing technique and is also the most commonly used. When using the “Chuo” technique, the sound produced often starts from weak and gradually becomes strong, which is more like a rendering of the artistic conception, and adds beauty to the melody line.

Xiao Xiang Shui Yun
潇湘水云

Guqin Wangji' School
Xiaobei Zhu (Collect)

Figure 44. Xiao Xiang Shui Yun

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 43, a section is played using “Chuo”.

In this piece of music, the core element is reproduced by combining Opening strings and Stopped strings fingerings. In the first bar, the double eighth note “Re” is preceded by a “Chuo” in actual performance, which makes the music more interesting and enhances the core element. The emotions of the music also have ups and downs, slowly opening up the author’s heavy thoughts. In the eighth bar of this section, the same double eighth note “Re” is played in the same way, blending the emotions and creating a clear image.

3.4 The playing techniques of “Zhu” (注)

In playing the Guqin, the “Zhu” technique involves lightly pressing the string with the left hand about 5mm above the playing position while the right hand plucks the string. The left arm and wrist move down, while the forearm gently lifts, causing the fingers pressing the string to slide down to the desired pitch. This technique is used almost as frequently as the “Chuo” technique. When using the “Zhu” technique, the sound produced tends to gradually become weaker, creating a sense of release and sighing in the music.

Xiao Xiang Shui Yun
潇湘水云

Guqin Wangji School
Zhu Xiaobei (Collect)

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Xiao Xiang Shui Yun' (潇湘水云). It is written in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature and a tempo marking of 104. The score consists of a single line of music. Two specific sections are highlighted with red boxes, and red arrows labeled 'Zhu' point to the left hand's position on the strings at the beginning of these sections. The text 'Guqin Wangji School Zhu Xiaobei (Collect)' is located in the upper right corner of the score area. To the right of the score is a QR code.

Figure 45. Xiao Xiang Shui Yun

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 44, a section is played using “Zhu”.

The performance of the piece is enriched by the use of “Zhu” techniques. “Zhu” is used in the 12th bar and involves sliding the left hand from about 5mm above the playing position to the designated pitch while the right hand plucks the string, creating a fading effect. “Zhu” is used before the 14th bar, which involves plucking and brushing the string simultaneously. In both cases, the notes should be played cleanly and precisely. These techniques enhance the emotional depth of the piece and effectively convey the author’s sense of helplessness in a cold school.

3.5 The playing techniques of “Changsuo”

The “Changsuo” technique is divided into two parts: the left hand and the right hand. The left hand is mainly responsible for pressing the strings, while the right hand is mainly responsible for plucking the strings. The first finger of the left hand is placed on the fret, and the other four fingers are placed on the strings and close to the fret. The fingertips press the strings with force, but not too hard so as not to damage the strings. Each finger that presses the string should be released one by one, and not released simultaneously. The first finger of the right hand is placed at the bottom of the bridge, and the other four fingers rest on the strings. The four fingers can move freely, but the fingers should be kept bent. When plucking the strings with the right hand, it should be forceful, but not excessively. The fingers should be able to leave the strings easily, to produce a clean, clear sound.

Xiao Xiang Shui Yun
潇湘水云

Guqin Wangji School
Xiaobei Zhu(Collect)

♩=104

Figure 46. Xiao Xiang Shui Yun

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 45, a section is played using “Changsuo”.

This piece of music uses the “Changsuo” technique, which is a nine-note sequence also known as the “Dasuo”. The technique involves using the “Mo, Tiao, Mo, Gou, Ti, Mo, Tiao, Mo, Tiao” technique to emphasize the note, resulting in a bright and solid tone. The technique requires even and controlled finger pressure, with a rhythm that is tight and loose in turns, creating dynamic and changing rhythms and tones, making it dynamic even in stillness. The music presents a combination of hardness and softness, movement and stillness, with a layered sense of tone, rhythm, and melody. It conveys a sense of unstoppable momentum, reflecting the character of facing challenges with fearlessness and moving forward with courage.

3.6 The playing techniques of “Zou Shouyin” (走手音)

“Zou Shouyin” is a unique playing technique in Guqin music and is also one of the most characteristic performance elements. “Zou Shouyin” refers to the left hand sliding up or down one or more notes after the right hand has played a note, resulting in a change in pitch. There are various types of “Zou Shouyin” techniques, including “Shang, Xia, Jinfu, Tuifu, second up, third up, Chang, Yin, Nao, Chuo, and Zhu,” among others. These techniques are performed using the thumb, middle finger, and index finger. When playing “Zou Shouyin” the upper body should be naturally relaxed, the left hand should be half-closed, and the fingers pressing the strings should not be too forceful. The force used during the sliding motion should also be evenly distributed to create a smooth melody. The use of “Zou Shouyin” connects individual notes to create a continuous melody, adding beauty and integrity to the music.

Xiao Xiang Shui Yun
潇湘水云

Guqin Wangji School
Xiaobei Zhu(Collect)

Figure 47. Xiao Xiang Shui Yun

Source: Xiaobei Zhu

In Figure 46, a section is played using “Zou Shouyin”.

When playing slide notes, it is required to relax the upper body naturally, and the left hand should be in a semi-grip shape. The fingers pressing the strings should not use excessive force, and the intensity of the slide notes should be even, in order to play a smooth melody. The use of slide notes connects the dotted notes into a linear melody, making the music more beautiful and cohesive. Through the correct use of slide notes, the linearity of the melody is increased, and the continuous thoughts of Luo Suli in his musical composition are also expressed.

Through above documents, I found that as one of the traditional Chinese musical instruments, the Guqin has a unique way of musical expression. The left hand plays an important role in Guqin performance, expressing the emotions and tones of the melody through techniques such as “Yin Nao Ghuo Zhu.” These techniques not only form part of the melody and rhythm, but also exhibit the different styles of various schools and the emotions and personal interpretations of different pieces. In the transmission of Guqin performance techniques, the Guqin Wangji School insists on preserving the stable, vigorous and powerful performance style of the school, meticulously retaining the state of advanced techniques in the music to better express and understand the charm and elegance, and to preserve and pass on the style characteristics of the school’s music. This expressive way makes Guqin music more beautiful and complete, and gives the Guqin a unique position in Chinese music culture.

