

THE LAST OF
CHINA'S
LITERATI

The Music, Poetry, and Life
of Tsar Teh-yun

Bell Yung

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Contents

- List of Figures and Photo vii
- Photo Credits ix
- Foreword by George Shen xi
- Preface xv
1. Waters and Mists of the Rivers Xiao and Xiang 1
 2. Calling upon Tsar Teh-yun *Laoshi* 9
 3. Early Years 17
 4. Calligraphy, Poetry, and Music 27
 5. From Adolescence to Marriage 37
 6. A Tale of Two Cities: Shanghai and Hong Kong 45
 7. Studying Qin 55
 8. Elegant Gatherings of Musicians, Poets, and Artists 69
 9. Qin Students and the Deyin Qin Society 81
 10. Method of Teaching 95
 11. Style of Playing 103
 12. The Sojourner and Her Poems 119
 13. Qin and Tsar Teh-yun in the Twenty-First Century 135

Contents

Postscript 141

Appendices

1. Titles and translations of qin compositions mentioned in the text 143

2. Chronology 144

3. Poems in Chinese characters 146

Notes 153

Bibliography 165

Combined index and glossary of Chinese characters 171

Figures and Photos

Figures

1. Map of Shanghai region 17
2. Genealogy of Tsar Teh-yun's Family 18
3. Students of Tsar Teh-yun 87
4. Schematic diagram of typical tempo structure in a qin composition 109
5. Comparison of Zhang's and Tsar's tempo treatment of Section 3 of "Longxiang Cao" 114

Photos

1. Tsar Teh-yun playing qin at age 95 in the year 2000. x
2. "Yinyinshi Ming." 10
3. About 1911. From left to right: Tsar, mother, first elder brother, second elder brother, father, sister. 25
4. Tsar Teh-yun at age 22 (1927). 41
5. Tsar Teh-yun at age 31 (1936). 48
6. Tsar Teh-yun, her husband Shen Honglai, and their son George, 1936. 48
7. Tsar Teh-yun, her husband Shen Honglai, and their son George, 1950. 69

- 8, 9, 10, 11. Tsar Teh-yun by her qin, 1980. 83
12. Tsar Teh-yun teaching, with Bell Yung, 1980. 84
13. Tsar Teh-yun celebrating her 100th birthday, 2005. 93
14. Tsar Teh-yun with students and friends, 2003. 139
Front row left to right:
Sou Si-tai, Cheung Lai-chun,
Lau Chor-wah, Tsar laoshi, Leung Lai-wan,
Mrs. Shum Hing-shun; back row left to right:
Au Siu-kam, Lee Chee-keung, Ng Ying-wai,
Shum Hing-shun, Wong Hong-wah, Wong Shu-chee,
Ho Chun-wah, Tse Chun-yan.

Waters and Mists of the Rivers Xiao and Xiang

The mists and waters of the Rivers Xiao and Xiang are immense;
Like the rivers' thousand waves my sorrows pile up.
When will I be able to return home?
The affection of old friends lasts and lasts.^a

Tsar Teh-yun (1962)¹

When the noted American ethnomusicologist and field recorder John Levy visited China in 1966 seeking authentic music of the people, he sought out Tsar Teh-yun in Hong Kong, a British colony but nevertheless a place steeped in Chinese culture, for permission to record her performance of qin music. The piece Tsar chose to play was “Xiaoxiang Shuiyun” (Waters and Mists of the Rivers Xiao and Xiang), a composition from the thirteenth century. In later years, her students learned that this is her most beloved piece, which she would pass on only to the truly advanced students as the final work that they would learn from her before she would dismiss them for having “graduated” from her instruction.

“Xiaoxiang Shuiyun” is technically demanding and structurally complex, a composition that has long been celebrated among qin players. While the music is programmatic to some degree in depicting the subject matter, the composition embodies one of the most common themes in Chinese literati culture throughout history: the profound regret felt by enlightened and concerned intellectuals over their helplessness and despair in the face of the perceived moral degradation of the society they live in and the political corruption of their government. Their culturally sanctioned alternative has been to escape and retreat into the simplicity and beauty of nature, far from the chaos and intrigues of society and worldly power.

The piece was composed by the noted qin musician Guo Chuwang of the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), born in Yongjia of Zhejiang province. While Guo's exact dates are not known, he was active in the last two decades of a dynasty that was considered a glorious period in the arts: its poetry, calligraphy, painting, porcelain, drama, and music all reached new heights of creative energy and unrivaled achievement. Yet politically and militarily the dynasty, together with its predecessor the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127), was among the weakest in China's long history. For centuries the government had to endure looming threats from northern invaders (the Liao, the Jin, and the Mongols), and internally it was beset by incompetent leadership and corrupt officials. Utterly disillusioned by the situation and apprehensive about the bleak future, Guo composed "Xiaoxiang Shuiyun" to express his gloom and despair, and the wish to escape to the simplicity of nature.

In the literary preface to the earliest extant notation of the piece collected in the three-volume *Shenqi Mipu* (Wondrous and Secret Notation) of 1425, the compiler Zhu Quan wrote: "This piece was composed by Master Guo Chuwang, who was originally from Yongjia. When he observed that the Jiuyi Mountains appeared to be always obscured by the mists rising from the rivers Xiao and Xiang, he composed the piece to lodge his deeply felt feelings. As a composition, the music shows delight in the beauty of the light and shadow produced by the water and clouds, and through the music he expresses a wish to don the fisherman's straw cape, dwell on a small boat, and lead a simple life on the rivers amidst wind and rain." The image of the Jiuyi Mountains being always obscured by mist was meant to be a metaphor for the usurpation of political integrity by corruption. Guo's "deeply-felt feelings" over worldly affairs were palpable, as was captured by Zhu Quan in poetic terms. For centuries, qin players interpreted the metaphor as follows. The otherwise clear view of the Jiuyi Mountains represents the riddance of the "barbarian" invaders who at the time occupied the North so that the lost land could be restored, while the "mists" represent the cowardice and incompetency of corrupt officials, epitomized by the then prime minister Jia Sidao, who appeased the enemy.²

Yet "Xiaoxiang Shuiyun" also expresses a more personal sentiment that permeated the Southern Song period, as is articulated in Tsar's poem quoted above: an exile's longing for home. From the earliest antiquity, the cradle of Chinese civilization had been in the North. For more than one millennium, after the "first" emperor Yingzheng unified the many regional kingdoms in 221 BC and established the Qin dynasty, the seat of supreme power and the centre of elite culture had been along the lower basin of the Yellow River. The region was considered "northern" China by later generations, as opposed to "southern" China along the basin of the Yangzi River and points further south.

When the Song dynasty was first established in AD 960, its reign encompassed both the north and the south, with its capital set in the city of Kaifeng immediately south of the Yellow River. However, being militarily weak, the Song was under constant threat by nomads to the north, first the Khitan people of the northeast (who adopted the Chinese dynastic name of Liao), then the Tanguts of the northwest (Chinese dynastic name Xia); and finally the Jurchen people of Manchuria to the further northeast (Chinese dynastic name Jin). In the year 1126, the Jin first annexed the Liao, then sacked the Song capital Kaifeng and took the emperor and most of his family as prisoners. The Song court retreated south to the Yangzi River basin, established a new capital at what is now Hangzhou, and was able to withstand further advances by the Jin invaders mainly through appeasement and by paying tributes as a subordinate. Consequently, the second half of the dynasty, from 1127 to 1279, is commonly called the Southern Song, and the period before that, from 960 to 1127, is known subsequently and by contrast as the Northern Song.

The Southern Song, though characterized by relative stability and prosperity, and by glorious literary and artistic attainments, was a period of national shame and regret, particularly among the literati, many of whom held high government posts. Such feelings arose not only because the last emperor of Northern Song had become a prisoner of the enemy, but also because the court had been banished from what was considered up until then the cradle and center of Chinese civilization. The literati, many of them through the medium of poetry, expressed the general feeling of remorse and longing for the land of their ancestors that had fallen under "barbarian" rule. Prominent among them was Xin Qiji (1140–1207), literary name Jiaxuan, who left a large number of poems, many of which allude to this sentiment. When he was stationed in the province of Jiangxi, he wrote a *ci* poem to the tune "Pu Sa Man,"³ in which the following line appears, "Looking northwest towards Chang'an, how wretched are those countless mountain ranges."^b Another poet Liu Chenweng (1232–1297), literary name Xuqi, wrote in the poem "Chun Gan" (Spring Thoughts), to the tune "Liushaoqing," "How can I bear sitting alone by the lamp, thinking of old palace's high tower in moonlight."^c A poem by Lu You (1125–1210), literary name Fangweng, to the tune "Su Zhongqing" (Telling of Innermost Feelings), reads in its entirety as follows:

Years ago, I travelled ten thousand miles in search of honor;
Riding alone, I guarded the Liang-chou frontier.
Where are my broken dreams of mountain passes and rivers?
Dust has darkened my old sable coat.
The Tartars have not been defeated,
My hair has turned gray first,

My tears flow in vain.
Who would have thought that in this life
My heart should be with the T'ien Mountains
And my body grow old by the seashore!^{d,4}

Such longing and regret were no doubt part of Guo Chuwang's "deeply-felt feelings" as noted by Zhu Quan. Zha Fuxi wrote that the traditional interpretation of the feeling expressed in "Xiaoxiang Shuiyun" was one of *juanhuai guguo*, or "longing for the homeland" and *shennan xinbei*, or "the body is in the South, the heart is in the North" (Zha 1995 [1956], 431).

Tsar Teh-yun grew up in Shanghai. In 1950, at the age of 45, she, her husband, and their young son, like some well-educated and many prosperous Shanghainese, emigrated to Hong Kong to escape what they perceived as the ruthless rule of the communist regime. A brief traumatic trip back to Shanghai a few years later to visit her mother convinced her that she would never return to her hometown, where almost all her family and friends were. Her regret and longing for an unreachable home to the North is much like those of Guo Chuwang, Xin Qiji, Liu Chengweng, Lu You and others during the Southern Song dynasty. It is not accidental that Guo Chuwang's qin composition "Xiaoxiang Shuiyun" was her favorite and that she alludes to it often in her poetry, including the lines quoted at the beginning of this chapter. This is because not only does the composition reflect her feelings, it also links her to fellow poets who lived almost a millennium ago.

In 2006 at the age of 101, Tsar Teh-yun is widely acknowledged as the pre-eminent living qin musician. Her contemporaries and immediate predecessors, such celebrated qin musicians of the twentieth century as Guan Pinghu, Zha Fuxi, Shen Caonong, Zhang Ziqian, Wu Jinglue, Wei Zhongle, Yang Xinlun, Yu Shaozhe, Yao Bingyan, Wu Zhaoji, and Wu Zonghan, had all passed away by the end of the last century. Musicians of a younger generation or two, though having achieved acclaim themselves, still travel far and wide to pay their respects to her, and to seek her approval by playing a piece or two. In recent years, these visitors have included Wu Zhao, Zheng Minzhong, Gong Yi, Lin Youren, Li Xiangting, Wu Wenguang, Zeng Chengwei, Cheng Gongliang, Yao Gongbai, and Dai Xiaolian. Many of the students whom she taught in the last five decades in Hong Kong visit regularly and frequently.

The traditional deference to age certainly has played a role in elevating her status within the qin community. Equally important, two other factors elicit reverence and awe from her admirers. These are her overall literary and artistic attainments, and her personality and philosophy of life, both of which have become increasingly rare among qin players, and which have had a direct effect on her musical artistry.

Tsar grew up in a privileged environment. Her parents, particularly her mother, several of her uncles on both sides of her parents, her two elder brothers, and a few school teachers, all played a critical role during her childhood and youth in exposing her to and nurturing her in the traditional arts of the literati, including poetry, calligraphy, and painting. Few other qin players of her generation, and even fewer in younger generations, enjoyed the luxury of such opportunities. In her later years her calligraphy and poetry were, and still are, greatly admired and sought after. Fellow qin players marvel at her privileged experience and recognize the influence of these arts on her qin music.

Clearly related to her upbringing and her attainments in the fine and literary arts are her modest personality and noble philosophy of life and art. For example, she has always shunned public performance and recording; she began to teach the qin very reluctantly, not only because she didn't believe that she had attained the stature to teach anyone, but also because she believed that assuming a teacher's role was an arrogant stance; throughout life she has actively avoided any association with fame and fortune when it comes to qin music or other artistic and literary endeavors because she considers such association beneath her and unworthy of the arts. In short, she embodies the lofty ideal of the purest kind of amateur artist — one who practices the arts with no other goal in mind except the act itself for one's own enjoyment, and as a tribute to the arts being practiced. In an age of commercialism, her fellow qin players are in awe of this rare quality, and pay her the highest respect for it. They also note and respect the profound influence of this philosophy on her music.

The qin and its music are in many ways unique in Chinese musical culture.³ The long and uninterrupted history of the instrument spans at least two millennia, attested by archaeological and literary evidence. While many instruments in the world are as old, few can claim the unbroken continuity of the qin tradition, a continuity which underscores its generally conservative nature. Until the last century, the tradition of qin playing retained much that is archaic, including the repertory, the notational system, the performance practice, the aesthetic ideals, and the social context.

Qin music has always been associated intimately and exclusively with China's small and elite class of literati, and is identified closely with the refinement and sophistication of this social class. Until recent times, the great majority of China's population had little chance to hear this music, although many would have heard of the name of the instrument because it is often mentioned in popular performing genres such as storytelling and opera, where it functions as a symbol of the literati. It is also a common subject in paintings that depict the recluse scholar contemplating the serenity and grandeur of nature while playing the instrument, or strolling on a mountain path followed by a servant boy carrying his qin.

Its long history produced a rich lore concerning the instrument and its music. Physical parts of the instrument and many of the individual finger techniques have symbolic significance; individual pieces in the vast repertory are laden with extra-musical content. The symbolism and lore are related to the history, myths, legends, philosophy, and religion of China, especially as cultivated and transmitted by the literati. Thus, along with poetry, calligraphy, and painting, qin and its music form a microcosm of China's elite and refined culture.

A large amount of writing from every generation of qin scholars and musicians bears on the instrument, its music, its technique of performance, and its lore and philosophy. The notational system used for performance today was established at least as early as the twelfth century AD and has remained essentially unchanged.⁶ The relative stability of the notation makes music written down centuries ago accessible to a modern musician. A repertory of over three thousand items, mostly from the last five and a half centuries, is extant today.

The instrument was used as part of an ensemble for ritual music, and as an accompaniment to the singing of refined poetry. But its outstanding role in performance has always been as a solo instrument. As such, the music is played not so much for an audience as for the performer's own enlightenment and enjoyment, although occasionally performers may play for one another. Qin musicians are predominantly "amateurs," in the sense that they do not depend upon performance as a means of living, and need not cater to the tastes of a paying audience. This private mode of performance played a critical role in shaping many of the aesthetic principles and musical characteristics of the instrument.

