



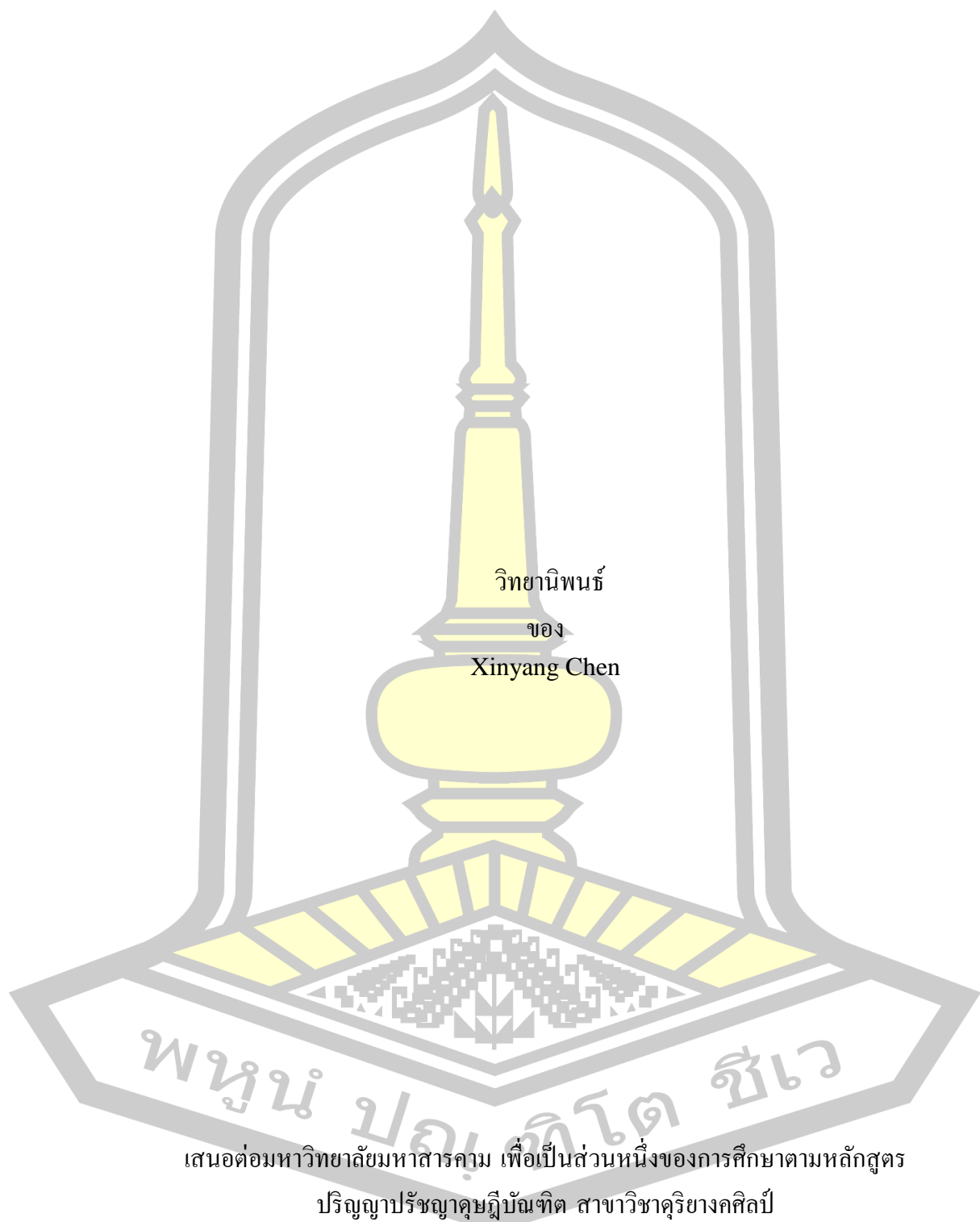
Tianqin: Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang  
Autonomous Region of China

Xinyang Chen

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music  
September 2024

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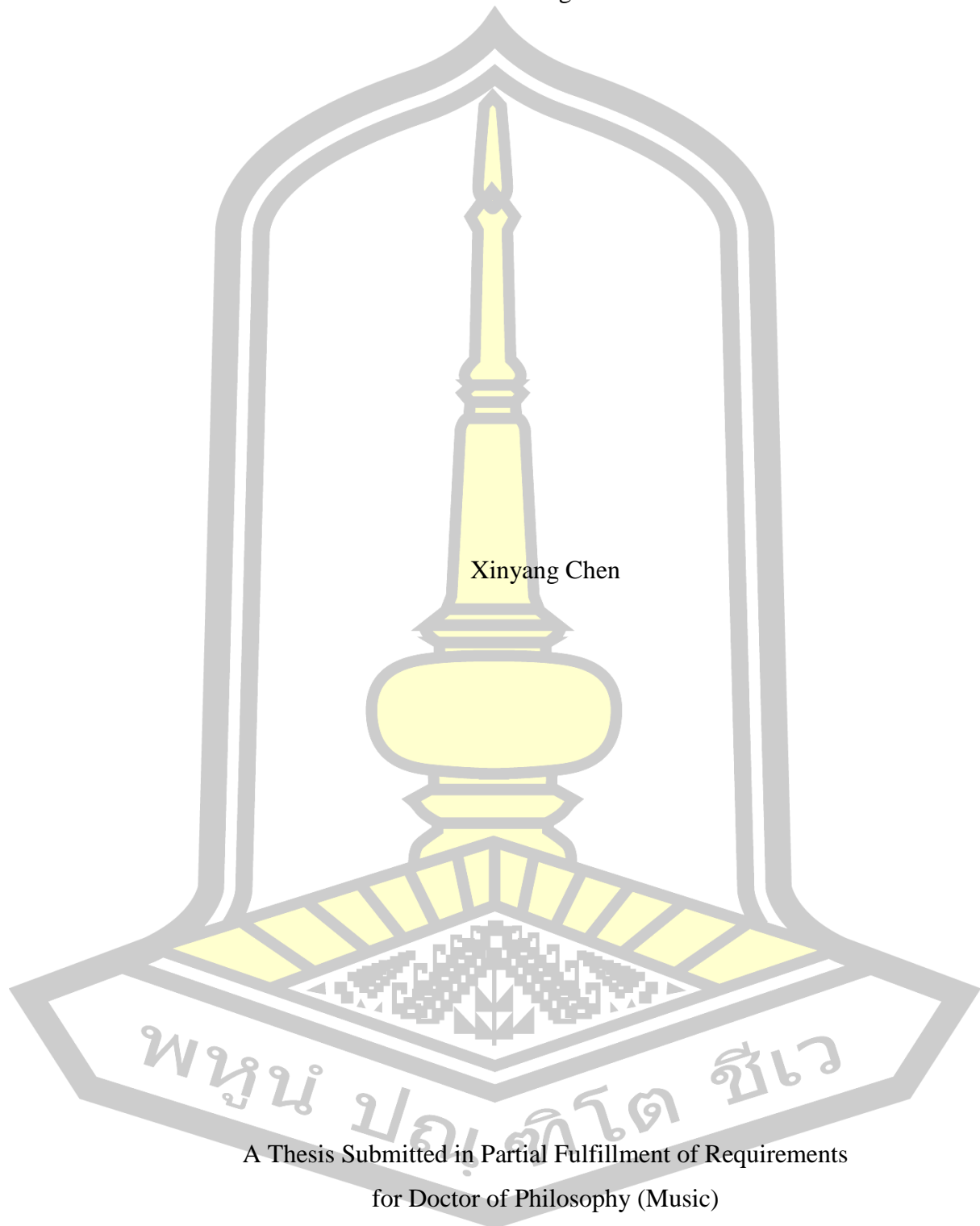
เทียนฉิน: เครื่องดนตรีพื้นบ้านของจีนในเมืองหลงโจว เขตปกครองตนเองกว่างซีจ้วงของจีน



กันยายน 2567

ลิขสิทธิ์เป็นของมหาวิทยาลัยมหาสารคาม

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September 2024

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<b>TITLE</b>	Tianqin: Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China		
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### ABSTRACT

The Tianqin is a traditional Chinese musical instrument that belongs to the category of plucked string instruments. The objectives of this research were to: 1) Investigate the process, techniques, and materials used in the creation of the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. 2) Analyze and describe the techniques utilized in playing the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. 3) Analyze the cultural changes of the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Adopting qualitative research methods with interview and observation form as the research tools. Collect data on-site through interviews with four informants in the field and classify and analyses the collected data. The results indicate that:

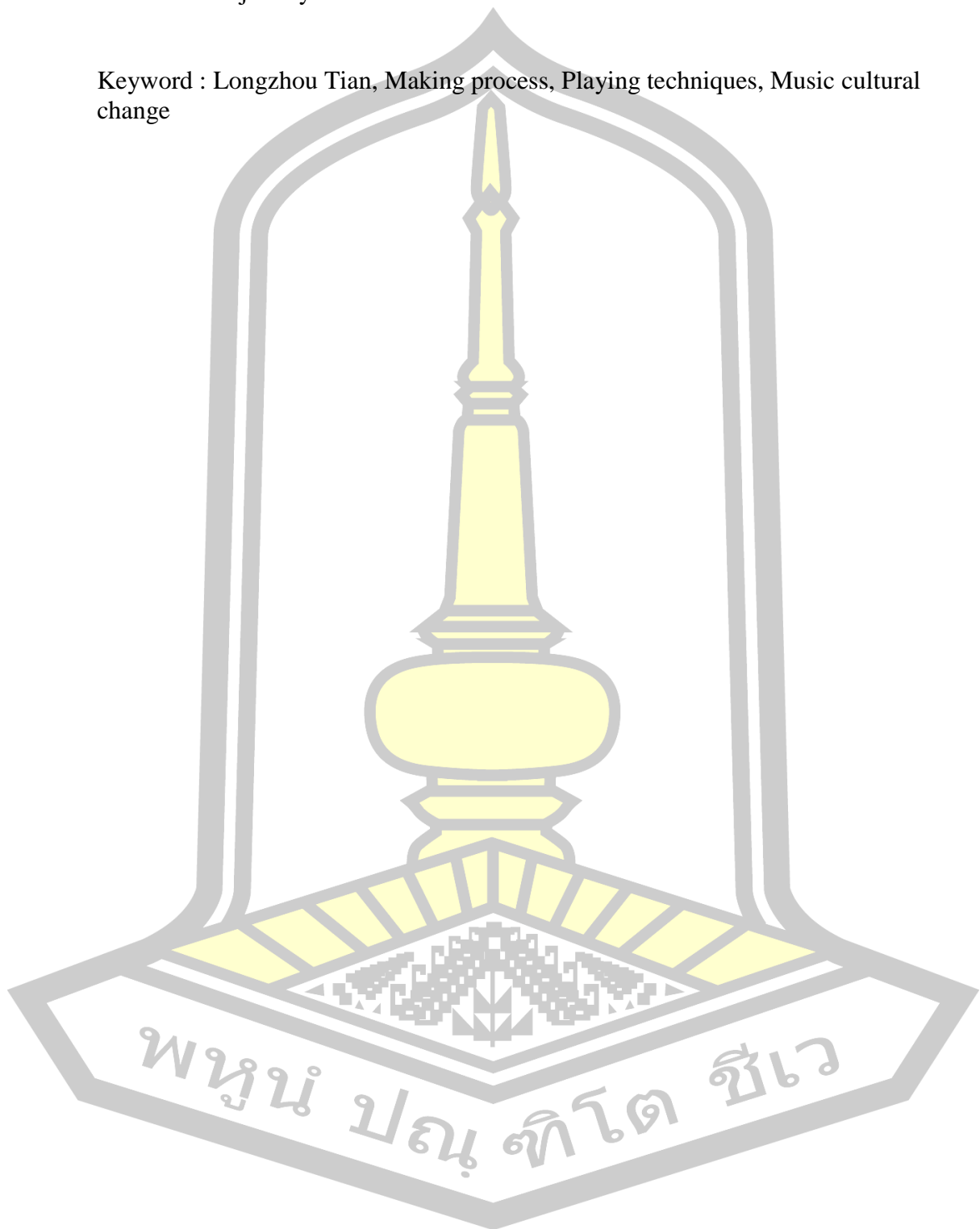
1. The Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument is a process steeped in tradition, craftsmanship, and cultural significance. It is a testament to the rich cultural heritage of Longzhou County and the broader Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Understanding the process, techniques, and materials used in crafting the Tianqin provides a window into the vibrant tapestry of Chinese folk music and the enduring legacy of traditional craftsmanship.

2. The techniques utilized in playing the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument reflect the deep-rooted cultural heritage of Longzhou County and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. These techniques encompass not only instrumental prowess but also vocal artistry, storytelling, and visual performance elements. Understanding these techniques provides a comprehensive appreciation of the Tianqin's role as a cultural ambassador and a vessel for preserving and conveying Zhuang traditions.

3. The cultural changes of the Tianqin in Longzhou County reflect a delicate balance between preserving its traditional roots and adapting to contemporary cultural dynamics. While the instrument has evolved from its religious origins to encompass a broader range of themes and performance contexts, its cultural significance remains deeply rooted in the heritage of the Zhuang people. The efforts of various stakeholders

in preserving, promoting, and innovating the Tianqin have been instrumental in shaping its cultural trajectory.

Keyword : Longzhou Tian, Making process, Playing techniques, Music cultural change



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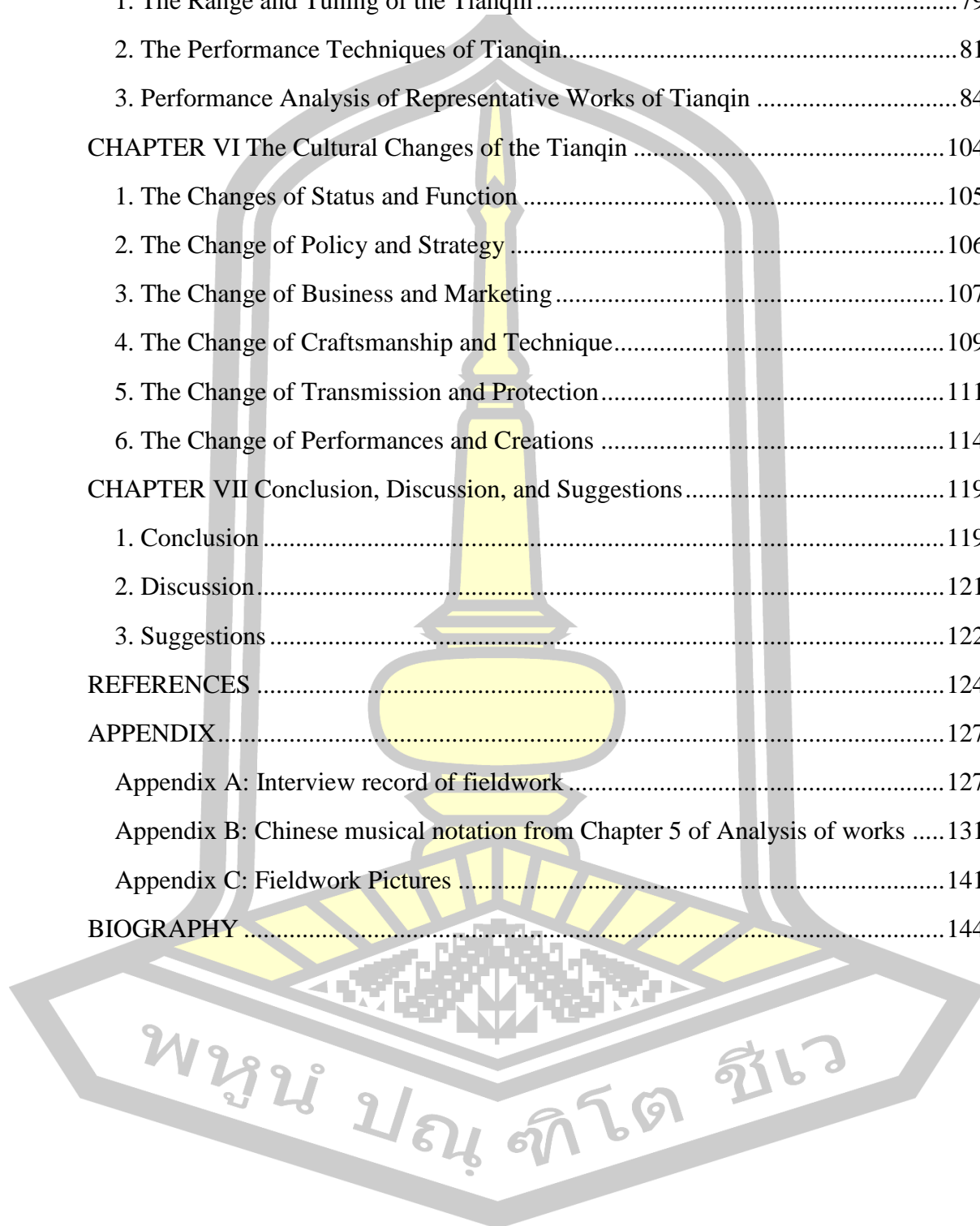
Xinyang Chen

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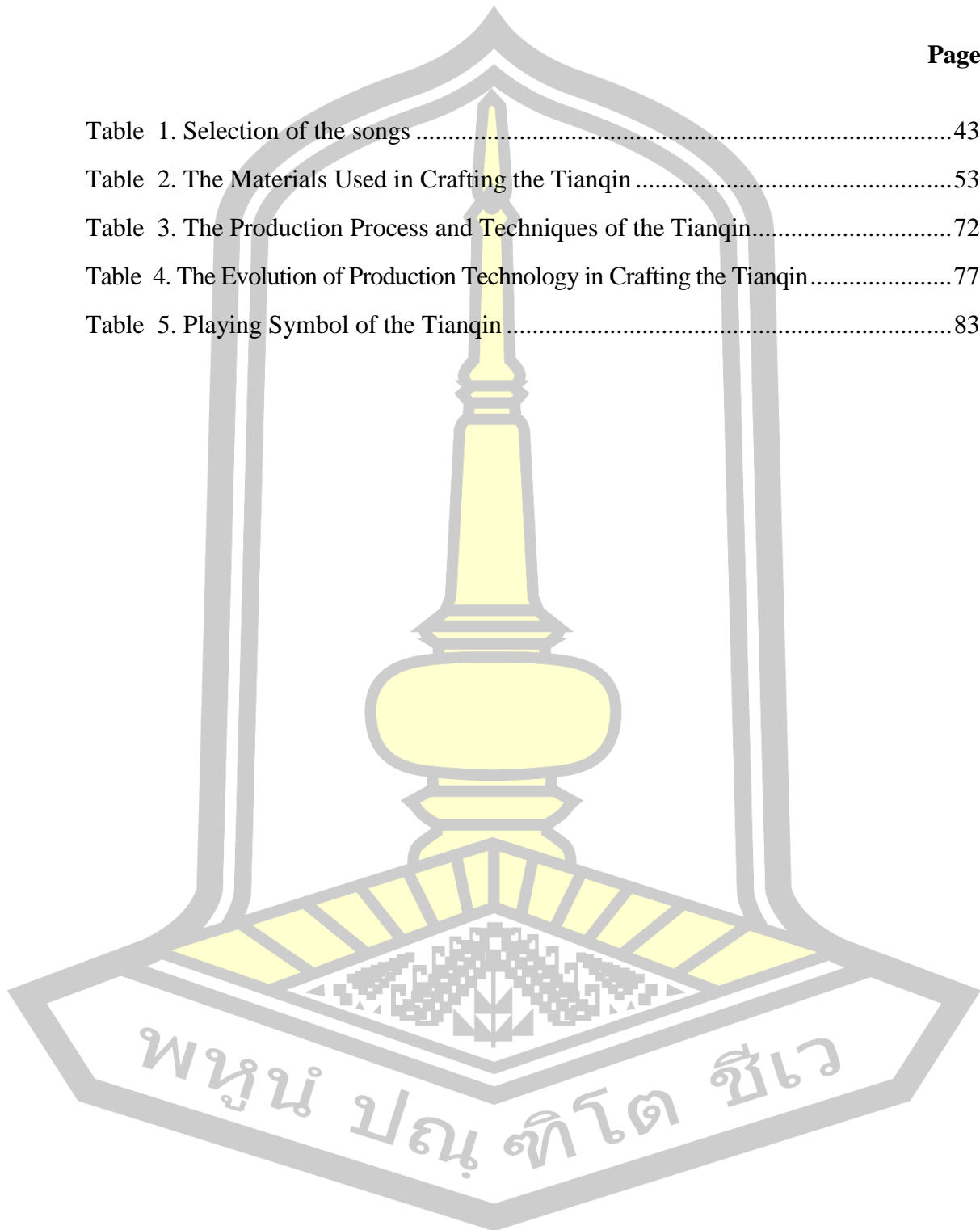


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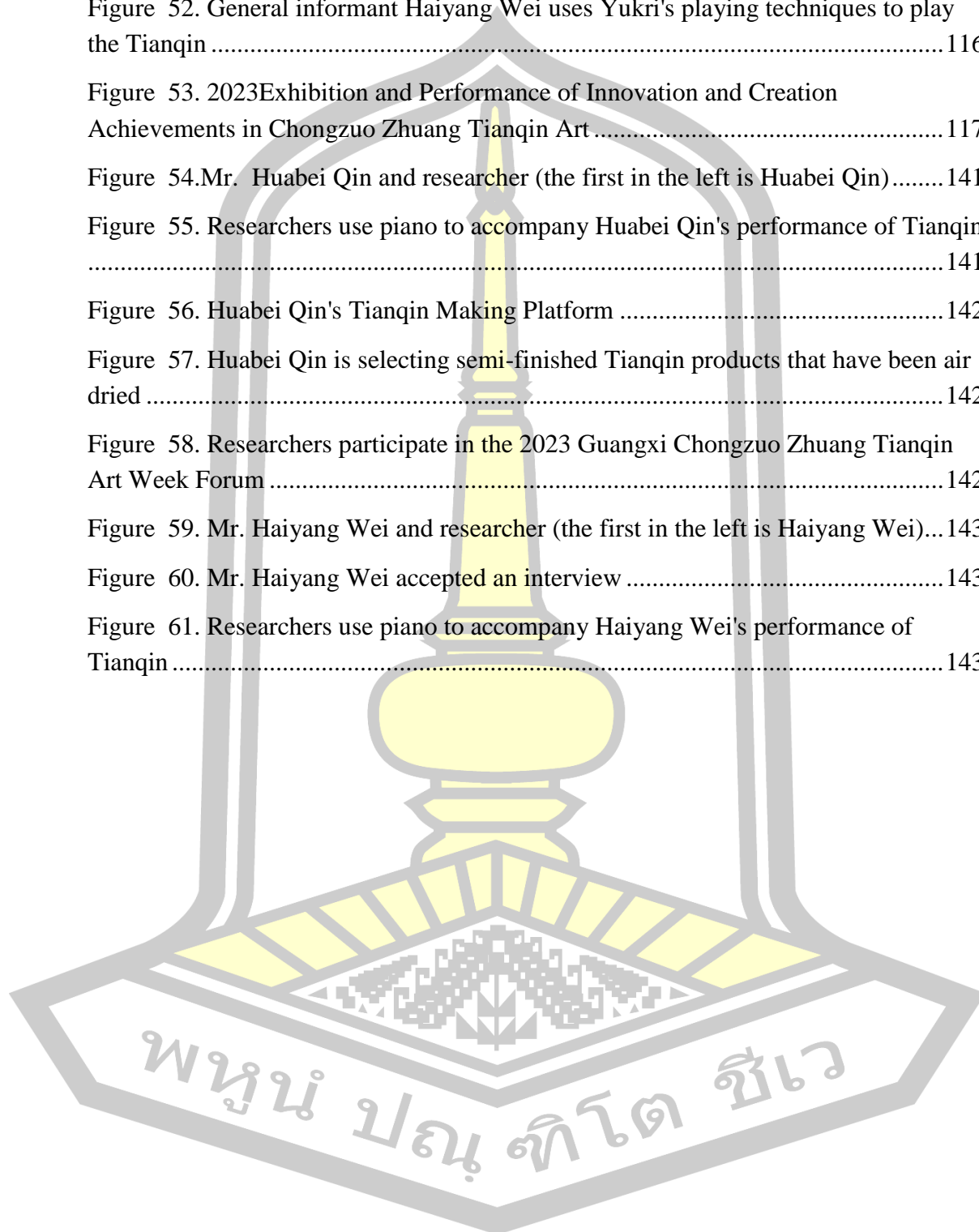


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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

### 1. Research Background

Longzhou County, under the jurisdiction of Chongzuo City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China, is located in the southwest of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 200 kilometers away from Nanning City. It is adjacent to Jiangzhou District of Chongzuo City in the east, Ningming County and Pingxiang City in the south, Daxin County in the northeast, and shares borders with Vietnam in the northwest. On December 13, 2007, after review and identification by experts from the China Folk Literature and Art Association, Longzhou County was named the "Home of Chinese Tianqin Art".

The Tianqin, an ancient plucked instrument intrinsic to the Zhuang ethnic group, stands as a quintessential symbol of the Luoyue cultural heritage. Popularly known as "Dingding" among the populace, its name derives from its connection to the historic Zhuang folk practice of "Tian." This instrument's legacy finds its stronghold in the regions of Longzhou, Pingxiang, Ningming, and Dongxing in the southwestern province of Guangxi. In a significant recognition, the Zhuang Tianqin art secured a place on the national Intangible Cultural Heritage representative project list in 2021 (Nong Ruiqun, 2023).

As an important cultural characteristic of the Zhuang nationality, the structural hierarchy of Tianqin culture includes material culture and spiritual culture. The material culture mainly refers to the Tianqin instrument itself, while the spiritual culture refers to the folk scriptures, songs, dances, folk rituals, and folk beliefs implied in them when Tianqin is used as an accompaniment, as well as the artistic forms such as Tianqin music and dance created by modern people. For the transmission and protection of Tianqin culture, the current society pays more attention to its spiritual cultural level, while the attention to its material cultural level—the transmission and protection of Tianqin musical instruments themselves—still needs to be strengthened. Tianqin is the foundation of Tianqin culture, so we need to strengthen the transmission and protection of its production skills, so that Tianqin itself can be continuously transmitted, thus

providing a carrier and foundation for the transmission of Tianqin culture. (Huang Shangmao,2020)

From December 24, 2023, to January 1, 2024, I had the privilege to participate in the 2023 Guangxi Chongzuo Zhuang Tianqin Art Week. During a week of learning and exchanges, we conducted multiple field investigations in Longzhou County and Chongzuo City, learning from folk artists and inheritors about the production and playing techniques of Longzhou Tianqin. We gained a great deal. While feeling the enormous artistic charm of Longzhou Tianqin, it also stimulated my interest in further studying and researching Longzhou Tianqin.