In terms of playing techniques, the Guqin Wangji School recommends “Xiaoxiang Shuiyun” as a representative piece of advanced techniques. Field research has found that the school uses a combination of techniques such as “Yinnaochozhu”, “Changsuo”, and “Zoushouyin” to express the melody of “Xiaoxiang Shuiyun”, with a broad progression and expressing emotions of indignation, sorrow, and heroism. The playing technique of Stopped string is used in the piece to emphasize the breath and express different tones, creating an artistic realm of water, light, clouds, and smoke that is very appealing.

4. Summary

Through the analysis of the application of performance techniques in representative works at different levels, the Guqin Wangji School not only emphasizes the fundamental aspects of musical structure, style, and performance techniques but also focuses on portraying the contemporary thoughts and spirit of the people in Henan province. The Guqin Wangji School great emphasis on providing a solid foundation in the study of Guqin art for its performers. While highlighting the diverse regional styles and performance techniques, the school also respects and values individual artistic styles, preserving the simplicity and charm of Guqin music. This approach enables a better transmission and preservation of the musical styles, performance techniques, and uniqueness of Guqin schools.

Table 8. The representative techniques in the music pieces of different levels in the Guqin Wangji School

level	Techniques the form
Basic	“Gou”, “Tiao”, “Left hand first finger”, “left hand forth finger”,
Intermediate	“Open string”, “Harmonics”, “Stopped string”, “Cuo”, “Gun”, “Fu”, “Shang”, “Xia”, “Tui”, “Fu”
Advanced	“Yin”, “Nao”, “Chuo”, “Zhu”, “Changsuo”, “Zou Shouyin”

In the Basic level have four representative techniques, and basic music work typically focus on basic fingerings, rhythm, and accurate note playing.

In the intermediate level have ten representative techniques, and intermediate music work require a certain level of improvement and challenge in technique, as well as the ability to express the musicality with good tone quality.

In the advanced level have six representative techniques, and advanced-music work showcase more complex and advanced technical requirements, as well as demonstrate delicate musical handling and expression.



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Chapter VI

The transmission process of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China

In this chapter, the transmission process of the Henan Guqin Wangji School was discussed, and related methods and elements of transmission were identified.

1. Interview data
2. Transmission modes of the Guqin Wangji School
3. Transmission elements of the Guqin Wangji School
4. Summary

1. Interview data

The process of transmission should be examined from two perspectives: one is from the elements of transmission, and the other is from the functions of transmission.

Luo Suli (2022, interviewed) said: “After graduating in 1999, I joined the Ancient Music Ensemble of Henan Museum. The first time I heard this instrument, I fell in love with its sound. I studied under many teachers and explored various schools of Guqin playing before finally becoming a disciple of Teacher Han Tingyao. Teacher Han, who graduated from Tsinghua University with a degree in mechanical engineering, is the third-generation inheritor of the Jiuyi Style. Usually, Guqin playing is passed down within families, but as Teacher Han’s children were not interested in the instrument, I had the opportunity to deeply study the Jiuyi Style of Guqin and became his formal disciple.

At the Guqin Wangji School, there are not only Guqin teachers from the Jiuyi Style, but also teachers from various other Guqin Styles who bring their personal aesthetic appreciation of Guqin music. Through the process of Guqin teaching, we not only cultivate students’ learning habits but also shape their spiritual pursuits. By integrating Guqin with the cultural life of the people in Henan, the instrument has become a way of life.

Han Yanyao (2022, interviewed) said: In the teaching process, the main focus is on allowing students to imitate. Guqin music does not have a regular rhythm or beat;

it is played with a free and unmeasured rhythm. “Sanban” (散板) refers to the feeling of a free continuation at the end of each phrase, and the sounds within each phrase can vary in speed. Depending on the player’s mood, the lingering sounds can be played for a longer or shorter duration. Playing with a “sanban” style is similar to speaking, delivering each phrase one by one. Guqin music can be like having a conversation.

In fact, each Guqin school and player has their own unique style of playing. As long as it resonates with their own aesthetic sense, it is considered appropriate. Therefore, Guqin can enhance a person’s aesthetic abilities. transmission is about passing down our ancestors’ historical and cultural heritage, as it is the root of our Chinese identity.

Cheng Fang (2022, interviewed) said: In the teaching process, it is important to learn music theory. Students need to understand the language of music in order to better express it. Learning Guqin itself is learning the music of our own nation, and it encompasses cultural and historical understanding. It is about learning how to express oneself through music. The learning environment at the Guqin Wangji School is different from other Guqin schools. It combines tea art, wine culture, flower arrangement, and other lifestyle elements. This brings together people who share the same love for Guqin and similar lifestyle habits. It serves both as a place for learning and for making friends, making the process more enjoyable and appealing.

The students at Guqin Wangji School come from diverse professions, including successful individuals from various fields. This diversity enriches the teaching process through mutual exchange and learning.

Wangyue (2022, interviewed) said: A person learning Guqin should not limit themselves to playing only one school of repertoire. The preference for a particular style of music reflects one's character. In the development of art, there are several stages. Technique is the foundation, followed by the cultivation of individuality. Once individuality matures, it becomes a distinctive style. This style is influenced by the historical and cultural context of the region and also has an impact on that particular geographical area.

Liu Xuran (2022, interviewed) said: The Guqin classroom and various Guqin activities allow students to understand the cultural history of the Guqin and experience its musical charm. Through this, they come closer to the lifestyle of ancient Chinese

literati, achieving a spiritual resonance. Guqin education is not merely about learning music; it also influences aesthetics and even morality.