Qin music is complex in structure and refined and subtle in its aesthetics. The extreme quietness of its tone requires a serene environment and the full and undivided attention of the player as well as the listener, if there is one; it takes a sensitive and cultivated ear to appreciate the many shades of timbre and dynamics that vary within a small range. These variations are produced by minute differences in finger techniques. The fact that most compositions have extra-musical content that relate to the history, philosophy, and religion of China poses yet another challenge to both the player and the listener.

These characteristics of the qin tradition are all related to the fact that for centuries it has catered to, and has been cultivated by, the literati, an elite class that served as court and government officials, and hence held enormous power, possessed great wealth, and enjoyed lofty stature. So long as the status of this class remained unchanged, the qin tradition and its special characteristics were sustained. Despite China's turbulent history in the last twenty-five hundred years as dynasties rose and fell, the power and prestige of the literati remained essentially unchanged. It follows that the longevity and continuity of the qin tradition were maintained—until recent times.

The late 19th and much of the 20th centuries witnessed tumultuous changes in China's political, social, and economic structures. Furthermore, in the last century China experienced a burst of development in science and technology, a rapid spread of mass media and global communication, the large-scale import of Western ideas, the increasing dominance of market economy, and the rise of a middle class. Along with the collapse of the last imperial dynasty in 1911 came the disintegration and loss of power of the literati class. As a result, the qin tradition as it was practiced for two millennia was doomed.

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of famous qin musicians recorded in history, legend, or fiction have been men, ranging from the mythological figure Bo Ya to the great musicians of the twentieth century such as Guan Pinghu. Notable exceptions were Cai Yan, also known as Cai Wenji, of the second century AD, and the heroine Lin Daiyu in the celebrated eighteenth century novel *Hongloumeng*.⁷ The membership list of the well-known qin group called Jinyu Qinshe (Jinyu Qin Society), formed in 1936, shows that only 24 of the 224 members were female, and some of them were included in part because they were wives of male members. It is therefore astonishing that the most revered qin musician today is a woman, Tsar Teh-yun.

Tsar was born in the waning days of China's last imperial dynasty. She lived through most of the twentieth century and has now entered the twenty-first. During this period, the world saw unprecedented advancement in science, technology, and mass media. China witnessed some of the most violent upheavals, from the fall of the Qing dynasty, internal strife among warlords, the rise of the Communist party, invasion by and ultimate defeat of the Japanese, the establishment of the People's Republic, isolation from the outside world, innumerable political movements that culminated in the Cultural Revolution, and finally the development of a market economy in the last two decades that propelled China onto the world stage with increasing political and economic influence. After 1949, the Nationalist government on the island of Taiwan and the British colony of Hong Kong grew in economic power and enjoyed political stability; the result was a splintering of the Chinese nation that continues to be a source of internal and international tension today. These tremendous political, social, and economic changes also brought enormous changes in ways of living and in artistic pursuits. If someone from 1905 were to be transported to 2005, he would be totally disoriented by how people live today, by the value system people hold, and by the fast pace of life.

Tsar Teh-yun grew up in a traditional and privileged family of learning, affluence, and refined tastes, which prepared her well in later years when she lived in a world of the literati. This world has a long tradition called *yaji*, or "Elegant Gatherings," dating back at least two millennia. In imperial China,

men of leisure, and occasionally women, met in these yaji and cultivated as a group the gentle arts of poetry, painting, calligraphy, and qin music. By the early twentieth century, the privileged literati class and its life style had largely vanished along with the imperial dynasty. Yet, in the 1930s and 40s in Shanghai and later in the 1950s and 60s in Hong Kong, Tsar Teh-yun and her friends held on to the last vestiges of refined artistic practices. By then most of them no longer belonged to the privileged leisure class but were working professionals. Tsar Teh-yun at age 101 is the very last surviving representative of this heritage. Her life and artistic pursuits may be considered a testament to the culture of a small group of Chinese, who maintained in the last century a tradition which most of us can only read about today. Through her, one senses a link to a lost part of Chinese social and cultural history that is not likely to appear again.

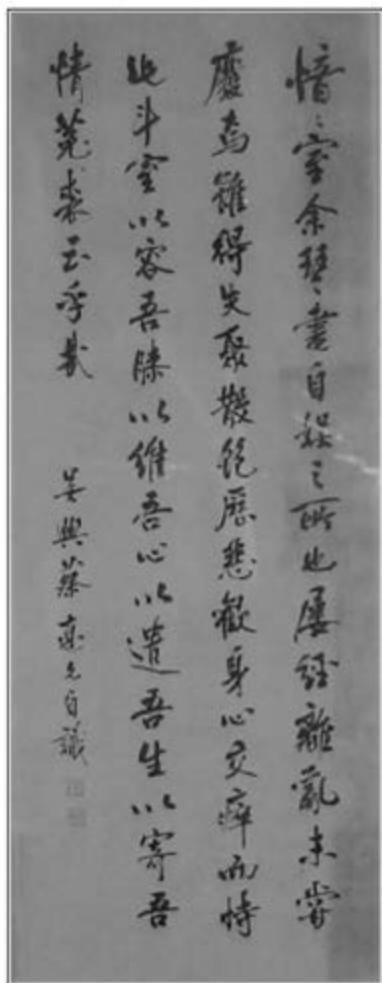
Yet Tsar is also special because she is a woman in a largely male world. From her many stories, it emerges that her position as a daughter, a wife, and a mother, and more generally as a woman, exerted a great influence on the course of her personal life, on the challenges she faced, and on the solutions she found. In her public, professional, and social lives, she was often the only woman amid a group of men. It cannot have been easy for her to manoeuvre her way through such an environment. One story suffices as an example: a noted qin musician once expressed his admiration for her playing, but then made it clear to her that he regarded her so highly only because she was a woman.

The story of Tsar's life and work is the story of the qin tradition and the yaji practice in twentieth century China. Tsar's personal trials and triumphs as an artist and a woman shed light on the cultural and social lives of a segment of Chinese society in recent times. In the broader historical context, her circle of friends can be recognized as the last generation of the literati that had dominated China's politics and elite culture for millennia. The fact that the second half of Tsar's own century has been pervaded by an exile's longing for home, a sentiment which she rarely speaks of but which is powerfully expressed in her poems and in qin pieces such as "Xiaoxiang Shuiyun," gives vivid testimony to a sentiment shared by her countless compatriots throughout China's long history. Most of all, hers is the inspiring story of an exceptional individual.

Calling upon Tsar Teh-yun *Laoshi*

I first met Tsar Teh-yun *laoshi* (the form of address for one's teacher) in the fall of 1978 when I started teaching at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Shortly after my arrival from the United States in September, I paid a visit to Tsar *laoshi* with Professor Rulan Chao Pian, who happened to be visiting at the university as well that year.¹ We expressed our wish to study qin with her, and she graciously and readily agreed to accept us as her students and to give us weekly lessons. Professor Pian's lessons lasted only a few months because she had to return to the United States; I continued my lessons until December 1980, when I left Hong Kong to begin teaching at the University of Pittsburgh. Lessons stopped during the two summers of 1979 and 1980 because of the heat—her normal practice.²

At the time, Tsar *laoshi* and her husband lived in the North Point region of Hong Kong Island, occupying a modest third-floor apartment (referred to as "second floor" in British and Hong Kong practice) along King's Road, a major thoroughfare on the island. Stepping into her flat was like entering a different world, for despite the hum of traffic and the hustle and bustle outside, a special calmness reigned within. Most prominent in the living room was the qin table, on which sat two instruments facing one another that she used for teaching. One of them was her personal instrument called *Huxiao*, "Tiger's Roar," with which I would become well acquainted in the following decades. The other was a nameless instrument for the use of her students. At another corner was her calligraphy table, on which sat an ink-well, an ink-slab, and a cylindrical bamboo container in which calligraphic ink brushes of different sizes stood like a vase of flowers. Rolls of rice paper lay alongside. On one wall hung an ink-brush painting of peony flowers by her artist friend Zhou Shixin; on another was a piece of calligraphy executed in the archaic *zhuan* style by noted scholar Rao Zongyi; on still another was a short essay in honor of her study, called "Yinyinshi ming," (in honor of Yinyin Study), composed by her and executed in her own elegant calligraphy, that reads (photo 2):



Yinyin Study is where I take delight and amuse myself
with qin music and calligraphy.
Despite frequent forced dislocations,
I never forsake my arts.
With all the separations and reunions
I have had my fill of joy and sorrow,
More than my body and soul can endure.
Yet in this small study,
I can rest my knees,
Nurture my soul,
While away my time,
And indulge my love for the arts.
This place is my humble refuge.^{a,3} (YSW, 147)

Photo 2 "Yinyinshi Ming."

This room, and others through the years which served as her "humble refuge," has been described by other students of hers. Reminiscing in 2000 about his lessons, a former student James Watt (Qu Zhiren), who began studying with Tsar in 1968, wrote: "The calmness of the North Point apartment contrasted with the noise outside. I remember this very well. This situation reminded me of a line in Tao Yuanming's poem, 'If your mind is distant, the place becomes remote.'^b The calm of the Yinyin Study not only reflected the inner state of Tsar laoshi, but was also felt by her students. This kind of association brought me into a different state of mind. Before beginning my lesson, I already felt that I had progressed" (YQ, v. 1, front material).

Another former student Lau Chor-wah wrote about the room when she first studied with Tsar laoshi in 1973: "Outside of Yinyin Study was a bus stop and tram tracks. Across the street was the North Point Fire Station. Amidst this clatter, the Yinyin Study was a spot of Buddha's Pure Land (*jingtu*). Each weekly lesson in the afternoon was a peaceful and happy occasion, a memorable experience. Even today, when I play certain pieces, I can still hear the accompaniment of the screaming fire engines ..." (YQ, v. 1, front material).

George Goormaghtigh, another former student, recalled his first visit to Tsar in the Spring of 1973: "The three of us walked to the Hung Hom jetty from which we took the ferry to North Point. Once there, we made our way through bustling streets in order to get to the King's Road where the old double-decker trams ran. A few yards further on, on a pavement lined with small shops and stalls we slipped into a dark entrance where offerings burned for the God of Gates could be seen. An old lift took us up to the second floor, where, as all over Hong Kong, a wrought iron door protected the entrance. We rang the bell. Mrs. Shen [Tsar] appeared behind the door and let us in. She was a lady of delightfully refined politeness, in her sixties [sixty-eight then] but looking younger than her age. She seemed pleased to see us but at once set about giving our friend his music lesson. She did however play a tune for us. To this day, I can still clearly remember the impression that this sound, although barely audible due to the traffic noise, made on me. It had a strength and subtle grace that attracted me at once. That very same day we asked her if she would be prepared to take us on as students. She agreed, and not long afterwards, the classes began" (Deyin Qinxun, 10).

After my formal lessons with Tsar laoshi ended in December 1980, I returned to Hong Kong at least once a year to conduct research as well as to visit my parents. These visits lasted from a week or so to a month; much later, from 1996 to 2002, I taught at The University of Hong Kong and spent extended periods of time in the city. On each trip, I made a point of visiting Tsar laoshi and playing qin with her. After her husband died in 1984, her son, George Shen, returned to Hong Kong from Tokyo in 1986 to assume the chief editorship of *The Hong Kong Economic Journal*, a prestigious Chinese language daily newspaper. She moved with George and his wife Jane to a flat on the top floor of an apartment building on Cloudview Road, half way up the hill, on the Eastern end of Hong Kong Island, overlooking the old Kai Tak Airport across the harbour. In 1996, George and Jane retired to California. But Tsar laoshi preferred to stay in Hong Kong, moving to her own flat, another top floor apartment, on Waterloo Road Hill area on the Kowloon side of the city. Though the rooms were all different, they were all her private Yinyin Study, her "humble refuge." The qin table, the calligraphy table, and the art works on the wall were the same.

When I first met her in 1978, Tsar laoshi was 73 years old, although she looked not a day over 50. Her hair barely showed streaks of grey and her gestures and movements were youthful. She was soft-spoken, with delicate features and a gentle demeanour. With sparkling eyes and a quick smile, she has a sharp wit and a lively sense of humour. When she played the qin, she was transformed into a different presence and seemed to be the embodiment of paradox, for her posture was calm and stately with hardly any overt movement, and her facial expression was neutral, betraying no emotion. In contrast, her hands were swift and flexible, darting this way and that, sliding, lifting, striking, or in repose. The music that emanated from the instrument, alive with excitement, rhythmic suppleness and subtlety, seemed to be an extension of the movements of her hands. In turn, her two hands, when she was playing the qin, seemed to become the essence of her existence, the manifestation of her energy and spirit.

Goormaghtigh wrote of her hands poetically as follows: "How can one not speak of Cai Laoshi's hands? They ply the strings while the rest of her body is still. Her hands which are quite large and full, seem alive with a natural energy; no need to force, nothing seems out of their reach; they flow freely. Carefree movements maintain their distinction. As in the perfect execution of a ritual, this elegance is forever present, and in this finely tuned ballet, nothing is stilted: paying minute attention to every detail finally becomes a spontaneous thing, a second nature that is more real than the first. Her hands sometimes glow as if possessed of some inner light. Her gestures and the force that drives them are fascinating. Strength is not simply of a muscular nature, it stems from a kind of unwavering determination, a movement that nothing can hinder, something untamed that engenders music unvarnished by pretension" (Deyin Qinxun, 10–11).

Through the years, I have come to realize that what I learned from her is much more than simply how to play a musical instrument, for the qin is not merely an instrument, and playing it is not merely making music. Through at least two thousand years of continuity in performance practice, volumes of theory and aesthetics have been written, hundreds of compositions have been preserved in a unique notation, and a large body of myth and legend have been transmitted through written as well as popular and oral literature. The long history of the instrument and its music developed a unique philosophy and code of behaviour among qin musicians. Learning to play the qin is part and parcel of learning about that philosophy. Studying with Tsar makes this point obvious. How she plays and teaches, how she talks about music and life, and how she behaves towards her students and others — these are different from other kinds of music-making and other teaching processes. Meeting her week after week, one learns a set of ethical codes and a philosophy of life above and

beyond playing the qin. Goormaghtigh summed this up when he wrote: "She opened me to another reality. I don't know if the terms 'moral' and 'spiritual' are appropriate here, but one should probably add 'respect for life'" (Deyin Qinxun, 10–11).

For example, after she agreed to teach me, she never mentioned money or tuition. It was tacitly understood that she taught me not because she expected any return, monetary or otherwise, but because she liked me and thought that I had the potential to be a qin musician and, even more importantly, a friend. She never acted as if she was a teacher and I a student. Rather, she made it clear that our relationship was that of close friends with a shared interest in qin music and in life.