Unfortunately, due to the fact that Longzhou Tianqin is mostly popular in specific regions and lacks comprehensive and systematic research, it has not attracted the attention of the academic community for a long time. There are still some prominent issues in its preservation and development process. Although it has received more attention than in the past, this has not changed its current dilemma.

Although supported by the non-material cultural heritage program, the management department has taken some protective measures, such as organizing dissemination activities related to Longzhou Tianqin and offering Tianqin performance courses in some primary and secondary schools. However, there has been no substantial change in the development status of Longzhou Tianqin. This is because the development of musical instrument culture is the result of the combined efforts of many aspects, such as the transmission of creation techniques, performance skills, musical creativity, dissemination, and promotion, theoretical research, etc. The lack of any link in this cultural ecological chain will bring difficulties to the cultural dissemination of Longzhou Tianqin.

Based on the above background, this research will focus on studying the production process of Longzhou Tianqin, analyzing performance skills, studying its cultural changes, and proposing suggestions and solutions to these issues, so that Longzhou Tianqin can better inherit and develop in the future, creating more distinctive music.

## **2. Research Objectives**

2.1 To investigate the process, techniques, and materials used in the creation of the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

2.2 To analyze and describe the techniques utilized in playing the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

2.3 To analyze the cultural changes of the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

## **3. Research Questions**

3.1 What are the specific materials and techniques involved in the construction of the Tianqin, and how has this process evolved over time in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China?

3.2 What are the playing techniques used in performances of the Tianqin in Longzhou County, and how do these contribute to the unique sound and musical expression of the instrument?

3.3 How has the cultural significance of the Tianqin in Longzhou County changed over time, and what factors have influenced these changes in the context of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China?

## **4. Research Benefits**

4.1 We will know the specific materials and techniques involved in the construction of the Tianqin, and the process evolved over time in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China.

4.2 We will know the playing techniques used in performances of the Tianqin in Longzhou County, and how do these contribute to the unique sound and musical expression of the instrument.

4.3 We will know how has the cultural significance of the Tianqin in Longzhou County changed over time, and the factors have influenced these changes in the context of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China.



## 5. Research Definitions

5.1 Tianqin refers to the Chinese Folk Musical Instrument, often referred to as a plucked zither or lute. It consists of a rectangular soundboard with multiple strings stretched over bridges, which are plucked or strummed to produce musical tones.

5.2 The process refers to the step-by-step procedure followed in the construction of the Tianqin instrument. It includes the selection and preparation of materials, shaping and carving the soundboard, attaching the strings and bridges, and applying finishes or decorations.

5.3 Creation techniques refers to the creation of the Tianqin encompass the specialized skills and methods employed by artisans during the construction process. This may involve techniques such as wood carving, bending and shaping materials, stringing and tuning the instrument, and applying decorative elements.

5.4 Materials refers to the materials used in the creation of the Tianqin, including both structural and decorative components. Traditional materials may consist of specific types of wood for the soundboard and body, such as rosewood or Chinese fir.

5.5 Playing techniques refers to the specific methods employed by musicians to produce different sounds and expressions. These techniques may include plucking, strumming, bending, or sliding the strings, using various fingerpicking patterns, and employing techniques such as vibrato or harmonics.

5.6 Cultural change refers to the evolution and shifts in the instrument's role, significance, and usage within the cultural context of Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and the broader Chinese musical landscape.

## 6. Research Conceptual Framework

The analysis and description of the playing techniques; and the examination of the cultural changes surrounding this instrument. By employing qualitative research methods, including observation and interviews, and utilizing theoretical frameworks from musicology, ethnomusicology, historical musicology, and organology, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Tianqin's role and evolution within its cultural context. The research process involves the meticulous selection of sites, informants, and musical pieces, followed by data collection, analysis, and

presentation to generate insightful results that contribute to preserving and appreciating this unique musical heritage.

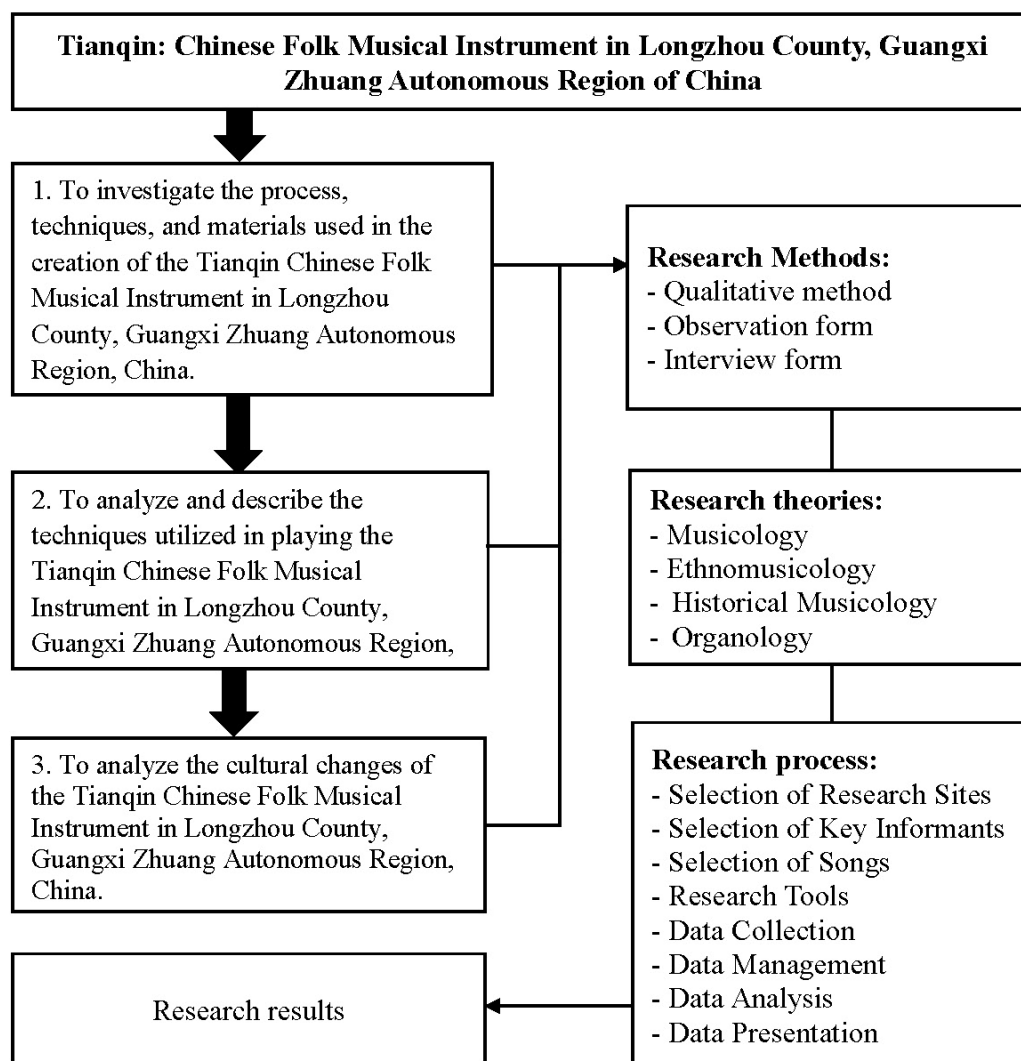


Figure 1. Research conceptual framework

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Literature Review**

In the subject about Research on Tianqin: An Exploration of a Chinese Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China. The researcher reviewed the document to obtain the most comprehensive information for this thesis. With review of various documents according to the following topics.

1. General knowledge of Longzhou County
2. General knowledge of Cultural Significance of the Tianqin
3. General knowledge of Preservation Efforts of the Tianqin
4. Research theory
5. Related research

#### **1. General knowledge of Longzhou County**

##### **1.1 Geographical position**

Longzhou County is located in the upper reaches of the Zuojiang River in the southwest corner of southern Xinjiang, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, south of the Tropic of Cancer, from  $106^{\circ} 33' 11''$  E to  $107^{\circ} 12' 43''$  E, and from  $22^{\circ} 8' 54''$  N to  $22^{\circ} 44' 42''$  N. It is adjacent to Chongzuo County to the east, Ningming County to the southeast, Pingxiang City to the south, Vietnam to the west and northwest, and Daxin County to the northeast. The area is 2311.19 square kilometers. Longzhou Town, the county seat, is 239 kilometers (highway mileage) away from Nanning City, the capital of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. (Longzhou County Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, 1993)

##### **1.2 Topographic features**

The terrain in Longzhou County is relatively high from north to south, with the Shuikou River, Lijiang River, and Zuojiang River running through the entire area, forming a low and flat valley plain. The northern region of the river is mainly characterized by karst landforms (commonly known as stone mountains), mainly consisting of peak cluster depressions, peak cluster valleys, and peak forest valleys. The direction is roughly northwest southeast, with an elevation of mostly 500 to 700 meters;

The southern region of the river is mainly composed of Tushan and karst landforms: Tushan is a Daqingshan mountain range, running in a northwest southeast direction, with its main peak at an altitude of 1045 meters. The karst landforms are mainly dominated by peak forests and valleys, with an altitude of mostly below 500 meters and relatively scattered distribution. (Longzhou County Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, 1993)

### 1.3 Climatic characteristics

Longzhou County is located south of the Tropic of Cancer and has a distinct subtropical monsoon climate with abundant heat, abundant rainfall, and sufficient sunlight. Overall, it is slightly cold in winter and spring, hot and rainy in summer, warm and cool in autumn, with distinct dry and wet seasons, with both hot and cold seasons; The annual frost free period is 350 days, with a frost period of 13 days. Due to the influence of terrain and environment, the rainfall in the county also has significant characteristics: the rainfall in mountainous areas is more than that in hilly and valley areas; The distribution of rainfall decreases from northwest to southeast, which is opposite to the decreasing trend of tropical and subtropical regions in China from south to north and from east to west; Summer rainfall accounts for more than half of the annual rainfall, making it prone to dry winters and spring droughts. The rainy season starts in mid to late April and the weather is variable. Farmers describe this climate as "childlike, with three changes in a day". Due to the influence of microclimate environment, the agricultural meteorological disasters in Longzhou mainly include low temperature rain, cold dew wind, drought, floods, strong winds, hail, frost, etc. (Longzhou County Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, 1993)

### 1.4 Natural resources

#### 1.4.1 Water resources

The surface water area in Longzhou County covers a total of 69524 acres, including 36347 acres of rivers, 2941 acres of mountain ponds, 7956 acres of reservoirs, 7653 acres of ponds, and 14627 acres of ditches. The main rivers are Shuikou River, Pinger River, Zuojiang River, Mingjiang River and Heishui River, which belong to the Pearl River basin and the Xijiang River system. The total length of the county is 178.5 kilometers, the total rainwater collection area is 35977 square kilometers, and the annual average total runoff is 73.55 billion cubic meters. There are 31 other small rivers

with a total length of 311.5 kilometers, a catchment area of 1066.8 square kilometers, a maximum flow rate of 5175 cubic meters/second, a minimum flow rate of 6.96 cubic meters/second, a total drop of 1966 meters, and an annual runoff of 439 million cubic meters. (Longzhou County Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, 1993)

#### 1.4.2 Plant resources

There are over 500 types of timber plants, 690 types of medicinal plants, accounting for 25% of the total number of such plants in Guangxi, 138 types of fiber plants, accounting for 35% of the total number of wild fiber plants in Guangxi, and 33 types of starch plants, accounting for about 30% of the total number of wild starch plants in Guangxi; 58 species of oil and wax plants, accounting for 21% of similar plants in Guangxi; There are 5 types of rubber plants, accounting for 31% of similar plants in Guangxi, 82 types of feed plants, 28% of such plants in Guangxi, and 48 types of wild fruit plants, accounting for 23% of the total number of wild fruit plants in Guangxi; 21 species of beverage plants, accounting for 37% of similar plants in Guangxi; There are 32 species of tanning plants, accounting for 23% of the total plant species in Guangxi, 16 species of lac insect host plants, accounting for 64% of the total plant species in Guangxi, 48 species of aromatic plants, accounting for 22% of the total plant species in Guangxi, 105 species of ornamental plants, 31 species of tannin extract plants, accounting for 21% of the total plant species in Guangxi. In addition, there are 21 honey source plants, 26 vegetable plants, 35 pesticide plants, 33 green fertilizer plants, 22 dye plants, and 10 resin paste plants. Among them, there are 21 species of national first level protected plants, including Concave Vein Camellia and Qingtian Tree. There are also 21 species of national second level protected plants, including Corbicula, Golden Plum, Forked Leaf Cycad, Gemu, and Bauhinia. There are also three national third level protected plants, including Xiangzinan, Yunnan Cycad, Blood Sealing Throat, and Fat Cow Tree. Listed as 51 rare and frequently endangered protected plants. (Longzhou County Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, 1993)

#### 1.4.3 Animal resources

Longzhou County is dominated by limestone mountainous areas, with numerous peaks and wide distribution of evergreen broad-leaved forests and vegetation coverage, providing good living conditions for animals. According to incomplete statistics, there are 7 orders, 20 families, 30 species of mammals, 11 orders, 25 families,

71 species of birds, 175 species of fish, 11 orders, 12 families, 39 species of arthropods, amphibians, and reptiles, and 707 species of insects in 14 orders, 101 families, among which 43 species are natural enemies of forest pests, 86 species are natural enemies of crop pests, and 29 species are mainly medicinal insects. The first class protected animals in the county include the white headed langur, the South China tiger, and the black langur; The second level protected animals in the country include the red bellied pheasant, forest musk deer, pangolin, and crested hornbill, while the third level protected animals in the country include owls, gray magpies, red bellied golden pheasants, monkey monkeys, pythons (southern snakes), silver pheasants, large civet cats, small civet cats, and sumen antelopes. (Longzhou County Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, 1993)

#### 1.4.4 Mineral resources

Metal mines in Longzhou County include copper, iron, manganese, lead, zinc, titanium, and rare minerals such as yttrium, gadolinium, neodymium, and lanthanum. Non metallic minerals include pyroxene, coal, sulfur, marble, cinnabar, gypsum, crystal, phosphate rock, limestone, and clay. (Longzhou County Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, 1993)

#### 1.4.5 Scenic spots

There are 9 famous scenic spots in Longzhou County, including Longgang National Nature Reserve, Xiaoliancheng Scenic Area, Paomadong Scenic Area, Dushan Scenic Area, former site of the French Consulate in Longzhou, Longzhou Uprising Memorial Hall, Ho Chi Minh Exhibition Hall, Longzhou Iron Bridge Obstruction War Site, and former site of the Red Eighth Army Headquarters Scenic Area. (龙州县\_百度百科 (baidu.com))

### 1.5 Folk Culture

#### 1.5.1 Fubo Birthday Ceremony

The Longzhou Fubo Birthday Ceremony originated from the local people's gratitude and worship for the protection of the country and the people by the Eastern Han Fubo General Ma Yuan. The "Ancient Fortress Ancestral Hall" in Longzhou may have been built during the Song Dynasty, and the Fubo Festival activities should be synchronized with the temple construction time. Later, people gradually deified



General Fubo, and the heroes of Nanjing's pacification were revered as the great deity of blessings and disaster relief. As a result, the Fubo commemoration activity was elevated to a religious ritual and has been passed down to this day. In 2017, it was included in the list of intangible cultural heritage protection in Chongzuo City. ([www.longzhou.gov.cn](http://www.longzhou.gov.cn))

#### 1.5.2 Golden Dragon Brocade

Longzhou Golden Dragon Brocade is one of the four major Ming brocades in China. Zhuang brocade originated in the Qin and Han dynasties, formed in the Tang and Song dynasties, and flourished during the Ming and Qing dynasties. At the beginning of the Han Dynasty, Jinlong belonged to the southern Guangdong region. Since ancient times, there has been a custom of planting mulberry and raising silkworms, using silkworms to weave brocade, and using brocade as a cover as a dowry. It originated from the belief in the ancient Chinese myth of "empty mulberry giving birth to humans", which gave the mulberry the image of a tree of life and fertility, and placed great hopes on children for reproduction and inheritance. In 2017, it was listed as a representative project protection list for intangible cultural heritage in Chongzuo City. ([www.longzhou.gov.cn](http://www.longzhou.gov.cn))

#### 1.5.3 Tianqin

The Tianqin, which has been sung for over a thousand years, is an important component of Luo Yue culture. As a plucked stringed musical instrument, the biggest feature of the Tianqin is that the performer holds the Tianqin in their hands, shakes the bell with their feet, and sings while playing. Its performance form is only one example in the performance of Chinese ethnic instruments. In December 2007, Longzhou was awarded the title of "Hometown of Chinese Tianqin Art" by the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and the China Folk Literature and Art Association. With the Tianqin, Longzhou was awarded the title of "China Folk Cultural Heritage Tourism Demonstration Zone" in April 2008. ([www.longzhou.gov.cn](http://www.longzhou.gov.cn))

#### 1.6 City history

Longzhou, formerly known as Baiyue Spring and Autumn Period. Qin Dynasty belongs to Xiangjun. At the beginning of the Han Dynasty, it belonged to Nanyue Kingdom (Guangdong). In the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Yuanding of the Han Dynasty (111BC), it belonged to Yulin Commandery. In the sixth year of Wu Huangwu

of the Three Kingdoms Period (227 years), it belonged to Yulin Commandery of Jiaozhou. The Jin Dynasty belonged to Jinxing County in Guangzhou. The Northern and Southern dynasties belonged to Jinxing County of Southern Dingzhou. The Sui Dynasty belonged to Yulin Commandery of Yangzhou. In the second year of the Tang Dynasty (713), Jimi Longzhou was set up (the prefecture office is located in Jiuzhou Village, Guyang Village, Zhubu Township today), which is under the jurisdiction of Yulin Commandery, Guangzhou. According to legend, the name of the state is named after the spring named "Longquan" at the foot of Shuiling Mountain in Shanglong Township, which is the beginning of the county's name. In the first year of Tang Yifeng (676 AD), Jimi Jinlong Prefecture was established in present-day Jinlong Township, belonging to the Lingnan Dao'an Nandu Protectorate. In the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907-959), Longzhou was first under the jurisdiction of Chu, and then under the jurisdiction of Yizhou in the Southern Han Dynasty. The prefecture governance was moved to the north gate of today's Longzhou Town. In the early Song Dynasty, Jimi Longzhou was re established, and the state government was relocated to the north gate of Longzhou City. In addition, Jimi frozen states were established in the underground freezing and layout area of the current county, all under the jurisdiction of Zuojiang Road on Guangnan West Road (later renamed Guangxi Road). The original Jimi Jinlongzhou was renamed Qianlongzhai, under the jurisdiction of Wukao. In the fifth year of the Huangyou reign (1053), the court implemented the rule of local officials over Longzhou, which was the beginning of the inheritance of the Longzhou chieftain and still belonged to Zuojiang Road. In the third year of Dade in the Yuan Dynasty (1299), Longzhou was upgraded to Wanhua Mansion, and the government was moved to the current Longzhou City, which belongs to Taiping Road, Ryanggang Province, Zhongshu Sheng Province, Hubei Province. The Jimi Frozen Prefecture was divided into two prefectures, Shangdong and Xiadong. In the 20th year of the Zhizheng era (1360), they were collectively referred to as Shangxia Frozen Prefecture and were under the jurisdiction of Wanhua Prefecture in Longzhou, still under the jurisdiction of Taiping Road. In the second year of the Hongwu reign of the Ming Dynasty (1369), Longzhou Wanhua Prefecture was abolished and renamed Longzhou. Due to the old situation, the upper and lower frozen prefectures were under the jurisdiction of the Taiping Prefecture on Zuojiang Road under the Guangxi Provincial Government. In the ninth year (1376),



it was relocated to Longzhai and renamed Jinlongdong, under the jurisdiction of Anping Tuzhou, Taiping Prefecture. In the early Qing Dynasty, the Ming Dynasty implemented the system. In the third year of Yongzheng (1725), Longzhou was divided into two local inspection departments, Shanglong and Xialong, under the jurisdiction of Taiping Prefecture. In the fifth year (1727), the Xialong Division was reorganized into a traditional system, abolishing the hereditary system, and was transferred to the Taiping Prefecture to be transferred to Longzhou City. Shanglongsi was still under the jurisdiction of the Taiping Prefecture due to its original system. In the 56th year of the Qianlong reign (1791), Longzhou was reestablished in the area of Xialong Division, under the jurisdiction of Taiping Prefecture, while Shanglong Division was under the jurisdiction of Longzhou for review. In the 57th year (1792), Longzhou was renamed as the Longzhou Department and still belonged to the Taiping Prefecture. Jinlongdong was annexed by Vietnam in the late years of Jiaqing and returned to Lower Langzhou in Vietnam. In the 13th year of the Guangxu reign (1887), Guangxi Province was transferred from Taiping to Longzhou. In the same year, Jinlong Cave returned to China and remained under the jurisdiction of Anping Prefecture, Taiping Prefecture. In the 33rd year of the Guangxu reign (1907), the Shanglong Tusi, the Upper and Lower Permafrost Regions, abolished their hereditary system and belonged to the Longzhou Department. In the first year of Xuantong (1909), Jinlongdong was transferred from Anping Prefecture to the jurisdiction of Longzhou Department. In January of the first year of the Republic of China (1912), in accordance with the Provisional Regulations of Guangxi Local Officials established by the Guangxi Military Government, the Longzhou Department was upgraded to the Longzhou Military and Political Branch, with jurisdiction over Pingxiang Department, Shanglong Tusi, Shangxia Frozen Soil Prefecture, and Jinlong Cave. In June of the second year of the Republic of China (1913), the disarmament sub government was set up in Longzhou County, still governing Shanglong Chieftain, Shangxia Frozen Earth Prefecture and Jinlong Cave, and was under the supervision of Zhennan. Pingxiang Hall belongs to Yuanzhi. In 1913, it belonged to Zhennan Road. In 1914, it was changed to the 16th year of the Republic of China (1927), and the land was changed to flow back, and the upper and lower permafrost states were incorporated into Longzhou County. In the 17th year of the Republic of China (1928), Shanglong Tusi and Jinlong Cave were merged into Shangjin

County. Li Zhen Nan Inspectorate District (located in Longzhou). On February 1 of the 19th year of the Republic of China (1930), the CPC led the Longzhou Uprising, and the two counties established revolutionary committees. By March 20, the Eighth Red Army had withdrawn from Longzhou, under the jurisdiction of Zuojiang Revolutionary Committee. In September of that year, the Guangxi Provincial Government announced the amendment of the Provisional Regulations on the Organization of Guangxi People's League, establishing the Ninth People's League District in Longzhou, with Longzhou and Shangjin counties under the jurisdiction of the Ninth People's League District. In April 1932, it belonged to the Mintuan Longzhou District. In 1934, it belonged to the Longzhou Administrative Supervision District. In April of the 26th year of the Republic of China (1937), Longzhou County was renamed Longjin County. Longjin County and Shangjin County are under the jurisdiction of the 12th Administrative Supervision District and later renamed as the Seventh Administrative Inspector's Office. ([www.longzhou.gov.cn](http://www.longzhou.gov.cn))

In the early days of liberation, the names of Longjin and Shangjin counties remained unchanged and were under the jurisdiction of the Longzhou Commissioner's Office of the Guangxi Provincial People's Government. On May 5, 1951, the two counties merged into Longjin and Shangjin United County, with the county seat located in Longzhou City. In August 1952, the county was renamed Lijiang County, under the jurisdiction of Chongzuo Special District. On April 23, 1953, with the approval of the State Council, the name of Lijiang County was renamed Longjin County due to the same name as Lijiang County in Yunnan Province, belonging to the Yongning Special Zone of Guangxi Province. In December of the same year, it was under the jurisdiction of Yongning Special District of Guixi Tong Autonomous Region. In early 1953, it was under the jurisdiction of Guixi Tong Autonomous Region. In early 1956, it was under the jurisdiction of Guixi Tong Autonomous Prefecture. In January 1958, it belonged to the Nanning Special Administration of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (formerly renamed as Zhuang). In December of the same year, Longjin, Ningming, and Pingxiang counties (cities) merged to form Munan County, which governed Pingxiang City. In January 1959, it was renamed Longzhou County. In May, the county was abolished and merged, and the original organs of Longjin County were relocated back to Longzhou, still known as Longjin County and under the jurisdiction of Nanning Special

Administration. On May 27, 1961, with the approval of the State Council, Longjin County was renamed Longzhou County. On December 31, 1961, it was officially renamed as Longzhou County and still belongs to Nanning. On December 28, 2002, Nanning was abolished and Chongzuo City was established. Longzhou County has been under the jurisdiction of Chongzuo City since then. On December 21, 2021, it was announced by the People's Government of Guangxi as a land border port city in Guangxi. ([www.longzhou.gov.cn](http://www.longzhou.gov.cn))

In summary, we have gained a more comprehensive understanding of Longzhou County through its geographical location, climate characteristics, natural resources (including water resources, soil resources, plant resources, animal resources, mineral resources, scenic spots), folk culture, and urban history. Due to its geographical environment and historical conditions, its development exhibits characteristics such as richness and openness. Due to the influence of border culture and the location in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, which has the largest population of Zhuang people, a local culture characterized by "Zhuang" has been formed, with multiple cultures developing together. The long-term integration, mutual influence, and absorption of multiple cultures have formed the "diverse and unified" ethnic and local traditional culture of Longzhou County.