Ding Xiangyang (2022, interviewed) said: As a Henan native, one has a responsibility to promote the culture of the Guqin. Guqin students come from different backgrounds, including housewives and students. Teaching should primarily focus on the students' individual situations with the aim of helping them understand how to play the instrument. Within the Guqin Wangji School, there are different levels of classes: basic, intermediate, and advanced. The repertoire for learning mainly comes from the teaching materials created by Luo Suli.

Summary

Table 9. The table of opinion on the transmission process

Opinion of transmission	Luo Suli	Han Tingyao	Cheng fang	Ren Shizhou	Wang Yue	Liu Xuran	Ding Xiangyang
Course transmission	√			√			√
Activity transmission	√				√		
Spiritual Shaping	√					√	
Moral cultivation	√						
Education Expansion	√				√	√	
History and culture		√				√	
Tutors and students			√			√	
Cultural atmosphere			√	√			√

Though above all of documents, I found that the transmission of Guqin school is complex. So, the researcher would like to my opinion of the transmission.

2. Transmission modes of the Guqin Wangji School

2.1 Transmission of “Kouchuan Xinshou”

China's traditional way of passing down ethnic music is “Kouchuan Xinshou,” and Guqin is no exception. However, the way in which the Guqin Wangji School passes on its musical techniques has not changed due to social environment. The teaching of

Guqin pieces is mostly done by hand, with the instructor demonstrating the playing of a phrase several times while the student listens attentively, memorizing the fingerings, rhythms, and positions, and then imitating the playing. The teaching usually takes the form of one-on-one sessions that last about an hour, which can be adjusted according to the needs of the student. The Guqin Wangji School generally teaches Guqin pieces based on familiarizing oneself with the melody, gradually learning the piece one phrase at a time, and all the pieces taught come from Professor Luo Suli. The instruction in playing the Guqin usually involves teaching the proper posture for holding the instrument and techniques for playing the piece.

2.1.1 The posture for playing the Guqin

Luo Suli believes that playing the Guqin requires comfort and ease, so there is no special requirement for posture when playing qin music. The tradition of using silk strings to make Guqins dates back to ancient times. The tone of silk strings is warm and full, but in recent years, with the revival of traditional culture, the number of Guqin enthusiasts has increased, and the vast majority use steel-stringed Guqins instead of silk-stringed ones. However, the Guqin Wangji School has always adhered to traditional playing styles, using silk-stringed Guqins. The strings are made of silk, which is soft in texture, has a high degree of extension, and has a long sustain. Therefore, the finger force of the right hand is focused on the fingertips, and the force is gentle and without any bodily movements. The Guqin Wangji School emphasizes a “bright and clear” Guqin style, and during the process of playing passages with multiple finger movements, the left hand should maintain the same shape, and the whole hand should be moved by the strength of the arm and the direction of the movement.

2.1.2 Learning Guqin music.

During the process of teaching Guqin music, the Guqin Wangji School uses a one-on-one teaching model to teach each sentence, following the steps of “teacher plays, student imitates, teacher demonstrates, student practices, and then memorizes the music.” In cases where the finger movements are complex or not easy to remember, the school will allow students to read the sheet music while playing. After mastering the finger techniques, the teacher will demonstrate and guide the student on how to handle the music, then break down the music phrase by phrase with the student, accompanied by the teacher's humming of the melody. Eventually, the student will achieve the ability

to play the music from memory. The Rong-style Guqin playing emphasizes not looking at the sheet music, as they believe that only by being familiar with the finger techniques can one reduce the distractions and immerse oneself in the music, better expressing the emotions conveyed through the instrument.

2.2 Transmission of practice

The Guqin Wangji School encourages students to practice by familiarizing themselves with the melody of the score and playing along with fingerings while silently singing along, making it easier to learn. During teaching, the school repeatedly sings the melody of the music, and students follow the lead of the teacher to play each phrase, “singing the strings” provides specific stimulation for students to repeatedly hear the melody in their minds, forming memory and making it easier for students to respond to the melody. Ultimately, the goal is to complete playing along with singing. Meanwhile, the school advocates for the method of memorizing and playing each phrase, allowing students to establish auditory cues and promote the connection between new knowledge and existing knowledge, linking learning content with the students’ cognitive structure and ultimately enabling students to play the entire piece by memory, forming meaningful learning. Therefore, it can be seen that the method used by the school to spread the technique of playing the ancient Guqin through “ear training” and “singing the strings” has a certain degree of scientificity for students learning the Guqin.

2.3 Transmission of performances

The school regularly holds various forms of Guqin concerts, recitals, and exchange performances, and actively participates in large-scale events such as Guqin conferences and music festivals both domestically and internationally. These performances not only showcase the members’ technical proficiency in playing the Guqin, but also promote the charm and cultural value of Guqin music to audiences. Through performance transmission, the Guqin Wangji School attracts more attention and understanding of Guqin culture.

2.4 Transmission of online

The Guqin Wangji School has set up official accounts on multiple social media platforms and attracts a large number of qin enthusiasts through the publication of Guqin performance videos, teaching videos, and concert previews. Additionally, the

school also promotes Guqin culture through websites, blogs, and other forms of online content, popularizing qin knowledge and techniques. Online transmission provides the Guqin Wangji School with a broader platform for transmission, enabling more people to learn about and appreciate Guqin culture.

3. Transmission elements of the Guqin Wangji School

3.1 Guqin Cultural Instructors

The instructors of the Guqin Wangji School mostly do not have a professional music education background from a school. Based on their apprenticeship or experience in learning the Guqin, they can be divided into three categories:

The first type of teacher is those who have learned from Jiuyi style Guqin masters and have a pure Jiuyi style Guqin identity. These Guqin teachers have different degrees of mastery of Jiuyi style Guqin repertoire and performance style. The disciples of the third-generation Jiuyi style Guqin master Han Tingyao include Luo Suli, who inherited and developed Jiuyi style Guqin art and is known as the fourth generation of Jiuyi style Guqin players. Luo Suli also has disciples such as Cheng Fang. Every year during the Guqingming Festival, the Guqin school gathers to hold elegant gatherings and has organized thematic Guqin concerts many times.