Even though the weekly lessons were on playing the qin, music-making inevitably touches upon other aspects of artistic and social life. Through both the learning process and casual conversation on music and other topics, I came to understand her ideology of qin music: what it is, what it symbolizes, what it means to her and to society, and how she interacts with qin players, qin listeners, and other people. By the time I met her, I had already read histories and essays on qin playing, its aesthetics, and its sociology and philosophy. They were, however, merely empty words when I began to know Tsar laoshi. Only years later did I realize the enormous influence she had on me, not only as a qin player, but as a model of how to live and behave and interact with others.

Yip Mingmei, another student, wrote: "Tsar laoshi does not only teach the technique of qin playing, but she is concerned with the development of one's character. She often says that qin playing will not bring one wealth and fame, but it makes one happy and nurtures one's aspirations. She would say to her students with gentle mockery that they were fooled into thinking that playing qin would bring material benefit" (Yip, 216). Tsar laoshi told me that she would agree to teach someone only if she found that the person had a pleasant physical appearance, refined manners, cultivated tastes, and integrity of character. She is known to have rejected potential students outright, or after a few lessons, because she deemed them unworthy of being her friend. She has also said that playing the qin is an outward expression of one's inner self. Who you are will be laid bare by how you play.

My visits always began in mid-afternoon at around 3 pm, shortly after her nap. After about one hour of lesson, the routine was to have an afternoon snack. During those early years of my lessons when she had a Chinese maid, the snacks were mini-meals, often consisting of a bowl of noodles or other delicacies. In later years, she would serve cakes that she had her Filipino maid buy in a bakery nearby. In traditional middle and upper-middle class homes, such rituals were obligatory for family members and honored guests. For her, the students

coming to take lessons are both family and honored guests. Her students Lau Chor-wah, Sou Si-tai, and others all remembered these afternoon snacks when they had their lessons. Gong Yi, a prominent qin player from Shanghai, wrote: "Every time I visit, Tsar laoshi always entertains me with snacks. When I bid my leave, she always makes me take home chocolate and cakes before she lets me go. Even now when I'm approaching 60 years of age, she still treats me as if I were a child. Those moments fill me with surprise, a feeling of being spoiled, and they were ones I'll treasure" (Deyin Qinxun 2005, 19).

Favored students were occasionally invited to stay for dinner after the lesson, or she would assemble several of them to play for one another, with a dinner served afterwards. On those occasions, she would often prepare dishes herself, surprising and delighting her students with her Shanghai-style cuisine. Although she never stepped into a kitchen while growing up, she picked up the fundamental principles of cooking and techniques for certain dishes in later life. Her students remember some of her, and our, favorite dishes such as smoked fish Suzhou style, pork chop with onion, red-cooked chicken, fish with raisins, and whole chicken soup with lots of Tianjin cabbage.

A particular technique she employed in teaching was to play with a student in unison once the student had learned a composition by memory. She would place two qins facing one another on the same table, only inches away from one another. She and the student would then play together in unison. The proximity allowed the student to closely observe and imitate her every movement and every sound. Because her personal rhythmic treatment of a composition tended to be irregular and complex, playing in unison was the only effective way for a student to truly master her interpretation.⁴ I remember well how tirelessly she played with me over and over again until I grasped the difficult rhythm of certain pieces. On occasions when several of her students gathered, she would ask two of them to play in unison with one another. This technique of teaching suits qin music, particularly her style of qin music. But it also exemplifies her dedication to passing along her art to her students.

In recent years, particularly since about year 2000, Tsar laoshi has played less and less because of arthritis in her right shoulder, which causes pain when she lifts her right arm. She wants her students to play when we visit, and, during our playing, she closes her eyes and moves the fingers of her both hands quietly across her lap as if she herself were playing.

Because she has been playing less in recent years, she and I chat more during my visits. She began telling me about herself, with bits of stories from different periods of her life. She talked about her parents and siblings, her teachers and schoolmates, her husband and his family, and, much later in her life, her qin friends and students. I found the early stories particularly fascinating

and illuminating, for those first few decades of the twentieth century were no more than distant and vague images to my generation, constructed out of stories told to us by our parents' and grandparents' generations. Every little incident revealed a certain time and place that was both familiar and strange to me. Her stories were also terribly moving because many of them were very personal. I began to see another side of her behind the gracious manners, witty words, and refined music. Her pains are palpable, her regrets acute. I had earlier read some of her poems, many of which suddenly assume their real meaning because of these stories. Her formidable memory made the stories immediate and alive.

During those early sessions, I would rush home and jot down from memory as much as possible on my computer. Later, when I decided to document her life properly and to place all the stories in their correct sequence for the sake of coherency, I developed a technique that she readily and kindly allowed me to use. I would bring my laptop computer and start telling the stories back to her by reading my notes. She would then correct or elaborate on some details, or move tangentially to other stories, at which point I would frantically click away at the keyboard. In this way I wove the stories together into a narrative that formed a larger picture. Later, I relied very much on her son George to fill in with details and factual information.

Tsar Teh-yun (or Cai Deyun)¹ was born, according to the Chinese lunar calendar, on the 30th day of the tenth month, 1905 (November 26th in the Gregorian calendar), in the town of Shuanglin in Huzhou county, Zhejiang province, a town where her parents' families had lived for many generations. Shuanglin is near the border of Jiangsu province, and about ten miles south of Taihu (Lake Tai), the third largest fresh-water lake in China near its eastern seaboard. (See Figure 1.) Huzhou county is situated in the heart of the Suzhou-Hangzhou axis; the two historic cities and the surrounding region have long been celebrated for their prosperity and for being centers of literati culture. It is no wonder that a popular saying goes, "Up above there is heaven, down below there are Suzhou and Hangzhou." Huzhou county itself is celebrated for its high-quality ink brushes and rice paper for painting and calligraphy, industries that grew out of the literati culture.²



Figure 1
Map of Shanghai region

According to a five-volume Cai (or Tsar) genealogy, the Cai clan, by the late twentieth century, had lived in Shuanglin for at least 28 generations. The clan traces its ancestry back to the kingdom of Cai, one of twelve that existed during the Eastern Zhou, or Spring and Autumn, period (845–476 BC), in today's Henan province alongside the Yellow River in north central China. When the Cai kingdom fell, the clan dispersed. Some fled south and settled in today's Huzhou region.³

Based upon a reconstruction of the Cai genealogy by Tsar's cousin, Cai Dejian, their generation was number 28. (See Figure 2.) A prominent member of generation 22, their great great great grandfather, was Cai Chunli (1699–1734), a scholar-official. In each of the following four generations including her grandfather's, at least one son was a scholar-official and served the Qing dynasty court.

In many Chinese families, the sons, even when they form their own families, continued to live with their father or grandfather in the same household. Thus they formed close-knit extended families. Often, if one of the brothers, say brother A, did not produce a male heir, brother B, who might have more than one son, would “transfer” (*guoji*) one of his sons to brother A so that the lineage of brother A could be continued. Such a transfer would be literal and permanent, so that the child would consider an uncle his real father, with all the rights and duties pertaining to such a relationship.

Figure 2, the Cai family genealogy, shows that such transfers were practiced in the Cai family for four generations in a row, directly affecting Tsar laoshi's lineage. In generation 24, Cai Xianzhang had several sons, one of whom, Cai Xiechang (generation 25), was transferred to an uncle, Cai Lie (1752–1789), who did not have a male heir. The transferred son, Xiechang, was born in 1813, at which time his new father, Lie, had been deceased for 24 years. Xiechang himself had six sons, one of whom, Qingshu (generation 26), was transferred to a cousin (not a brother), Rulian, who was a son of Zhen, one of four brothers of Xiechang's father. Thus Qingshu carried on the lineage of another branch of generation 24. Qingshu himself bore six sons, one of whom, Zhimu (generation 27), was the father of the subject of this biography, Tsar Teh-yun laoshi (generation 28).

One of Xiechang's six sons, Mougong (1844–1884), had two sons, the elder Shize (1879–1959), and the younger Shiqi (1884–1955), in generation 27. Shiqi was transferred to one of his uncles, Yan. Finally, in generation 28, one of Shiqi's three sons, Dejian, was transferred to his uncle Shize.⁴

Of all Tsar's illustrious ancestors, the great grand uncle Xiechang (who was her blood great grandfather) appears to have been the most eminent, holding many important government posts. Although her grandfather Qingshu did not

hold any official government position, Tsar has the impression that he nevertheless was a greatly esteemed and respected citizen of Huzhou county. She has little impression of her grandfather otherwise since he died when she was very young, but she tells this story, no doubt passed along from her elders: "The day I was born happened to be the first day of duty of the new county governor (*zhixian*). Upon his arrival in town, he immediately came to pay his respects to my grandfather. Informed that a new grandchild had been born that day, he brought along special congratulatory steamed buns to offer to my grandfather." Well-educated people in traditional China were expected to become government officials. However, China was undergoing drastic political and social upheavals towards the end of nineteenth century. Industry and commerce were beginning to be established to form the foundation of a middle and upper-middle class outside of government officialdom. That Tsar's grandfather, though highly educated, was not in government service was thus not as uncommon as it had been earlier.

Tsar's father, Cai Zhimu (July 30, 1875 – July 2, 1935) was number five of six brothers. Tsar is not quite sure how many sisters her father had (it was customary in old China to count only sons as core family members), but she remembers that there were at least four aunts. Of her father's four elder brothers, two died young. These elder brothers were borne by their father's first wife, who died relatively young. A second wife bore several more children, including Tsar's father and a younger son. There was a gap of two decades between the two sets of children.

When Tsar was two years old, her father moved the family from Shuanglin first to the nearby city of Wuxing, then to the metropolis Shanghai some fifty miles away. That the family moved from a small provincial town to Shanghai was not surprising at the time. While there must have been personal reasons to move, this kind of migration came to be a pattern from the middle of the nineteenth century. Shanghai became one of the so-called foreign treaty ports in mid-century, and immediately afterwards witnessed an increasing Western presence. The city, which until the early nineteenth century was an obscure village, began its ascent as a major industrial and commercial hub in China. The Tsar family's move was but one example of many that took place in the surrounding region.³

The specific reasons why the Tsar family moved during those waning years of China's last imperial dynasty are not clear. One possible reason is the new work that Tsar's father embarked upon at the time: the production and trading of silk. He first worked as a manager of a silk company in Shanghai, but later started his own silk business. Tsar recalls that her father would often journey to Wuxi, about eighty miles or so west of Shanghai to buy silk cocoons for his

factory. The cultivation of silk is, of course, one of the oldest industries in China, and the Zhejiang province is particularly well known for the enterprise, especially the city of Hangzhou, the largest in the province, about thirty miles from Tsar's hometown. There is a famous saying, known throughout China, which goes as follows: "One wants to be born in Suzhou, to dress in Hangzhou, to eat in Guangzhou, and to die in Liuzhou." The implication is that Suzhou is known particularly for the beauty of its people, Hangzhou for exquisite silk, Guangzhou for fine cuisine, and Liuzhou for high-quality wood suitable for coffins.

Almost the entire Tsar clan moved from her father's generation on down. The only ones who stayed behind in Shuanglin were the two elder sisters of Tsar's father, whom she called *niang'niang*.⁶ Tsar does not remember much else about these aunts, nor about the several *bakbak* (Mandarin *bobo*, a form of address for uncles who are elder brothers of one's father). She does remember uncle number two, who was about twenty years older than her father, because he introduced her to traditional calligraphy with brush and ink when she was still a little girl. Proper training in calligraphy requires one to begin by diligently copying the styles of past masters. Following that method, uncle number two introduced her to many famous calligraphers and calligraphic styles in history. This uncle had two daughters, who were about the same age as Tsar's mother. The elder of these taught and managed the Tsar Clan's school in Shanghai after the family moved, which was where Tsar later studied for a number of years.

Tsar remembers her *suk'suk* (Mandarin *shushu*, form of address for one's father's younger brother), an uncle who was the sixth and youngest of her father's brothers, and she remembers him mainly because of the story of him and his wife. This uncle had been betrothed to a young woman but died of a sudden illness shortly before his wedding day. As Tsar tells the story, shortly after his death, the uncle appeared in a dream of the bride-to-be and told her that she was destined to belong to the Tsar clan. At the time of his death family members on both sides agreed that the engagement should be nullified and that the young woman should be free to marry someone else. But she defied their advice and resisted their persuasion, insisted instead that she should observe widowhood even though the wedding ceremony had not taken place nor had the marriage been consummated. She moved into the Tsar family residence and stayed there for the rest of her life, performing the duties of a widow and a daughter-in-law. In order to continue this uncle's lineage, the family transferred Tsar's second elder brother and her younger sister as children of this uncle and aunt, considered as the sixth "chamber" because this uncle is number six in the sequence of sons.

The concept and the term “chamber” (*fang*) provided a structure for an extended patrilineal family. As a rule, grown sons continued to live with their parents even after they married and had their own children. In such an extended three-generation family, the living quarters were divided into *fang*, or chambers. The elder son's family was called *da fang* (big or first chamber), the second son's, *er fang* (second chamber), the third son's, *san fang* (third chamber) and so forth. Their children were referred to as “*da fang's* so-and-so”, “*san fang's* so-and-so”, etc. Both male and female children from different brothers or “chambers” were given a numerical suffix according to their dates of birth irrespective of which “chamber” they belonged to. In short, the cousins in the patrilineal family were treated as if they were brothers and sisters.

The word *fang* designated not only a physical space and division, but a lineage unit and subdivision, with a clear implication of the hierarchy that prevailed within the extended family. This hierarchy had a built-in power structure that created internal political units within a clan and underscored the firm control exerted by the extended family over several generations. Even when the brothers moved away physically, the term “chamber” continued to be used among family members, although the degree of control exercised by the older generation naturally decreased. As the twentieth century proceeded, large extended families began to break apart, and the concept of “chamber” slowly disappeared. But the Tsar family appeared to have continued this practice in the early decades of the century. Adherence to the “chamber” designation and the story of Tsar's sixth uncle and aunt underscored the family's conservative strain.

Tsar's mother, Yao Huaishu (June 15, 1872 – April 29, 1957), whom Tsar characterizes as tall and well brought-up, had a relatively small family with two elder sisters and one younger brother. Tsar remembers the *jiujiu* (Mandarin same romanization, the form of address for a brother of one's mother) as being particularly close to her. When she was practicing large-character calligraphy with ink and brush as a youngster, her mother and this uncle would help out by pulling the paper away from her as she completed one sheet after another. Their attention, support, and tutelage must have been an important factor in her developing a serious interest in this refined art, and later in her life, becoming an elegant and much-admired calligrapher. She does not remember much about the two aunts, whom she called *yima* (Mandarin same romanization, the form of address for one's mother's sisters). The second of those aunts, whom she called *niduyi* (Mandarin *erdayi*), or second elder *yima*, was never married but lived with the Tsar family all her life. Tsar's son George remembers her as a kindly old lady who had her own room in the house and spent most of her time playing solitaire. She lived well into her 90s and died in 1957.