## **2. General knowledge of Cultural Significance of the Tianqin**

### **2.1 The cultural significance of the Tianqin in Longzhou County**

Longzhou County, Guangxi, which is located in the important border town in the southern border of the motherland, is a sacred place where Comrade Deng Xiaoping fought and a revolutionary resort in Zuojiang under the leadership of the CPC. There are tourism resources such as the "Great Wall of Southern Xinjiang" Xiaolian City, the Red Army Memorial Hall, Zhongshan Park, the former site of the French Consulate, Huashan Murals, Zixia Cave, and Chen Yonglie Temple, known as the "border town" and "Little Hong Kong". The natural scenery within the territory is beautiful, the geological landscape is unique, there are numerous scenic spots and historical sites, and the cultural heritage is profound. Longzhou's most famous Tianqin culture is renowned both domestically and internationally. The Tianqin women's playing and singing group has performed in Beijing 6 times, participated in various major events and competitions

both inside and outside the region 31 times, and performed in Hong Kong and Macao 4 times. In 2006, he was selected for the Guangxi program "Night in Salzburg, Austria". In June, he was also invited to participate in the "Earth Flying Song - European Tour" organized by CCTV to perform in Europe and America. On December 22, 2010, Longzhou Tianqin Art Troupe became the only unit in Guangxi that won the honorary title of "exemplary organization of National County level Art Troupe and Private Art Performance Troupe". Longzhou Tianqin, a cultural treasure of the Zhuang ethnic group that has been dormant for over 2000 years, has traveled through time and space from the "Southeast Asian style night" to the "Sino Austrian Salzburg night", shining brightly, leaving Guangxi and heading towards the world. Tianqin culture has become a distinctive and beautiful business card of Longzhou. How to accelerate the development of Tianqin cultural tourism, explore the cultural heritage of Tianqin, promote the integration and development of Tianqin culture with border culture, ASEAN culture, historical culture, revolutionary culture, etc., create a Longzhou Tianqin cultural tourism brand, fully utilize the advantages of the forefront location of the China ASEAN Free Trade Zone, the former site of the Red Eighth Army Headquarters, and the unique advantages of the Zuojiang Revolutionary Old Area, and promote the sound and rapid development of the Tianqin industry and tourism industry, Promoting and accelerating the new leap of "enriching the people and revitalizing the border, strengthening the county through trade and industry", and turning Longzhou into a famous land ASEAN business port, industrial and tourism city, has become a major issue that Longzhou urgently needs to solve. (Lin Zhongwei, 2013)

The Tianqin culture has brought a strong sense of sanctity and participation to the vast number of border residents. The Jinlong Budai people have several mass gatherings throughout the year, among which the largest, most lively, and grand is the "Nongdong Festival" held on January 11th every year to worship ancestors and heaven. Starting from the eighth day of the first lunar month and continuing until the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, the eighth to fourteenth days are villages within the border of China, and the fifteenth day of the first lunar month is in Xialang County, Gaoping Province, Vietnam. Staggered festivals are celebrated in order to bring people from both China and Vietnam together, exchange information, engage in trade, visit family and friends, and connect with each other. Firecracker snatching is the most interesting game

in the Nongdong Festival. According to Tan Shaoping, an elderly person from Hengluo Village, this event was held every year during the Nongdong Festival before 1958. In 1946, it was the villagers of Xialang County, Vietnam who grabbed the fireworks. However, due to the relatively distant distance between the two villages, the villagers of Hengluo had good wine and good food, and they had a pleasant conversation with the Vietnamese villagers. The next day, someone was specially sent to help the Vietnamese villagers send the gifts back.

From the above examples, it can be seen that when Tianqin is used as a diplomatic medium for neighboring countries Vietnam, the subject of public diplomacy has diversity, which is more reflected in the interaction and exchanges between the people of China and Vietnam. The government bears the responsibility of assisting and supporting, gradually increasing the recognition and favor of Tianqin among the people of both countries, and narrowing the distance between hearts and minds. (Jiang Da,2020)

The Tianqin culture reflects the worship of nature by the Zhuang ancestors, and the Tianqin music reflects the artistic thinking formed by the Zhuang ancestors through their long years of understanding, respecting, and transforming nature. In the past, science and productivity were backward, and people were unable to explain natural phenomena with science. At the same time, they believed that nothing happened for no reason. In their interaction with nature and tracing the origin of natural phenomena, the ancestors of the Zhuang ethnic group believed that all things had spirits, resulting in worship and reverence for nature, which is "heaven". The belief in "heaven" among the ancestors of the Zhuang ethnic group is reflected in various aspects of their lives. (He Xingsha,2021)

The worship of "heaven" by the ancestors of the Zhuang ethnic group originated from their reverence for "heaven", and in this reverence, faith emerged. They also expressed their reverence and faith through relevant ceremonies. The operator of the Tianqin ritual activity, Tianpo, uses the Tianqin to carry out rituals such as marriage, childbirth, praying for blessings, treating illnesses, eliminating disasters, exorcism, and entertainment. For example, the ancestors of the Zhuang ethnic group believed that carrying out the "making heaven" ceremony could pray for disaster relief. In the first and second months of the lunar calendar, people would invite Tianpo to hold the



"making heaven" prayer activity; In life, if things go wrong or elderly people celebrate their birthday, they will also "do things like heaven". The Tianqin ritual activity essentially involves people praying for nature and blessing their wishes to be fulfilled. The Tianqin culture originally belonged to the "witch" culture, which was intended to pray for blessings and alleviate disasters. However, after thousands of years of historical accumulation, it gradually formed various functions such as psychological comfort, social entertainment, cultural inheritance, ethnic identity, and border harmony. (Huang Binxiang,2014)

As a magic instrument of the local Ethnic religion, Tianqin directly participates in various religious ceremonies of the local ethnic groups, and almost covers all aspects of the local ethnic groups' life, still playing an important ritual role in the local ethnic groups. The religious activities of Tianqin playing and singing include: seeking services, seeking flowers and flowers, weddings, sacrifices, baby full moon, crossing bridges, birthdays, getting on the beam, picking up the bride, entering the new house, arranging for the dragon, dedicating to the precepts, offering offerings to the Jade Emperor, bringing flowers into the house, and exorcising evil spirits, sending fire ghosts, sending faint gods, driving out chicken ghosts, and closing villages and villages. These become the protection and development models of Tianqin among the people, and these rituals are also the recognition of the entire ethnic group towards its traditional culture. (Yang Yanbing,2020)

The Zhuang ethnic group has a long history of development and has created outstanding music culture in the flood of history. These cultures are closely related to Tianqin, which not only has an impact on the daily life of the Zhuang people, but also exhibits a strong religious color; Tianqin can be used as a accompaniment for songs and dances, as well as for solo performances. It is also a magical tool used by the ancestors of the Zhuang ethnic group to entertain gods and divine beings, resulting in the formation of witchcraft music mainly based on Tianqin. The core of this type of sorcery and music culture is that the Zhuang people hope to strengthen contact and communication through the Tianqin, and make beautiful wishes for happiness, peace, and abundant grain; In addition, Tianqin culture originates from production and life, and has become a link and bridge to maintain the spirit of the Zhuang people. It constantly interacts and inherits modern Zhuang people with their ancestors. The

Tianqin culture constructs life etiquette for the Zhuang ethnic group, continuously conveying richer spiritual nutrients, and constructing a unique local order in Guangxi. (Li Xuchang, 2021)

## 2.2 Cultural and historical context of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and its influence on the use and perception of the Tianqin

Tianqin is widely used in Human settlement of Zhuang nationality in Guangxi, covering all aspects of social life, which also makes the use occasions of Tianqin have strong nationality. For example, folk sacrifices. Tianqin has a close relationship with folk sacrifices, and folk sacrifices are the source of Tianqin. To this day, there are still Tianqin performances in folk sacrifices of the Zhuang ethnic group in Guangxi. For example, folk activities. In the long-term development process, the Zhuang people of Guangxi have created prosperous and splendid folk culture. Various folk activities, such as wedding and funeral activities, are carriers of Guangxi Zhuang ethnic folk culture, and the Tianqin is an indispensable element in folk activities. In addition, ethnic festivals are also common occasions for using the Tianqin. For example, Nongdong Festival is a special festival of Changyi Zhuang in Jinlong Town, Chongzuo City, Guangxi. During the festival, the Zhuang people will worship the gods and pray for good weather, while young men and women also take this opportunity to sing love songs and find partners. The Tianqin performance runs through the entire Nongdong Festival. (Liang Yi,2023)

Tianqin has only been circulating in the border areas between Guangxi and Vietnam for a long time and is not known to the outside world. Until the 1980s, Mr. Fan Ximu, a famous Chinese ethnomusicologist, went to Longzhou County, Guangxi to collect folk songs and found that the local ritual activity operators of dragon boats used a kind of ritual instrument with unique shape and clear and mellow tone. The local people called the ritual instrument "Ding Ding", and some regions called it "Ding Ding", "Ding Ding", "Ding Deng", etc. According to relevant records, these names mainly come from the timbre emitted when playing the Tianqin, which is a simulation of the sound of the Tianqin. Later, through the cooperation of musicians and local craftsmen in Longzhou County, it was gradually transformed into a musical instrument that can be played on the stage, that is, the Tianqin we see now. (He Xingsha,2019)

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### 2.3 The influence of Sino-Vietnamese cultural exchanges on the Tianqin and its role in promoting cultural connections between China and Vietnam.

Tian "is a folk deity commonly believed by the Zhuang and Dai ethnic groups in China, the Dai, Nong, and Thai ethnic groups in Vietnam, as well as some ethnic groups such as Laos and Thailand. The village of Xialang in Vietnam, adjacent to Jinlong, also has a revered deity called "then", where people perform lyre playing, singing, and ritual processes in various important occasions such as weddings and funerals. During the investigation, it was found that the Tianqin masters who presided over the Tianqin ceremony were mainly concentrated in villages inhabited by the Budai branch of the Zhuang ethnic group, such as Banchi, Banyan, Bansong, and Qizhutun in Jinlong Town. The village of Henglou in Jinlong Town, Longzhou is closely connected to Vietnam. Among the 20 apprentices led by master Shen Guangyu, who played the Tianqin, 9 were Vietnamese. With the increasing influence of Tianqin culture, master Li Shaowei from Banchi Village in Jinlong also recruited 6 Vietnamese apprentices. Master Shen Guangyu is often invited by his Vietnamese disciples to do things in Vietnam. In addition to the Vietnamese villages and towns adjacent to Golden Dragon, he also goes as far as Ho Chi Minh City in southern Southern Vietnam. Vietnamese



disciples often come to China to invite renowned masters to enhance their reputation through their teachings. Chinese villages also invite Vietnamese lyre masters to assist in traditional festivals and major occasions such as the Nongdong Festival's prayer ceremony or mage upgrading. The melodious sound of the Tianqin master playing the Tianqin and the nimble figure of the singing ceremony constantly appear in the mountains and rivers, fields, and houses along the Sino Vietnamese border. Over time, they continue to grow and become a divine force to bless production, protect life, and embody spirit. It can be said that the Tianqin culture shared across borders between the Chinese Zhuang ethnic group and neighboring countries such as Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand is a cultural space constructed by the production, life, and cross-border interaction of border ethnic groups. (Huang Ling,2020)

In the past fifteen years, the main characteristics of the research on the music and culture of the Sino Vietnamese Tianqin are as follows: firstly, the research object content has been continuously expanded, and the early research on the music and culture of the Sino Vietnamese Tianqin mainly focused on the comparison of the main body of the Tianqin instrument. Later, with the continuous deepening of research, the research content gradually expanded to include the usage occasions, functions, culture, and culture of the Tianqin instrument group. Secondly, research on the culture of Tianqin music mostly focuses on its ethnic culture, while research on the essence of music is rare. In published works, there are few scores related to Tianqin music, and the collection, notation, and organization of Tianqin music are also areas that need to be focused on in the future. Third, there are few research results on music culture of Tianqin from the perspective of the Internet, but emerging platforms such as Tiktok and Kwai affect all aspects of people's lives. We need to explore the impact of this new social media platform on the development of music culture of Tianqin. In a word, we believe that in the context of the in-depth implementation of the "the Belt and Road" initiative, with the continuous deepening of the research on cross-border ethnic cultures, the music and cultural achievements of China and Vietnam will be more presented. (Li Yanan,2021)

Tianqin culture presents an active and dynamic process in both vertical transmission and horizontal transmission, which includes not only the memory and selection of ethnic traditions, but also the reflection and refraction of cultural context.

If we say that Tianqin culture is the national heritage of the Budai branch of the Zhuang nationality, after the establishment of the border of the nation state, as the Intangible cultural heritage shared by cross-border ethnic groups, it has become a cultural symbol and emotional bond for harmonious border areas and border people. The Tianqin culture is rooted in the local area and interacts with each other across borders. It is created and nurtured by the Budai branch of the Zhuang ethnic group living across borders between China and Vietnam through imagination and practice, and continuously innovated and reconstructed through generations of inheritance, forming its internal generative texture and growth mechanism. (Huang Ling,2020)

In summary, by examining the cultural significance of Tianqin in Longzhou County, the cultural and historical context of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and its impact on the use and cognition of Tianqin, the impact of Sino Vietnamese cultural exchange on Tianqin, and its role in promoting cultural connections between China and Vietnam, these three aspects are examined. We have gained a clearer understanding of the cultural significance and socio-cultural context of Tianqin.

### **3. General knowledge of Preservation Efforts of the Tianqin**

3.1 Literature on initiatives aimed at documenting and preserving the Tianqin tradition in Longzhou County and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

In the folk art census conducted in the 1980s, Tianqin was included as a Zhuang folk instrument in the "Dictionary of Chinese Ethnic Minority Art" and became a member of the Chinese folk instrument family. In 2003, Longzhou established a research group on exploring ethnic cultural resources, inviting ethnic musicians from both inside and outside Guangxi to focus on deeper exploration and organization of Tianqin, a folk art with rich ethnic characteristics. The experts of the research group started with the ancient instrument "Tianqin", which is rich in Zhuang ethnic characteristics. Through processing, organizing, refining, and innovating, they have made multiple improvements. At the same time, the Tianqin music was also organized and refined, creating Tianqin playing and singing songs with beautiful melodies, strong national style, full of contemporary atmosphere, and easy to pass on. In 2003, the performance of the "Tianqin Women's Playing and Singing Group" at the Southeast Asian Style Night of the Nanning International Folk Song Festival showcased the

unique ethnic art of the Zhuang ethnic group in Longzhou to the general audience, becoming a major highlight of the Nanning International Folk Song Festival and attracting much attention. After the establishment of the "Longzhou Tianqin Women's Playing and Singing Group", it has been invited to record programs on Beijing Central Television 6 times, participated in the opening ceremonies of the "2006 Beijing Guangxi Cultural Week" and "Tourism Carnival", participated in various literary and artistic activities such as the "Bauhinia Dragon Love in Guangdong" celebration of the 10th anniversary of Hong Kong's return held at the Zhongshan Memorial Hall, and went to Salzburg, Austria, Munich, Germany, and Vietnam for performances, which are highly favored by audiences from all over the world. In January 2007, Longzhou Tianqin Art was included in the first batch of intangible cultural heritage list in Guangxi; In May 2007, Longzhou Tianqin production artist Qin Huabei was selected as one of the first batch of "Outstanding Inheritors of Chinese Folk Culture"; On December 13, 2007, the China Federation of Literary and Artistic Circles and the China Folk Literature and Art Association awarded Longzhou County the title of "Hometown of Chinese Tianqin Art". In April 2008, the Longzhou "Tianqin Women's Playing and Singing Group" participated in the competition of the original ecology group at the 13th CCTV Youth Singer TV Grand Prix, showcasing its unique artistic charm and successfully entered the finals. On April 25, 2008, Longzhou was awarded the title of the second batch of "China Folk Cultural Heritage Tourism Demonstration Zone" in China for its Tianqin Cultural Heritage. The art of Longzhou Tianqin, with its unique style and charm formed by its rich ethnic cultural characteristics, has had a wide influence at home and abroad. (He Mingzhi, 2010)

At present, local government departments in Guangxi attach great importance to the protection and development of the Tianqin culture, actively promote the Tianqin culture to be included in the protection list of Intangible cultural heritage at the autonomous region level, and carry out the census and rescue of the Tianqin cultural heritage. In addition, local government departments are actively combining the protection and development of Tianqin culture, investing a large amount of funds to support the development of the Tianqin cultural industry. Through overall planning and management, and efforts to change the blind, amateur, and disorderly development state of Tianqin culture in the past, the Tianqin cultural industry is promoted to scale,

standardization, and scientificity. For example, the government increases funding investment, actively promotes Tianqin art products to both domestic and international markets, and increases its popularity, Build a competitive Tianqin cultural brand and promote the rapid development of Tianqin related cultural industries. For example, since 2003, the government of Longzhou County in Guangxi has allocated tens of millions of yuan to support the protection and development of Tianqin culture, including the construction of Tianqin cultural venues, the training of Tianqin industry practitioners, the training of Tianqin culture and art reserve talents, and the introduction of Tianqin culture and art into local primary and secondary school classrooms; Holding Tianqin Culture and Art Festival, shooting Tianqin themed movies, and supporting performance teams to perform in other places have increased the popularity of Tianqin. (He Xingsha,2021)

In 2019, Longzhou County, Chongzuo City, Guangxi, applied to be included in the fifth batch of national Intangible cultural heritage protection list under the name of "Zhuang Tianqin Art"; In December 2019, Vietnam applied for approval to be included in the list of representative works of Intangible cultural heritage of mankind with the "Tianqin culture of the Tày people, Nong and Tai nationalities in Vietnam". (Wei Zhenni,2020)

3.2 The impact of cultural policy, educational programs, and community engagement in safeguarding the Tianqin and its associated practices.

After the normalization of relations between China and Vietnam in the 1990s, national and local governments successively carried out cross-border interactions of the Chinese Vietnamese Tianqin culture, and civil exchanges became more frequent and close. In November 2003, the "Southeast Asian Style Night" of the Nanning International Folk Song Art Festival marked the historic moment when Tianqin entered the world stage of ethnic art. The Tianqin women's playing and singing team from Jinlong, Longzhou, China, played "Singing Heavenly Ballad", and the Tianqin women's playing and singing group from Liao people in northern Northern Vietnam also performed "Singing Heavenly Ballad · Yuebei". China and Vietnam Tianqin performed on the same stage, producing a shocking effect of beauty, beauty and common beauty. Afterwards, the Longzhou women's Tianqin playing and singing group often went to various parts of Vietnam for performances and exchanges. As a port city near

Longzhou, Pingxiang has always had close business contacts with Vietnam. Since 2008, Pingxiang has held the Sino Vietnamese folk song contest and the Tianqin performance every year in Jiudu on the first day of the first month, inviting Lạng Son province Province and Tongdeng City of Vietnam to participate. So far, it has held eleven sessions. These cross-border exchanges have built cross-border interactive intangible cultural heritage communities with Tianqin culture as the main focus, cultivating a good cultural space for the exchange, inheritance, and innovation of Tianqin culture between China and Vietnam. Today, in the context of the living inheritance of Intangible cultural heritage, the Tianqin culture has been restored and developed, moving from ritual to life. Every year in Jinlong District, Longzhou, in the Spring Festival, Gepo Festival, Kunna Festival, Changxin Festival and other traditional festivals, Chinese and Vietnamese border people often visit relatives and friends, sing folk songs and other folk exchanges, and Tianqin frequently appears. Under the external influence of national guidance, local support, and academic research, Zhuang villages in the Jinlong region have also formed folk consciousness, and the Tianqin culture has formed a brand. In addition to traditional ritual interaction, master apprentice inheritance and other ways, transnational cultural exchanges based on art performances and skills transfer have also attracted people of all ethnic groups in China, Laos, Thailand and other countries to experience and learn, expanding the depth of communication and interaction of Tianqin culture as a cross-border Intangible cultural heritage. (Huang Ling,2020)

In 2007, Tianqin was listed as a district level Intangible cultural heritage, which attracted many experts, scholars and folk artists. Many Zhuang folk songs were recorded, sorted and processed in a standardized way, so that the melody of the music is more in line with the public aesthetic, more easily accepted and loved by the public, and the playing skills of Tianqin are increasingly standardized. Under the impact of the times, the Zhuang people in Longzhou County are becoming more and more Chinese, which has driven the Longzhou County Party Committee and the County Government to include the playing and singing of the Tianqin in the art training programs of primary and secondary schools in Longzhou County. This measure has increased the new generation of young people's sense of national self-identity of the Zhuang people, and



opened up a new path for the inheritance and protection of the Tianqin art. (Chen Xiang,2017)

With the rise of tourism in Chongzuo City, Chongzuo City, as the host city of the 2022 Guangxi Cultural Tourism Development Conference, has actively integrated the elements of Tianqin and its playing and singing performances into the promotional videos and literary performances of the conference. In addition, in 2023, Chongzuo organized the opening ceremony of China Vietnam International Border "Spring Dragon Festival", the cultural tourism promotion conference of "Magnificent Border Charm Chongzuo", the Yuanxiao (Filled round balls made of glutinous rice-flour for Lantern Festival) Evening Party with the theme of "Culture into Thousands of Families", the praying ceremony of the Zhuang Nongdong Festival, the 2022 Guangxi New Folk Song Conference, and the launching ceremony of Guangxi Automobile Tourism Conference The Tianqin played a role in the promotion of Red tourism in the Guangxi tour of Sino Vietnam friendship and the launching ceremony of the world's "intangible heritage" Zhuang Frost Festival of "New Journey of Singing Songs of Frost". Through various activities, Tianqin culture has further spread and developed through radio and television, newspapers and magazines, WeChat official account, video accounts, etc. (Pan Yuliang and Ou Cailing,2023)

The formation and development of a culture must be accompanied by its social and historical significance and needs. Tianqin was originally a prop used in folk rituals and witchcraft activities, but later evolved into a musical instrument with a history of over a thousand years. The development of Tianqin follows the path of a market economy, finding a combination of artistic enhancement and public aesthetic needs. In September 2003, with the support of the Longzhou government, the "Longzhou Tianqin Women's Playing and Singing Group" emerged, consisting of 15 Zhuang ethnic girls with an average age of 21 in Longzhou, dressed in ethnic costumes and playing while singing. It not only retained the traditional performance form, but also achieved the effect of "qin and sister unity, infinite charm". This indicates that the art of Tianqin can be accepted by contemporary market music culture and audience aesthetic culture, indicating that local characteristic musical instruments not only have historical and cultural value, but also radiate new charm and vitality in the contemporary aesthetic environment. Tianqin has the conditions for market promotion. (Wu Jinglin, 2009)

3.3 Analyze any challenges, successes, or lessons learned from previous efforts to preserve and promote the Tianqin tradition.

Inheritance and protection through the use of Tianqin in traditional folk festivals. In addition to using the Tianqin in related beliefs and worship ceremonies, the Tianqin family and folk artists also participate in various traditional Zhuang folk festival activities such as the Nongdong Festival, March 3rd Gepo Festival, Abao Festival, and April 13th Guanyin Festival to achieve the inheritance and protection of the Tianqin. (Baidu baike editorial department, 2019)

Inheritance and Protection of the Production Technology of Tianqin Musical Instruments. Tianqin is an important carrier of Zhuang ethnic singing and playing art, and the Tianqin maker is an important link in the inheritance and protection of Tianqin production technology. In response to the shortcomings and limitations of the old Tianqin in terms of appearance, material, assembly method, and use, Qin Huabei, under the guidance of the famous musician Fan Ximu from Guangxi and the folk music teacher Han Xing from Guangxi Art School, comprehensively improved the form of the Tianqin, integrating modern fashion while retaining traditional ethnic characteristics, making the creativity more innovative and unique.

In the early 1980s, Professor Fan Ximu, a famous ethnic musician, discovered the Tianqin when collecting folk songs in Jinlong Town, Longzhou County. Through the comprehensive rescue, excavation, sorting and dissemination of some Zhuang culture experts and scholars as well as the local government and relevant departments, it stood out from the plight of being on the verge of extinction and became one of the representatives of the excellent traditional culture of the Zhuang nationality. In order to change the single performance method and improve the performance skills of the Tianqin, Han Xing, a folk music teacher at Guangxi Art School, borrowed from the techniques of other plucked instruments and creatively improved the original index finger plucking performance method to the index finger and thumb finger plucking method. This greatly improved the musical expression of the Tianqin, expanded the volume, and made the sound more both crisp and rounded. In addition to persistently exploring, introducing, and disseminating the Tianqin culture, so that it continues to receive recognition and attention from the world, He Zhizhi, an associate professor of the Chinese Department at Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities, and Nong

Ruiqun, a senior teacher at Longzhou Zhishan Primary School, also participated in the translation and organization of ancient Zhuang characters in the birthplace of Tianqin, and carried out rescue excavations and protection; In September 2003, famous ethnic musicians such as Fan Ximu, Liang Shaowu, Nong Feng, Han Xing, and others went to Longzhou to collect wind and create operas such as "Singing the Sky Ballad", "Playing the Sky Qin to Sing a Strong Song", and dance "Sky Qin Music" based on the rhythm of the sky qin. They also guided the improvement of the structure of the sky qin, trained young artists, and brought the art of the sky qin to various stages and screens, attracting the attention of many experts, scholars, and the general public. (Li Yan, 2012)

At present, a number of colleges and secondary technical schools in China, including Guangxi University for Nationalities, Guangxi Arts University, Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities, Zhang Yimou Art School, etc., offer the art course of Tianqin. Nanning Binhu Road Primary School established the "Yingmeng" Tianqin Art Troupe in 2007, with 50 members, aged about 9 years. The delegation has participated in the reception performances of the China ASEAN Expo for many times, and has also been invited to perform in Hong Kong, Shanghai and City of Sydney, Australia. In the local Longzhou County where the art of Tianqin is inherited, Longzhou Ethnic Middle School and Longzhou Xinhua Primary School also set up Tianqin art interest classes. The Tianqin Art Interest Class of Longzhou Ethnic High School was established in 2004, and currently has 3 classes with 40 students in each class. Some students in this interest class have also been invited to Hong Kong and Macau for learning and exchange activities. This reflects that the local government recognizes and supports the Tianqin art as a national Folk art from the perspective of education, which is conducive to the cultivation of new communication talents of Tianqin art and the inheritance, innovation and development of Tianqin art. (Huang Shangmao and Huang Xinyu, 2010)

With the development of market economy and the rapid development of globalization, modernization and informatization, as the Intangible cultural heritage of ethnic minorities, Tianqin art is not competitive due to insufficient sensory stimulation and lack of modern elements. In particular, the impact of pop music and foreign culture has brought new challenges to the Intangible cultural heritage of ethnic minorities,



which has little room for market development, in terms of communication ability and market recognition, and has also gradually put many inheritors of Tianqin art who could rely on performance to earn a living into a dilemma. At present, the inheritance and innovation of Tianqin art lack stable and systematic organizational guarantees, making it difficult to form a scale effect. In today's era where the traditional habitat of Tianqin art is gradually disappearing, in order to achieve the inheritance and innovation of Tianqin art, it is necessary to scale up and influence it. Taking Tianqin production as an example, there is a serious situation of individual businesses fighting alone and lacking a systematic inheritance system. Although the Longzhou County Culture and Sports Bureau and other competent units have made great efforts for the inheritance and innovation of Tianqin art, due to the limited human and material resources and the withering of the old generation of inheritors, there is still no complete public reading materials, official account and influential Personal media of Tianqin art. Especially in recent years, as there have been fewer and fewer inheritors who still possess the ability to operate the Tianqin ritual, the possibility of fully documenting the art of Tianqin is also decreasing. Since the 21st century, the increasing trend of stage, performance, and commercialization in Tianqin art has also led to the deconstruction of its cultural core, which may ultimately lead to Tianqin art becoming a stage culture completely detached from the local cultural space. However, this form of Tianqin art clearly cannot help promote the revitalization of rural culture.