The second category refers to those who do not have a direct lineage to the Jiuyi style of Guqin. They may have learned from teachers of Guqin and music in music conservatories, or from practitioners of other Guqin styles outside of the Jiuyi style's Guqin people. For example, studied under Ding Chengyun, a Guqin professor at Wuhan Conservatory of Music, while Wang Yue studied under Ding Jiyuan, a professor at Henan University. These Guqin practitioners teach in Guqin halls, spreading their own ideas and styles of Guqin playing while also integrating the cultural influences of the Guqin schools. As a result, they possess not only the fundamental characteristics of traditional Chinese culture, but also the diverse cultural traits of Henan.

The third category is new branches of the Guqin community. These are young Guqin teachers cultivated by various Guqin styles in Guangzhou. Some of them specialize in teaching Guqin and handling enrollment and other administrative tasks at Guqin styles, while others become professional Guqin players after studying at Guqin styles and establish their own Guqin studios or apply to teach at other Guqin styles.

Most Guqin community teachers are musicians who did not major in Guqin at professional music colleges, and their knowledge structures are diverse and complex. , Liu Xurao was originally a news media worker, and Ding Xiangyang worked in sales. The cultural backgrounds and knowledge structures of Guqin teachers in the Guqin community are not the same, but it is clear that they all have a deep sense of recognition and love for Guqin music culture and traditional Chinese culture. Ding Xiangyang, who used to work in sales, said: “If I didn't love Guqin, I wouldn't be working here. My current job can't even support my family.” Cheng Fang, who majored in piano, said: “I just liked it at the time. I played for at least two hours every day and the more I played, the more I liked it. In the end, I turned Guqin into my career.”

3.2 Pathways of Guqin music transmission

Classroom teaching and professional small-class teaching are the main methods of Guqin education. Guqin activities mainly include Guqin gatherings, concerts, and lectures. During the process, multimedia and internet tools such as PPT, videos, and WeChat are often used for support.

3.2.1 Closed-door classroom teaching

The Guqin scores used in class in Guqin halls are generally in the form of staff notation or simplified notation, along with Jian Zipu. Class time is usually around 45 minutes per session, with many Guqin halls arranging for two consecutive classes, totaling 90 minutes. The teaching format can be divided into large classes and small groups (2-3 people). Guqin halls often have gatherings of Guqin friends, and some Guqin halls are also private living spaces. Therefore, before class, teachers or teaching assistants will arrange the Guqins, tables, and chairs according to the number of students attending the class. Normally, the Guqins are hung on the wall and the tables and chairs are placed to one side. In classes with more than four students, the arrangement of Guqins, tables, and chairs is generally in a classroom style with the teacher at the front and the students arranged in three rows facing the teacher.

The course schedule of the Guqin Wangji School is reasonable, with three to four small pieces or two large pieces taught in half a year, and sufficient time for practice is provided, adhering to the principle of gradual progress. The primary goal of the first level is to develop a solid foundation in finger techniques. For example, “Xian Weng Cao” mainly focuses on practicing the “Gou” and “Tiao” “finger techniques of

the right hand, as well as the practice of the thumb and little finger of the left hand. “Qiu Feng Ci” introduces a new finger technique called “waves” and emphasizes the technique of playing Overtones. In the second level, the requirements for finger speed increase and students begin to pursue artistic expression. For example, “Liangxiao Yin” describes a moonlit night with a light breeze and a pleasant mood. It is a short and elegant piece and an entry-level piece in the Guangling style, which emphasizes the requirement of artistic expression. The level of interest and practice time of each student may vary, so after the first level, there may be significant differences in the fundamental techniques of the students. Those who have mastered the basics well will continue to the next level of study, while those who have not may stop learning. Success in transitioning to intermediate or even advanced levels depends mainly on the student's self-awareness and understanding in learning the Guqin.

In addition, the Guqin Wangji School offers traditional Chinese culture-related courses in addition to Guqin classes. These courses include tea art and flower arrangement, as well as calligraphy classes. The school also offers courses in Taiji, Tea art, and other subjects. As students at the Guqin school develop a stronger sense of identification with traditional Chinese culture, they gradually begin to study other traditional Chinese cultural subjects. This mutual reflection between Guqin and other traditional cultures promotes a sense of identification among students with Guqin culture and even traditional Chinese culture as a whole. The Guqin teaching content uses the self-compiled textbook “Twenty-four Lessons” as the introductory material, while referring to Luo Suli’s formal Guqin textbook “The First Step in Guqin Studies”. Other courses such as Guqin healing, Taiji, Traditional Chinese medicine health preservation, and Tea art choose course content and teaching materials based on the characteristics of each Guqin schools.

3.2.2 Open-style activities outside the institute

Open-ended off-site activities include chat-style music learning activities, as well as more formal music learning activities in the form of small meetings such as lectures, gatherings, and concerts, which are important avenues for the Guqin school. Regardless of size, the Guqin Wangji School regularly holds Guqin lectures and gatherings. Each Guqin school, depending on its own resources, may invite Guqin masters to hold Guqin lectures and gatherings in the school, or may collaborate with

other cultural units, social organizations, individual cultural institutions, etc. to hold Guqin lectures and gatherings outside of the school in other cultural spaces such as cultural centers, schools, libraries, etc. These Guqin lectures and gatherings attract Guqin enthusiasts from all walks of life inside and outside of the school, which not only connects more like-minded individuals with Guqin music culture, but also expands the space for Guqin transmission within the school. On the one hand, it is the external transmission of Guqin culture, and on the other hand, it is a way of evaluating Guqin teaching within the school.