Tsar's mother also came from a learned family, with an enormous home library. "Every late Spring, Mother and Uncle would carry all the books in their home library into the courtyard and spread them out for sunning, for so doing chased the dampness away from the paper, preventing the pages from decaying and from being eaten by moths or silverfish," Tsar said. Most Chinese families apply this custom to bedding and clothing, and no doubt Tsar's family did that too. The fact that Tsar remembers books being sunned is an indication of how important they were to her even as a young child.

Thanks to her parents' influence Tsar was brought up in an atmosphere of serious literary pursuits, including calligraphy and the reading of classics and poetry exclusively. She recalls that there was absolutely no "trashy" reading material, which meant anything written in the *baihua* (colloquial) style of writing. This included the widely acknowledged classic *Hongloumeng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*), which she was only allowed to read when she was in high school, let alone the more popular *baihua* fiction published during her youth by such well known authors as Liu E and Zeng Pu.⁷ Her mother's influence was pervasive and went far beyond the literary sphere. For example, even today she recalls her mother's advising her to be "patient, not to complain, and not to remember unpleasant experiences," and several of her poems were written in her mother's memory. It can be surmised that Yao Huaishu was the model of a proper wife and mother in an upper-class traditional family, a model that Tsar tried to emulate.

Yet a hint of independence is often revealed in little things, as for example in the story of her given name Teh-yun. The traditional custom of China was for the most senior member of the clan, often one of the grandparents or great grandparents, to bestow a name on a newborn baby. When Tsar was born, the name given by her grandfather was Tsar Yun-tzu (Yunzhu). The character *tzu* (*zhu*), meaning "pearl," was a popular choice for a female name. However, while still a little girl, Tsar considered the word too common, even—in her own words — "vulgar." So at her instigation, the character for *tzu* (*zhu*) was changed to another one, which has the same pronunciation in the Huzhou and Shanghai dialects but means "aspiration" (pronounced differently in Mandarin as *zhi*). A few years later she discovered that all of her male siblings (including cousins from the various "chambers" of her father's side) followed a naming system that female siblings did not: the first of the two-character cluster of their given names share the same character; in this case, the character "Teh" (De). (It could also be the second of the two-character cluster.) Thus her two brothers were named Dehong and Deyi. This is a practice followed by many Chinese families so that male cousins were easily identified as members of the same generation in the extended family. Tsar was distressed that, because she

was a daughter, her name did not follow the pattern that governed the names of her brothers and male cousins on her father's side. Taking the initiative once again, she consulted with her mother about whether her name could be changed to Tsar Teh-yun (Cai Deyun), so as to conform with the names of the males of that generation. Her mother gave her consent to the change. As a result, her younger sister, who was originally named Tsar Zay-tzu (Cuizhu), also had her name changed to Tsar Teh-zay (Cai Decui).

Tsar grew up in Shanghai in "an old-style house with very large rooms and high ceilings," she recalls. She had her own bedroom, which had an enormous bed with mosquito nets draped over it, the bed being so huge that "I wouldn't know which side to get off." Before bed, her father would have snacks, such as fruit, prepared for her, and sometimes, when she was already in bed, her mother would place bite-sized pieces into her mouth.

Tsar was small and sickly as a baby and toddler. One doctor predicted she would not live to thirty; another said there was no hope for her even growing to adulthood. Her second elder brother was so concerned that he bought for her a great delicacy called *qunbian*, the edge meat of a turtle, supposed to be extremely nutritious and which was said to strengthen the constitution. The family no doubt doted on her in part because of her perceived sickness. In order to beat the odds that she might not grow to adulthood, her parents dressed and raised her as a boy hoping she might grow strong like her two elder brothers. She reverted to female dress when she began formal education at age eight (considered quite late to begin schooling).

That was in Shanghai, where the family lived in the northern part of the city just across from the Soochow Creek, beyond the bridge called Leji Qiao, "Garbage Bridge." This was an unfortunate and inappropriate name dating from an earlier era; by the early twentieth century there was no garbage at the bridge, and the neighbourhood was respectable. The school she attended was the Tsar clan's own establishment near her home, called the Huzhou Lühu Gongxiao (Huzhou Clan Sojourn-in-Shanghai School), established and run by Tsar's Huzhou clansmen in Shanghai, and managed by one of her cousins. As the name implies, all teachers and students were from her hometown of Huzhou. Though she was somewhat older than most of her classmates, she was physically small, hence always seated at the front row of the classroom.

She remembers little of those early school years except that boys and girls were in separate rooms. Children of the same gender and different ages were put in the same class; as a result, there was great age spread among her classmates. She remembers that she was very popular; classmates, particularly the older girls, were fond of her and would come up to hug and kiss her as if she were a doll. Without doubt she was already very attractive. But she was also docile and

pliant, and, as she put it, “quite innocent of the facts of life and worldly complexity and intrigues” since she grew up in the protected environment of a close-knit family and in a genteel clan school. When talking to me at age 99, she laughingly told the story of what an ignorant young teenager she was. One day, her obviously pregnant eldest sister-in-law came to visit. Tsar’s mother said jokingly: “Here she comes again bringing us a water melon.” Her elder aunt on her mother’s side also happened to be visiting, and said in jest to her pregnant niece-in-law: “When you finish this bottle of sesame seed oil, you’ll give birth to the baby.” Tsar was quite alarmed to hear this and took it to heart, inferring that sesame seed oil would produce babies in women — and she avoided sesame seed oil for many years.

Tsar had two elder brothers, Cai (Tsar) Dehong (1898–1976) and Cai Deyi (1902–1993?), and a younger sister Cai Decui (1908–2002). She addresses them as *dugugu* (Mandarin *dagege*, big elder brother), and *nigugu* (Mandarin *ergege*, second elder brother), and *meimei* (younger sister). The two girls, being the youngest, were both addressed by everyone as *meimei*. Tsar, being the elder, was called *dumeimei* (Mandarin *dameimei*, “big” younger sister), while her sister was *xiaomeimei* (Mandarin *xiaomei*, “little” younger sister).



Photo 3

About 1911. From left to right: Tsar, mother, first elder brother, second elder brother, father, sister.

Since the children were relatively close in age, they often played as a group, although it was clear that big elder brother was a bully. Tsar recalls: "When we were very little, we used to play together. Once, during New Year's time, all the chairs were dressed in special New Year's red seat covers and red cushions. The four of us were playing in the living room, with cushions all scattered on the floor, and lots of the usual New Year's goodies spread all over the place: candies, sugar-coated lotus 'hearts,' preserved plums, melon seeds, and so on. Then we suddenly heard the wheels on the street stopping by the front door, and knew that our father was home from work. We hurriedly put the living room in order, returned all the cushions to their rightful places, and hid the food on a long table at the rear of the living room behind a screen. We rushed out to greet our father at the front door as we normally did when he came home, and then followed him upstairs to see that he was settled down and did not need us for anything. When we came back downstairs, we discovered that all the goodies were gone from the long table behind the screen, and knew it was big elder brother's doing. Big elder brother did have the habit of bullying us younger siblings."

Tsar continues: "But big elder brother always behaved himself whenever guests were visiting. One day as the family members were chatting, I blurted out: 'It's great that tomorrow Niang'niang will be visiting.' Nobody knew why I suddenly said that, but in my heart I was secretly rejoicing that tomorrow would be a day of peace because big elder brother would behave properly in the presence of a visitor." Despite his bullying, Tsar remembers fondly big elder brother's kindness toward her, how he helped with her homework in mathematics at which he was particularly good. Mainly owing to his support and encouragement, she ended up doing very well in mathematics in school. Eventually, both brothers were sent to an exclusive Western missionary school. After graduating, big elder brother worked for a publishing company and became very knowledgeable about books. He would obtain books for her and her mother when they requested. Second elder brother studied law at Soochow University (a Christian university whose prominent law school produced almost all of China's lawyers and judges during the period), and eventually became a successful lawyer. He was particularly good with the English language and helped Tsar develop her own English proficiency. Little sister went to another Christian university, the Jinling College for Women in Nanjing (also called the Virginia College), and majored in geography. After graduation, she taught at her alma mater and elsewhere until retirement, becoming one of the leading professors of geography in China. Jinling College for Women was closed down in 1952, along with all other Christian universities, their faculties being dispersed among other universities.

Notes

CHAPTER 1

1. These four lines are the second half of a *ci* poem written by Tsar Teh-yun. Original Chinese text of poems are in Appendix 3, as referenced by chapter number and superscript letter.
2. See, for example, Zha 1995 [1956], 431 and Wu and Wu 2001, 6.
3. *Ci* poems were originally composed to be sung to pre-existent tunes that have tune titles. The verse structure of a poem, including phrase lengths and phrase patterns, rhyming schemes, and choice of linguistic tones for individual characters, must conform to the musical structure of the tune it was written for. By the time of the Song dynasties, the performance function of *ci* poems largely disappeared, and poems were composed mainly as a literary form to be read. However, verse structures remained, and poems were named after the tune titles to which the original verse structures conformed. The musical features of the tunes were lost.
4. Translation by James J. Y. Liu. See Liu and Lo 1975, 386.
5. *Qin* is also known as *guqin*, often referred to in the West as the seven-string zither.
6. An earlier notational system from which this one developed dates to the sixth century. A single composition has survived from that period.
7. Several English translations have been published in the West, with the title translated variously as "Dream of the Red Chamber," "A Dream of Red Mansions," and "The Story of the Stone."

CHAPTER 2

1. Professor Pian, who held joint appointments in the Departments of Music and of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University, was my doctoral advisor under whose supervision I completed my degree in 1976.
2. When I started taking *qin* lessons from Tsar laoshi, I had already had three or four lessons from the *qin* player and scholar Cheung Sai-bung in the fall of 1977. Cheung studied *qin* with Tsar laoshi, and had been teaching at the Music Department at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In 1977–78 he was a visiting scholar at Harvard University; I was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Cornell University at the time, and, visiting Cambridge frequently, took lessons from him. Cheung was instrumental in recruiting

me to teach at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1978 to be his colleague. He died of a heart attack in August of that year.

3. The Chinese character *yin* in *yinyin* (a repeat of the same character) means “quiet, calm, harmonious” and, by extension, “contented.”
4. Qin players have much greater freedom in manipulating the rhythm of a composition even though the notation is being followed. Further discussion in Chapter 11. Also see Yung 1985.

CHAPTER 3

1. Tsar prefers to transliterate her name according to the Shanghai pronunciation, rather than the Putonghua pronunciation of Cai. I transliterate the names of her family members in the Putonghua pronunciation and transliteration.
2. Its third celebrated product is *simian* (silk-cotton) or raw silk.
3. The Cai Genealogy itself was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. The information on the clan was part of the reconstruction by Tsar Teh-yun's cousin, Cai Dejian (b. 1919), in 2003.
4. Because the genealogy was reconstructed by Cai Dejian, he naturally was most familiar with his direct lineage: his (transferred) father Shize, his grandfather Mougong, his great grandfather Xiechang, and his great great grandfather Lie. Note that, following the genealogical convention, daughters, who would marry and live with their husbands' families, were not recorded. George Shen (son of Tsar Teh-yun) informed me that the reconstructed genealogy is likely to have errors.
5. The most prominent was a member of the famous Rong family of Wuxi, near Suzhou, who moved to Shanghai in the 1870s and went on to become the greatest industrialist of twentieth century China. See Rong and Rong 1995 and Ma 1997.
6. *Niang'niang* is equivalent to aunt in English. However, the Chinese has different forms of address for different kinds of aunts: whether she is on the father's side, the mother's side, married into the family, older or younger than the father, and older or younger than mother. Furthermore, different parts of China have their own set of such names for aunts (as well as other relatives). *Niang'niang* is what most people from Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces use for aunts who are younger sisters of one's father (although apparently in Tsar's home town this form of address was applied to *older* sisters of one's father). There is no equivalent of these two words in Mandarin. The story of Chinese kinship concepts and terminology, both formal and informal, is particularly complex, especially when one considers both historical and regional variants. I romanize these forms of address according to how Tsar pronounces them in her native dialect.
7. Such a bias against *baihua* literature persisted into her adult years, for she never read, and had no interest in, now classic literatures published in the 1920s and 30s by such well known authors as Lao She, Ba Jin, Zhang Henshui, and others.

CHAPTER 4

1. Of the three Tsar knew Wu particularly well because not only did Wu also hail from Huzhou county, his grand daughter happened to be Tsar's classmate when they were little girls. Wang was a contemporary of Tsar's father and well known for his ink brushes sought after by painters and calligraphers.

2. There are traditionally different ways of orally delivering poetry. A) *du*, *nian*, or *song*, which refer to reading or reciting in regular pulse, one beat for each syllable, with a longer rest at the end of a phrase; B) *yin* or *song*, which refer to reciting in irregular rhythm without musical pitches, often but not necessarily with rhythmic groupings that follow the caesura structure within a phrase; C) *yin* or *chang*, which refer to chanting with musical pitches and irregular rhythm. Note that some terms come to mean different things by different people in different regions. Note also that all the above styles are done in private, with a quiet speaking voice, as opposed to public “performance” with strength and projection. Tsar Teh-yun’s delivery is of the “C” kind. More on poetry chanting, see Chao 1956 and Boyce 1975.
3. *Baixiang Cipujian* was compiled by Shu Menglan, fl. 1796–1820. There have been several reprints in recent years, including ones issued by Zhonghua Shuju (Beijing, 1982), Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe (Guangzhou, 1981), Shangwu Yinshuguan (Hong Kong, 1959), and Shijie Shuju (Taipei, 1956–57). While the edition used by Tsar today was published by Saoye Shanfang (Shanghai, 1932), the edition she read during her younger years could be the 1919 edition.
4. *Diangu* is often translated into English as “allusion,” although it also means quotations of a term or a short phrase from Confucian Classics and other ancient writings. Some *diangu* are widely used and known, but others could be from little known sources. When a poetic line is filled with multiple quotations, reading it becomes more like solving a puzzle even for the learned. Tsar disapproves of such practice.
5. This group of actors and actresses, known as the “Chuan” generation because they all had the character “Chuan” in their given artist’s names and were trained together, played a critical role in transmitting the art of Kun Opera in the twentieth century. Zheng Chuanjian was the last surviving one, and passed away in the 1990s.
6. Xu was a scholar and the co-founder of the celebrated Kunqu Chuanxi Suo (Kun Opera Training Institute), which trained all the “Chuan” generation of Kun Opera artists.
7. Tsar’s upbringing is reflected in how she and her husband brought up their son George, who remembers the rigid disciplines of his boyhood. Proper behaviour during dinner time serves as a good example: he must had three mouthfuls of plain rice before reaching for dishes of meat and vegetable at the centre of the dinner table that are for sharing. When he reaches for these dishes, he must first reach for a vegetable dish rather than a meat dish. Furthermore, he must not reach for the same dish twice in a row.