In recent years, people are worried that the inheritance of Intangible cultural heritage pays too much attention to economic development. In some places, ethnic villages promote "development protection" in name, but in fact they have become "online celebrity tourism villages" with homogeneous landscape and content. The "Beauty Village" developed by Longzhou County at the beginning of this century for the purpose of developing the local tourism economy is to attract tourists and cooperate with tourism enterprises to develop various projects with the female celestite performance as the selling point. The so-called "development based protection" project eventually evolved into a "development greater than protection" project, and the women's Tianqin performance team established by "Meimei Village" initially attracted some tourists, but in the end, it was gradually forgotten by tourists due to its single repertoire and monotonous performance. In fact, in the final analysis, one of the major

reasons for the decline of the "beauty village" is that the local performing Tianqin art does not consider the simultaneous revitalization of the material and spirit of the countryside, but uses some elements of the Tianqin art to develop projects specifically for tourists to perform and cheer up. Although the completely Secularization Tianqin art still has ethnic customs, it has lost its sacredness, The performance of the Tianqin in the "Beautiful Village" has always been beyond its imagination, which has led to the loss of its core competitiveness in Tianqin art. From this example of "development protection", both local governments and tourism enterprises will never mind crossing the red line of "maintaining authenticity" in the protection and development of Intangible cultural heritage in consideration of their political achievements and commercial benefits. (Li Yanan and Ping Feng,2021)

In summary, through Literature on initiatives aimed at documenting and preserving the Tianqin tradition in Longzhou County and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, The impact of cultural policy, educational programs, and community engagement in safeguarding the Tianqin and its associated practices, Analyze any challenges, successes, or lessons learned from previous efforts to preserve and promote the Tianqin tradition. We have gained a clearer understanding of Documentation and Preservation Efforts of the Tianqin Tradition.

#### **4. Research Theory**

##### **4.1 Musicology**

Musicology is the general term for all theoretical subjects that study music. The general task of musicology is to elucidate the nature and laws of various phenomena related to music. For example, studies on the relationship between music and ideology include music aesthetics, music history, music ethnology, music psychology, music pedagogy, etc. The study of the material and material characteristics of music includes musical acoustics, jurisprudence, instrumental science, etc. The study of music form and its composition includes melodic theory, harmony acoustics, counterpoint, composition theory, etc. There are also from the performance aspect to consider, such as performance theory, command method and so on. (Beard& D. J. & Gloag& K, 2005)

In this study, the researchers applied the method of Musicology to analyze the playing techniques and musical works of Tianqin, the analysis was divided into three groups: basic, intermediate and advanced. The musicological analysis in this thesis, firstly, focuses on the investigation of human spirit and social environment, and explains the musical phenomenon from the perspective of human society, history and cultural life outside music. Secondly, the social nature of music is explained through the music itself, especially through the form elements of music.

## 4.2 Ethnomusicology

### 4.2.1 Definition of Ethnomusicology

Ethnomusicology refers to the study of music from the cultural and social aspects of the people who make it and how it influences the behavior of the listeners. It encompasses distinct theoretical and methodical approaches that emphasize cultural, social, material, cognitive, biological, and other dimensions, or contexts of musical behavior, in addition to the sound component. Within musical ethnography it is the first-hand personal study of musicking as known as the act of taking part in a musical performance. Folklorists, who began preserving and studying folklore music in Europe and the US in the 19th century, are considered the precursors of the field prior to the Second World War. The term ethnomusicology is said to have been coined by Jaap Kunst from the Greek words, it is often defined as the anthropology or ethnography of music, or as musical anthropology. (Seeger, Anthony. 1983.)

### 4.2.2 Theories and Methods of Ethnomusicology

#### Anthropological and Musicological Approaches:

Two approaches to ethnomusicological studies are common: the anthropological and the musicological. Ethnomusicologists using the anthropological approach generally study music to learn about people and culture. Those who practice the musicological approach study people and cultures to learn about music. Charles Seeger differentiated between the two approaches, describing the anthropology of music as studying the way that music is a "part of culture and social life", while musical anthropology "studies social life as a performance," examining the way "music is part of the very construction and interpretation of social and conceptual relationships and processes." (Seeger, Charles, 1983.) Ethnomusicologists following the anthropological approach include scholars such as Steven Feld and Alan Merriam. The anthropological

ethnomusicologists stress the importance of field work and using participant observation. This can include a variety of distinct fieldwork practices, including personal exposure to a performance tradition or musical technique, participation in a native ensemble, or inclusion in a myriad of social customs. Similarly, Alan Merriam defined ethnomusicology as "music as culture," and stated four goals of ethnomusicology: to help protect and explain non-Western music, to save "folk" music before it disappears in the modern world, to study music as a means of communication to further world understanding, and to provide an avenue for wider exploration and reflection for those who are interested in primitive studies. (Merriam, Alan. 1964)

#### 4.2.3 The application of Ethnomusicological methods in this study

The research method of ethnomusicology is widely used in this study. It provides important data and plays an important role in field work, interviewing keyinformants, sorting, and collecting data, and analyzing data. Based on obtaining data and materials, the researcher uses the principles of ethnomusicology to analyze and explore the historical, social, and cultural backgrounds related to Tianqin, so as to further study their functions, roles, development and preservation status and trends. These contents are covered in the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters of this thesis.

#### 4.3 Historical Musicology

The historical Musicology is a branch of musicology. It is a discipline to study the specific process and regularity of the development of music history using various methods of interpreting history in chronological order. Originally Western music was the main research axis, and now it includes music history research from all over the world. It studies the issues related to the writings of music history and the science of the past changes of music that appear in music treatises, such as the evolution, development and laws of music content and form. It belongs to a branch of the entire field of human cultural history research, and is a discipline juxtaposed with historical studies such as literature, fine arts, and dance. (Crist& S. A.& Marvin, 2004)

In this research, the method of historical musicology is used to study the specific process and development law of chronological interpretation of history. From the perspective of historical musicology, the researcher discusses the musical culture change of Tianqin in the course of historical development, and further expounds the factors that produce these changes.

#### 4.4 Organology

Organology is derived from the Greek language and is a subject that focuses on musical instruments (tools for playing music). It is currently an important subject in the field of musicology at home and abroad. Early scholars' research on musical instruments was mainly a supplement to the field of ethnomusicology. After the 19th century, under the influence of the trend of extensive collections of musical instruments in European and American museums, musical Organology gradually became an independent discipline. The earliest research content of musical Organology is the classification of musical instruments. At present, the research of musical Organology mainly focuses on the relationship between musical instruments and musical performance, musical instrument classification, musical instrument materials, musical instrument design, musical instrument production, musical instrument vibration mode, musical instrument symbolism, etc. In addition, musical Organology and music acoustics, music pedagogy, music archeology, music iconography and other disciplines all overlap.

Organology studies the origin, development, evolution, spread and derivation of Musical Instruments, as well as their structures, characteristics, manufacturing techniques and materials. It covers a wide range of disciplines such as archaeology, history, cultural anthropology, musicology, taxonomy, acoustics, mechanics (physics, solids, fluids, structures), electronics, technology, and materials science. There are many kinds of Musical Instruments in the world, which not only have long origin and historical background, but also have their special and complicated development rules. So far, the structure and acoustic mechanism of Musical Instruments have not been fully explored from scientific principles. Whether from the point of view of social science or natural science, the science of Musical Instruments is quite complex and profound from object to content, and there are still many problems that need to be solved satisfactorily from scientific theory. (Hood & M. & Zhou & J. M., 2016)

Organology research methods in this research was used to study the origin, development, evolution, transmission and derivation of Musical Instruments, as well as their structures, characteristics, manufacturing techniques and materials of Tianqin.

In summary, this section mainly conducts research from three aspects: Musicology, Ethnomusicology, Historical Musicology and Organology. The fourth,



fifth, and sixth chapters of this article will use musicology, ethnomusicology, Historical Musicology and Organology theories to discuss.

## 5. Related Research

Up to now, the researcher has collected a few papers and monographs on Tianqin. Different from the previous studies, this research will make a detailed study on the making process and playing techniques, and discuss its musical cultural changes. In general, the studies collected by the researcher mainly include the following aspects:

Judging from the publication time of the papers, the interval is from 1983 to 2023. Judging from the themes of the papers, most of them focus on the historical origins, production technology, cultural transmission, protection and development. Due to its unique shape, exquisite production, beautiful tone and other characteristics, the academic community has a great interest in its research.

### 5.1 The research on the historical origin of Tianqin are as follows:

Liao Jinlei. (1983). The article "Tianqin" was published in the journal "Musical Instrument", which is the earliest academic achievement for researchers to understand Tianqin.

Zhao Minglong (2019). "On the Origin of Zhuang Tianqin Art - Part 13 of the Luo Yue Culture Research Series", published in the Journal of Guangxi Socialist University. According to this article, the term "Tianqin" was first seen in Liao Jinlei's paper "Tianqin" published in the magazine "Musical Instruments" in 1983. The article stated: "Tianqin, in Chinese, is called ding di ng. Later, in 1985, Mr. Lu Kegang published the article "The Modes and the Characteristics of Multi tone Combination of Zhuang Tianqin Music" on the trial issue of Guangxi National Arts, explaining the "Tianqin", Constituted a unique musical style. In August of the same year, Fan Ximu, a scholar of the Guangxi Institute of Ethnic Culture and Arts, conducted field research in Jinlong Town and Shangjiang Township of Longzhou County, Ningming County and Pingxiang City, the border area of Guangxi, and found the Zhuang folk musical instrument "Ding", which has been popular for thousands of years, and named it "Tianqin" according to its functions of "Du Tian", "Sing Tian" and "Jump Tian", Recorded in "Chinese Ethnic Folk Musical Instruments" and "Chinese Ethnic Art Dictionary". Since then, most Chinese scholars have followed this name.



### 5.2 The research on the making craftsmanship of Tianqin are as follows:

Yang Liyun (2022), "Research on the Inheritance and Transformation of Tianqin Making Skills from the Perspective of Rural Revitalization", published in the Journal of Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities, documented the improvement of Tianqin making skills. Under the guidance of Professor Han Xing, Huabei Qin, the inheritor of Tianqin making skills, improved the appearance, material, and assembly method of Tianqin.

Longzhou County Bureau of Culture, Tourism, Radio, Film and Television (2021), "Intangible Cultural Heritage - Longzhou Zhuang Tianqin Production Techniques", The article states that the Tianqin is composed of a stem, head, barrel, surface, shaft, horse, and string. The piano stem is flat with a round back, narrow at the top and wide at the bottom. The head of the qin is narrow and wide on both sides, carved into shapes such as a dragon head or phoenix head. The piano tube is flat and round, and the piano code is made of bamboo or wood in a bridge arch shape. The strings are made of silk or nylon thread. There are two types of Tianqin: fixed rod type (head and rod) and segmented rod type (rod is divided into three sections and connected by mortise and tenon direct insertion method). The main production processes include material selection, cutting, pest prevention and anti-corrosion, planing, grooving, carving, cutting rod, cutting gourd, opening socket, cutting tube plate, tube plate, polishing, opening sound hole, making shaft, making code, rod tube connection, oiling, gasket, and string installation.

### 5.3 The research on the playing techniques of Tianqin are as follows:

Yang Xiuzhao, Lu Kegang, He Hong, and Ye Jing wrote a book called "A Study of Guangxi Minority Musical Instruments", which can be used to test the tuning of the Tianqin in the fourth and fifth degrees, with no fixed pitch and no fixed pitch. The staff notation is mainly in the form of playing and singing.

Gao Min (2010) updated the performance method of the Tianqin in the book "Guangxi Ethnic Minority Characteristic Musical Instruments and Folklore". From traditional sitting performance to standing playing and singing, standing singing and dancing. And the book provides a detailed record of the musical characteristics of Tianqin - lively and varied rhythms, strong improvisation in playing and singing, and beautiful and melodious sounds.

Luo Meng (2019) published her master's thesis "Research on the Musical Characteristics of Longzhou Tianqin Culture", which provides a detailed analysis of the musical nature, performance forms, performance characteristics, and form analysis of Tianqin. At the same time, it mentions the five tone and six tone modes of neutral tones mentioned by predecessors, and on the basis of previous research on the pentatonic melody of Tianqin music, compares it with Vietnamese Tianqin in terms of musical form. Research has found that there are commonalities, all of which involve decorative variations such as adding flowers, expanding, and reducing themes. In addition to traditional folk singing (original singing), there are also modern stage singing. In the singing section, the main voice is popped out, and the modern lyre master plays a popular new folk song with modern characteristics adapted from the original ecological lyre repertoire. At the same time, by comparing the differences in form between traditional and modern Tianqin music, it was found that there are significant differences in rhythm, melody, creative techniques, and accompaniment.

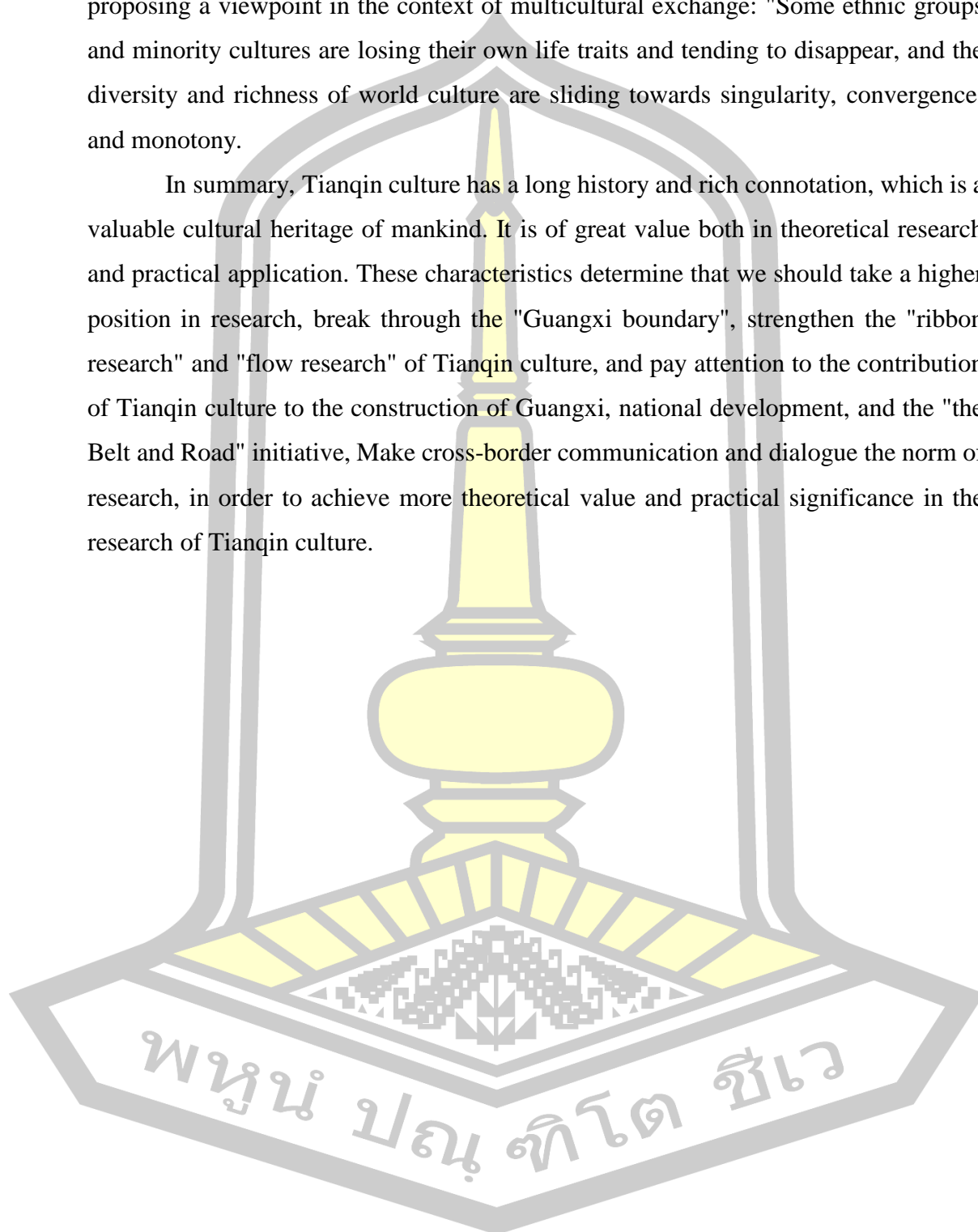
5.4 The research on the transmission of Tianqin are as follows:

He Zhizhi (2010), in the article "Reflections on the Development of Tianqin Culture in Longzhou, Guangxi", elaborated on the development of Tianqin music culture, as well as the practical problems that exist in the development process, and proposed targeted suggestions. The main focus is on both protective and commercial development, actively safeguarding local intellectual property rights.

Huang Xinyu (2011) introduced the study of Budai Tianqin culture through the article "Research on the Communication of Budai Tianqin Culture in Longzhou, Guangxi", and obtained effective protection, inheritance, and dissemination from it, with the aim of providing reference for other ethnic minority cultures. The author first provides an overview of the background culture related to the Tianqin music of the Budai ethnic group in Longzhou, explaining the dissemination of Tianqin music culture from four perspectives: cultural performance, media dissemination, intergenerational inheritance, and school inheritance. Furthermore, the main argument is the development and value of the dissemination of Tianqin culture. The inspiration drawn from the above analysis and argument is that in the era of globalization and multiculturalism, the protection and dissemination of minority culture research is not only conducive to the inheritance and development of national culture, but also provides

reference value for the protection of other cultures. The innovation of the article lies in proposing a viewpoint in the context of multicultural exchange: "Some ethnic groups and minority cultures are losing their own life traits and tending to disappear, and the diversity and richness of world culture are sliding towards singularity, convergence, and monotony.

In summary, Tianqin culture has a long history and rich connotation, which is a valuable cultural heritage of mankind. It is of great value both in theoretical research and practical application. These characteristics determine that we should take a higher position in research, break through the "Guangxi boundary", strengthen the "ribbon research" and "flow research" of Tianqin culture, and pay attention to the contribution of Tianqin culture to the construction of Guangxi, national development, and the "the Belt and Road" initiative, Make cross-border communication and dialogue the norm of research, in order to achieve more theoretical value and practical significance in the research of Tianqin culture.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **Research Methodology**

In this study, the researcher utilizes qualitative research methods and adopts a research design based on case study and ethnography. This research design enables a profound understanding of the unique characteristics and processes involved. Therefore, the study is conducted following the steps outlined below.

1. Research scope
  - 1.1 Scope of content
  - 1.2 Scope of time
2. Research process
  - 2.1 Selection of the research sites
  - 2.2 Selection of the key informants
  - 2.3 Selection of the song
  - 2.4 Research tools
  - 2.5 Data collection
  - 2.6 Data management
  - 2.7 Data analysis
  - 2.8 Data presentation

#### **1. Research Scope**

##### **1.1 Scope of Content**

1.1.1 Investigating the process, techniques, and materials used in the creation of the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. It provided an in-depth examination of the traditional craftsmanship involved in making Tianqin instruments, including the selection of materials, assembly methods, and design considerations.

1.1.2 Analyze and describe the specific techniques utilized in playing the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. It delve into the musical characteristics, performance forms, and improvisation methods associated with Tianqin.

1.1.3 Analyze the cultural changes in the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. It examine how Tianqin's cultural significance has evolved, considering its historical, social, and cultural contexts.

## 1.2 Scope of Time

February 2023 to June 2024.

## 2. Research Process

### 2.1 Selection of the Research Site

Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

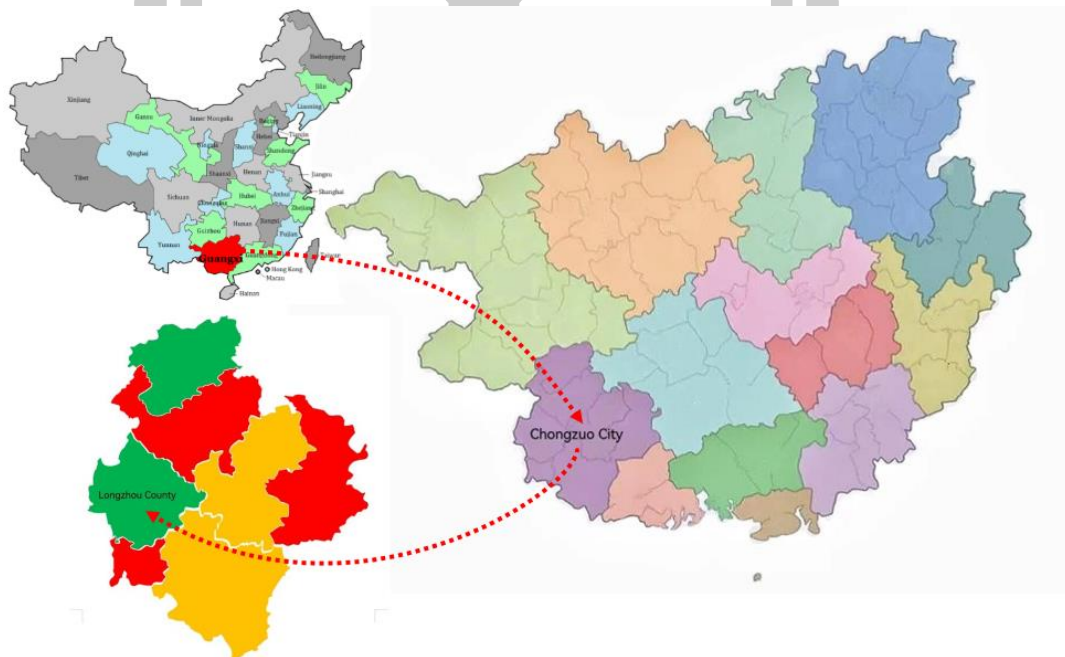


Figure 2. The Map of Longzhou County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Source: <https://mr.baidu.com/r/UFkSD6vkM8?f=cp&u=d5115db32b511abe> (2023)

### 2.2 Selection of the Key Informants

Based on the research objectives, the researcher selected three groups of people as the interviewees in the field research. They are: key informants, general informant and casual informants. The following selected criteria and selected personnel presented.



### 2.2.1 Key informants

The criteria for selecting key informants are:

- 1) The person belongs to the research field of this research.
- 2) The person was a local born and raised in Zhuang area.
- 3) The person knows the culture development of the Tianqin.
- 4) The person is older and has many years of experience in playing the Tianqin.
- 5) The person is a representative inheritor of Tianqin production above the provincial level or enjoys a high prestige in the local area.

Based on the above selection criteria, two key informants were selected, including: Mr. Huabei Qin from Longzhou county and Mr. Tingzhong Lü from Chongzuo City. (See Figure 3-4)



Figure 3. Key informant Huabei Qin  
Source: Huabei Qin (2023)

From Figure 3: Mr. Huabei Qin is an excellent producer. Huabei Qin, Zhuang nationality, born in Longzhou County in August 1964, is the fourth generation of Tianqin making skills. He grew up watching his grandfather make and play the Tianqin, and was deeply influenced by it. The seeds of his love for the Tianqin sprouted in his heart. At the age of 12, he was able to use gourds, nylon thread, clam wood, and other materials to make a heavenly organ and play for himself. In 2007, the Tianqin produced by Huabei Qin won the third prize in the first Guangxi Tourism Product



Design Competition. In 2012 and 2013, he won the Excellent Award and Gold Award at the Guangxi Arts and Crafts Exhibition. In 2014, he was awarded the honorary title of "Guangxi Arts and Crafts Master" in the sixth session. In 2020 and 2021, he was awarded the titles of "Chongzuo Craftsman" and "Guangxi Craftsman".



Figure 4. Key informant Tingzhong Lü

Source: Tingzhong Lü (2023)

From Figure 4: Mr. Tingzhong Lü, born in 1964, is a Zhuang ethnic group from Ningming County, Guangxi. Current professor and Tianqin class teacher at the School of Arts, Guangxi Minzu Normal University. Member of the Music Education Branch of the Chinese Education Society and member of the Guangxi Musicians Association. Mainly engaged in teaching and researching ethnic vocal music. In terms of project research, led the 2010 Guangxi Education Department research project "Inheritance and Development of Tianqin"; In December 2011, he led the cultivation project of the characteristic research team of the South China Border Issues Research Base, titled "Research Team for the Inheritance and Development of Zhuang Tianqin Culture"; In 2013, responsible for editing the school level teaching materials of Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities, including the project "Tianqin Performance Tutorial". Participated in the "Research on Localization Education of Luoyue Ethnic Music", the "Special Project Establishment of the" Border Issues

Research "of the Guangxi Humanities and Social Sciences Development Research Center of Guangxi Normal University", and the 2011 institute level project "Comparative Study of Zhuang Gaoqiang Folk Songs in Various Regions of Guangxi".

#### 2.2.2 General informant

The criteria for selecting general informants are:

- 1) The person was a local born and raised in Zhuang area.
- 2) The person knows the culture development of the Tianqin.
- 3) The person is older and has many years of experience in playing the Tianqin.
- 4) The person having years of experience teaching Tianqin.

The following are the criteria for selecting general informants and eligible representatives:



Figure 5. General informant Qiyuan Yao

Source: Qiyuan Yao (2023)

From Figure 5: Ms. Qiyuan Yao is Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities Teacher: He or she teaches the Tianqin in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous

Region. In addition to their regular jobs, these people are interested in or have a certain understanding of the characteristic Tianqin of the Zhuang. The following people were chosen based on this criterion: Ms. Qiyuan Yao (See Figure 4)



Figure 6. General informant Haiyang Wei

Source: Haiyang Wei (2023)

From Figure 6: Haiyang Wei is a special talent of the National Art Fund, an original musician of the Zhuang ethnic group in Guangxi, a promoter of the inheritance and promotion of Zhuang original ecological music, a specially appointed Tianqin teacher and performer at Guangxi Academy of Arts, deputy head of the Guangxi Folk Artists Association Art Troupe. His works cleverly combine the Zhuang ethnic language, musical instruments, and the trend of world songs to create his own unique music world. Representative works such as "Mumianpo", "Shanhe", "Auntie She", "Zhuang Dance Music", "Grandma", "Zhuang Wine Song", "I Go Home", "Gama Song", etc. Currently residing in Nanning, Guangxi, I am engaged in music creation and production, as well as promotion and education of Tianqin!