The Guqin-related activities are a necessary part of the operations of the Guqin Wangji School. These activities include inviting friends to come to the Guqin studio to play the Guqin and drink tea, as well as holding regular teacher-student Guqin music concerts and inviting Guqin enthusiasts from inside and outside the studio to attend. There are fixed patterns for holding Guqin-related events such as Yaji and teacher-student Guqin music concerts: a Guqin is placed in the center of the venue, with incense burners or flower arrangements on the Guqin table. Everyone sits facing the Guqin table, and the teacher and students take turns performing pre-arranged pieces in a specific order. In this setting, the teacher displays their Guqin techniques, and the students showcase their progress in front of others through performance. Sometimes, Guqin-related yajis or concerts that invite famous Guqin players may charge a certain fee. Liu Dongyang, a student of the Guqin school, said: “A Yaji that is purely for show is not a true Yaji. The real Yaji is when we gather together in daily life.” He went on to describe: A few days ago, we had a rehearsal in Zhengzhou. After the rehearsal, a friend of mine who also plays the Guqin invited us to have dinner. After dinner and drinking, we were feeling good, and then they brought out a Guqin table. I played the Guqin while singing, and someone else played the Xiao (簫). They said, ‘Wow, this is what a Yaji should really be like!’

In China, social music education is mainly evaluated through music grading exams and participating in various music competitions. Currently, there are various activities such as Guqin grading exams and Guqin competitions. For two consecutive years, the Guqin Wangji School has organized Guqin grading exams and encouraged students and other Guqin friends to participate in the Guqin Wangji School competition.



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Guqin activities have become an opportunity for students to showcase their techniques and have become a common way of evaluating their progress in learning the Guqin in the Guqin Wangji School. The functions of the activities organized by the Guqin Wangji School have become more diverse, serving both pure Guqin exchanges, self-entertainment, making friends, and also commercial showcases and student recruitment.

3.2.3 Application of Multimedia and the Internet

In the past two years, due to the pandemic, the Guqin Wangji School has generally begun to use multimedia and the Internet to carry out the transmission of ancient music. Currently, PowerPoint has become a necessary multimedia tool for the Guqin Wangji School to conduct lectures. In the past two years, the school has also opened online courses on the Guqin, such as the public welfare online Guqin course that started in 2021, which had been held until the fourth session as of October 2022. In addition, the school has set up a “Micro-classroom WeChat group” for irregular lectures on Guqin and other traditional cultural activities. The school has widely developed and utilized the functions of WeChat, and WeChat public accounts have become important platforms for Guqin recruitment and transmission. The school has established its own WeChat public account, which regularly publishes information on the courses and gatherings of the Guqin schools, as well as related knowledge of Guqin culture and education. The several Guqin schools of the Guqin Wangji School are actually an epitome of the Henan Guqin school, and also an epitome of the overall space for Henan Guqin music and cultural education. By conducting individual case studies on the five Guqin halls under the Guqin Wangji School, the current situation of its Guqin music and cultural education space is objectively presented.

3.3 Guqin Music Cultural Learners

In the tradition of Guqin learning, the master has high cultural and moral standards when selecting apprentices. Coupled with the fact that Guqin music has a unique style of sparse, light, even, and calm tones, it has always been taught within a niche community. However, due to changes in the times, it has come close to extinction. Around the year 2000, the predecessor of Guqin school was established, and in 2003, Guqin was successfully inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. As

a result, the number of Guqin learners has increased dramatically, and Guqin school has become an important place for Guqin learning today.

In contemporary Guqin school's cultural education, it can directly recruit students from the general public with almost no prerequisite for prior experience. The teaching audience is diverse, and the teaching style and time are flexible and varied to meet different learners' needs. This is in sharp contrast to the traditional niche culture of Guqin music, which had a much more limited range of learners. In Guqin school, there are no specific requirements for learners' cultural literacy or moral character - anyone who wants to learn is welcome.

The age range of Guqin school learners varies from 6 to over 80 years old, with different levels of education ranging from primary school to doctoral degree, and various professions including teachers, media, doctors, managers, businessmen, economists, civil servants, artists, and other fields. The mobility of Guqin learners is high, and few of them can truly integrate Guqin music into their lives. Guqin learners exhibit a trend of diversification and multilevel development in terms of age, education, and profession.

3.4 The Cultural Environment

Guqin schools, like the Guqin Wangji School, are decorated in a manner suitable for Guqin music and create an atmosphere that embodies the traditional Chinese literati culture of Guqin, Qi, Calligraphy, and Painting. For example, Guqin school walls are adorned with Guqins and furnished with tea tables, tea sets, and bookshelves. Some Guqin school are also decorated with flowers, incense burners, calligraphy, and paintings, creating an atmosphere of sophistication and elegance, while others are simpler and plainer.

Guqin school are not only places for learning Guqin, but also venues for hosting Guqin gatherings, lectures, concerts, and other events. The use of the term "school" in Guqin school creates a cultural space where people who frequent Guqin school form a community and develop a connection with Guqin. Some Guqin school focus on tea culture, while others focus on wine culture. During Guqin gatherings, Guqin players exchange ideas and showcase their techniques. In today's age, Guqin schools often have WeChat groups, public accounts, and other forms of communication that facilitate interactions among Guqin players.

The cultural environment of Guqin schools is distinct from other musical environments, as it possesses unique traditional Chinese cultural attributes that are specific to Guqin music.

4. Summary

By organizing the interview data collected during the field research on the Guqin Wangji School, we can extract the viewpoints of key informants and general informants and conduct a summary and analysis of the transmission process. This analysis mainly focuses on two aspects: transmission methods and transmission elements.

The transmission of the Guqin Wangji School mainly manifests in four ways: 1) Transmission of “Kouchuan Xinshou”, 2) Transmission of practice, 3) Transmission of performances, 4) Transmission of online. The school has always maintained the tradition of “oral transmission and heartfelt instruction,” utilizing the traditional teacher-student approach in Guqin learning and practice. Through learning and reading scores, students can acquire valuable information about the historical and cultural background of Guqin schools and enhance their Guqin techniques.