CHAPTER 5

1. See Seagrave 1985.
2. Ginling College for Women opened in 1915 with six faculty and eleven students, the product of the imagination of a group of American women educators stranded in Shanghai in 1911, all refugees from the revolutionary turmoil in central China. One was Matilda Thurston, who became the first president of the College. She graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1896 and went to China in 1913 to find a location for Ginling, hire faculty, and recruit students. It was only in 1907 that the Chinese emperor issued an edict favoring education for women in China. The Revolution of 1911 marked a new beginning, and Ginling College was ultimately founded by five

- mission boards — Northern Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Northern and Southern Methodists, and Northern Presbyterians. Each board pledged US\$10,000 for buildings and equipment, the support of a representative on the teaching staff, and a contribution of US\$600 toward current expenses. (Quoted from “The American Context of China’s Christian Colleges and Schools” in the Smith College Archives.)
3. George Shen told me that his mother’s case was not unique. He knew of at least one other family at the time which also did not allow the eldest daughter to leave home to attend college for the same reason.
 4. The play, which was about friendship and devotion between women, was by Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet and playwright born in Rockland, Maine on February 22, 1892. Millay wrote the five-act play in 1921 at the request of the drama department of Vassar College, from which she graduated in 1917, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Vassar College Alumnae Association. The entire text of the play was in iambic pentameter, and the story is also an imitation, if not parody, of a Shakespearean tragic-comedy. Tsar recalls that the English language teacher at the time was an American woman called Mrs. Margaret Hunt. One suspects that Hunt might be a Vassar graduate, for it was a surprising choice of a play for Tsar and her classmates in the early 1920s, only a few years after the play was premiered and published in the U.S. I recently showed Tsar the play again and read some lines. She still remembers some sections, but said that, at the time, she merely memorized the text and parroted them on stage without much comprehension.
 5. The Chinese name is *la mei* (December plum). It is not related to the common fruit plum tree, but the flowers resemble plum blossoms in size and appearance but with a waxy surface, in colors of bright red or faint yellow. Its scientific name is *chimonanthus praecox*, familiarly called wintersweet in the West.
 6. The school was established by the so-called Gengzi Peikuan, a sum of money paid by China to the United States as compensation after China’s defeat in the 1900 war against eight Western nations, known as the Boxer War. The U.S. used the sum to build the school and establish the scholarships.
 7. The only member of Honglai’s family that won the approval and affection of Tsar was Honglai’s younger brother Danlai. According to Tsar, Danlai had tuberculosis in his youth. Upon hearing of his untimely death in Kunming on October 19, 1944 at age 36, Tsar wrote a poem in commemoration. See YSW vol. 1, 56.

CHAPTER 6

1. For the record, the apartment names and streets (full address where known) where they lived since they married were:
Between 1928 and 1937 in Shanghai:
Da’an Fang
Ruihua Fang
Runde Li
No. 19 Yuyuan Cun
No. 41 Xiangkang Li
Between 1937 and 1942 in Hong Kong:
The Delin Apartments on Hankow Road
A different street number on Hankow Road

A third street number on Hankow Road (No. 49, 3rd floor) April 1 to end of July, 1939

No. 15 Ashley Road (one street to the West of Hankow Road) August 1939

No. 1 Middle Road (perpendicular to Hankow road, behind today's Peninsula Hotel)

No. 16 Hankow Road

No. 5 Hankow Road

Between 1942 and 1950 in Shanghai:

Carlton Apartments on Park Road (today's Huanghe Lu), behind Park Hotel

Aiduya Lu (English name Edward Road)

Xinghe Li on Jing'an Si Lu

Yongye Dalou on Xiafei Lu (French name Avenue Joffre, today's Huaihai Lu)

No. 14 Lancun (English name Orchid Village) on Huanlong Lu (today's Nanchang Lu)

Shanzhong Lu (today's Changshu Lu), a spacious apartment on the third floor.

No. 5 Dunxin Lu (today's Wuyi Lu)

Between 1950 and 1970 in Hong Kong:

Knutsford Terrace (Tsim Sha Tsui area on the Kowloon side)

Sun Street (Wanchai area on the Hong Kong side)

Salisbury Avenue (Tsim Sha Tsui)

Sau Chuk Yuen Road (Kowloon City area on the Kowloon side)

Grampian Road (Kowloon City)

Observatory Road (Tsim Sha Tsui)

Shu Ying Terrace on Boundary Street (Kowloon City)

Earl Street (Kowloon Tong area on the Kowloon side)

North Point Apartments, King's Road (North Point area on the Hong Kong side)

2. It was not until the 1960s, when she started training a small number of outstanding qin students, that she carved out a niche in the artistic and cultural sphere.
3. When I mentioned my interpretation to her, she laughed and agreed heartily.
4. Coincidentally, Rong Baoren was the younger sister of Bell Yung's paternal grandfather, and Yuan Ying's son, Christopher Shih, was a classmate of Yung's since primary school through college, and a life-long friend. During those years in Hong Kong, both Tsar and Yung visited Yuan's home, but they never met nor did they know of one another.
5. Huang Zi (1904–38) was a distant cousin of Honglai and a classmate at Tsing Hua for eight years as well as at Oberlin for two years. Honglai went to Oberlin in part because of Huang. Upon his return from the U.S., Huang became dean of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, but died of typhoid fever at the young age of 34. He is one of the most respected composers of early twentieth century China.
6. Bell Yung's father, Durbin Yung (Rong Da-Ben) was a student at Datong University in the early 1930s and remembered the name Shen Honglai as one of his teachers.
7. Information in this section is mainly combed from Huang 2004.
8. Tsar herself remembers that she first started lessons with Shen Caonong in 1938, which led to the chronology of her life published in Tsar 2000b, *Deyin Qinxun* 2005, and other sources. However, evidence shows that the year was 1941. See Chapter 7.
9. Jiang's second wife, Du Liyun, was the elder sister of Du Jinfang, who, in the 1950s and 60s, would become one of the most famous Peking Opera actresses of her generation.

10. The major duty of a *wenshu* is to be in charge of correspondences. It requires the ability to compose well-crafted letters in classical prose that are presented in elegant ink-brush calligraphy.

CHAPTER 7

1. As she told BY, George Shen has a slightly different version of the story. See *Deyin Qinxun* No. 3, 4.
2. In 2002, the prominent qin player Gong Yi noticed four old photo albums in the flea market in Shanghai, and recognized Tsar, her husband, and her son in some photos. He bought the albums and had them delivered to Tsar in Hong Kong, who, looking through them, identified the albums as belonging to Shen Caonong. The photos comprehensively documented his life from youth to old age, including his years in Hong Kong. Some group photographs were with Tsar and family when they were all living at No. 16 Hankow Road around 1939 or 1940. The albums were probably taken away by Red Guards from Shen's home during the Cultural Revolution, and later disposed of as trash and ended up in the flea market.
3. *Yin* and *nao* are special finger techniques of the left hand.
4. Later she also learned the other version, which was based upon the score transmitted by Pei Jieqing, teacher of Shen Caonong.
5. Significantly, Shen identified himself as a *ru* (Confucianist). See *Jinyu Qinkan* 1937, 246.
6. A *wan* is a poetic form specifically to mourn a dead person.
7. Yue and Qin were ancient kingdoms during the Spring and Autumn period (fifth century BC and earlier), situated respectively in today's Zhejiang and Shaanxi provinces.
8. One of the earliest documents of such gatherings is an essay by the celebrated calligrapher Wang Xizhi (321–379) known as Lanting Jixu, or "A Preface to the collection of poems composed at a gathering at the Orchid Pavilion," written in AD 353. Because of the exquisite calligraphy of Wang, the essay became a standard text to be copied by all calligraphy students. The content thus became also widely known and disseminated through the ages. A short essay of 324 characters, the preface records the beauty of nature around the Orchid Pavilion, the joy of the gathering, in which participants all composed poems, and lamented the ephemeral nature of such occasions.
9. Intended as a regular publication, the second issue came out only in 1996 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Society.
10. Zhang used the Chinese lunar calendar for date and month, but Western Gregorian calendar for year.
11. Liang Zaiping (or Liang Tsai Ping) became the most prominent zheng and qin player in Taiwan in later years and trained many students.
12. Zhang's diary mentions one such yaji at Tsar's home.

CHAPTER 8

1. These census figures were combed from Huang 2004.
2. Rediffusion (HK) Ltd. had been a cabled radio station in Hong Kong for many years before it officially added a bilingual cabled TV service in April 1957 called

WiredVision. George joined Rediffusion in 1955 to prepare for the WiredVision service, but at the same time served as Programme Producer for its cabled radio service, both the Silver Station (in Cantonese) and the Golden Station (in Mandarin and Swatow), and sometimes also the Blue Station (in English). When WiredVision was officially inaugurated, George was an on-camera announcer in both English and Cantonese, though his main responsibility was in the control room. He left WiredVision in December 1957 to join Sun Sun Film Enterprises, Ltd.

3. In 1957, George married Jane Yuan, elder daughter of Yuan Yang'an who was a well-known filmmaker of the time and also a Shanghai expatriate in Hong Kong. They have a son Mark born in 1961 and a daughter Janet born in 1962. In 1968, George was appointed the Head of Administration and Public Relations for the Asian Productivity Organization in Tokyo and relocated his family there. Two years later, because his parents had to move out of their apartment, he bought for them the North Point Apartment on King's Road.
4. Since the late 1940s, Zhang has switched from Chinese to Western calendar in recording months and days.
5. The hotel was torn down in the 1970s, and the coastal area has since been greatly developed.
6. The musicians were Wu Chunbai, Xu Wenjing, Tsar Teh-yun, Sheng Xiansan, Lui Tsun-yuen, Wu Yinming, Feng Deming; professors were Rao Zongyi, Yang Zonghan, Zeng Kezhuan; poets were Zhao Shuyong, Song Xinleng; writers were Liu Cunren, Huang Seming; artists were Zhao Heqin, Zhang Bihan, Wu Wanhui, Xiao Lisheng, Zhuang Yicun, Cheng Baizhen; amateur opera singers were Zhang Eyun, Zheng Yuansu, Yu Zhaoxing; lady artists were Wang Baoqi, Zheng Guisheng, Zheng Guiquan, Lu Xinru.
7. The Chinese verb that I translate as "told" is *zhu* 講 which has implication of the unequal social relationship between the two: that the "teller" is one of greater authority than the "tellee," most often a parent or a teacher "telling" a child or a student. The English word "order" may be too strong, but not entirely inappropriate here. On the other hand, the choice of this word could be Tsar's literary style.
8. See previous footnote.
9. The program booklet gives its own English title to the concert as "A Musical Soir'ee of Chinese Opera and Chinese Ancient Instruments Recitals [sic]."
10. The information is from a program booklet of the concert, provided by George Shen.
11. A private university established by a group of American missionaries in 1888. Originally named Canton Christian College, it went through several transformations and, in 1927, was renamed Lingnan University.
12. The second half of this poem begins this book. The entire poem is discussed in Chapter 12.
13. Mr. Rao is Rao Zongyi (b. 1917), an eminent academic and scholar of classical Chinese literature. He was mentioned in yaji memoirs.
14. She had begun having individual students at home privately a few years before.

CHAPTER 9

1. In the West, van Gulik was best known as the author of a series of Judge Dee murder mysteries.

2. Years later in the 1970s, when Tsar's son George and his wife Jane were living in Tokyo, they met van Gulik's widow, a Peking native named Shui Shifang, his son who was a consul with the Netherlands embassy in Tokyo, and his grand daughter who was Jane's student at the Sacred Heart International School in Tokyo. When George noticed the last name of "van Gulik" among Jane's roster of students, he made enquiry and the two families re-connected.
3. Students and admirers of Xie Tingguang published her writings posthumously. See Liu et al 2002.
4. In 2005, Tse retired from medical practice to enrol as a doctoral student in musicology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, intending to write a dissertation on the qin.
5. Zhou Xiling is the daughter of painter Zhou Shixin mentioned elsewhere.
6. The recording also includes three pieces played by her teacher Shen Caonong from an old private recording.
7. She played two versions of this piece. The earlier version in this recording is from the collection *Jiao'an Qinpu* (1868); the latter from the private notation of an early twentieth century master Pei Jieqing. The two are known among her students as the "Old version" and the "Chuan version" respectively.

CHAPTER 10

1. As late as 1980, old instruments could be purchased for a few hundred yuan or less; the same ones today may fetch hundreds of thousands of yuan.
2. For fuller discussions, see Yung 1998.
3. Elsewhere Tsar said that "Not everyone is suitable to study the qin because, in addition to liking it and possessing musical talent, the most important is the person's *qizhi* (inner quality). Even though Confucius said that 'no one is incapable to be taught,' the fact is, some people simply don't have the *qizhi* that is suitable for studying qin. Even learned person does not necessarily possess a good *qizhi*. As to those who possess bad *qizhi*, we can forget about them" (Qi 2001, 67).
4. I have never heard her play the first piece in Volume 3, "Jiukuang" (Wine Madness).

CHAPTER 11

1. The performing style in qin, despite the existence of musical notation, critically influences the structure of a composition.
2. Three of Tsar's students have issued CDs: Lau (1996), Tse (2001), Sou (2007).
3. With few exceptions, recordings of qin music issued from the Mainland use metal strings.
4. The authors of the contemporary manual for playing qin suggested that the lowest string be tuned to two octaves below Middle C (Shen et al. 1961, 15). Tsar normally tunes her lowest string to about a minor 3rd lower.
5. The concern has diminished in recent years because Wong Shu-chee, one of Tsar's students, has been researching and manufacturing silk strings.
6. Fred Lieberman points out that Liang Ming-yüeh, the prominent qin musician in Taiwan, prefers low pitch and silk strings but nevertheless indulges in recording and performance (private communication).

7. Although the notation implies rhythmic groupings. See Lee 1995.
8. Zha Fuxi wrote: “The guqin tradition has its deficiencies. ... Even though it has notation, the notation is not complete — its rhythm is determined by finger techniques, while finger techniques do not fully include metrical pattern or durational values” (Zha 1954b, 320). Also see Zha 1954a.
9. Occasionally, the notation does mark the ending phrase or section of a piece with the technical term *san*, indicating that it should be played in free rhythm.
10. This is one of few qin pieces with a known composer, Zhuang Zhenfeng, who published fourteen original compositions, including Wuye Wu Qiufeng, in the collection *Qinxue Xinsheng* (1664). The kind of tree referred to in the Chinese title, “wu,” is known in the West as Chinese parasol tree. It reaches 50 feet high, with enormous leaves growing to one foot by one foot that turns golden in the Fall.
11. Wu Wenguang received a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University in 1990 with a dissertation “Wu Jinglue’s qin music in its context,” and currently is on the faculty of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing.
12. Earliest extant notation is in the collection *Mei’an Qinpu* (1931), although the title “Changmen Yuan” was known as a song for two thousand years. See Zha 2001, 524–525.
13. ZYDG disc 1, track 3.
14. Earliest extant notation is from the collection *Xingzhuang Taiyin Xupu* (1560). Tsar’s version is taught by her teacher Shen Caonong. See YQ, 173.
15. The story of Empress Chen, according to historians, is emeshed in political power struggle and court intrigue. The qin composition dwells only on the emotion of Empress Chen.
16. Earliest extant notation in *Xilutang Qintong* (1549). Tsar’s version of notation is from a hand copy of qin master Li Zizhao (1856–1939).
17. The set of 78s were later reissued on a Lyrichord LP. Wei was part of a cultural group organized by the International Red Cross to tour the United States in October 1938 in order to raise funds for refugees of the Sino-Japanese War. After the concert tour, he enrolled briefly as a student at a small college near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. When I met him in 1981, he could no longer remember the name of the college, although he was certain of the city.
18. The technique, and its musical effect, are similar to rubato in Western classical music.
19. Zhang’s recorded version was included in ZYDG disc 3, track 5. The staff notation transcribed from recording appears in GQ, 176–180. Because the entire piece is in free rhythm, the transcription, by Xu Jian, necessarily can only approximate the durational values of notes and arbitrarily fits them into a metrical structure. It is far from satisfactory.
20. This is one of several possible meanings of the word *yun*.
21. See, for example, Liang 1985, 203.
22. For explanation of these techniques, see Lieberman 1977 or Yung 1997.