### 2.2.3 Casual informant

The criteria for selecting casual informants are:

- 1) The person was a local born and raised in Zhuang area.
- 2) The person knows the culture development of the Tianqin.
- 3) The person is older and has many years of experience in playing the

Tianqin.

Audience representatives

### Sampling Strategy:

A purposive sampling strategy employed to select individuals who have a deep understanding and experience with Tianqin in the Zhuang community.

### 2.3 Selection of the Song

- 1) It is suggested by those who have inherited "intangible cultural heritage".
- 2) Classic representative works of Tianqin.
- 3) It has distinctive regional chara.
- 4) Recommendations from professional Tianqin player.
- 5) It has a significant impact on Longzhou county or Guangxi.

Table 1. Selection of the songs

Type of songs	Description	Total songs	Selected song
1. Traditional pieces	The Tianqin performance repertoire circulated before being discovered by Chinese experts in 1985	30	2
2. The pieces in the textbook	Currently, the only Tianqin textbook in China	31	3

### 2.4 Research Tools

The research tools used in this research are mainly interview form, observation form and questionnaire. In order to obtain the research data, the researcher designed the questionnaire and designed the corresponding interview form and observation form according to different research objects.

Process of making the questionnaire based on research objective.

- 1) Bring it to the advisor to examine.
- 2) Be altered in accordance with advisor editing.
- 3) Before using, have it inspected by an expert.
- 4) Modified in accordance with expert advice before being used in the fieldwork.

### 2.5 Data Collecting Methods:

1) Interview: In the process of collecting data from the two places, the researcher selected three groups of informants as interview objects. The form of the interviews was flexible, and the content was consistent with the research objectives. They are: the fourth generation of Tianqin making skills; Tianqin researcher and Tianqin performer; music teachers and students of the primary and secondary schools and local universities.

2) Observation: In the process of data collection, researchers conducted a survey on Tianqin in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region through direct observation. Using mobile phones, DSLRs, cameras, and recording pens, the production process and music activities of Tianqin were recorded. The performance process of 20 Tianqin songs was directly observed, complete videos were recorded and relevant photos were taken. First hand data was collected, and data was stored using SD cards, computers, and USB flash drives. Researchers watched the Longzhou Tianqin performance and Tianqin teaching in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The "March 3rd" music event in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and the recording of the Tianqin performance program "Huashan Welcome Song" have gained a corresponding understanding of the ethnic instrument Tianqin in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

3) Questionnaire: It is one of the tools for conducting field work. There are various types of heavenly organs, as well as different production methods and performance techniques of heavenly organs. According to the social function of the Tianqin, its performance forms can be roughly divided into playing the sky, singing the sky, and dancing the sky. There are multiple songs in each category, and researchers distributed pre prepared questionnaires within the Guangxi region to select representative works with the characteristics of Tianqin music in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. These works have high popularity, a wide range of dissemination, and are deeply loved by Yi. Then, they are analyzed and compared, and the performance of Longzhou Tianqin is summarized in terms of musical characteristics. Therefore, using a questionnaire survey can provide relevant data for researchers.

4) Document Analysis: Review relevant documents, including educational curricula, policy documents, historical records, and existing research literature.

## 2.6 Data Management



#### Ethical Considerations:

Ensure informed consent from all participants, guaranteeing their anonymity and confidentiality. Any observations or interviews conducted with participants' full understanding and consent.

#### Validity and Reliability:

To increase validity and reliability, use triangulation, which involves using multiple methods (interviews, observation, document analysis) to collect data. This helps to cross-check information and deepen your understanding of the issues.

#### Evaluate the methods:

**Cultural theory:** Cultural theory helps to understand how Tianqin is deeply embedded in the cultural structure of Zhuang society. It can guide you to explore how the cultural significance of Tianqin in Longzhou County has changed over time and the factors that influence these changes in the context of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in China. This theoretical perspective can also be used to analyze the cultural changes of the Tianqin ethnic instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

**Ethnomusicology:** Ethnomusicology is a discipline that studies music within its cultural context. It can provide a framework to understand the unique playing techniques and styles of the Tianqin, as well as how these techniques and styles contribute to the unique sound and musical expression of the instrument.

### 2.7 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis carried out using a thematic analysis approach. Transcribe the interviews and code the transcripts and field notes for emerging themes. These themes further analyzed in relation to the research questions.

**2.5.1 Objective 1: Analysis of the process, techniques, and materials used in the creation of the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.** The data collected include interviews and observations of skilled artisans involved in making Tianqin instruments. The selection of materials, assembly methods, and design considerations.

**2.5.2 Objective 2: Analysis of the specific techniques utilized in playing the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.** Collect data through audio and video recordings of



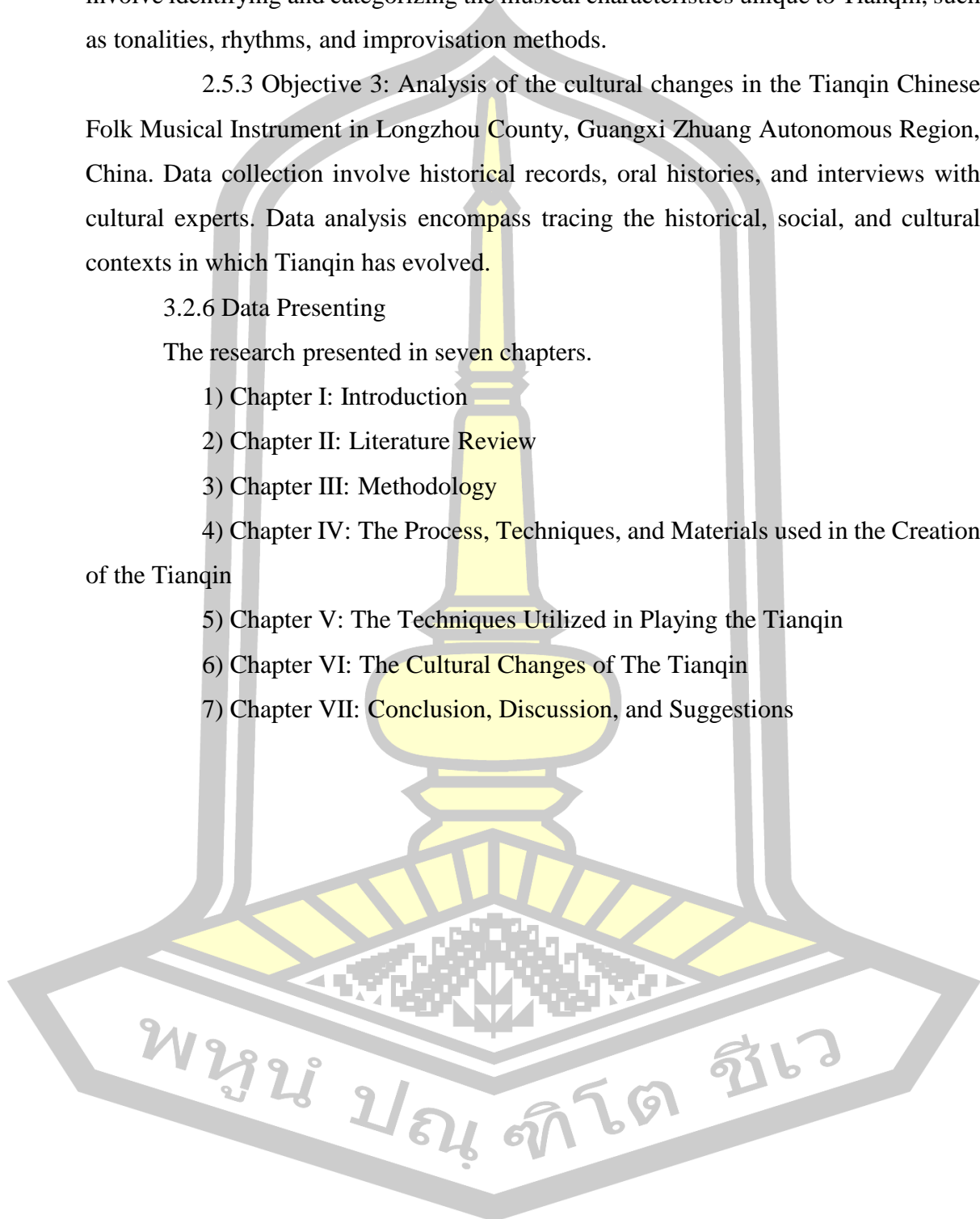
Tianqin performances, interviews with musicians, and musical notations. Data analysis involve identifying and categorizing the musical characteristics unique to Tianqin, such as tonalities, rhythms, and improvisation methods.

2.5.3 Objective 3: Analysis of the cultural changes in the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Data collection involve historical records, oral histories, and interviews with cultural experts. Data analysis encompass tracing the historical, social, and cultural contexts in which Tianqin has evolved.

### 3.2.6 Data Presenting

The research presented in seven chapters.

- 1) Chapter I: Introduction
- 2) Chapter II: Literature Review
- 3) Chapter III: Methodology
- 4) Chapter IV: The Process, Techniques, and Materials used in the Creation of the Tianqin
- 5) Chapter V: The Techniques Utilized in Playing the Tianqin
- 6) Chapter VI: The Cultural Changes of The Tianqin
- 7) Chapter VII: Conclusion, Discussion, and Suggestions



## CHAPTER IV

### The Process, Techniques, and Materials used in the Creation of the Tianqin

In the research process of this chapter, the research theories of ethnomusicology and organology were predominantly adopted. For instance, the research method of ethnomusicology was employed to conduct fieldwork and explore the creativity concept of Longzhou Tianqin from multiple dimensions. Based on the principles of organology, this chapter discusses the creativity of Tianqin from the following aspects:

1. The materials used in crafting of the Tianqin
2. The production process and techniques of the Tianqin
3. The evolution of production technology in Crafting of the Tianqin



Figure 7. Huabei Qin

Source: Huabei Qin (2023)

In response to the aforementioned issues, we interviewed Mr. Huabei Qin, as shown in Figure 7, the fourth-generation inheritor of Longzhou Tianqin production techniques. Through exploring these three aspects, the aim is to further understand the creative process, craftsmanship, and materials of the Tianqin, in order to provide a scientific theoretical basis for subsequent instrument production reforms. In January 2024, researchers completed on-site research, visited Mr. Huabei Qin, a key informant, and recorded the entire production process of the Tianqin instrument.

## 1. The Materials Used in Crafting of the Tianqin

According to interviews with the key informants, the main raw materials needed to make Tianqin include wood, gourd, string, and other materials. The choice of raw materials by the luthier is the early stage of the musical instrument manufacturing process, including the conception of the shape of the instrument and the preliminary assumption of its timbre.



Figure 8. Wood

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

### 1.1 Wood: as shown in Figure 8.

Huabei Qin (interview, January 9, 2024) emphasizes the critical role of material selection in the Tianqin-making process, as it not only influences the instrument's quality and sound but is also intricately tied to the craftsmanship and experience of the artisans. Therefore, craftsmen diligently consider factors such as the source, type, texture, and hardness of the wood when selecting materials.

Firstly, the wood's source is a crucial aspect of material selection. In the Zhuang ethnic area, qin makers typically use wood sourced from local forests, which boast abundant tree resources such as Huanghuali, red sandalwood, red rosewood, and Wutong wood. These trees require several years of growth to attain the size and quality necessary for qin making. Craftsmen prefer mature trees with long growth times, straight textures, and solid materials as raw materials.

Secondly, the type of wood is also pivotal in material selection. Different types of wood exhibit varying characteristics, such as texture, color, and hardness, making them suitable for crafting various types of Tianqin. For instance, Huanghuali, renowned for its beautiful texture, solid material, and rich sound, is considered high-quality wood for qin making. Red sandalwood, another common choice, is prized for its delicate texture and deep color, contributing to the exquisite body of the Tianqin.

In the production of Longzhou Tianqin in Guangxi, wutong wood is typically chosen for the soundboard. Wutong wood, known for its excellent acoustic characteristics, is widely used in crafting musical instrument soundboards. It exhibits outstanding acoustic performance, effectively amplifying and enhancing the sound, resulting in a purer and more beautiful tone for the Tianqin.

Apart from texture, the appearance of the wood is another crucial consideration in material selection, directly impacting the Tianqin's look and sound. Craftsmen prefer materials with straight, even, and flawless textures, as these contribute to the production of Tianqin with appealing appearances and pure sounds. Conversely, using wood with uneven or flawed textures may result in impure sounds or noise in the Tianqin.

Finally, hardness is a key factor in material selection, directly influencing the Tianqin's durability and sound. Craftsmen opt for woods with higher hardness, as they can resist physical and chemical influences from the outside, ensuring greater durability and producing purer sounds.

Throughout the material selection process, craftsmen also take into account factors such as the scent and color of the wood. Their judgments, based on experience and skills, ensure that the selected woods are optimal for crafting qins with the desired sound and appearance through meticulous selection and processing.

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Figure 9. Gourd

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

#### 1.2 Gourd: as shown in Figure 9.

According to Mr. Huabei Qin's description (interview, January 9, 2024), In the production of the Tianqin's sound box, the gourd is an indispensable material. However, not all gourds are suitable for making Tianqin. The gourd used for crafting Tianqin needs to be carefully selected and processed to ensure sound quality and playability.

Firstly, the gourd used for Tianqin making should be mature. Mature gourds typically have a full shape and deep yellow skin with a smooth surface, free of defects. This is because mature gourds contain more moisture and sugar, enhancing the resonance effect of the Tianqin's sound box and producing a richer, warmer sound.

Secondly, the gourd used for Tianqin making should be well-shaped. Well-shaped gourds contribute to the stability of the Tianqin's sound box, preventing shaking or deformation during play. Additionally, well-shaped gourds are easier to process and carve, enhancing their aesthetic value and artistic significance.

Lastly, the gourd used for Tianqin making needs to undergo specific treatments and processing. This includes washing and drying the gourd and applying a protective layer of varnish on the surface to prevent oxidation and discoloration.





Figure 10. String

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

### 1.3 String: as shown in Figure 10.

Mr. Huabei Qin (interview, January 9, 2024) told the researchers that the selection of string materials is a very important part of the production of the Tianqin in Longzhou, Guangxi. The strings of the Tianqin should be made of tough and high-quality materials. Here are some possible choices:

**Nylon string:** Nylon string is a common string material, with good toughness and elasticity, capable of producing a softer sound quality.

**Steel string:** Steel string is a string material with high elasticity and toughness, which can produce a brighter sound.

**Silk string:** Silk string is a soft and beautiful string material, suitable for playing classical music.

When selecting strings, makers need to consider factors such as the tone color, volume, range, and playing style of the instrument to choose the most suitable string material.

### 1.4 Other materials

Mr. Huabei Qin (interview, January 9, 2024) said that in the production of the Tianqin, alongside the primary materials like wood, gourd, and strings, there are also essential auxiliary materials. Though used in smaller quantities, these materials play an indispensable role in the production and performance of the Tianqin.

Firstly, paint is a crucial auxiliary material. It serves the dual purpose of protecting the body and decorating the Tianqin, enhancing both its aesthetics and



durability. When selecting paint, craftsmen prioritize attributes like wear resistance, weather resistance, and environmental friendliness.

Secondly, polishing wax serves multiple functions in the production process of the Tianqin. It is not only used to beautify the appearance of the instrument but also significantly affects its sound quality and service life. By finely polishing the surface of the Tianqin, polishing wax can remove small defects, making the surface smooth like a mirror and enhancing the overall aesthetic of the instrument. More importantly, a smooth surface can better transmit sound vibrations, making the sound of the Tianqin clearer and brighter. Additionally, the special components in polishing wax can interact with wood to fine-tune the sound quality of the instrument, making it more perfect. Apart from improving sound quality, polishing wax can also form a protective film, enhancing the wear resistance and scratch resistance of the Tianqin surface, effectively extending the instrument's service life.

Thirdly, adhesive plays a crucial role in the production process of Tianqin. It serves not only as a bridge connecting various components but also as a guarantee for the overall stability and sound quality of the instrument. Through the use of adhesive, the maker is able to firmly bond components of different materials together, forming a harmonious and unified whole. This adhesive effect not only enhances the structural strength of the Tianqin but also makes the instrument's sound quality more pure and beautiful. Additionally, the adhesive can resist the influence of the external environment on the Tianqin to a certain extent, such as changes in humidity and temperature, thereby extending the instrument's service life. Therefore, selecting the appropriate adhesive and using it correctly is crucial to creating a beautiful, durable, and excellent sound quality Tianqin.

Finally, other auxiliary materials include small components such as connecting rods and gaskets. Despite their small size, these components play a crucial role in the production and performance of the Tianqin. For instance, the connecting rods ensure a secure attachment between the soundbox and the neck, greatly enhancing the stability of the soundbox.

Table 2. The Materials Used in Crafting the Tianqin

Matetial	Descriptions
Wood	1.Huanghuali 2.Red sandalwood 3.Red rosewood 4.Wutong wood
Gourd	1.Should be mature 2.Should be well-shaped 3.Needs to undergo specific treatments and processing
String	1.Nylon string 2.Steel string 3.Silk string
Other materials	1.Paint 2.Polishing wax 3.Adhesive 4.Other auxiliary materials

## 2. The Production Process and Techniques of the Tianqin

Mr. Huabei Qin said that once the raw materials for making Tianqin are ready, we can enter the preparation stage of Tianqin production.

### 2.1 Preparation stage of the Tianqin

#### 2.1.1 Design and Planning

##### 2.1.1.1 Design of the shape and size of the Tianqin

Shape Design: Traditional Guangxi Longzhou Tianqin typically features a distinctive shape, and this traditional characteristic should be preserved during the design process. Simultaneously, adjustments can be made based on modern aesthetics to align more closely with the visual preferences of contemporary individuals. For instance, the Tianqin's body may adopt a smooth curve, while the head of the Tianqin could be designed with an exquisite dragon head shape, symbolizing the cultural traits of Longzhou, Guangxi.

**Size Design:** The size of the Tianqin directly impacts its sound quality and playing experience. During the design phase, consideration should be given to the user's body shape and hand size to ensure a comfortable performance. Additionally, it is crucial to factor in the resonance effect of the Tianqin and adjust the size of the body and barrel appropriately to achieve the optimal timbre.

#### 2.1.1.2 Decorative Element Design

**Integration of Traditional Elements:** As a traditional instrument, the Guangxi Longzhou Tianqin often incorporates traditional elements such as dragons, phoenixes, and cloud patterns into its decoration. These elements are not only beautiful but also rich in cultural connotations. In design, these traditional elements can be skillfully integrated into the body, head, and other parts of the instrument to maintain its traditional characteristics.

**Combination of Modern Aesthetics:** In addition to traditional elements, it is also possible to combine modern aesthetics and add some new decorative elements. For example, modern carving techniques can be used to create more three-dimensional decorative patterns, or modern paints and inlay materials can be used to enhance the texture and luxury of the Tianqin.

#### 2.1.1.3 Structural and Functional Design

**Structural Design:** During the design process, careful consideration must be given to the structural stability and durability of the Tianqin. For instance, the connection between the Resonator and the Neck, as well as the fixing method of the strings, needs to be meticulously designed and tested to ensure that the Tianqin can maintain stability and good sound quality during performances.

**Functional Design:** Additionally, the practical needs of the Tianqin should be taken into account. For example, designing a string shaft that can adjust the pitch to facilitate the player's adjustments as needed or adding a string protection device to extend the lifespan of the strings.

#### 2.1.1.4 Prototype Testing and Adjustment

Following the completion of the preliminary design, a prototype of the Tianqin can be crafted for testing purposes. Through practical performance and feedback, necessary adjustments and optimizations can be implemented in the design to ensure that the final product meets expectations for sound quality and performance.

### 2.1.2 Preparation of tools and equipment

Mr. Huabei Qin (interviewed on January 9, 2024) told researchers that the following are the tools he frequently uses when making the Tianqin:



Figure 11. Cutting Angle Grinder

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

2.1.2.1 Cutting Angle Grinder: As shown in Figure11. Used for cutting and grinding wood. With its precise and efficient cutting capabilities, it assists the craftsmen in quickly cutting the wood to the desired size and shape, ensuring precise jointing of the instrument's parts.





Figure 12. Sander

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

2.1.2.2 Sander: As shown in Figure 12. Used for initial smoothing of the wood surface. When making the Tianqin, it is necessary to sand the wood to remove fragments and uneven surfaces, resulting in a smooth and delicate feel.



Figure 13. Drill

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024



2.1.2.3 Drill: As shown in Figure 13. Used for drilling holes in the wood. When constructing the Tianqin, holes need to be drilled for installing parts such as the tuning pegs, bridge, and soundbox. Electric or hand drills are used for this purpose. It is essential to select the appropriate drill bit diameter to ensure accurate hole size and placement.



Figure 14. Soundhole Mold

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

2.1.2.4 Soundhole Mold: As shown in Figure 14. Used for punching holes on both sides of the soundbox. Precise punching of the soundholes is crucial in making the Tianqin. The soundhole mold ensures that each hole is sized according to the design specifications.



Figure 15. Spatula

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024



2.1.2.5 Spatula: As shown in Figure 15. Used for mixing adhesives. When preparing the adhesive, the spatula is used to mix the ingredients in a specific ratio. The completed adhesive is then applied to the various parts that need to be bonded using the spatula.



Figure 16. Sandpaper

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

2.1.2.6 Sandpaper: As shown in Figure 16. Used for fine polishing and smoothing the wood surface. Typically, after the initial sanding with the sander, different grades of sandpaper are used to polish and refine the Tianqin's surface.

2.1.2.7 Other Tools: Pencil, Knife, Scissors, Carving Knife, Air Compressor, etc. The pencil is used to draw the basic outlines of the Tianqin's parts on the wood; the knife and scissors are used to trim excess wood; the carving knife is used to carve patterns on the Tianqin; and the air compressor is used to blow away sawdust and dust that accumulate on the Tianqin.

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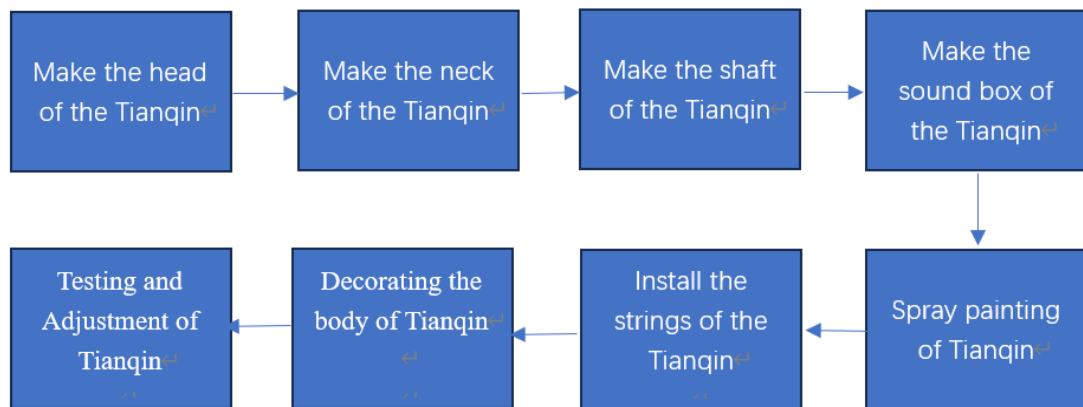


Figure 17. Flowchart of making Tianqin

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)

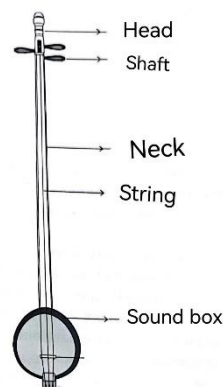


Figure 18. Names of parts of Tianqin

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)

2.2 Production stage of the Tianqin. As shown in Figure 17.

2.2.1 The production of the head of the Tianqin

The head of the Tianqin is a symbolic component of the instrument, possessing not only unique aesthetic value but also carrying the profound connotation of Zhuang culture. As shown in Figure 18. Therefore, during the crafting of the Tianqin's head, artisans meticulously attend to every detail, encompassing shape, carving, and decoration.

Firstly, the shape serves as the foundation of the head production. Craftsmen cut the wood into a suitable form based on the overall design and specifications of the Tianqin. Common shapes for the head include round, flat, square, etc., each having distinct characteristics and usage scenarios. The wood commonly used for the head is typically sourced from local forests, rich in tree resources such as Huanghua pear, red sandalwood, and redwood. After determining the shape, craftsmen conduct preliminary grinding and finishing on the head's surface, ensuring it is smoother and more regular.



Figure 19. Carving of the Tianqin's head

Source: Huabei Qin

Next in the process is carving. As shown in Figure 19. The core element of Tianqin's head production, involving various techniques such as line carving, relief carving, and openwork carving. Craftsmen employ various tools and methods to carve the Tianqin's head according to design requirements and their own creativity. During the carving process, particular attention is given to the fineness and symmetry of the patterns and lines, as well as their coordination with the entire tianqin's head. Common carving patterns include dragons, phoenixes, flowers, etc., symbolizing auspiciousness and blessing.

Following carving, craftsmen polish and wax the head of the instrument. Polishing enhances smoothness and gloss, giving the head a beautiful and delicate appearance. Waxing protects the surface, preventing wood erosion and wear caused by the external environment.

Finally, the decoration process is undertaken to increase the artistic value and beauty of the Tianqin's head. This typically involves inlaying precious stones, carving patterns, etc. Craftsmen employ various decorative techniques, adding unique characteristics and charm to the headstock. For instance, they may inlay precious stones or jade or carve symbolic patterns and designs.

In addition to the above steps, attention to certain details is essential in headstock creation. This includes ensuring the headstock's weight is moderate, neither too heavy nor too light; adjusting the position of tuning pegs to facilitate subsequent string installation and intonation adjustment; and properly treating the headstock's surface to enhance wear resistance and aesthetic appearance.

### 2.2.2 The production process of the Qinqin neck

#### Production of the Tianqin neck:

First, selecting the material is the initial step in making the Tianqin neck. When crafting the Tianqin neck, we typically choose high-quality woods that are hard, aesthetically pleasing, and uniform in texture. Common woods include yellow flower chestnut, rosewood, and purple sandalwood. These woods have a high density and hardness, allowing them to withstand the tension of the strings and providing excellent sound and feel.

Second, the next step is cutting. During this process, craftsmen will cut the wood to the appropriate length and shape based on the design requirements of the neck. Typically, the neck should be around 120 centimeters in length, with shapes commonly being rectangular or cylindrical. During cutting, craftsmen ensure that the edges of the wood are parallel and perpendicular, guaranteeing both stability and aesthetic quality of the neck.