The diversity of the Guqin Wangji School gatherings reflects the multi-faceted nature of its heritage. Guqin music activities represent a comprehensive process of inheriting Guqin music culture, encompassing all aspects related to the Guqin, including its spiritual significance, emotions, history, culture, traditions, and technical techniques. Today, the transmission of Guqin music history and culture is often closely linked to the transmission of Guqin melodies and techniques, forming a comprehensive system of Guqin music cultural transmission that encompasses various domains such as compositions, craftsmanship, music culture, and traditional values.

The key elements of transmission in the Guqin Wangji School include: 1) Guqin Cultural Instructors, 2) Pathways of Guqin music transmission, 3) Guqin Music Cultural Learners, 4) The Cultural Environment. The Guqin Wangji School emphasizes the integration of learning the Guqin with contemporary life. In the actual transmission of Guqin music, they place importance on the musical expression of Guqin music, highlighting the mastery of Guqin performance techniques before discussing the artistic conception and charm of the Guqin. The philosophical ideals promoted by the Guqin Wangji School may not always align with their practical implementation. On one hand,

the school aspires to a more academic approach to Guqin learning, akin to university-level education. However, practical constraints, such as societal demands and market influences, make it challenging to fully realize this ideal. As a result, the school has incorporated various cultural connotations and functions, such as using the Guqin for cultivating the mind, promoting wellness, and spiritual practice, in order to attract participants. On the other hand, the Guqin Wangji School has downplayed its focus on Guqin technique while recognizing the importance of imparting essential knowledge about music itself. They continue to organize periodic Guqin-related activities and events to showcase the achievements of the society, aiming to avoid being marginalized within the broader musical landscape.



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Chapter VII

Conclusion discussion and suggestion

1. Conclusion

1.1 According to the first research objective, the history and development of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan China, the history can be divided into three stages: preparation (2000-2007), founding Process (2007-2009), and development stages (2009-2022). The development includes personal development of the founder, composition and development of members, development of the music activities. Through these three stages of development, the Guqin Wangji School gradually matured and became an important force in the regional Guqin community. In the contemporary cultural environment, the Guqin Wangji School strives for the transmission and promotion of Guqin music through continuous exploration and innovation, making positive contributions to the flourishing development of regional Guqin culture.

1.2 According to the second research objective, through the analysis and research of the Guqin Wangji School basic, intermediate, and advanced play techniques, it can be observed that the music characteristics of the Guqin Wangji School are manifested in the application of its performance techniques in the works. Through the analysis of the application of performance techniques at different levels, Guqin Wangji School not only focuses on the musical style and performance techniques of the music, but also pays more attention to expressing the thoughts and spiritual outlook of contemporary people in Henan province. In this way, it can better inherit and preserve the musical style, performance techniques, and uniqueness of the Guqin style.

1.3 According to the third research objective, Based on the questionnaire survey, interviews, and data collection of the members of the Guqin Wangji School, it can be concluded that the transmission process of the school consists of different modes of transmission and essential elements. The modes of transmission: “Kouchuan Xinshou” transmission, practice transmission, performances transmission, and online transmission. The essential elements of transmission include the instructors of Guqin music culture, the channels of Guqin music transmission, the recipients of Guqin music culture, and the cultural environment surrounding Guqin music. It can be seen from this



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that the transmission of techniques emphasizes the interaction between individuals, and the methods and elements of transmission still play an important role in the transmission and development of Guqin art. The Guqin school is an important platform for the folk transmission of Guqin art in contemporary school. It adheres to traditional methods of transmission and emphasizes the accumulation of cultural literacy and the practice of techniques for Guqin learners. It is the main process for undertaking the transmission and development of Guqin art.

2. Discussion

2.1 Discussion on history and development of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China

Through field investigations and literature analysis, researchers have found that the history and development of the Guqin Wangji School are relatively short. However, when studying the historical development process of the school, it is necessary to explore it from different stages. As a qin society that has grown up in the contemporary cultural environment, the Guqin Wangji School inherits the traditions of multiple Guqin music genres and has become one of the bases for the transmission and development of contemporary Guqin music culture in Henan.

The formation and development of the Guqin Wangji School are inseparable from the collective strength of Guqin practitioners. Various elegant gatherings and Guqin music exchange activities organized by the school have become essential support for the Guqin practitioners' musical lives. The scale and social impact of the Guqin Wangji School have gradually expanded, playing an important role in the transmission and development of Guqin music in the Henan region. As a Guqin music community, the Guqin Wangji School plays an active role in the transmission and development of Guqin music traditions. It not only preserves the traditions of multiple Guqin music genres but also provides a platform for Guqin practitioners to learn, exchange, and perform. The development of the Guqin Wangji School is closely related to the active participation of Guqin practitioners, and its expansion in scale and influence further promotes the prosperity and development of Guqin music culture in the Henan region.

The research results are consistent with the following scholars' views: 1) In the history of Henan, there have been a large number of renowned Guqin players and Guqin

scores, but they are mainly recorded by individual Guqin practitioners and Guqin compositions. Guqin music has not formed clear factions and has not reached a certain scale, with significant gaps in between (Cao Xiaqing, 2014). 2) The development of Guqin schools in Henan has mainly taken place in the past two to three decades. Many Guqin studios were established by folk artists who changed careers, and some were even funded by businessmen to hire teachers who can play the Guqin to manage them. Most of these studios are profit-oriented, and there is limited communication and cooperation between them due to the pursuit of individual interests (Chen Lina, 2012). 3) From a historical perspective, Guqin research has mostly focused on Guqin practitioners who have made outstanding contributions to the transmission of the Guqin in contemporary times. Their practical Guqin studies, Guqin thoughts, music notation work, performance techniques, and artistic features are the key research areas (Wang Xiaoting, 2011). 4) The study of association culture has become an important part of academic research in various disciplines. Currently, academic research related to Guqin schools in the field of qin studies is relatively lagging compared to the flourishing Guqin music activities (Ge Hancong, 1995).