CHAPTER 12

1. When she was a school girl taking painting lessons, she was particularly good at rendering plum blossoms (Chapter 4). Later, when she formed a lasting friendship with two friends and called themselves “the three friends of winter,” she was designated as “plum” (Chapter 5).

2. “Parallel Prose (p’ien-wen) is characterized by a tendency to use four- and six-word parallel phrases, a somewhat florid and artificial style, and emphasis on verbal parallelism, attention to tonal euphony, occasional rhyme, and frequency of allusion. It is a form of prose that makes use of most of the devices peculiar to Chinese poetry. Parallel Prose flourished during the Six Dynasties, especially during the Ch’i and Liang Dynasties (479–556)” (Hightower 1965, 38).
3. *Xiaoya* refers to one category of poems in *Shijing* (Book of Odes, or Book of Poetry), the earliest extant anthology of poetry with 311 items that date to pre-Confucius times.
4. It is quite possible that this poem was composed during a *yaji*, since she mentioned such a gathering in her essay written for Wang Di (Tsar 1989), an example of the literary game of “response” (*he*).
5. The original Chinese in the fourth line uses the word *yinyin*, a reference to her study. See its meaning in Chapter 2, endnote 3.
6. This line contains metaphors that require some explanation. The word “yun” refers to *yunxiang*, a plant of the citrus family with the Western scientific name of *Rustaceae*. It has fragrant leaves, flowers, and branches. The term “yun window” is a standard metaphor for one’s study. However, the use of *yun* here also makes reference to Shen Caonong’s wife, whose given name is Yunxian. This reference to the name of her teacher’s wife is annotated by Tsar herself at the end of the third line of the poem. Furthermore, the given name Caonong contains the character *cao*, which means “grass,” hence the reference of “fragrant grass.”
7. Yue was a tiny and short-lived kingdom in the fifth century BC during the so-called Spring and Autumn Period. Qin (221–206) was considered the “first” empire that united the many kingdoms, but was short-lived.
8. This line refers to the qin piece called “Guangshan Yue” (Moon over the Mountain Pass). In short, she continues to play the qin.
9. Mr. Lu is Lo Ka-Ping (Lu Jiabing), an eccentric who was a qin collector and player. Mr. Rao is Rao Zongyi, a professor of Chinese, a qin player, a calligrapher, and a pre-eminent scholar of Chinese literature. See Chapter 6.
10. With George’s permission, I copy here what he wrote to me on the matter: “When I was due for retirement, my mother was very anxious to see Jane and I leave Hong Kong as soon as possible. We found and purchased the present flat at Happy Court and she was happy and content to live in Hong Kong, where she could keep in constant touch with most of her qin friends. When we came to the US, we found that our life was not that easy as we first thought. For instance, we had to pay for our own Medicare insurance (more than \$1,000 per month for both of us, plus supplementary insurance) because I had never worked in this country. We later found out that mother would not be able to have self-paid Medicare, and at her age, it would be difficult to have full medical insurance coverage. Then there was the issue of helpers. In short, when she lives in Hong Kong, we are able to hire two domestic helpers to take care of her, and medical expenses are reasonable and affordable.

“Much earlier I once sounded to mother the idea of moving to Shanghai, where helpers would be better, relatives are still around, and the cuisine more to her palate. Also, the distance to the US would be shorter. But she did not like the idea of going to live in China. Her 1953 experience there was a major factor, but the company of Hong Kong qin friends must be a factor in her preference for Hong Kong.

“As the years went by, mother’s physical condition gradually declined. She has long realized that it would be difficult for her in her advanced age to take a long trip and to live in a different environment, and we really dare not take the risk of having her do so. With her present physical condition, it is really impractical. On the other hand, she feels that we are so far away, although we talk over the phone every day. But even if she makes the trip, how would she live? She needs a place with no stairs, quarters for helpers, and medical care.

“Jane and I may have a comfortable house now, but we do not know how long we would be able to manage our present way of living. We are both not getting younger, though we still perform all the house chores ourselves (mostly by Jane). Many of our friends have moved to senior residences, or old homes, and the day we follow suit is drawing nearer every moment. We do not know whether or not we would be able to adjust to that kind of life, but the fact remains that we will not be able to take care of ourselves for very long.

“This is the dilemma facing us. Jane’s mother is also advanced in age, but luckily she has another daughter in Hong Kong, and her mother is more outward looking. So I try to visit Hong Kong as frequently as possible, but even for me such trips have become physically quite demanding. Nevertheless, it looks like the present pattern will go on.”

11. Following the tradition of the colonial government, the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong annually bestows the “Bauhinia Awards” of various ranks to about one hundred of its distinguished citizens.

CHAPTER 13

1. Qiao Jianzhong reported in 2000 that more than 50 CDs were available (Qiao 2000, 211).
2. For example, www.guqin.net, accessed April 4, 2008.
3. www.linkclub.or.jp/~qingxia/cmusic/cmusickaoji.htm, accessed April 4, 2008.
4. www.chinagreatwall.org/detail/news_detail.jsp?info_id=1100112076&cust_id=greatwall, accessed April 4, 2008.

Index-Glossary

Note that some common words and names are provided with Chinese characters but not indexed.

1911 Revolution, xi, 121

Aiduya Lu 愛都亞路

aile 哀樂, 130

Ailing 崑齡, 38

Anhui 安徽, 81

appoggiatura, 116

Au Siu-kam 區肇森, 86, 87 fig. 3, 92, 139
photo 14

Ba Jin 巴金

baihua 白話, 23, 154n7

Baixiang Cipu 白香詞譜, 31, 155n3

bahbah 伯伯, 21

ban 板, 107

bangdi 邦笛, 31

bei. See calligraphy.

Beijing Qinxun 北京琴訊, 135

bi 比. See poetry.

Bo Ya 伯牙, 7

bobo. See *bahbah*.

brushes and techniques. See calligraphy.

Cai 蔡

Cai Changshou 蔡昌壽, 79, 88

Cai Chunli 蔡春禮, 18 fig. 2, 19

Cai Decui 蔡德粹. See Tsar Teh-zay.

Cai Dehong 蔡德宏, 18 fig. 2, 23, 25

Cai Dejian 蔡德堅, 18 fig. 2, 19, 154nn3-4 (chap. 3)

Cai Deyi 蔡德誥, 18 fig. 2, 23, 25

Cai Deyun 蔡德允. See Tsar Teh-yun.

Cai Lie 蔡烈, 18 fig. 2, 19

Cai Maogong 蔡懋功, 18 fig. 2, 154n4
(chap. 3)

Cai Mengyan 蔡夢言, 27

Cai Peizhu 蔡佩珠, 74

Cai Qingshu 蔡慶書, 18 fig. 2, 19

Cai Rulian 蔡汝璉, 18 fig. 2, 19

Cai Shiqi 蔡世淇, 18 fig. 2, 19

Cai Shizhe 蔡世澤, 18 fig. 2, 19, 154n4
(chap. 3)

Cai Wenji 蔡文姬, 7

Cai Xianzhang 蔡憲章, 18 fig. 2, 19

Cai Xiechang 蔡雙昌, 18 fig. 2, 19

Cai Yan 蔡琰, 7

Cai Zhen 蔡珍, 18 fig. 2, 19

Cai Zhimu 蔡止穆, 18 fig. 2, 19-20

Caifuji 蔡福記, 79

calligraphy: *bei* 碑, 28; brushes and techniques, 29; *caoshu* 草書, 28, 57; *chun yanghao bi* 純羊毫筆, 29; *kaishu* 楷書, 28; *langhao bi* 狼毫筆, 29; *lishu* 隸書, 28, 57; *mianlizhen* 綿里針, 29; stele, 28; *xingshu* 行書, 28, 57; Zhang Menglong 張猛龍, 27-28. See also stele; *zhengti* 正體, 28; *zhuàn* 篆, 9, 57

caoman fuqin 操慢撫琴, 138

Caoman Suoji 操竣瑣記, 63

- caoshu. See calligraphy.
- Central Conservatory of Music, 135, 161n11
- Cha Guo Ling 茶果嶺, 75
- Chang'an 長安, 3, 62
- Changmen Yuan 長門怨, 91, 108, 111
- Changsha 長沙, 62
- Changshu 敘熟, 71
- Changshu Lu 敘熟路, 157n1
- chanting, 30, 85, 155n2 (chap. 5)
- Chan Suk-fun 陳淑芬, 87 fig. 3
- Chen Wen 陳雯, 92
- Chen Xuanzhen 陳璇珍, 74
- Chen Yunqian 陳芸謙, 57, 66
- Cheng Baizhen 程白真, 159n6
- Cheng Gongliang 成公亮, 4
- Chengjiantang Qinpu 澄鑒堂琴譜, 113
- Cheung Lai-chen 張麗珍, 34, 82
- Cheung Sai-bung 張世彬, 82, 86, 87 fig. 3, 153n2 (chap. 2)
- Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石, 52
- chikui shi pianyi 吃虧是便宜, 140
- China Conservatory of Music, 135
- Chinese literature, 37, 41, 82, 84, 85, 159n13, 162n9
- Chinese lunar calendar, 17, 75, 158n10 (chap. 7)
- Chinese opera: Kun Opera 昆曲, 33-35, 52, 56-57, 63, 65, 67, 75-78, 83, 93, 97, 123, 155nn5-6; Peking Opera 京劇, 34-35, 52, 76, 78, 157n9; zaju 雜劇 78
- Chingling 慶齡, 38
- Choi Cheung-sau. See Cai Changshou.
- Chongqing 重慶, 45, 49-50, 52, 65
- Chuan 川
- chuan 傳, 34, 155nn5-6
- Chun Gan 春感, 3
- chun yanghao bi. See calligraphy.
- Chungking. See Chongqing.
- ci 詞
- tianci 填詞, 31;
- tune: Daolianzi 搗練子, 126; Liushaoqing 柳梢青, 3; Pusaman 菩薩蠻, 3, 129; Qingyu'an 青玉案, 77; Shuidiao Getou 水調歌頭, 123; Su Zhongqing 訴衷情, 3; Tashaxing 踏莎行, 124
- Cloudview Road, 11, 90, 131, 138
- Communist, 49, 70
- communist ideology, 96
- Communist Party, 7, 49, 50, 53
- communist regime, 4, 69-70, 132
- Craig, Dale. See Qi We'ao.
- Cuizhu 粹珠. See Zay-tzu.
- Cultural Revolution, 7, 96, 99, 137, 154, 158
- da fang 大房, 22
- Da'an Fang 大安坊, 43, 45, 156n1 (chap. 6)
- dagege 大哥哥. See dugugu.
- Dai Xiaolian 戴曉蓮, 4
- dameimei 大妹妹. See dumemei.
- danbo wuwei 淡泊無為, 138
- Daolianzi. See ci: tune.
- dapu 打譜, 63
- Datong 大同, 39, 48, 157n6
- Daxia 大廈, 39
- Daxiyang Fancaiguan 大西洋番菜館, 42
- Daxue 大學, 138
- dayima 大姨媽, 30
- De 德. See Teh.
- Delin 德鄰, 50, 156n1 (chap. 6)
- Deng Jichen 鄧寄塵, 85
- Deng Zhaohua 鄧兆華, 85, 87 fig. 3
- Deyin Qin Society, 88, 92-93
- Deyin Qinshe 德音琴社, 88. See also Deyin Qin Society.
- Deyin Qinxun 德音琴訊, 11-14, 51, 89, 92-93, 138, 157n8, 158n1 (chap. 7)
- Di Runjun 狄潤君, 40-41
- diangu 典故, 31, 155n4
- dianxin 點心, 44
- Dingyou 丁酉, 124
- dizi 笛子, 33, 56, 83, 111
- Dongping 東平, 28
- Dongtian 洞天, 74
- dou. See qin: playing technique.
- Du Jinfang 杜近芳, 157n9
- Du Liyun 杜麗雲, 157n9
- dugugu 大哥哥, 25

- dumeimei 大林林, 25
Dunxin Lu 敦信路, 157n1
- Eastern Zhou dynasty 東周, 19
ensemble, 6, 33–34, 107
er fang 二房, 22
erdayi 二大姨, 22
ergege 二哥哥. See *nigugu*.
ethnomusicology, 84, 88, 161n11
- Fan Boyan 范伯炎, 65–66
Fanchuan pai 泛川派, 99
fang 房, 22
fanghui 方回, 77
Fanghui 方回, 81
Fangweng 放翁, 3
feiyan. See *qin*: playing technique.
Feng Deming 冯德明, 159n6
finger technique. See *qin*: playing technique.
Fohua 佛花, 57
free rhythm, 30, 107–9, 111, 113, 161n9, 161n19
fu 賦
Fudan 复旦, 39, 47
- Gao Luopei 高罗佩. See Van Gulik, Robert.
ge 歌
Gengxin Diaowei 耕辛钓渭, 81
Gengzi Peikuan 庚子赔款, 156n6
Ginling 金陵, 39, 40, 155n2 (chap. 5)
glissando, 116
gong 宫, 115
Gong Yi 龚一, 4, 14, 92, 138, 158n2 (chap. 7)
Goormaghtigh, Georges, 11–12, 85, 87 fig. 3, 92
Gu Huiman 顾惠曼, 86, 87 fig. 3
Guan Pinghu 管平湖, 4, 7, 110
Guangdong 广东, 49, 78
Guanghua 光華, 39
Guangling pai 广陵派, 71, 113
Guanglingsan 广陵散, 110
Guangxi 广西, 49
Guangzhou 广州, 21, 78, 83, 135, 155n3
- Guanshan Yue 关山月, 91, 107
guixiu 鬲秀, 76. See also *guixiu mingyuan*.
guixiu mingyuan 鬲秀名媛, 76
Guizhou 贵州, 49
Guo Chuwang 郭楚望, 2, 4
Guo Maoji 郭茂恭. See Goormaghtigh, Georges.
guoji 過繼, 19
guoli 國立, 39
Guqin Chujie 古琴初階, 56–57, 97
Guyuan 古怨, 79
guzheng 古琴, 78, 86
- haijiao* 海角, 125
Hainan 海南, 49
Haitian 海添, 75
haiwai 海外, 125
Han 漢
hand and finger movement. See *qin*: playing technique.
hand technique. See *qin*: playing technique.
Hangzhou 杭州, 3, 17, 21, 72, 135
Hankow 漢口, 49
Hankow Road, 50–51, 156–57n1, 158n2 (chap. 7)
haozi 號子, 107
he 和
Heilongjiang 黑龍江, 78
Henan 河南, 19
Hiromi, Tanaka 田中博美, 86, 87 fig. 3
Hiroo, Hieda 稗田治雄, 85–87
hong dou tang 紅豆湯, 98
Hongkou 虹口, 38
Honglongmeng 紅樓夢, 7, 23, 35
Hu Juren 胡菊人, 85, 87 fig. 3, 92
Huaihai Lu 淮海路, 157n1
huan. See *qin*: playing technique.
Huang Duxiu 黃篤修, 85
Huang Jichang 黃繼昌, 83
Huang Seming 黃番名, 75, 159n6
Huang Zi 黃自, 48, 157n5
Huanghe Lu 黃河路, 157n1
Huanlong Lu 環龍路, 52, 157n1 (chap. 7)
Huaqiao Ribao 華僑日報, 71