Third, after cutting and planing, the string slots and tuner holes need to be made on the thinner end. The string slot is where the tuner secures the strings, shaped like a rectangle below the headstock. When creating the string slot, craftsmen leave more than 0.5 cm of wood on both sides of the Tianqin neck, hollowing out the middle section but not completely. The tuner holes are located on both sides of the string slot, one on the left and one on the right, with one above and one below. A small hole is drilled on each side of the reserved walls of the string slot.



Figure 20. Polishing of the Tianqin's neck

Source: Huabei Qin

Finally, sanding is essential. As shown in Figure 20. This step removes any rough edges or uneven areas from the surface of the Tianqin neck, resulting in a smoother and more regular neck surface. During sanding, craftsmen use various types of sandpaper and polishing agents to sand and buff the neck multiple times, enhancing its smoothness and glossiness.

### 2.2.3 The production of the shaft of the Tianqin

**Selection of materials:** Wood with a hard texture and beautiful texture is usually used as the material for the neck, such as nanmu and pear wood.

**Cutting wood:** According to the length and diameter of the neck, cut the selected wood into corresponding pieces. When cutting, pay attention to keeping the wood smooth and with beautiful texture.

**Grinding wood:** Use tools such as sandpaper or grinders to grind the wood, removing burrs and uneven parts on the surface to make it smooth.

**Engraving pattern:** Engraving on the polished wood, usually with auspicious patterns such as cloud patterns and dragon patterns, which symbolize good luck and good fortune.

**Coloring:** The carved stringed instrument shaft is painted with colors, usually red, black, etc., to make it more beautiful.





Figure 21. The shaft of the Tianqin

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

Installing the shaft: When installing the shaft on the Tianqin, it is essential to ensure that it matches the shaft hole in the Tianqin neck. As shown in Figure 21. Apply a suitable amount of lubricant to the contact surface of the shaft to reduce friction. Then, align the shaft with the shaft hole in the Tianqin neck and gently insert it. Use a tool to tap lightly to secure it in place.

#### 2.2.4 Production Techniques for Tianqin Soundboxes

The production process for Guangxi Tianqin soundboxes mainly consists of the following steps:

First, selecting the gourd. The lower part of the gourd is chosen as the main material for the Tianqin body. In traditional folk beliefs, the gourd is considered to possess the power to ward off evil spirits.

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Figure 22. Installing the Tenon

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

Second, cutting the tenon., The tenon is inserted from the bottom of the Tianqin soundbox: As shown in Figure 22. And adhesive is applied to the joint between the tenon and the Tianqin neck to strengthen the connection between the neck and the soundbox. This also serves to reinforce the soundbox, similar to the function of the keel in a ship.



Figure 23. Drilling

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

Third, drilling holes: As shown in Figure 23. Seven-hole plum-blossom-shaped sound holes are drilled on both sides above the place where the neck is inserted into the Tianqin soundbox. These holes function to adjust the pitch and volume, providing performers with rich expressive capabilities.



Figure 24. Installing the base

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

Fourth, installing the base: As shown in Figure 24. The previously cut and polished base is attached to the bottom of the Tianqin soundbox and connected to the tenon, reinforced with adhesive.

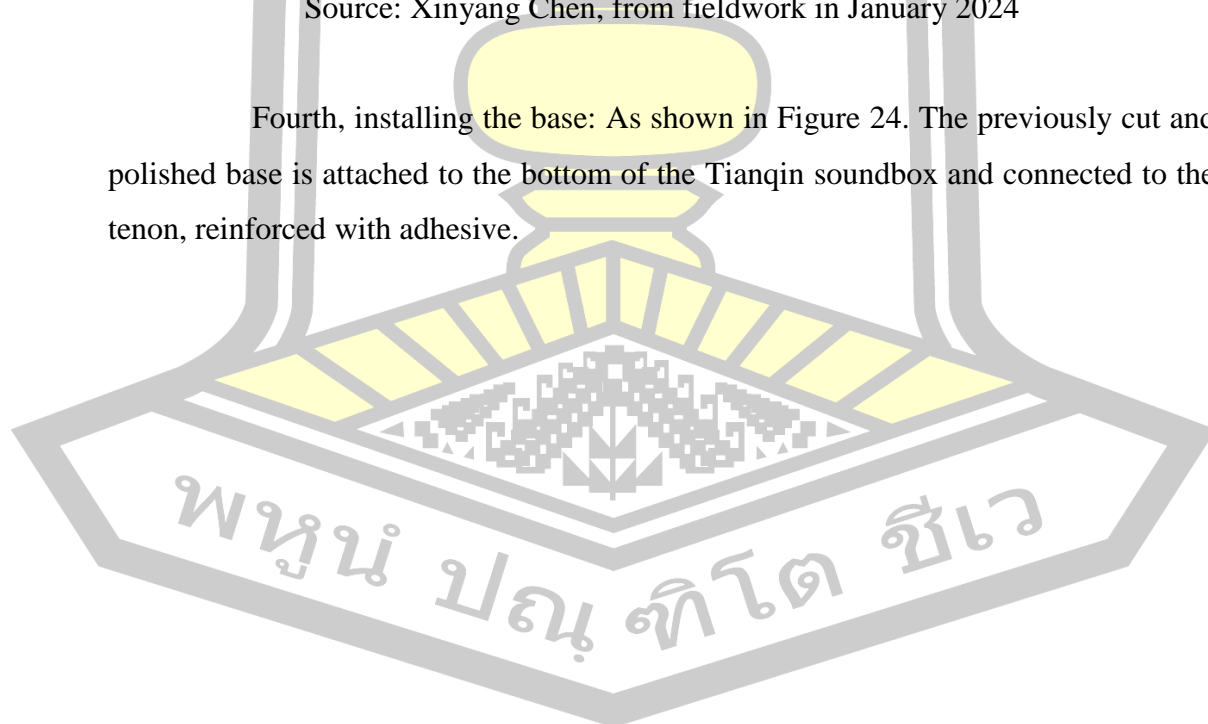




Figure 25. Painting

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

Fifth, painting: As shown in Figure 25. The inside of the Tianqin soundbox is painted to prevent corrosion and enhance the durability of the Tianqin.



Figure 26. Adhesive sound board

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024



Sixth, adhesive sound board: As shown in Figure 26. Using bronze wooden plates to glue the selected gourd sections together, forming the surface of the cylindrical shape.

Finally, sanding and polishing. The gourd is properly hole-processed to ensure its shape meets the design requirements and maintains a smooth surface.

#### 2.2.5 Spray painting of Tianqin:

First, 2.2.5 Spray painting of Tianqin:

First, Clean the Tianqin: Before painting, the Tianqin must undergo thorough cleaning to ensure its surface is free of dust, oil, and other impurities. This can be done using a soft cloth or specialized cleaners.

Second, Choosing the Right Paint: When painting the Tianqin, it is crucial to select a paint that is durable, waterproof, and corrosion-resistant. Additionally, the color of the paint should complement the material and style of the instrument.

Third, Applying the Primer: The first step is to apply a layer of primer to the surface of the Tianqin. The primer enhances the adhesion and smoothness of the paint, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent coats. Typically, two to three coats of primer are required, with each coat drying completely before applying the next.

Fourth, Applying the Color Coat: Once the primer has dried, the color coat is applied. The choice of color depends on the design requirements, which can range from a single hue to a combination of multiple colors. The application of the color coat must be uniform to avoid color variations and dripping.

Fifth, Applying the Gloss Coat: After the color coat has dried, a final layer of gloss coat is applied. This coat enhances the shine of the Tianqin, giving it a more aesthetically pleasing appearance. The gloss coat should also be applied uniformly, avoiding bubbles and scratches.

Finally, Drying and Sanding: Once the painting is complete, the Tianqin is placed in a well-ventilated area to dry. The drying time depends on the type and thickness of the paint used. Following drying, the surface of the Tianqin is sanded to remove any imperfections or unevenness.

In summary, these are the lacquering steps involved in the production of the Tianqin. It is crucial to prioritize safety during the painting process, avoiding inhalation of paint fumes and contact with the skin. Additionally, meticulous attention to detail is

essential in each step to ensure the final Tianqin has excellent aesthetics and protective qualities.

### 2.2.6 Installation of Tianqin Strings



Figure 27. The strings need to be threaded through the tuner holes

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

First, the strings need to be threaded through the tuner holes: As shown in Figure 27. Then, twist the tuners to wind the strings around them until they are securely fastened.

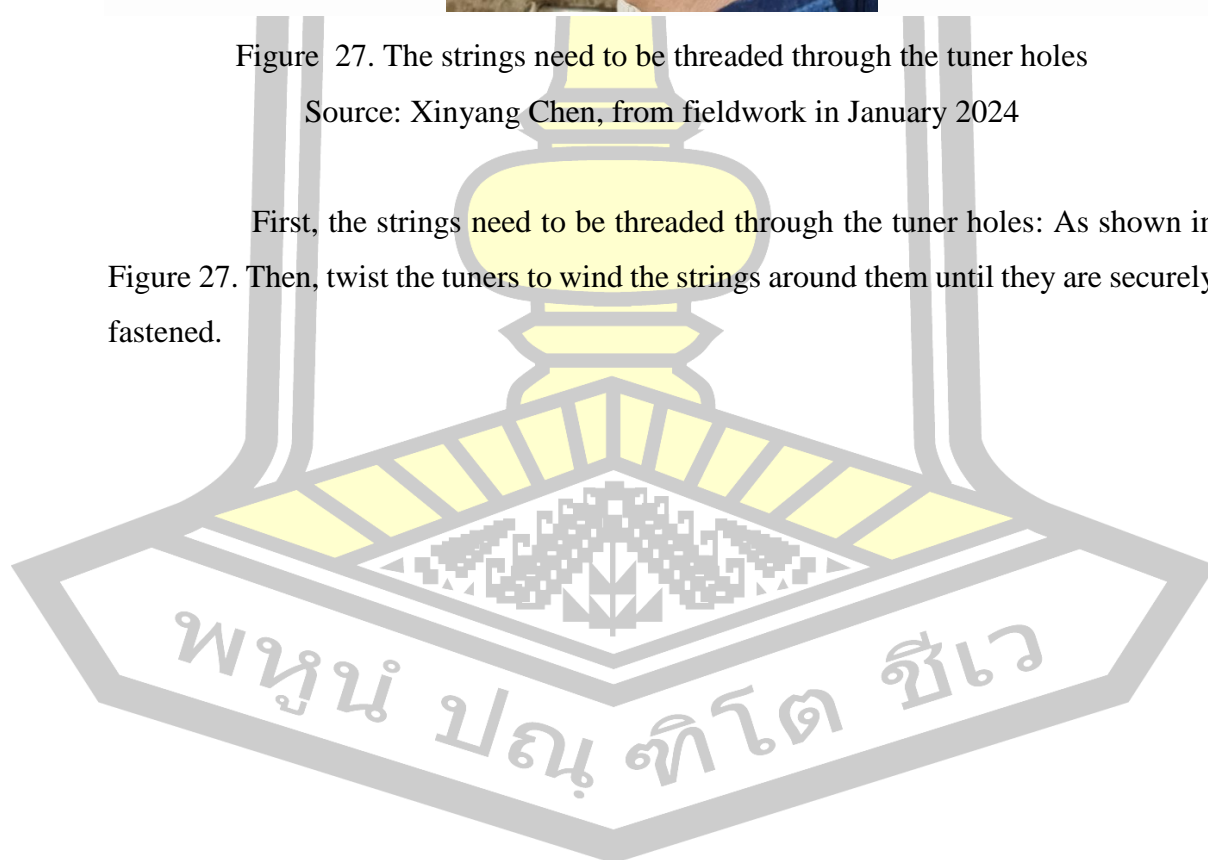




Figure 28. Through the string holes in the base

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

Second, the other end of each string is threaded through the string holes in the base: As shown in Figure 28. Before doing this, protective rubber sleeves are applied to the strings to reduce friction with the string holes.

Third, the bridge is installed to support the strings. The strings are then pulled and adjusted to the appropriate tension to ensure accuracy.

Fourth, the string axles are tightened to secure the strings in place, taking care not to over-tighten or under-tighten them to prevent affecting the sound quality.

Finally, the pitch of the strings is checked for accuracy and fine adjustments are made if necessary.





Figure 29. Decorating the body of Tianqin

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in January 2024

#### 2.2.7 Decorating the Tianqin Body. As shown in Figure 29.

In the process of making the Guangxi Longzhou Tianqin, decorating the body is an important step. Through carving and inlaying techniques, the artistic appeal and ornamental value of the Tianqin can be enhanced, making it more unique and magnificent.

**Carving:** Carving is an artistic creation on the body of the Tianqin. Different patterns and styles can be chosen based on personal preferences. Common carving patterns include landscapes, flowers and birds, figures, etc. Customized designs can also be made according to the purpose and theme of the Tianqin. Carving can be done using traditional hand tools such as knives and engravers, or modern tools like electric carving machines. During the carving process, it is important to maintain smooth lines and clear patterns while avoiding damage to the body of the Tianqin.

**Inlaying:** Inlaying involves inserting metal or gemstone decorations onto the body of the Tianqin. This technique enhances the luxuriousness and preciousness of the instrument. Common materials for inlaying include silver, gold, diamonds, pearls, etc. When inlaying, suitable decorations should be selected and fixed onto the body using appropriate adhesives. Attention should be paid to maintaining balance and stability of the decorations to avoid affecting the sound quality and playing performance of the Tianqin.

**Varnishing:** Varnishing is a treatment that protects and beautifies the body of the Tianqin. Traditional natural varnish made from plant extracts or modern paints with various colors and effects can be used. During varnishing, the body of the Tianqin should be cleaned thoroughly before applying an appropriate amount of varnish evenly over the entire surface. Finally, the varnish should be allowed to dry, followed by polishing and sanding to achieve a smooth and delicate finish.



Figure 30. Testing and Adjustment of Tianqin

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in in January 2024

#### 2.2.8 Testing and Adjustment of Tianqin: As shown in Figure 30.

In the process of making the Guangxi Longzhou Tianqin, the testing and adjustment stage is a crucial step. Through testing, the sound quality, intonation, and timbre of the Tianqin can be checked to see if they meet the desired requirements. Based on the test results, necessary adjustments can be made to ensure that the Tianqin produces pleasant and melodious sounds.

**Preparation for Testing:** Before testing, it is important to ensure that all parts of the Tianqin are installed properly, including the strings fixed onto the tuning pegs at the head and tail. Additionally, appropriate playing environment and conditions should be prepared, such as a suitable playing space and temperature.

**Testing Process:** Begin by playing simple pieces or scales to check the sound quality and intonation of the Tianqin. Observe the vibration of the strings and the expression of the timbre, as well as any possible noise or broken strings. At the same

time, different playing techniques and dynamics can be tried to test the responsiveness and expressiveness of the Tianqin.

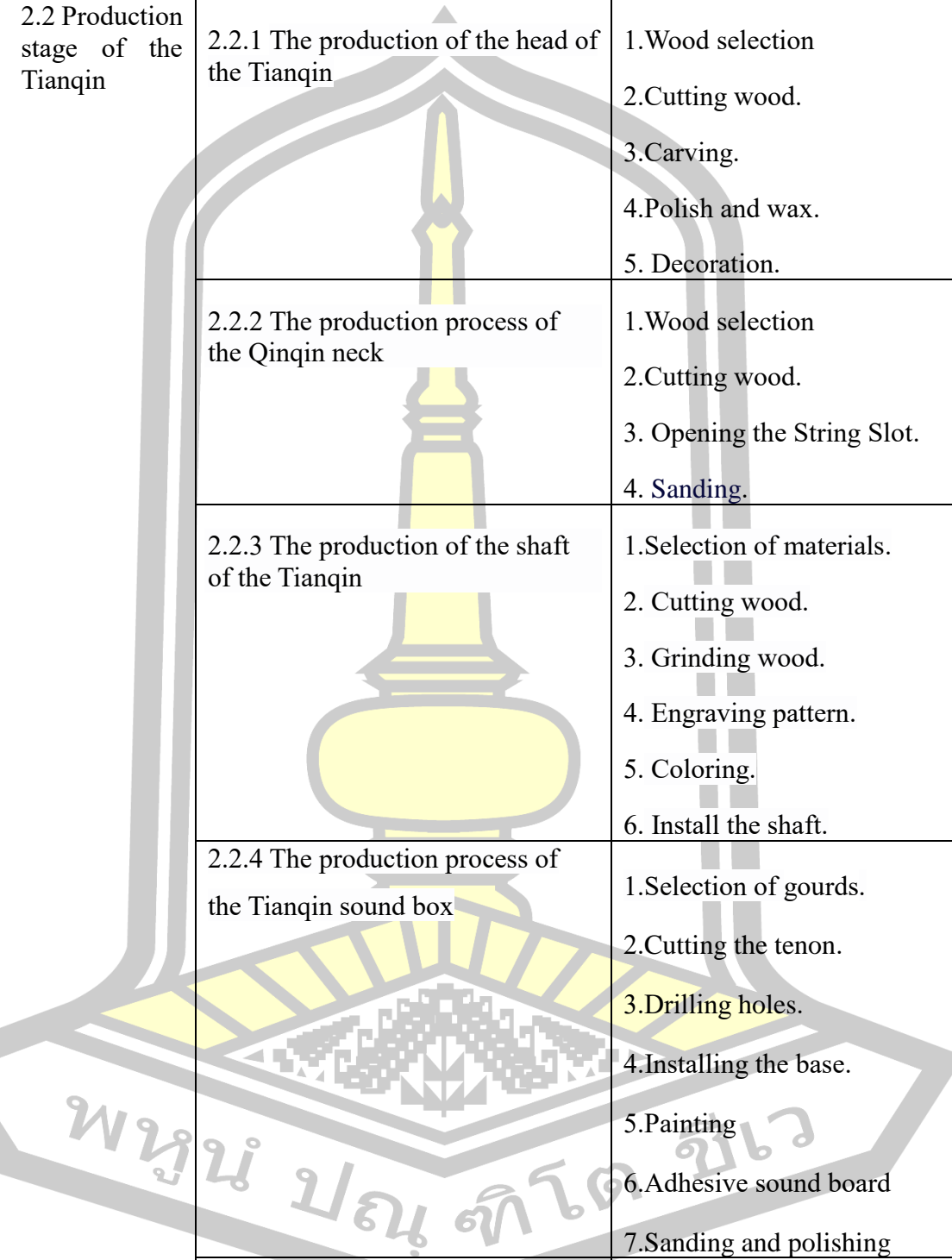
**Adjusting String Tension and Intonation:** Based on the test results, if the string tension is too high or too low, or if the intonation is not accurate, adjustments can be made accordingly. The string tension can be adjusted by turning the screws on the tuning pegs, increasing or decreasing the tightness of the screws. The intonation can be adjusted by moving the bridge up or down to change the effective length of the strings, thereby adjusting the pitch.

**Adjusting Bridge Position:** In addition to adjusting string tension and intonation, the position of the bridge can also be adjusted based on the test results. The position of the bridge affects the vibration of the strings and the transmission of sound, so it needs to be adjusted according to actual conditions. Try moving the bridge forward or backward, or changing its shape and material to achieve better tone and playing experience.

**Multiple Testing and Adjustments:** Testing and adjustment is an iterative process that may require multiple attempts to achieve optimal results. After each test, observe carefully and listen attentively to feedback, making targeted adjustments accordingly. This process requires patience and attention to detail to ensure that the sound quality and playing performance of the Tianqin reach their best state.

Table 3. The Production Process and Techniques of the Tianqin

Stage	Step	Descriptions
2.1 Preparation stage	2.1.1. Design and Planning	2.1.1.1 Design of the shape and size of the Tianqin 2.1.1.2 Decorative Element Design 2.1.1.3 Structural and Functional Design 2.1.1.4 Prototype Testing and Adjustment



Stage	Step	Descriptions
2.2 Production stage of the Tianqin	2.2.1 The production of the head of the Tianqin	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wood selection</li> <li>2. Cutting wood.</li> <li>3. Carving.</li> <li>4. Polish and wax.</li> <li>5. Decoration.</li> </ol>
	2.2.2 The production process of the Qinqin neck	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wood selection</li> <li>2. Cutting wood.</li> <li>3. Opening the String Slot.</li> <li>4. Sanding.</li> </ol>
	2.2.3 The production of the shaft of the Tianqin	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Selection of materials.</li> <li>2. Cutting wood.</li> <li>3. Grinding wood.</li> <li>4. Engraving pattern.</li> <li>5. Coloring.</li> <li>6. Install the shaft.</li> </ol>
	2.2.4 The production process of the Tianqin sound box	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Selection of gourds.</li> <li>2. Cutting the tenon.</li> <li>3. Drilling holes.</li> <li>4. Installing the base.</li> <li>5. Painting</li> <li>6. Adhesive sound board</li> <li>7. Sanding and polishing</li> </ol>
	2.2.5 Spray painting of Tianqin	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clean the Tianqin.</li> <li>2. Choosing the Right Paint</li> <li>3. Applying the Primer.</li> </ol>

Stage	Step	Descriptions
2.2 Production stage of the Tianqin	2.2.5 Spray painting of Tianqin	4. Applying the Color Coat 5. Applying the Gloss Coat 6. Drying and Sanding.
	2.2.6 Installation of Tianqin strings	1.Thread the strings. 2.Through the string holes in the base 3. Install Tianqin Bridge. 4.Tighten the shaft of Tianqin 5.Check the tuning of the Tianqin.
	2.2.7 Decorating the Tianqin Body	1.Carving. 2.Inlaying. 3.Varnishing.
	2.2.8 Testing and Adjustment of Tianqin	1.Preparation for Testing. 2.Testing Process. 3.Adjusting String Tension and Intonation. 4.Adjusting Bridge Position. 5.Multiple Testing and Adjustments.

### 3. The Evolution of Production Technology in Crafting of the Tianqin

#### 3.1 Innovation of the neck

Huabei Qin primarily innovated in two aspects of Tianqin's neck production: Firstly, there is an innovation in the material of the Tianqin's neck. Due to the Zhuang people in Longzhou believing that peach wood possesses exorcising properties, the traditional Tianqin's neck is made of peach wood. However, Huabei Qin made changes by utilizing strong and high-quality wood materials obtained from the demolition of old houses and the

purchase of new materials, such as *Excentrodendron hsienmu* and Mahogany, to create the Tianqin's neck. This change has enhanced the texture of the Tianqin pole. Secondly, there is an innovation in the method of connecting the Tianqin's neck. Traditionally, the Tianqin's neck is generally divided into two or three sections, which are usually disassembled for storage and reassembled for use. Huabei Qin's improvement is the connection of the Tianqin's neck in one section, eliminating the need for assembly. This modification makes the use of the Tianqin more convenient and easier to display in normal times.



Figure 31. The Innovative of the opening position of the Tianqin sound box

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in August 2023

### 3.2 Innovation of the soundbox.

There are two aspects of innovation in the production of Tianqin sound boxes. The first innovation is the innovation of the opening position of the Tianqin sound box. As shown in Figure 31. The traditional sound hole of the Tianqin sound box is located on the back of the sound box. Huabei Qin's innovation is to reposition the sound hole to the side of the sound box, solving two problems in the traditional sound hole of the Tianqin sound box. One is that the sound hole on the back of the box is prone to cracking, and the other is that the sound hole is close to the abdomen during playback, which affects the sound effect. The second innovation is the innovation of the materials used to make the Tianqin sound box. Most of the Tianqin sound boxes made by Huabei Qin use gourds as raw materials, which require long periods of air drying, carving, and polishing, and the cost is relatively high. Now he is



trying to use artificial composite materials on a small amount of Tianqin, which can greatly reduce production costs.



Figure 32. The traditional Longzhou Tianqin  
Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in August 2023



Figure 33. The Innovative Longzhou Tianqin  
Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in August 2023

### 3.3 Innovation of the string

The innovation in the production of the Tianqin's strings mainly manifests in two aspects. Firstly, there is the material of the Tianqin's strings. Traditional Tianqin's strings are made of cotton yarn, while Huabei Qin uses nylon strings, making the Tianqin's strings more practical and durable. Secondly, there is the number of Tianqin's strings. Traditional

Tianqin's strings are two, while Huabei Qin's Tianqin's strings can be made according to the needs of two or three strings. As shown in Figure 32-33.

### 3.4 Innovation in Sound Range

In terms of sound range, traditional Tianqin mainly focuses on playing whole tones, with limited use of semitones. This results in difficulties when adjusting tuning during performances and a narrower sound range. Huabei Qin's improved Tianqin, however, can play both semitones and whole, allo tones wing for easy tuning adjustments based on the needs of the performance, thus creating a more extensive range of sounds. Furthermore, by varying the size of the Tianqin's soundbox and drawing inspiration from the forms of western string instruments such as the violin, viola, cello, and double bass, Huabei Qin has successfully developed high-pitched Tianqin, medium-pitched Tianqin, low-pitched Tianqin, and even double-bass Tianqin. These innovations have significantly enhanced the adaptability and musical aesthetics of Tianqin performances.