2.2 Discussion on music characteristics of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China

Through field investigation and literature analysis, it was found that the music characteristics of the Guqin Wangji School are reflected in the application of basic, intermediate, and advanced performance techniques. By analyzing and studying the basic, intermediate, and advanced music works of the Guqin Wangji School, the application of performance techniques at the three levels in the works is analyzed and summarized. It is concluded that “Cai Yun Zhui Yue,” “Qiu Feng Ci,” “Feng Qiu Huang” are introductory pieces for learning the Guqin, focusing on the handling and control of different tones, and are basic exercise pieces. “Liu Shui” embodies the organic combination of musical materials and aesthetic concepts in the context of the times. The performance often uses the organic combination of “Open strings, harmonious, and Stopped strings”, and through rich techniques and variable tones, it demonstrates unique musical characteristics. “Xiao Xiang Shui Yun” largely retains the steady, vigorous, and robust performance style of its inherited Guqin school. The melody of the work is hidden in the complex techniques of “Yin Nao Chuo Zhu”. Its

characteristic is that the left hand plays to express the breath. Phrases and breath are the expression methods of traditional Chinese music beats and also the style of the genre. They express the emotions and personal interpretations of the piece.

The research findings align with the viewpoints obtained from my field survey: 1) Respecting individual artistic styles preserves the simplicity and charm of Guqin music. The uniqueness of Guqin music culture lies in its diverse musical styles. Guqin players naturally inherit and maintain the aesthetic concepts, values, musical styles, performance techniques, and repertoire of their respective Guqin schools (Liu Chenghua, 2000). 2) Research on Guqin mainly focuses on aesthetics and culture. It analyzes the aesthetic trends of Guqin art, from a balanced and moderate style to a clear and distant style, emphasizing the study of Qindao philosophy as an important means for individuals to cultivate their character and attain enlightenment (Zhang Di, 2011). 3) In terms of musical characteristics, some researchers have conducted studies on aspects such as Guqin schools' notation systems, comparative studies of individual players' performances, and studies on Guqin piece styles (Yi Hongshu, 1988). 4) Research on contemporary Guqin schools adopts methods such as music analysis and ethnomusicology to conduct detailed and in-depth studies on the analysis of performance techniques in different works within the cultural system of Guqin music. It is found that cultural factors with regional distinctions, nurtured by geographical and natural environments, have influenced the culture, language, music, and even the styles of Guqin players in the region. This process is not instantaneous but gradually stabilizes over many years of accumulation, resulting in the relatively stable and fixed aesthetic habits of Guqin players (Luo Suli, 2022 interview). 5) The analysis of Guqin music style elements in fragmentary form has certain limitations. However, it also reflects that the musical styles of each Guqin school have regional characteristics, influenced by the region's history, culture, politics, and other factors. It can be inferred that in the long course of history, the cross-regional diffusion of culture has brought about the emergence and development, transmission, and the determination and transformation of various Guqin schools' styles (Han Tingyao, 2022 interview).

2.3 Discussion on transmission process of the Guqin Wangji School in Henan, China



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Through field research and literature analysis, it has been found that establishing interview records and archives is crucial for studying the transmission methods and elements in the transmission process of the Guqin Wangji School. Here are some findings in this regard:

Transmission methods:1) Teaching dissemination: Through internal teaching activities within the Guqin school, Guqin music techniques and knowledge are imparted to cultivate a new generation of Guqin music enthusiasts and performers.2) Practice transmission: Through the daily practice activities of Guqin schools members, Guqin music techniques and repertoire are inherited and interpreted, further spreading to others.3) Event dissemination: Through various activities organized by the Guqin school, such as concerts, competitions, and symposiums, Guqin music culture is transmission to a wider audience.4) Online dissemination: Leveraging new media platforms such as the internet and social media, Guqin music culture is transmission through online teaching, audio, video, and other forms, enabling long-distance transmission.

Transmission elements:1) Guqin Cultural Instructors: Including members, teachers, and performers within the Guqin school, who play a role in imparting, inheriting, and interpreting Guqin music culture.2) Pathways of Guqin music transmission: Including traditional channels such as family and master-disciple transmission, as well as folk Guqin school as carriers of transmission.3) Guqin Music Cultural Learners: Including students and members within the Guqin school, as well as other individuals who come into contact with Guqin music culture through Guqin school activities and transmission channels.4) The Cultural Environment: Including organizational structure, internal regulations, artistic atmosphere, and other factors that have a significant impact on the transmission of Guqin music culture. By studying the transmission methods and elements, a deeper understanding of the transmission process of the Guqin Wangji School can be gained, providing relevant information and insights for the transmission and development of Guqin music culture.

The research findings align with the viewpoints of the researchers during the field investigation:1) Exploring the advantages and characteristics of the Guqin music transmission process within the Guqin school, the transmission channels and the Guqin music environment of the school are integrated into the local way of life. The Guqin

school serves as an important platform for the folk transmission of Guqin music in contemporary school, adhering to traditional transmission methods and employing the teaching method of “Kouchuan Xinshou.” It emphasizes the accumulation of cultural literacy and the practice of Guqin techniques, serving as the main path for the transmission and development of Guqin music art (Wang Zini, 2008).²⁾ By incorporating the transmission channels of Guqin music into the local way of life, traditional Guqin music art acquires a contemporary connotation. Through the integration with local culture and lifestyle, the Guqin school becomes more approachable and easily accepted by the local people in the process of transmission Guqin music art (Wang Xiaoting, 2011).³⁾ The Guqin school serves as an important platform for the folk transmission of Guqin music art in contemporary school. Through the organization and activities of the Guqin school, the transmission and development of Guqin music art can be promoted. The Guqin school not only devotes itself to the transmission of traditional Guqin music art but also continuously explores the integration of Guqin music art with modern school, driving the development of Guqin music art in innovative ways (Zhang Huaying, 2005). ⁴⁾ The Guqin school possesses unique advantages and characteristics in the transmission of Guqin music art, and its successful experiences can serve as a reference for other Guqin schools or Guqin enthusiasts. (Zhang Zhen, 2018)

3. Suggestions:

3.1 Suggestions for further research

3.1.1 This study has investigated the historical development, musical features, and propagation process of the Guqin Wangji School. It is hoped that future researchers can continue to study the regional characteristics and culture of Henan Province, so that the ancient Guqin music of Henan Province can play its unique cultural and artistic value in the new era.