- Hujia Shibapai* 胡茄十八拍, 91, 120, 143
Hujiang 滬江, 38–39, 112
Huxiao 虎嘯, 9, 55, 120
Huzhou 湖州: county, 17, 19–20, 24, 29; dialect, 23, 138, 154n1 (chap. 4)
Huzhou Lahu Gongxiao 湖州旅滬公校, 24
 ink-brush calligraphy, 30, 37, 89, 158n10 (chap. 6)
 ink-brush painting, 9, 27

Ji Kang 嵇康, xiii
Jia Sidao 賈似道, 2
Jiancong qingshi 蒯從清食, 138
Jiang Bocheng 蔣伯誠, 52
Jiangsu 江蘇, 17, 42, 47, 154n6
Jiangwan 江灣, 38
jianpu. See notation.
jianzipu. See notation.
Jiao'an Qinpu 蕉庵琴譜, 59, 160n7
Jiaotong 交通, 39
Jiaxuan 稼軒, 3
Jing'an Si Lu 靜安寺路, 45, 47, 157n1
Jingtao 驚濤, 65
jingtu 淨土, 11
jingxin. See qin: aesthetics.
Jinling. See Ginling.
Jinyu Qinkan 今虞琴刊, 62
Jinyu Qinshe 今虞琴社, 7, 62, 88
jiujiu 舅舅, 22
Jiuyi Mountains 九嶷山, 2
Jiyi 戟儀, 41
juanhuai guguo 卷懷故國, 4
Juedai Jiaren 絕代佳人, 80
juaju. See poetry.
Jurchen, 3
juren 舉人, 41
Juyong Guan 居庸關, 136

Kagan, Alan 84, 87 fig. 3, 98
Kai Tak 啟德, 11
Kaifeng 開封, 3
Kaigu Yin 慨古引, 79, 91, 107
kaishu. See calligraphy.
Kang Youwei 康有為, 28
ke 客, 125
 kinesthetic concern, 104
King's Road, 9, 11, 70, 157n1, 159n3
Kishibe Shigeo 岸邊成雄, 84, 86, 87 fig. 3
Kiyoshi, Fushimi 伏見靖, 86
Kowloon 九龍
Kun Opera. See Chinese opera.
Kunqu 昆曲. See Chinese opera: Kun Opera.
Kuomingtang 國民黨, 49
Kwan Sing-yau 關聖佑, 83

Lam, Joseph, 83, 87 fig. 3
Lam Siu-mei 林少薇, 86, 87 fig. 3
Lam Sui-ching 林萃菁. See Lam, Joseph.
Lancun 蘭村, 52, 66, 157n1 (chap. 7)
langchang. See poetry.
langhao bi. See calligraphy.
Lanting Jixu 蘭亭集序, 158n8
Lao She 老舍, 154n7
laoshi 老師
Lau Chor-wah 劉楚華, 11, 14, 30, 87 fig. 3, 89, 91–92, 97–98, 116, 139 photo 14
laxness, 103–4
Leji Qiao 垃圾橋, 22
Lengxiang Xianguan 冷香仙館, 76
Leung Lai-wan 梁麗雲, 84, 87 fig. 3, 92, 139 photo 14
Levy, John, 1, 85, 89, 103
Li Mingde 李明德, 65
Li Pusheng 李普生, 74
Li Wei-nuo 李衛嫻, 83, 87 fig. 3
Li Xiangting 李祥霆, 4
Li Zizhao 李子昭, 161n16
Liang Ming-yüeh 梁銘越, 160n6 (chap. 11)
Liang Zaiping 梁在平, 65–66, 158n11
Liangxiao Yin 良宵引, 91, 107
Liao 遼, 2–3
Lichi 麗池, 60
Lieberman, Fred, xvii, 160n6 (chap. 11)
Lin Daiyu 林黛玉, 7
Lin Youren 林友仁, 4
Lingnan 嶺南, 78, 159n11
Linhai 臨海, 72
Liqi 禮器, 28

- lishu. See calligraphy.
- literati, 1, 3, 5-8, 17, 34, 61, 73, 89, 95-96, 105, 119, 133
- Liu Chenweng 劉辰翁, 3
- Liu Chuncao 劉春草, 74
- Liu Chun-jo 劉君若, 84
- Liu Cunren 柳存仁, 159n6
- Liu E 劉鶚, 23
- Liu Wenlan 劉文蘭, 86, 87 fig. 3
- Liushaoqing*. See *ci*: tune.
- Liuzhou 柳州, 21
- Lo Ka-ping 盧家炳, 78, 162n9
- Longhua 龍華, 38
- Longxiang Cao 龍翔操, 71, 91, 113-15, 117
- Lu Hui Feng 陸惠風, 82, 87 fig. 3
- Lu Jiabing. See Lo Ka-ping.
- Lü Peiyuan. See Lui Pui-yuen.
- Lu Xinru 陸馨如, 32, 130, 159n6
- Lu You 陸游, 3-4
- Lü Zhenyuan. See Lui Tsun-yuen.
- Lugou Qiao 盧溝橋, 49
- Lui Pui-yuen 呂培原, 86, 92
- Lui Tsun-yuen 呂振原, 74, 77, 122, 159n6
- Lunyü 論語, 138
- Ma Bihun 馬璧魂, 77
- mei 梅, 41
- Meibaike Lu 梅白克路, 45
- Meihua Sannong 梅花三弄, 56, 79, 91, 120
- Meiling 美齡, 38
- meimei 妹妹, 25
- Meiyuan 梅園, 77
- melograph, 116
- metal string. See qin: construction.
- Mi Fei 米芾, 28. See also calligraphy: *kaishu*; *xingshu*.
- mianlizhen. See calligraphy.
- Ming Pao 明報, 85
- Mitani Yoko 三谷陽子, 86, 87 fig. 3
- Mu'ertang Gaodeng Zhuanxiu Xuexiao 慕爾堂高等專修學校, 33, 38, 40-41
- musical expression, 96, 113-14
- Nanjing 南京, 26, 39, 49, 62, 72, 81, 135
- Nanjing Xilu 南京西路, 45
- nanman 南蠻, 125
- Nanshi 南市, 38
- Nanyang Nüzi Shifan Xuetao 南洋女子師範學堂, 37
- Nanyang Zhongxue 南洋中學, 48
- nanyin 南音, 88
- nao. See qin: playing technique.
- narrative song, 88, 107
- Nationalist, 49-50
- Nationalist Government, 7, 48-49, 52
- Nationalist Party, 49
- Ng Ngoi-yee 吳靄儀, 83, 87 fig. 3
- Ng Ying-wai 吳英卉, 86, 87 fig. 3, 92-93, 139 photo 14
- nian. See poetry.
- niang'niang 娘娘, 21, 26, 154n6
- niduyi 二大姨
- Nichaihua 翠海花, 80
- nigugu 二哥哥, 25
- Nihon Gagakukai 日本雅樂會, 84
- Northern Wei dynasty 北魏, 27-28. See also Wei: Wei dynasty.
- notation: *jianpu* 簡譜, 56; *jianzipu* 減字譜, 56; notational symbol, 56, 97, 116; notational system, 5, 6, 106, 153n6; Western staff notation, 106, 109
- notational symbol. See notation.
- notational system. See notation.
- Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, 136
- ornamental technique. See qin: playing technique.
- pai 派, 71, 99. See also Guangling pai; Fan Chuan pai.
- Pan 潘, 60
- Pan Chonggui 潘重規, 81, 87 fig. 3, 98, 122
- Panyu. See Punyu.
- Pei Jieqing 裴介卿, 56, 158n4, 160n7
- Pei Zheng. See Pui Ching.
- Peking Opera. See Chinese opera.
- Peng Qingshou 彭慶壽, 62
- Peng Zhiqing 彭祉卿, 56, 62
- Peng Ziqin 彭子琴, 74
- People's Republic, 7, 52, 96

- People's Republic of China, 34, 49, 70, 121, 132, 136
- performance practice, 5, 12, 95-96, 103-4, 109-10
- Pian, Rulan Chao 阮, 85, 87, 91
- pianwen*. See poetry.
- piaobo* 漂泊, 125
- piaoyou* 漂流, 76
- Pingsha*. See *Pingsha Luoyan*.
- Pingshan 平山, 78, 129
- Pingsha Luoyan* 平沙落雁, 56, 58, 74, 81, 91, 107, 110, 120, 129
- pingze* 平仄. See poetry.
- pinyin* 拼音
- poetic activities, 77-78
- poetry: *bi* 比, 57; *jueju* 绝句, 127; *langchang* 朗唱, 30; *nian* 念, 30, 155n2 (chap. 4); *pianwen* 骈文, 124; *pingze* 平仄, 31; poetry chanting, 30, 155n2 (chap. 4); *qijue* 七绝, 77, 126, 129-30; *qilu* 七律, 126, 128; rhyme scheme, 31-32, 126; *wajue* 五绝, 77; *wulu* 五律, 130; *xing* 兴, 57; *yayan* 押韵, 31; *yin* 吟, 30; *zushi* 杂诗, 128
- poetry chanting. See poetry.
- portamento, 116
- Pu'an Zhou* 普庵咒, 51, 56, 58, 74, 79, 85, 91, 102
- Pudong 浦东, 62
- Pui Ching 培正, 78
- Punyu 番禺, 78
- Pusamun*. See *ci*: tune.
- putonghua* 普通话
- Qi Weicao 齐伟奥, 85, 87 fig. 3
- qigong* 气功, xv
- qijue*. See poetry.
- qilu*. See poetry.
- qin* 琴
- aesthetics: *jingxin* 静心, 138; *yijing* 意境, 105-6, 111; *yan* 颜, 116; *zhengxin* 正心, 138
- construction: metal string, 96, 103, 160n3 (chap. 11); silk string, 86, 96, 103-4, 160nn5-6 (chap. 11)
- playing technique: *dou* 逗, 97, 116; *feiyin* 飞吟, 97, 117; finger technique, 6, 58, 64, 66, 89, 97-98, 102, 106, 161; hand and finger movement, 90, 97, 100; hand technique, 99, 116; *huan* 唤, 97, 116; *nao* 靠, 58, 111, 116, 158n3; ornamental technique, 97, 111; *yin* 吟, 58, 111, 116, 158n3; *zhu* 看, 111, 116; *zhao* 照, 111-13, 116
- *qin* tradition, 5-8, 96, 129, 161n8
- Qin* 秦, 61, 158n7
- Qin Fu* 琴歌, xiii
- qin* lesson, 57-58
- qin* tradition. See *qin*: playing technique.
- Qing* 清, 28, 39, 49.
- Qingming* 清明, 32
- Qingyu'an*. See *ci*: tune.
- Qinxue Xinsheng* 琴学心声, 161n10
- Qiusai* 秋塞, 74. See also *Qiusai Yin*.
- Qiusai Yin* 秋塞吟, 56
- qizhi* 氣質, 160n3 (chap. 10)
- Qu Zhiren 屈志仁. See Watt, James.
- qudi* 曲笛, 33-34, 67
- Qulu* 曲律, 28
- qunbian* 裙边, 24
- Rao Zongyi 饶宗颐, 9, 32, 75, 159n6, 162n13
- recording, 5, 28, 63, 85, 88-90, 92, 96, 103, 105-6, 109-12, 115-16, 135, 139, 159n4, 160nn6-7 (chap. 9), 160n3 (chap. 11), 160n6 (chap. 11), 161n19
- Republic of China, 34, 49
- rhyme scheme. See poetry.
- ritual music, 6, 107
- Rong Baoren 荣保仁, 32, 47, 157n4
- Rong Daben 荣大本, 157n6
- Rong Hongzeng 荣洪曾. See Yung, Bell.
- Rong Siz. See Yung Sze-chak.
- Roufo 柔佛, 57
- ru* 儒, 158n5
- Ruihua Fang 瑞华坊, 43, 156n1 (chap. 6)
- Runde Li 吕德里, 45, 156n1 (chap. 6)
- Ryoko, Niikura 新倉涼子, 86, 87 fig. 3
- san* 散, 161n9
- san fang* 三方, 22