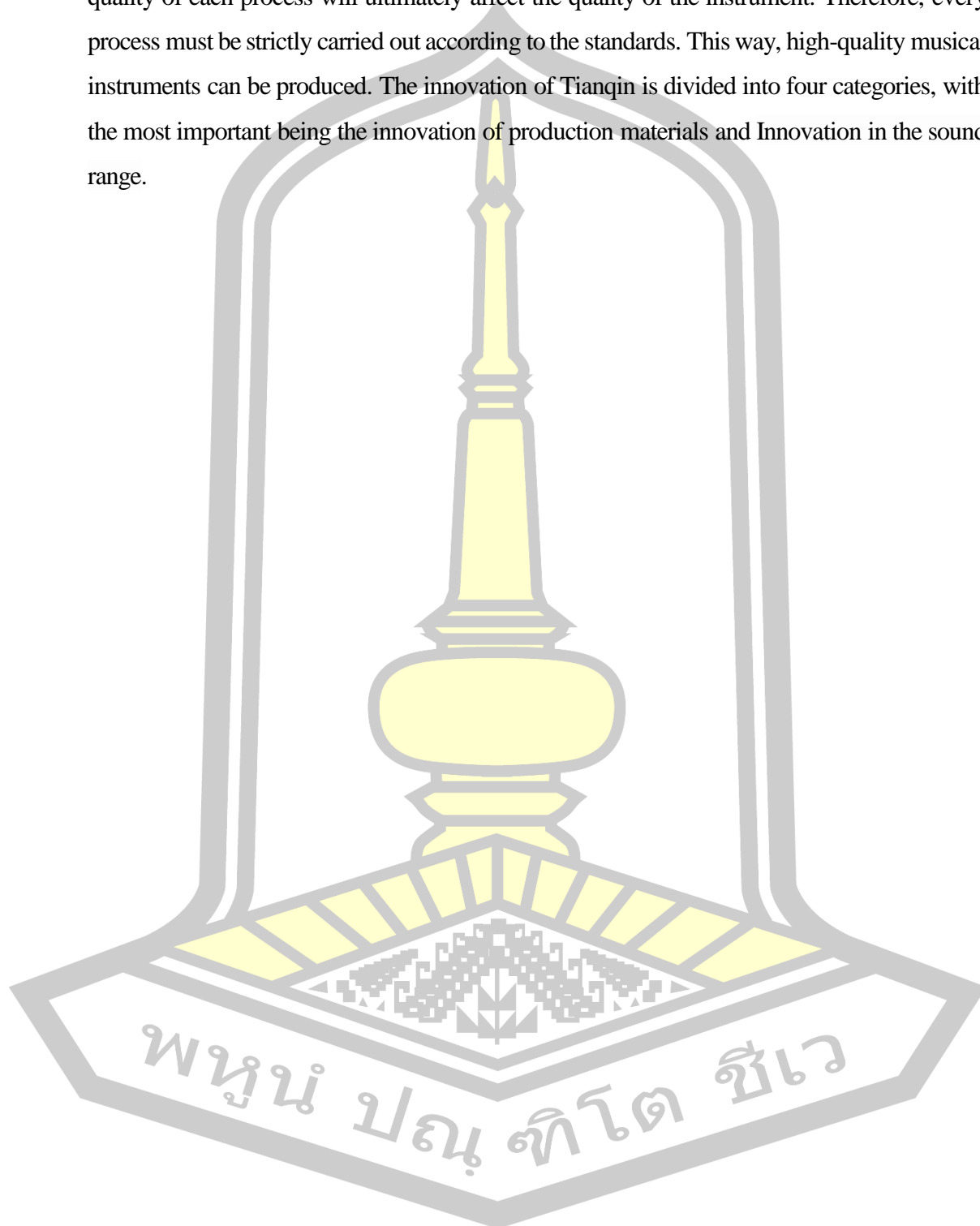
Table 4. The Evolution of Production Technology in Crafting the Tianqin

Types of innovation	Descriptions
3.1 Innovation of the neck	Changed the material and connection method of the Tianqin neck
3.2 Innovation of the soundbox	Changed the opening position and the material of the Tianqin sound box sound hole
3.3 Innovation of the string	Changed the materials used to make the strings and increased the number of strings
3.4 Innovation in the sound range	Expand the range of sound.

### Summary

This chapter mainly introduces the selection of materials, production process, and innovation of Longzhou Tianqin. The raw materials for making Tianqin are divided into four categories, and the selection of materials is crucial in the production of Tianqin. The production process of Tianqin includes 2 stages, 10 steps, and 48 detailed processes. Carving

and polishing are the most difficult because they require skilled manual operations. The quality of each process will ultimately affect the quality of the instrument. Therefore, every process must be strictly carried out according to the standards. This way, high-quality musical instruments can be produced. The innovation of Tianqin is divided into four categories, with the most important being the innovation of production materials and Innovation in the sound range.



## CHAPTER V

### The Techniques Utilized in Playing the Tianqin

This chapter includes interviews with scholars and performing artists who have been involved in the education and performance of the Tianqin for many years, as well as a review of relevant literature and historical archives. This chapter examines the playing methods and performance techniques of the Tianqin. The researcher found some representative works of Longzhou Tianqin and analyzed the playing techniques in combination with works. This chapter will discuss the techniques utilized of Tianqin from the following aspects:

1. The Range and Tuning of the Tianqin
2. The Performance Techniques of Tianqin
3. Performance Analysis of Representative Works of Tianqin

In response to the above issues, we specifically interviewed two key figures in the field of Longzhou Tianqin (a traditional Chinese instrument) performance. One is Professor Tingzhong Lü from the College of Arts at Guangxi Minzu Normal University, the author of China's first Tianqin textbook "Tianqin Performance Tutorial." The other is Haiyang Wei, a recipient of special talent funding from the China National Arts Fund, an inheritor of Zhuang ethnic original music, and a specially appointed Tianqin teacher and performer at Guangxi Arts Institute. Through these discussions on three aspects, we strive to further understand the basic performance techniques of Longzhou Tianqin, its forms of presentation, and the reasons behind these ideas. This will provide a scientific theoretical basis for future innovations in Tianqin performance techniques.

#### 1. The Range and Tuning of the Tianqin

Tianqin, a unique plucked instrument from Longzhou, Guangxi, is beloved by people for its broad range and distinctive timbre. In traditional Zhuang culture, Tianqin is not just a musical instrument, but also a carrier of cultural inheritance and emotional expression. Its range typically covers more than three octaves, allowing performers to evoke profound resonance in the low range and produce crisp and melodious melodies in the high range.

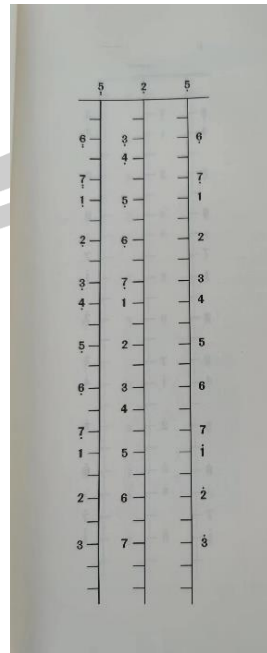


Figure 34. The tuning chart of Tianqin

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in August 2023

In terms of tuning: As shown in Figure 34, Tianqin demonstrates diversity and flexibility. According to an interview with key informant Tingzhong Lü. The tuning method of the pentatonic scale, which arranges the five pitch classes of Gong, Shang, Jue, Zhi, and Yu, reflects the basic characteristics of Zhuang music and enables it to produce melodies with strong local flavors. Meanwhile, the tuning of the heptatonic scale expands the range of music that can be played on Tianqin, making it adaptable to a wider range of musical styles, including Han music.

During the actual performance, performers often adjust the tightness of the strings according to the specific mode of the music or their own performance intentions, thereby altering the pitch. This tuning technique requires performers to not only be familiar with the structure of the instrument, but also possess solid musical theory knowledge. By mastering the tuning skills, performers can explore richer musical possibilities while preserving the unique characteristics of Tianqin music.

## 2. The Performance Techniques of Tianqin

For Tianqin players, mastering basic playing skills is the key to expressing the charm of music. These skills cover right-hand plucking, left-hand pressing strings, and the posture of playing Tianqin. According to interviews with the General informant Haiyang Wei (interview, December 25, 2023), The playing techniques of Tianqin are as follows:

**Right-hand plucking skills:** In the performance of Tianqin, the right hand is mainly responsible for creating musical notes. The thumb is usually used to pluck the low-pitched strings, producing a full and powerful sound. The index finger, middle finger, and ring finger take turns to pluck the strings, creating a clear and bright tone. Wheel finger is an advanced form of right-hand skills. Through rapid finger movements to continuously hit the strings, it creates a smooth and continuous melody, which is an indispensable skill for playing singing melodies. In addition, by varying the position and strength of the plucking, the player can shape different tones and volumes, adding expressiveness to the music.

**Left-hand pressing string skills:** The use of the left hand in playing is equally important. It controls the pitch and timbre changes of the notes by pressing and sliding the strings. Sliding is achieved by pressing the strings at different positions and quickly moving the fingers, a technique often used to connect two notes that are far apart, creating a smooth transition effect. Vibrato is produced by quickly and slightly vibrating the fingers touching the strings, adding a subtle vibration to the music. Bending is achieved by carefully adjusting the pressure of the fingers on the strings to raise or lower the pitch by half or whole steps, giving the music more expressiveness and depth.

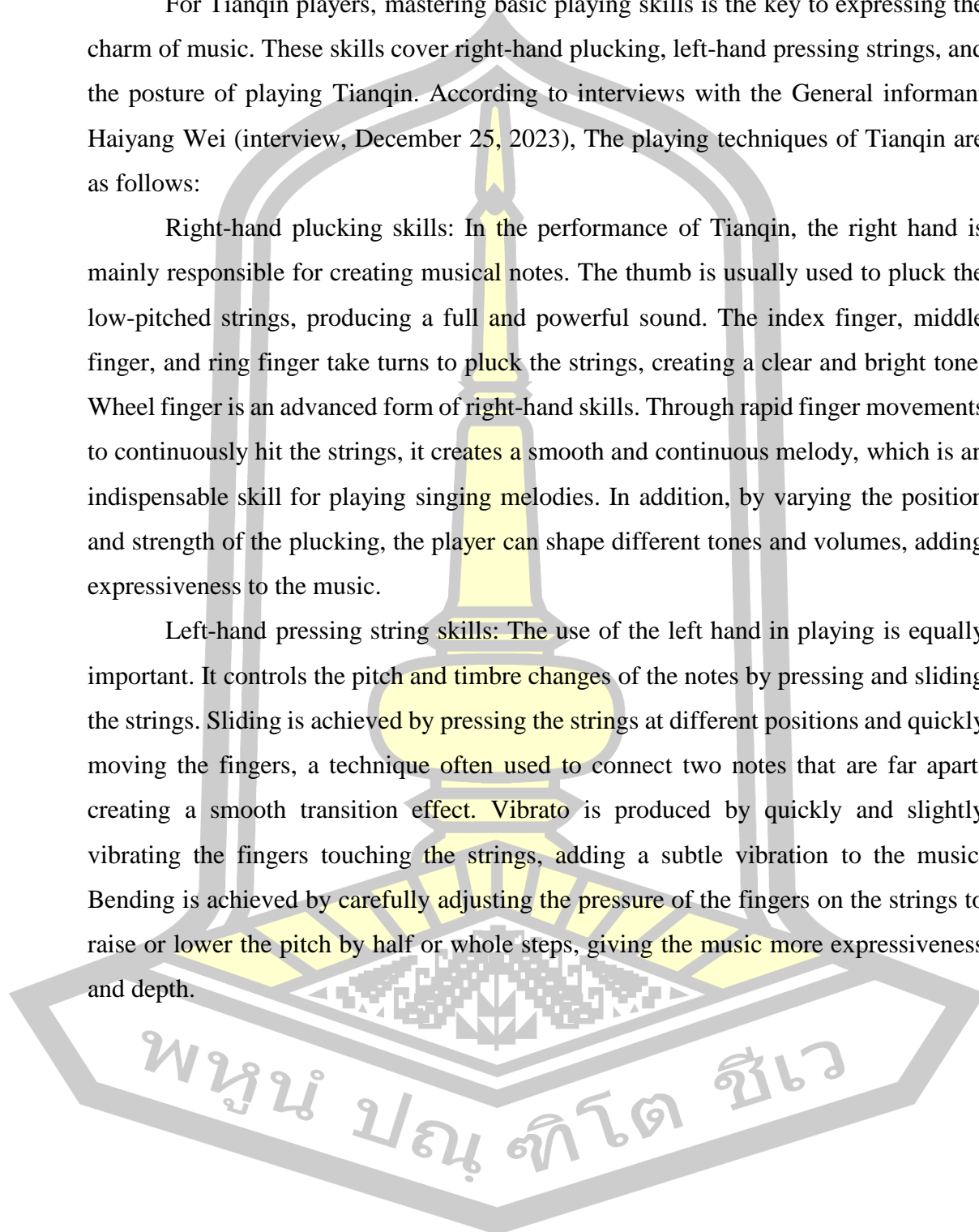






Figure 35. Sitting

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in December 2023



Figure 36. Standing

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in December 2023

Posture for playing Tianqin: To ensure smooth playing, having the correct posture is fundamental. There are two postures that can be taken when playing Tianqin: sitting or standing. When playing in a sitting position, the neck of the Tianqin is placed diagonally across the chest, with the soundbox resting on the right leg or outside. The head of the Tianqin is tilted at a 45° angle to the upper left corner. As shown in Figure 35. When playing in a standing position, the shoulder strap is tied around the waist, with the neck of the Tianqin sloping across the chest and the head tilted to the left. The left hand holds the Tianqin to press the strings, while the right hand often forms a three-point support with the thumb, middle finger, and ring finger, pressing on both sides of the soundboard or using a pick to pluck the strings. As shown in Figure 36.

Table 5. Playing Symbol of the Tianqin

Symbol	Name	Descriptions
	Yi Xian	Play on first string
	Er Xian	Play on second string
	San Xian	Play on third string
	Kong xian	Playing without pressing the strings
	Tan	Use the pick or fingers to play the strings from top to bottom and in an angle
	Tiao	Use the pick or fingers to play the strings from bottom to top and in an angle
	Tan shuang	Play the two adjacent strings
	Kuai Jia tan	Rapid and continuous small movements with fingers to flick and pluck the strings
	Strumming	Use a pick or your fingers to play two or three strings at the same time, from top to bottom and diagonally downwards.
	Arpeggio	Use pick or fingers to play all the strings in succession
	Xia hua yin	Slide from high pitched to low pitched
	Shang hua yin	Slide from low pitched to high pitched
	Index finger	Play with index finger
	Middle finger	Play with middle finger
	Ring finger	Play with ring finger
	Little thumb	Play with little thumb finger

### 3. Performance Analysis of Representative Works of Tianqin

In the performance history of Longzhou Tianqin, many classic works have emerged. In this section, the researcher select several distinctive pieces of music as analysis cases for Tianqin performance.

#### Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge

Transcription by Xinyang Chen



Figure 37. Excerpt of "Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge"

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)

#### 3.1 Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge

Liang Shaowu wrote the lyrics and Nong Lisheng composed the " Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge ". In 2002, it was arranged by Lao Zai and performed by the famous Zhuang singer Wei Wei at the Nanning International Folk Song Art Festival. Since its inception 20 years ago, this work has taken advantage of the wings of the Nanning International Folk Song Art Festival and has become a beautiful "sound landscape" in Zhuang Township (a sound worth appreciating and remembering from a cultural and aesthetic perspective).

### 3.1.1 The artistic characteristics of Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge.

#### 壮族敬酒歌

Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge

贝呀侬哎/客人来到家门口咧/敬上三碗迎客酒/米酒香醇山歌唱/壮家情意

捧呀捧在手

*Bee ah nong ai / When guests arrive at our doorstep / We offer three bowls to welcome them / Rice wine is fragrant, and mountain songs are sung / Zhuang hospitality is held in our hands*

贝呀侬哎/山歌出口不能收咧/杯中有酒不能留/酒满敬客我先喝/一点一滴

也呀也不漏

*Bee ah nong ai / Once you start singing, you can't stop / If there's wine in the cup, don't leave any behind / I drink first to honor the guests / Not a drop will be missed or left*

The lyrics and music of the Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge are flying and widely circulated. It is presented on stage and in various forms, including popular, ethnic, and group singing, drifting from the mountains to the city, and then to the whole country and the world. This song is timeless, just like a jar of old wine brewed in the sea of songs. As a new folk song, its lyrics and melody have obvious Zhuang ethnic characteristics. For thousands of years, Zhuang language has been passed down in daily life and mountain songs. In 1957, the Latin alphabet pinyin script was used as the written language. When she stepped out of the mountain songs and entered the modern world of lyrics, it was like Zhuang young men and girls wearing beautiful ethnic costumes entering the city, and the phrase "Beinong ah" was still authentic! In Zhuang language, "Beinong" means old, "Nong" means young, and "Beinong" can mean "brother sisters", or "brother" or "sisters", generally referring to relatives. "Beinong Ai" here is not only calling for relatives to toast guests, but also treating guests as if they were relatives - "family, guests, family.". The distinguished guests coming from afar are all brothers and sisters who can sing and dance together in the eyes of the Zhuang people. They are also the expression of the warm hospitality of the Zhuang people. The happiness, interest and joy of the Zhuang people are vividly expressed in the toast

songs. With the words "ah", "ah" and "li", the folk customs come to us. The enthusiasm and open and inclusive attitude of the Zhuang people appear so friendly and beautiful in the toast song.

### 3.1.2 The musical features of Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge

Traditional Zhuang Elderly Full Song Form: " Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge " is performed in the traditional Zhuang Elderly Full Song form, which is a specific song at Zhuang village banquets.

Distinctive rhythm: Its melody and rhythm have distinct characteristics, making the entire song have both a sense of rhythm and the function of expressing emotions and emotions.

Clear theme of lyrics: The lyrics are themed around toasting and singing, and the song often includes content such as setting the stage, expressing welcome, celebrating the beauty of the jade, etc. These contents make the theme of the song clear, expressing the love and joy of the Zhuang people for life.

Smooth melody: The melody is smooth and easy to sing, making " Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge " loved and sung by the vast Zhuang people.

Overall, the musical features of " Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge " reflect the unique charm and cultural connotations of Zhuang music, and are an important component of Zhuang music culture.

### 3.1.3 Performance analysis of Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge

#### 3.1.3.1 Plucking technique

When playing the " Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge ", plucking skills are crucial. The plucking technique of the Tianqin requires the performer to master the correct fingering and intensity to ensure the purity of the timbre and the smoothness of the melody. During the plucking process, special attention should be paid to volume control in order to show subtle emotional changes in different segments.

#### 3.1.3.2 Sliding technique

Sliding sound is one of the characteristics of the Zhuang Tianqin, and the use of sliding sound in the Zhuang Tribe Toast Song enriches the emotional expression of the music. Performers need to demonstrate the ups and downs of melody and emotional transitions by sliding the strings. The use of sliding notes should be in line with the emotions of the song to enhance its infectiousness.

### 3.1.3.3 Rhythm and beat

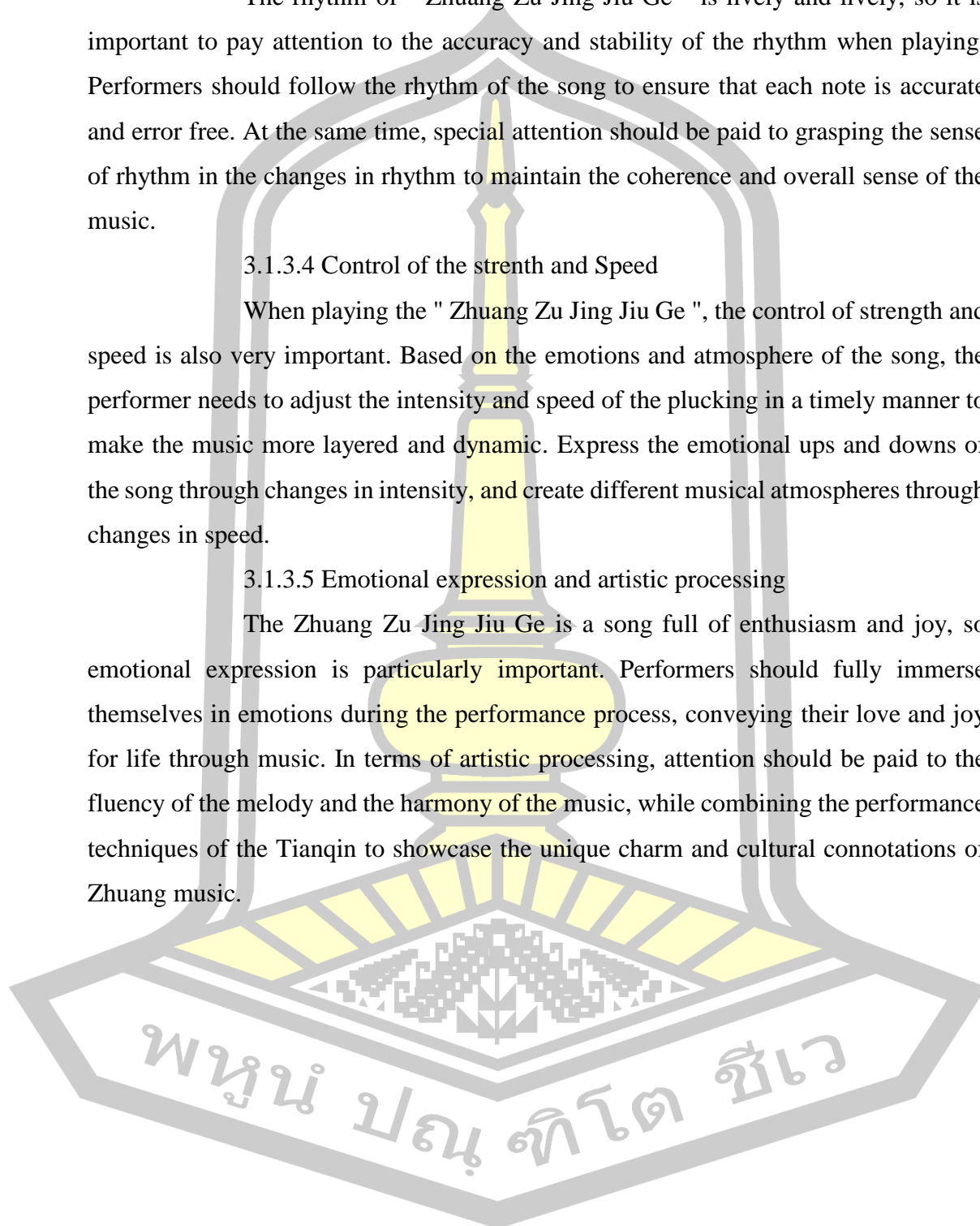
The rhythm of " Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge " is lively and lively, so it is important to pay attention to the accuracy and stability of the rhythm when playing. Performers should follow the rhythm of the song to ensure that each note is accurate and error free. At the same time, special attention should be paid to grasping the sense of rhythm in the changes in rhythm to maintain the coherence and overall sense of the music.

### 3.1.3.4 Control of the strenth and Speed

When playing the " Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge ", the control of strength and speed is also very important. Based on the emotions and atmosphere of the song, the performer needs to adjust the intensity and speed of the plucking in a timely manner to make the music more layered and dynamic. Express the emotional ups and downs of the song through changes in intensity, and create different musical atmospheres through changes in speed.

### 3.1.3.5 Emotional expression and artistic processing

The Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge is a song full of enthusiasm and joy, so emotional expression is particularly important. Performers should fully immerse themselves in emotions during the performance process, conveying their love and joy for life through music. In terms of artistic processing, attention should be paid to the fluency of the melody and the harmony of the music, while combining the performance techniques of the Tianqin to showcase the unique charm and cultural connotations of Zhuang music.





## Huashan Ying Ke Ge

Transcription by Xinyang Chen



Figure 38. Excerpt of "Huashan Ying Ke Ge"

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)

### 3.2 Huashan Ying Ke Ge

"Huashan Welcome Song" is a song with rich Zhuang ethnic customs, mainly circulated in the Ningming area of Guangxi. The song is set against the backdrop of Huashan, with lyrics created in the original Zhuang language. The melody blends the charm of local mountain songs and immortal qin, showcasing a unique regional music style. This song, with its passionate atmosphere and cheerful and enthusiastic style, fully showcases the warm hospitality, open tolerance, simplicity and kindness of the children of Huashan, as well as their sincere praise for a better life.

### 3.2.1 The artistic characteristics of Huashan Ying Ke Ge.

The original language: The lyrics are entirely in the original Zhuang language at the foot of Huashan, directly presenting the local language characteristics, allowing people to have a deeper understanding and experience of the local culture and customs.

The local color of the melody: The melody is rich in the charm of local folk songs and immortal qin. This highly distinctive music form brings people a different auditory enjoyment, making them feel like they are on that beautiful land.

Exciting and atmospheric atmosphere: The melody is passionate and atmospheric, displaying a passionate atmosphere that makes people feel the warm hospitality and longing for a better life of the children of Huashan.

A cheerful and enthusiastic style: The melody is cheerful and enthusiastic, allowing people to feel the open and inclusive, simple and kind qualities of the children of Huashan, as well as sincere praise for a better life.

Overall, the song " Huashan Ying Ke Ge " showcases the warm hospitality, open tolerance, simplicity, kindness, and sincere admiration for a better life of Huashan people with its unique artistic characteristics.

### 3.2.2 The musical features of " Huashan Ying Ke Ge ":

Single part form: The musical structure of this song is relatively simple and belongs to the single part form. It does not have complex melodic changes and transitions, and overall maintains a relatively consistent style and rhythm.

Repetitive melody: There is a lot of repetition and variation in the melody, and by repeatedly using certain core melodies or phrases, the song becomes more memorable and expressive.

Rhythm: In terms of musical form, the rhythm is lively and lively, giving people a feeling of joy and enthusiasm, echoing the welcoming and joyful emotions conveyed by the song.

Obvious local characteristics: The melody incorporates elements such as local folk songs and immortal qin, showcasing strong regional characteristics, which is also a major feature of the song.

Simple Harmony: In terms of harmony, this song usually uses relatively simple harmonies to highlight the expressive power of the main melody.

These musical features together constitute the unique local music style of "Huashan Ying Ke Ge", making it a beautiful scenery in the Huashan region.

### 3.2.3 Performance analysis of Huashan Ying Ke Ge

#### 3.2.3.1 Performance techniques

**Plucking technique:** As a traditional instrument of the Zhuang ethnic group, the Tianqin has unique playing techniques. When playing "Huashan Ying Ke Ge", the performer needs to master the correct plucking techniques to make the melody smooth and natural. When plucking, the strength and angle of the fingers should be controlled to produce a clear and bright sound.

**Sliding technique:** The sliding technique of Tianqin is one of its characteristics. When playing "Huashan Ying Ke Ge", the emotional and charm of the song can be expressed through the reasonable use of sliding notes. The use of sliding notes should be adjusted appropriately according to the melody and rhythm of the song to achieve the best sound effect.

**Treble technique:** The tremolo technique of the Tianqin is another characteristic of it. When playing "Huashan Ying Ke Ge", the reasonable use of vibrato can make the song more expressive and infectious. The use of vibrato should be adjusted appropriately based on the emotions and atmosphere of the song to achieve the best musical effect.

#### 3.2.3.2 Rhythm and beat

**Rhythm expression:** In "Huashan Ying Ke Ge", rhythm expression is very important. Performers need to master the rhythm of the song and express the emotions and atmosphere of the song through reasonable rhythm changes. When playing, attention should be paid to the accuracy and stability of the rhythm to make the overall effect of the song more perfect.

**Beat selection:** When playing "Huashan Ying Ke Ge", choosing the appropriate beat is very important. Choosing an appropriate beat based on the emotions and style of the song can better express the connotation and characteristics of the song. On the basis of mastering the basic rhythm, performers should flexibly use the changes in rhythm to enhance the expressive power of the song.