3.1.2 Should be comparative study of the performance techniques of different Guqin schools.

3.1.3 Should be studied and analyzed the characteristics of different Guqin styles.

3.1.4 Should be further investigated the transmission and protection of Guqin schools.

3.2 Applications in Henan Province

3.2.1 Universities, middle and primary schools in Zhengzhou can use the results of this study to promote Guqin school activities in their clubs and organizations.

3.2.2 The results of this study can also be utilized as a cultural and tourism development project in Henan Province.



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Appendix



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Appendix I Explanation of Special Terms in Dissertation

1. Guqin Wangji School(忘机琴社) It is a music institution that teaches and promotes the culture of Guqin.

2. Guqin, Qi, Calligraphy, and Painting(琴、棋、书、画) These four art forms originated in China. They include Guqin, Weiqi, Shufa and Painting.

3. “Kouchuan Xinshou”(口传心授) It is one of the main methods of traditional music transmission in China. It involves the transmission of musical techniques and artistic styles through oral teaching and personal demonstrations.

4. Wen Zipu(文字谱) It is a notation method used to describe the fingerings, string order, and pitch positions of the Guqin through text.

5. Jian Zipu(减字谱) A unique notation system in ancient China, exclusively used for recording Guqin music.

6. Gong Chipu(工尺谱) The Gongche notation is a unique notation system in China. It is a form of notation based on written characters.

7. Yaji(雅集) It refers to gatherings of literati and scholars who engage in reciting poetry, discussing academic topics, and exchanging scholarly ideas.

8. Gou(勾) It is a playing technique refers to plucking the strings inward with the third finger.

9. Tiao(挑) It is a playing technique refers to plucking the strings outward with the second finger.

10. Tuo(托) It is a playing technique refers to the action of plucking the string with the first finger pointing outward.

11. Pi(劈) It is a playing technique refers to the action of plucking the string with the first finger pointing inward towards the body.

12. Mo(抹) It is a playing technique refers to the action of plucking the string with the second finger pointing inward.

13. Ti(剔) It is a playing technique refers to the action of plucking the string with the third finger pointing outward.

14. Shang(上) It is a playing technique refers to playing a note by stopped a string, the finger remains on the string and moves upward to the right by one or more notes.

15. Xia(下) It is a playing technique refers to playing a note by stopped a string, the finger moves downward to the left after playing a note by stopped a string, instead of moving upward to the right.

16. Da(打) It is a playing technique refers to the action of plucking the string with the fourth finger pointing inward.

17. Zhai(摘) It is a playing technique refers to the action of plucking the string with the fourth finger pointing outward.

18. Lun(轮) It is a playing technique refers to the technique in which the right hand uses the index finger or thumb to rapidly and continuously slide or pluck the same string.

19. Bo(拨) It is a playing technique refers to the plucking technique used in playing the instrument.

20. Ci(刺). It is a playing technique refers to using the right hand thumb or index finger to rapidly and forcefully strike the strings.

21. Cuo(撮) It is a playing technique in which two strings are plucked using the “Gou” and “Tiao” techniques.

22. Gun(滚) It is a playing technique refers to continuous plucking .

23. Fu(拂) It is a playing technique refers to continuous brushing or sweeping of the strings.

24. Tui (退) It is a playing technique, plucking only one pitch, and “Fu” refers to returning to the original pitch with the finger.

25. Tui Fu(退复) It is a playing technique, plucking only one pitch, and “Fu” refers to returning to the original pitch with the finger.

26. Yin(吟) It is a playing technique where, after striking a note, the left hand sways from left to right.

27. Nao(揉) It is a playing technique where, after striking a note, the residual sound fluctuates up and down.

28. Chuo(绰) It is a playing technique where the player slides their fingers or a plectrum from the tail of the Guqin towards the head while producing sounds.

29. Zhu(注) It is a playing technique where the player slides their fingers or a plectrum from the head of the Guqin towards the tail while producing sounds.

30. Cai Yun Zhui Yue(彩云追月) It is a famous basic-level work in Guqin music.

31. Feng Qiu Huang(凤求凰) It is a basic-level Guqin work composed by Sima Xiangru during the Han Dynasty.

32. Qiu Feng Ci(秋风词) It is one of the famous melodies in the repertoire of Guqin music.

33. Liu Shui(流水) It is a Chinese Guqin piece and is one of the widely circulated and well-known pieces among the existing Guqin repertoire.

34. Xiao(箫) It known as the Dongxiao, is a single-tube vertical flute and is one of the oldest wind instruments.

35. Xiao Xiang Shui Yun(潇湘水云) It is a Chinese Guqin piece, recognized by generations of Guqin players as one of the excellent Guqin compositions.

36. Changsuo(长锁) It is a playing technique divided into two parts: the left hand and the right hand. The left hand is primarily responsible for pressing the strings, while the right hand is primarily responsible for plucking the strings.

37. Zoushouyin(走手音) It is a unique playing technique in Guqin, and also one of the most distinctive elements in Guqin music.

38. Sanban(散板) It is a Chinese musical term that refers to a slow tempo with irregular and free rhythms.

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