- saosao 嫂嫂, 60
 Sau Chuk Yuen 秀竹園, 70, 157n1
 (chap. 6)
 seal, 72-73, 76, 82
 seng 僧, 62
 Shandong 山東, 28
 Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 112,
 135, 157n5
 Shanghai Yinyue Xueyuan 上海音樂學院.
 See Shanghai Conservatory of Music.
 Shanzhong Lu 善鐘路, 157n1
 Shen Bozhong 沈伯重, 62
 Shen Caonong 沈草農, xvi, 4, 32, 50, 52,
 55-59, 62-66, 71, 108, 113, 122, 126-
 27, 157n8, 158n2 (chap. 7), 158n4
 (chap. 7), 160n6 (chap. 9), 161n14,
 162n6
 Shen Danlai 沈旦來, 43
 Shen Honglai 沈鴻來, xvi, 32, 41-45,
 47-50, 52, 55, 69-70, 124, 131-32,
 156n7, 157nn5-6
 Shen Jianzhi 沈鑿治, 44
 Shen Jun 沈君, 41
 Shen Liangqi 沈亮啟, 41
 Sheng Xiansan 盛獻三, 74-75, 77, 159n6
 Sheng Xiaopei 盛孝沛, 83, 87 fig. 3
 sheng 笙, 33, 56
 shennan xinbei 身南心北, 4
 Shenqi Mipu 神奇秘譜, 2
 Sheungwan 上環, 92
 shi 詩
 Shi Baochu 史寶楚, 47
 Shi Yinmei 史蔭美, 66
 Shijing 詩經, 162n3
 shimu 師母, 60
 Shuanglin 雙林, 17, 19-21, 42
 Shui Shifang 水世芳, 160n2 (chap. 9)
 Shuidiao Getou. See ci: tune.
 Shuixian Cao 水仙操, 91, 110, 117
 Shum Hing-shun 沈興頌, 84, 86, 87
 fig. 3, 89, 92, 139 photo14
 Shun Tak 信德, 92
 shushu 叔叔, 21
 Sichuan 四川, 49, 81, 128
 Sifu 思父, 123
 silk string. See qin: construction.
 simian 絲棉, 154n2 (chap. 3)
 Siqin 思親, 124
 song 松, 41
 Song. See Soong.
 Song Northern dynasty, 2-3, 76
 Song Southern dynasty, 2-4, 80, 133
 Song Xinleng 宋心冷, 32, 75-76, 159n6
 Songfang 頌方, 65
 Soochow 蘇州, 24, 26, 38. See also
 Suzhou.
 Soong 宋, 38. See also Ailing; Chingling;
 Meiling.
 Sou Si-tai 蘇思隸, 14, 83, 86-89, 92, 139
 photo 14
 stele. See calligraphy.
 Su Dongpo 蘇東坡, 32
 Su Zhongqing. See ci: tune.
 suihan sanyou 歲寒三友, 41. See also song:
 zhu, mei.
 sukukuk 叔叔. See shushu.
 Sun Keren 孫克仁, 64
 Sun Yude 孫裕德, 64
 Sun Yuqin 孫毓芹, 88
 Suzhou 蘇州, 14, 17, 21, 62, 72, 92, 108,
 154n5

 tai chi 太極, 86
 Tai Yuan 太原, 62
 Taihu 太湖, 17
 Tak Lun. See Delin.
 Tam Yue-him 譚汝謙, 82, 87 fig. 3
 Tang Junyi 唐君毅, 81, 84, 123, 126
 Tang Shizhang 唐世璋. See Thompson,
 John.
 Tangut, 3
 Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, 10
 Taohua Datong 陶化大同, 85
 Tashaxing. See ci: tune.
 teaching career, 39-41
 Teh 德
 tempo structure, 109-10
 texture, 29, 117
 Thompson, John, 88
 tianci. See ci.
 tianya 天涯, 125
 timbre, 6, 33, 104, 117
 Tong Kin-woon 唐建垣, 88
 tor-yee-lay 討厭來, 140

- trill, 116
 Tsar Teh-yun 蔡德允
 Tsar Teh-zay 蔡德粹, 18 fig. 2, 24-25
 Tse Chun-yan 謝俊仁, 87 fig. 3, 89, 92, 139 photo 14, 141
 Tsim Sha Tsui 尖沙嘴, 50, 70, 157n1 (chap. 6)
 Tsinghua 清華, 42, 157n5. *See also* Tsinghua Xuetang.
 Tsinghua Xuetang 清華學堂, 42
 Tuen Mun 屯門, 75
 tune. *See ci*.
 tzu 志
 tzu 珠
- Van Gulik, Robert, xiii, 73, 81, 105, 159-60nn1-2
 variation, 6, 91, 108, 112, 120
 vibrato, 116
- wan 碗, 61, 158n6
 Wanchai 灣仔, 69-70, 92, 157n1 (chap. 6)
 Wanfo 萬佛, 78
 Wang Baoqi 王寶琦, 159n6
 Wang Di 王迪, 77, 162n4
 Wang Guowei 王國維, 76
 Wang Jiqian 王季謙, 76
 Wang Xizhi 王羲之, 158n8
 Wang Yici 王憶慈, 75
 Wang Yipin 王一品, 27, 29
 Wang Zhibo 王植波, 73
 Wanhe Songfeng 萬壑松風, 120
 Waterloo Road Hill, 11, 132
 Watt, James, 10, 82, 87 fig. 3
 Wei 魏: Wei dynasty, 27-28; Weibei 魏碑, 28. *See also* calligraphy: *bei*.
 Wei Zhongle 衛仲樂, 4, 111
 Weilitang 衛理堂, 78
 weiqi 圍棋, xv
 Wenhui 文慧, 64-65
 wenren 文人, xv-xvi. *See also* literati.
 wenshu 文書, 52, 158n10 (chap. 6)
 Western staff notation. *See* notation.
 Wong Chi-fong 黃芷芳, 86, 87 fig. 3
 Wong Hong-wah 黃助華, 87, 92, 139 photo 14
 Wong Shu-chee 黃樹志, 84, 86, 87 fig. 3, 92, 139 photo 14, 160n5 (chap. 11)
 Wong Siu-lun 黃紹倫, 70
 Wu Changshuo 吳昌碩, 27
 Wu Chunbai 吳純白, 55, 74, 77, 159n6
 Wu Hanchu 吳漢初, 59
 Wu Jiaoti 吳蕉題, 40-41
 Wu Jinglue 吳景略, 4, 63, 65-66, 71, 88, 108
 Wu Ruo'an 吳若安, 39
 Wu Wanhui 吳浣蕙,
 Wu Wen 吳雯, 75, 76
 Wu Wenguang 吳文光, 4, 108, 161n11
 Wu Yinming 吳因明, 32, 74, 76-77, 159n6
 Wu Zhao 吳釗, 4, 136
 Wu Zhaoji 吳兆基, 4
 Wu Zheng 吳政, 65
 Wu Zhenping 吳振平, 65, 71
 Wu Zonghan 吳宗漢, 4, 65, 75, 122
 wubing shenyin 無病呻吟, 121
 wujian 舞劍, xv
 wujue. *See* poetry.
 wulü. *See* poetry.
 wuting 舞廳, 60
 Wuxi 無錫, 20, 154n5 (chap. 3)
 Wuxing 吳興, 20, 29
 Wuyue Wu Qiufeng 梧葉舞秋風, 91, 108
 Wuyi Lu 武夷路, 157n1
- Xia 夏, 3
 Xiafei Lu 霞飛路, 157n1
 Xian Mingcong 沈茗聰, 74
 Xiangjiang Yuan 湘江怨, 91, 129
 Xiangkang Li 祥康里, 45, 47, 156n1 (chap. 6)
 xiangsuya 香酥鴨, 32
 Xianqin 顯欽, 65
 xiao 簫, 67, 77, 78, 79, 83
 Xiao Lisheng 蕭立聲, 32, 74-75, 77, 159n6
 Xiao Yun'an 蕭雲庵, 75
 xiaomeimei 小妹妹, 25
 Xiaoshan 蕭山, 57
 Xiaoxiang Shuiyun 瀟湘水云, 1-2, 4, 8, 89, 91, 97, 101-3, 117, 120
 Xiaoya 小雅, 126, 162n3

- Xie Tingguang 谢廷光, 81, 84, 98, 160n3 (chap. 9)
- Xie Xiaoping 谢孝苹, 64
- Xilutang Qintong 西麓堂琴统, 161n16
- Xin Bao 信报, 131
- Xin Qiji 辛棄疾, 3-4
- xing 行, 57
- xing 興. See poetry.
- Xinghe Li 興和里, 157n1
- xingshu. See calligraphy.
- Xingzhuang Taiyin Xupu 杏莊太古續譜, 161n14
- Xinya Guoyuehui 新亞國樂會, 79
- Xiongnu 匈奴, 120
- xiushen yangxing 修身養性, 138
- Xu Jian 許健, 109, 161n19
- Xu Liangzhi 徐亮之, 75
- Xu Lingyun 徐凌霄, 35
- Xu Lisun 徐立蓀, 65
- Xu Wenjing 徐文鏡, 65, 72, 74, 76, 77, 80, 122, 129, 159n6
- Xuxi 須溪, 3
- yaaji 雅集, 7-8, 32, 34, 59-63, 66, 71, 73-79, 82, 88, 92-93, 96-97, 120, 122-23, 129, 135-37, 158n12, 159n13, 162n4. See also Zhilian Jingyuan; Jinyu Qinshe; Deyin Qinshe.
- yan 眼, 107
- Yang Pan'geng 楊盤庚, 74
- Yang Xinlun 楊新倫, 4, 83
- Yang Zonghan 楊宗翰, 159n6
- Yangguan Sandie 陽關三疊, 58, 91, 102, 112
- yanghang 洋行, 40-41
- Yangzhou 揚州, 62-62, 135
- Yanwu Ju 鹽務局, 48
- Yao Bingyan 姚丙炎, 4, 93
- Yao Gongbai 姚公白, 4, 92-93
- Yao Gongjing 姚公敬, 93
- Yao Huaishu 姚懷淑, 22-23
- Yao Ke 姚克, 75-76
- yaolingxin 搖鈴心, 46, 107
- yayun. See poetry.
- Ye 葉, 65
- Yi Guren 憶古人, 59, 91, 120
- Yi Junzuo 易君左, 75, 77
- yijing. See qin: aesthetics.
- yima 姨媽, 22
- yin 吟. See poetry; qin: playing technique.
- Yingzheng 燕政, 2
- Yinyin 憶憶, xiii, 90, 92, 97, 119, 154n3 (chap. 2), 162n5
- Yinyin Study, 9, 10 photo 2, 10-11, 29-30, 89-90, 92, 97, 119
- Yinyinshi 憶憶室, xii, 88
- Yinyinshi Ming 憶憶室銘, 9, 10 photo 2
- Yinyinshi Qinpu 憶憶室琴譜, 89-90, 97, 99, 101-2, 110, 119
- Yinyinshi Shici Wengao 憶憶室詩詞文稿, 30-31, 89
- Yinyue Yanjiusuo 音樂研究所, 77, 135
- Yip Ming-mei 葉明媚, 13, 82, 87 fig. 3, 92, 95, 98
- Yongye Dalou 永業大樓, 157n1
- Yoshikazu, Kikkawa 吉川良和, 86, 87 fig. 3
- Yu Dongxuan 余東旋, 77
- Yu Shaoze 俞紹澤, 4
- Yu Zhaoxing 虞兆興, 159n6
- Yuan Yang'an 袁仰安, 28, 79, 159n3
- Yuan Ying 袁英, 32, 47, 157n4
- Yue 越, 61, 158n7
- Yuenlong 元朔, 78
- Yuexi 月溪, 32
- Yuguang Lian 漁光戀, 28
- yun. See qin: aesthetics.
- Yung Hak-chi 容克智, 79
- Yung Sam-yin 容心言, 79
- Yung Sau-ying 容秀英, 79
- Yung Sze-chak 容思澤, 78, 88
- Yuntai 雲台, 75
- Yuntai Chunse Tu 雲台春色圖, 75
- Yun-tzu 允珠, 23
- Yung, Bell, 83, 84 photo 12, 87 fig. 3, 92, 157nn4-6
- Yunzhong Nüzi Zhongxue 允中女子中學, 47
- Yunzhu 允珠. See Yun-tzu.
- Yuqiao 漁樵, 74. See also Yuqiao Wenda.
- Yuqiao Wenda 漁樵問答, 55-56, 91, 102, 107, 110, 120
- Yuyuan Cun 愚園村, 45, 47, 156n1 (chap. 6)
- Yuyuan Lu 愚園路, 45

- zaju. See Chinese opera.
 zoshi. See poetry.
 Zay-tzu 梓祿, 24
 Zeng Chengwei 曾成偉, 4
 Zeng Kezhuan 曾克剛, 159n6
 Zeng Pu 曾璞, 23
 Zha Faxi 查阜西, 4, 56–57, 62, 65, 81, 109, 111, 161n8
 Zhabei 閩北, 38
 Zhang Bihan 張碧寒, 75, 77, 159n6
 Zhang Eyun 張遏雲, 159n6
 Zhang Henshui 張恨水, 154n7
 Zhang Menglong. See calligraphy.
 Zhang Peijia 張佩嘉, 75
 Zhang Qian 張遷, 28
 Zhang Qingchong 張慶崇, 88
 Zhang Renshi 張研詩, 73–74
 Zhang Shibin. See Cheung Sai-bung.
 Zhang Yanyi 張硯昶, 37
 Zhang Ziqian 張子謙, 4, 56–57, 62–63, 66, 71, 113. See also Guangling pai.
 Zhanjiang 湛江, 49
 Zhao Heqin 趙鶴琴, 32, 75–76, 159n6
 Zhao Rulan 趙如蘭. See Chao Pian, Rulan.
 Zhao Shuru 趙如深, 76
 Zhejiang 浙江, 2, 17, 21, 57, 72, 154n6, 158n7
 Zheng Banqiao 鄭板橋, 27
 Zheng Chuanjian 鄭傳鑑, 34, 52, 155n5
 Zheng Minzhong 鄭岷中, 4
 Zheng Yuansu 鄭元素, 76–77, 159n6
 zhengti. See calligraphy.
 zhengxin. See qin: aesthetics.
 Zhenxiage Cigao 珍霞閣詞稿, 57
 Zhenxiage Qucao Chugao 珍霞閣曲草初稿, 57
 zhi 志
 Zhilan Jingyuan 志蓮靜苑, 32, 73
 Zhilan Zhi Shi 芝蘭之室, 73
 zhixian 知縣, 20
 Zhongguo Gudian Xiqu Yinyue Xinshehui 中國古典戲曲音樂欣賞會, 78
 Zhongguo Guqin Dasai 中國古琴大賽, 136
 Zhongguo Minzu Guanxianyue Xuehui Guqin Zhuanyue Weiyuanhui 中國民族管絃樂學會古琴專業委員會, 136
 Zhongguo Qinhui 中國琴會, 136
 Zhongguo Yinyue Xueyuan 中國音樂學院. See China Conservatory of Music.
 zhonghu 中胡, 79
 Zhonghua Wenhua Cujin Zhongxin 中華文化促進中心, 92
 Zhongshan Gongyuan 中山公園, 45
 Zhongxi Nushu 中西女塾, 47
 Zhongyang Xintuo Ju 中央信託局, 47
 Zhongyang Yinyue Xueyuan 中央音樂學院. See Central Conservatory of Music.
 Zhongyong 中庸, 138
 Zhou Shixin 周士心, 9, 32, 72–78, 88, 92, 122, 160n5 (chap. 9)
 Zhou Xiling 周熙玲, 86, 87 fig. 3, 160n5 (chap. 9)
 Zhou Yuxi 周郁琦, 40
 zhu. See qin: playing technique.
 zhu 珠, 23
 zhu 竹, 41
 Zhu Quan 朱權, 2, 4
 Zhu Tingqi 朱廷禎, 48
 Zhu Yuanzhen 朱元璋, 65
 zhuàn. See calligraphy.
 Zhuang Jiancheng 莊劍丞, 65
 Zhuang Yicun 莊一村, 75, 159n6
 zhuo. See qin: playing technique.
 Zou Shonguan 曹芝山館, 73
 ziniyin 紫泥印, 72
 zixiao 自號, 130
 Zuiyu Changwan 醉漁唱晚, 91, 111–12, 116