### 3.2.3.3 Control of force and speed

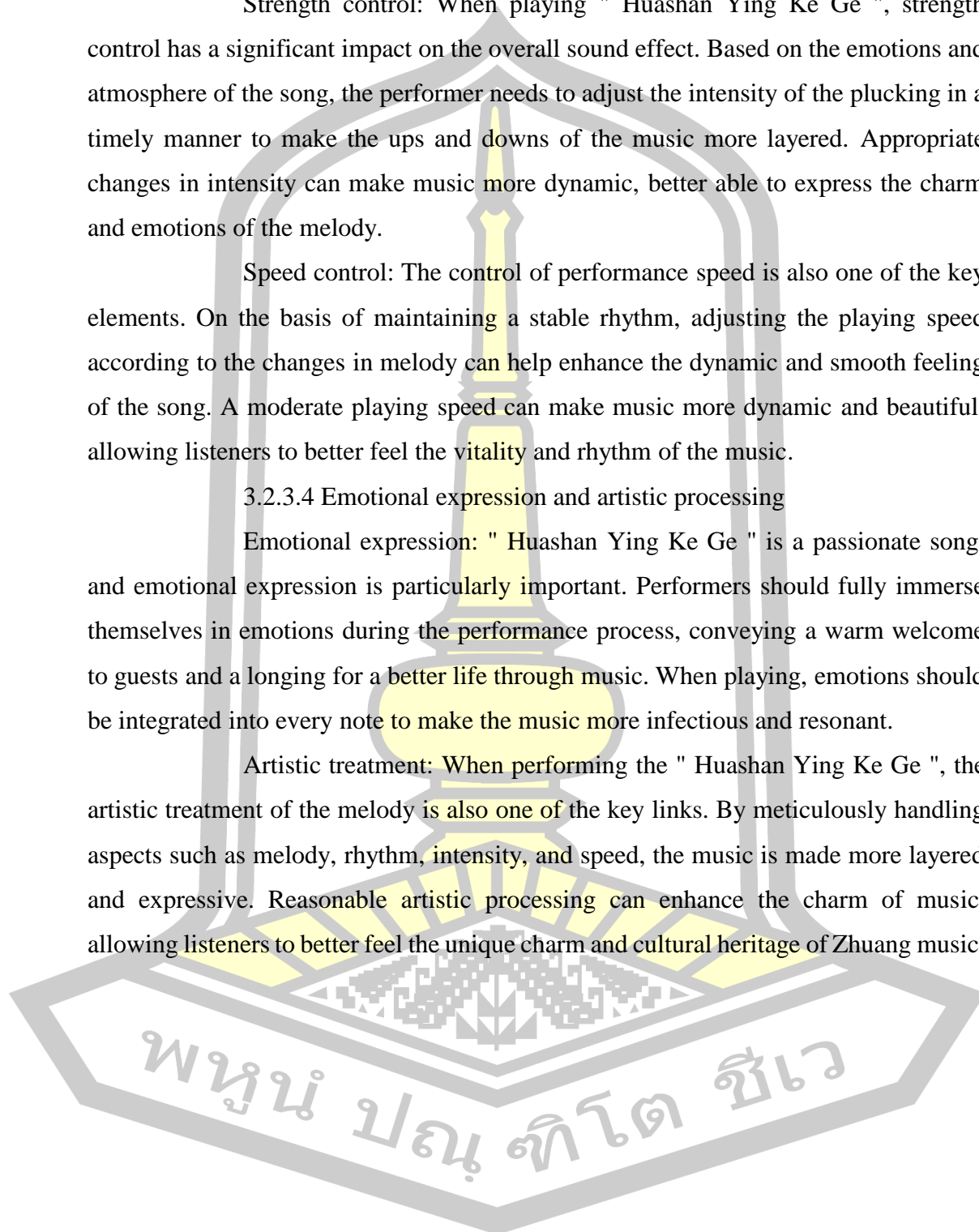
**Strength control:** When playing " Huashan Ying Ke Ge ", strength control has a significant impact on the overall sound effect. Based on the emotions and atmosphere of the song, the performer needs to adjust the intensity of the plucking in a timely manner to make the ups and downs of the music more layered. Appropriate changes in intensity can make music more dynamic, better able to express the charm and emotions of the melody.

**Speed control:** The control of performance speed is also one of the key elements. On the basis of maintaining a stable rhythm, adjusting the playing speed according to the changes in melody can help enhance the dynamic and smooth feeling of the song. A moderate playing speed can make music more dynamic and beautiful, allowing listeners to better feel the vitality and rhythm of the music.

### 3.2.3.4 Emotional expression and artistic processing

**Emotional expression:** " Huashan Ying Ke Ge " is a passionate song, and emotional expression is particularly important. Performers should fully immerse themselves in emotions during the performance process, conveying a warm welcome to guests and a longing for a better life through music. When playing, emotions should be integrated into every note to make the music more infectious and resonant.

**Artistic treatment:** When performing the " Huashan Ying Ke Ge ", the artistic treatment of the melody is also one of the key links. By meticulously handling aspects such as melody, rhythm, intensity, and speed, the music is made more layered and expressive. Reasonable artistic processing can enhance the charm of music, allowing listeners to better feel the unique charm and cultural heritage of Zhuang music.



## Fang Yan

Transcription by Xinyang Chen



Figure 39. Excerpt of " Fang Yan "

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)

### 3.3 Fang Yan

The Tianqin piece "Fang yan" is a poetic and emotional musical work that has been widely praised for its unique performance techniques and musical style. This piece of music was created by a famous composer in a certain year and is a typical Zhuang ethnic music, mainly using the traditional instrument of Tianqin.

This song is themed around geese, showcasing the beautiful posture and emotional connotations of geese flying in the sky through rich musical elements and emotional expressions. The performer uses techniques such as sliding and plucking of the Tianqin to vividly depict the flight and emotional changes of the geese, bringing an immersive feeling to the audience.

### 3.3.1 The artistic characteristics of “Fang Yan”.

**Unique instrument timbre:** The timbre of the Tianqin is unique, high pitched and bright, giving people a feeling of ethereal. In the song " Fang Yan ", the timbre of the Tianqin is fully displayed, creating a unique atmosphere for the repertoire.

**Rich emotional expression:** The song " Fang Yan " expresses deep emotions through rich musical elements and techniques. From the gentle beginning to the passionate climax, and then to the melodious ending, the audience can feel the deep emotions contained in the song.

**Exquisite Rhythm Design:** The rhythm design of this piece is very exquisite, combining traditional elements with modern innovation. By alternating between fast and slow rhythms and varying strengths and weaknesses, the tracks are made more layered and dynamic.

**Rich ethnic flavor:** As a traditional instrument of the Zhuang ethnic group, the Tianqin fully showcases its ethnic characteristics in the song " Fang Yan ". Both the melody and performance techniques are full of strong Zhuang ethnic customs, showcasing the charm of Zhuang music.

**Perfect artistic fusion:** The song " Fang Yan " perfectly blends the performance techniques of the Tianqin with modern musical elements, maintaining both the charm of traditional music and incorporating elements of modern music, bringing a new artistic experience to the audience.

### 3.2.2 The musical features of "Fang Yan”

**Three section structure:** This piece adopts the common three section structure, which is composed of three relatively independent sections. The first paragraph is usually an introduction, serving to introduce the theme; The second paragraph is the core part of the music, with a beautiful melody and full of emotions; The third paragraph is the conclusion, which concludes and summarizes the entire song.

**Using Tune:** In the song "Release the Wild Goose," the performer often enriches the color and layering of the music through tone modulation. By using different tones in different parts of the music, the entire piece becomes more varied and dynamic.



The use of sliding technique: The sliding technique of Tianqin is widely used in the song "Fang Yan". Through the use of glides, performers can express the flight of geese and various emotions, making the music more vivid and vivid.

Diverse Rhythm Changes: The rhythm of this piece is very diverse, with both slow melodies and fast rhythms. This change in rhythm corresponds to the flight of geese and emotional changes, making the song more emotionally expressive.

Smooth and Natural Melody: The melody of the entire piece is smooth and natural, giving people a relaxed and joyful feeling. The melodic lines are clear and the harmony is rich, making the track more artistic and infectious

### 3.3.3 Performance analysis of Fang Yan

#### 3.3.3.1 Performance techniques

Sliding technique: In the song "Fang Yan", the application of sliding technique is crucial. Performers need to use glide techniques to express the flight of geese and various emotions, making the music more vivid and vivid. The use of glissandi should correspond to the ups and downs of the melody and the changes in emotions, in order to enhance the emotional expression of the music.

plucking technique: The plucking technique of the Tianqin is the foundation, and the performer needs to master the correct fingering and strength to ensure the purity of the timbre and the smoothness of the melody. In the song " Fang Yan ", the use of plucking techniques requires special attention to volume control, in order to express subtle emotional changes in different segments.

Tune transfer technique: During the performance process, the application of tone transfer technique can enrich the color and layering of music. Performers need to choose the appropriate tonality based on the changes in the melody to maintain the coherence and overall sense of the music. When switching, it is important to maintain a natural and smooth flow to avoid any abrupt sensations.

#### 3.3.3.2 Music expression

Emotional expression: The emotions expressed in the song " Fang Yan " are deep and complex, requiring the performer to deeply understand the emotional connotations of the music and interpret it with their own understanding and feelings. Through rich musical elements and techniques, convey the deep emotions contained in the music to the audience.

**Rhythm sense:** In the performance process, grasping the rhythm sense is crucial. Performers need to adjust the rhythm according to the changes in the melody, making the music more layered and dynamic. At the same time, attention should be paid to the accuracy and stability of rhythm to ensure the integrity and fluency of the music.

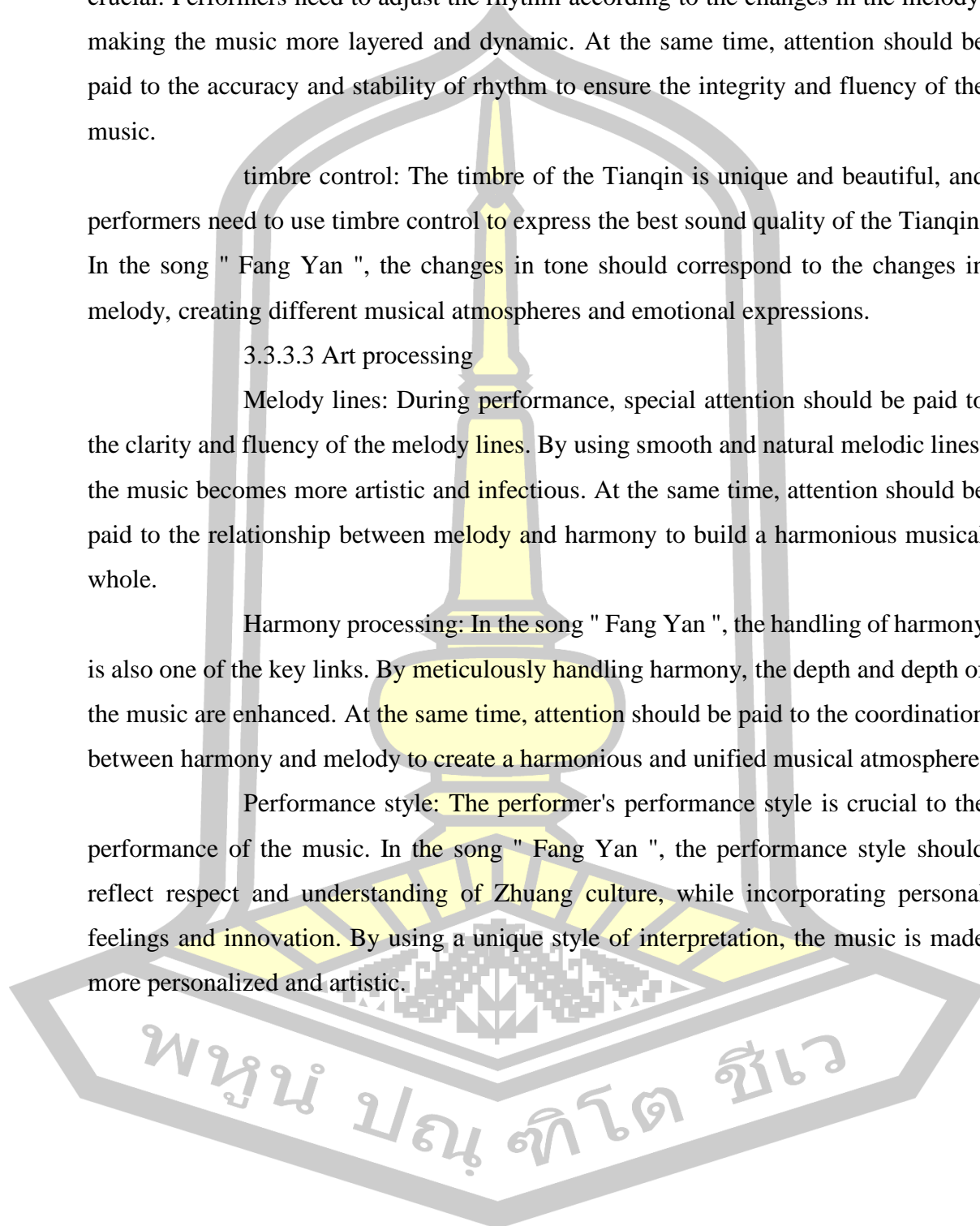
**timbre control:** The timbre of the Tianqin is unique and beautiful, and performers need to use timbre control to express the best sound quality of the Tianqin. In the song " Fang Yan ", the changes in tone should correspond to the changes in melody, creating different musical atmospheres and emotional expressions.

### 3.3.3.3 Art processing

**Melody lines:** During performance, special attention should be paid to the clarity and fluency of the melody lines. By using smooth and natural melodic lines, the music becomes more artistic and infectious. At the same time, attention should be paid to the relationship between melody and harmony to build a harmonious musical whole.

**Harmony processing:** In the song " Fang Yan ", the handling of harmony is also one of the key links. By meticulously handling harmony, the depth and depth of the music are enhanced. At the same time, attention should be paid to the coordination between harmony and melody to create a harmonious and unified musical atmosphere.

**Performance style:** The performer's performance style is crucial to the performance of the music. In the song " Fang Yan ", the performance style should reflect respect and understanding of Zhuang culture, while incorporating personal feelings and innovation. By using a unique style of interpretation, the music is made more personalized and artistic.



### 3.4 " Inviting Immortals "

#### Yao Xian Qu

Transcription by Xinyang Chen



Figure 40. Excerpt of "Yao Xian Qu"

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)

Yao Xian Qu (also known as "Inviting God Tune" and "Inviting Ancestor Gong Tune" in prayers) hides a beautiful legend in its music. Legend has it that in ancient times, there were two young and beautiful young people among the "Pianren", Nongduan and Nongya, known as "Duanya". They could sing and play the Tianqin well, bringing joy to people and were loved by the Zhuang people. Later, Nongduan transformed into a golden dragon, and Nongya transformed into a golden phoenix, both ascending to heaven. Some people refer to them as "immortal singers and dancers". Every year from the first to the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, Tianpo plays the "Inviting Immortals Song" to invite immortals to descend to earth and play with the people.

#### 3.4.1 The artistic characteristics of " Yao Xian Qu "

The Tianqin piece " Yao Xian Qu " inherits the characteristics of traditional Chinese instrumental music that are compared on a unified basis, but it also has obvious uniqueness, which is that the entire music is integrated, the boundaries between paragraphs are blurred, and there are no obvious sentence readings; The development of two main tones and the use of backbone notes as the basis for paragraph development go beyond the role of concluding notes. The reason why music has the above

characteristics is related to its use in ritual activities to compensate for the performance of separable music and the process of ritual activities. The performance of music accompanies the progress of ritual activities, and when the ritual activities end, the music also ends immediately. It is precisely for this reason that the music presents its unique characteristics, and it can be said that the structural characteristics of music are closely related to its underlying culture

#### 3.4.2 The musical features of " Yao Xian Qu "

The structure of the music is in the form of variations, inheriting the characteristics of traditional Chinese instrumental music that are compared on a unified basis. The overall trend of the theme melody is from the midrange “sol” to the bass, with two tones developing and forming. According to the material composition, it can be divided into two parts. At the junction of the two tones, there is a middle tone as a transition, so that the structure is integrated without obvious sentence division. Its variation also inherits this feature, and avoids complete repetition of the beginning and end tones and internal structure. It not only has the same tone, but also creates differences through different rhythms, forming contrast. In the process of composition, composers can say that they create ambiguity in clarity. Variational music is easy to find its source in the theme or previous paragraphs, but it is also similar but different, and there is a lack of obvious rest or long notes between the theme and variation, As a basis for paragraph division, the entire piece gives a sense of coherence. This can be said to be the uniqueness of the song and a reflection of the uniqueness of local music culture

#### 3.4.3 Performance analysis of " Yao Xian Qu "

##### 3.4.3.1 Performance techniques

String control: In " Yao Xian Qu ", the string control of the Tianqin is crucial. Performers need to master proficient fingering and intensity to ensure the purity of the tone and the smoothness of the melody. During performance, attention should be paid to the vibration of the strings and the stability of pitch to achieve the best sound quality effect.

Slipping technique: Slipping technique has an important application in " Yao Xian Qu ". By using glides in appropriate positions, the emotions and atmosphere in the music can be expressed, making the piece more vivid and vivid. The use of

glissandi should correspond to the changes in melody to enhance the emotional expression of the music.

**Rhythm sense:** In the performance process, grasping the rhythm sense is crucial. Performers need to adjust the rhythm according to the changes in the melody, making the music more layered and dynamic. At the same time, attention should be paid to the accuracy and stability of rhythm to ensure the integrity and fluency of the music.

**Performance style:** The performer's performance style is crucial to the performance of the music. In " Yao Xian Qu ", the performance style should reflect respect and understanding of traditional culture, while incorporating personal feelings and innovation. By using a unique style of interpretation, the music is made more personalized and artistic.

#### 3.4.3.2 Music expression

**Emotional expression:** The emotions expressed in the song " Yao Xian Qu " are deep and complex, requiring the performer to deeply understand the emotional connotations of the music and interpret it with their own understanding and feelings. Through rich musical elements and techniques, convey the deep emotions contained in the track to the audience.

**Music atmosphere:** The song " Yao Xian Qu " creates a mysterious and profound atmosphere through music. Performers need to use the unique timbre and performance techniques of the Tianqin to fully showcase this atmosphere and immerse the audience in the emotions and atmosphere of the music.

**Musical Image:** The song " Yao Xian Qu " creates an extraordinary and extraordinary musical image, expressing a fairyland like feeling through the use of Tianqin's performance techniques and musical elements. Performers need to have a deep understanding of the characteristics and requirements of this musical image in order to appropriately express it.

#### 3.4.3.3 Art processing

**Melody lines:** During performance, special attention should be paid to the clarity and fluency of the melody lines. By using smooth and natural melodic lines, the music becomes more artistic and infectious. At the same time, attention should be

paid to the relationship between melody and harmony to build a harmonious musical whole.

**Harmony processing:** In the song " Yao Xian Qu ", harmony processing is also one of the key links. By meticulously handling harmony, the depth and depth of the music are enhanced. At the same time, attention should be paid to the coordination between harmony and melody to create a harmonious and unified musical atmosphere.

**Artistic conception creation:** In the song " Yao Xian Qu ", the creation of artistic conception is also very important. Performers need to express an extraordinary, mysterious and profound artistic conception through music, so that the audience can feel the emotions and connotations contained in the music. At the same time, attention should be paid to the coordination and consistency between music and artistic conception to ensure that the overall effect of the music reaches the best state.

#### Chang Tian Yao

Transcription by Xinyang Chen

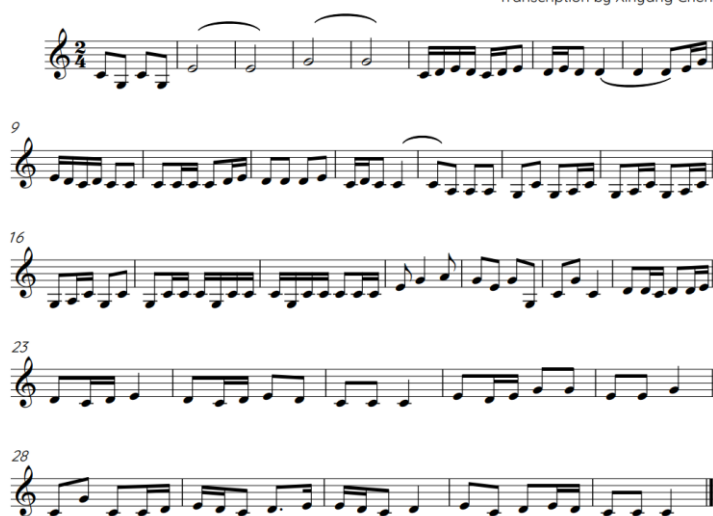


Figure 41. Excerpt of " Chang Tian Yao "

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)



### 3.5 " Chang Tian Yao "

" Chang Tian Yao " is a song played and sung by the Zhuang ethnic group's Tianqin, discovered by Liang Shaowu and Mr. Fan Ximu while collecting wind in the fields. The original style of playing and singing the Tianqin in this work fascinated Liang Shaowu. They decided to start with the ancient instrument Tianqin, and based on the original style of playing and singing the Tianqin, they sorted and processed it, adapted and innovated it, making its content and form sublimated. This song takes the singer as the first person and showcases the traditions and culture of the Zhuang people by describing their lives and scenes of playing the Tianqin. At the same time, the lyrics and rhymes are neat, catchy, and the language is plain and natural, simple and fresh, greatly improving the popularity of the work. In addition, the combination of 15 young and beautiful girls adds a sense of modernity to this work. Compared to the original natural Tianqin self playing and self singing, the form of the women's group is more likely to attract public attention and is more in line with public aesthetics, which is beneficial for the promotion and dissemination of traditional folk music.

#### 3.5.1 The artistic characteristics of " Chang Tian Yao "

The combination of original and modern elements: " Chang Tian Yao " integrates modern music elements while maintaining the original singing style of the Tianqin, such as using women's groups and innovating in arrangement and singing techniques, making the work both traditional charm and modern vitality and innovation.

The richness of emotional expression: This piece unfolds in first person self narration, expressing deep nostalgia and nostalgia for traditional culture by describing the lives of Zhuang people and the scenes of Tianqin playing and singing. The lyrics are simple and fresh in language, with sincere emotions that can resonate with the audience.

The uniqueness of Tianqin: Tianqin is a traditional instrument of the Zhuang ethnic group, with unique timbre and playing techniques. " Chang Tian Yao " fully utilizes these characteristics of the Tianqin, showcasing the traditional culture and musical charm of the Zhuang ethnic group through its performance and singing.

The sense of mission in spreading ethnic culture: The creation and promotion of this song reflects the creator's sense of mission in inheriting and spreading ethnic culture. They hope that through this work, more people can understand and appreciate the traditional culture and music of the Zhuang ethnic group.

Innovation in artistic form: On the basis of maintaining the singing of the Tianqin, " Chang Tian Yao " has innovated in artistic form, such as using the form of female groups, as well as innovating in arrangement and singing techniques, making the work not only have traditional charm, but also modern vitality and innovation. This innovation makes the work more attractive and can attract more people to understand and appreciate Zhuang traditional culture and music.

### 3.5.2 The musical features of " Chang Tian Yao "

Introduction: The beginning of this piece is a gentle melody, mainly played by the Tianqin, laying the foundation for the entire piece. This melody is melodious and has a strong sense of immersion, guiding the audience into the world of the song.

Main Song A: Following the introduction is Section A of the main song, which describes the daily life of Zhuang people and the scene of Tianqin playing and singing. The melody is smooth, the harmony is rich, and the emotions are sincere, highlighting the cultural characteristics and living conditions of the Zhuang people.

Chorus B: The chorus section is the climax of this song, with significant melody fluctuations and strong emotional expression. The lyrics express a deep attachment to hometown and traditional culture, making people feel a strong sense of nostalgia and respect for tradition.

Main Song A (Repetition): After the chorus, there is a repetition of Section A of the main song. This section reviews and repeats the previous content, deepening the audience's understanding of the theme of the song.

Chorus B (repetition): Subsequently, there is a repetition of section B of the chorus, and the chorus section plays again, reaching a climax in both melody and emotion, causing the entire piece to end in strong emotions.

In terms of musical structure, " Chang Tian Yao " adopts the common ABA structure, which includes an introduction, main song, chorus, main song repetition, and chorus repetition. This structure makes the repertoire smooth and natural, with ups and downs, which can express deep emotions while maintaining the integrity and unity of the music.

### 3.5.3 Performance analysis of " Chang Tian Yao "

#### 3.5.3.1 Performance Techniques

String control: The strings of the Tianqin have a special texture and require the performer to master certain skills to control the tone and pitch. During performance, attention should be paid to the vibration of the strings and the stability of the pitch to ensure the purity of the timbre and the smoothness of the melody.

Sliding technique: Sliding is an important technique in the performance of the Zhuang Tianqin, which can express the emotions and atmosphere in the repertoire. In " Chang Tian Yao ", the use of sliding notes should be in line with the changes in melody to enhance the emotional expression of the music.

Rhythm sense: The performance of the Tianqin requires close coordination with the rhythm of the song, so there is a high demand for the performer's sense of rhythm. During the performance, attention should be paid to grasping the changes in rhythm to ensure coordination with the overall rhythm of the song.

Body posture and movements: Playing the Tianqin requires coordination with changes in body posture and movements. During the performance, attention should be paid to the stability of body posture and coordination of movements to ensure the smoothness and aesthetics of the performance.

#### 3.5.3.2 Music Performance

Emotional expression: In " Chang Tian Yao ", emotional expression is the core. Performers need to convey their attachment and respect for their hometown and traditional culture through delicate musical expression. Through rich musical elements and techniques, convey the emotions in the track to the audience.

Music atmosphere: The unique tone of the Tianqin can create a mysterious and profound atmosphere. In " Chang Tian Yao ", the performer needs to use the unique timbre and performance techniques of the Tianqin to fully showcase this atmosphere and immerse the audience in the emotions and atmosphere of the music.

Music Image: In " Chang Tian Yao ", the music image is mainly reflected in the depiction of the lives and culture of the Zhuang people. Performers need to have a deep understanding of the characteristics and requirements of this musical image in order to appropriately express it.

### 3.5.3.3 Art processing

**Melody lines:** During performance, special attention should be paid to the clarity and fluency of the melody lines. By using smooth and natural melodic lines, the music becomes more artistic and infectious. At the same time, attention should be paid to the relationship between melody and harmony to build a harmonious musical whole.

**Harmony processing:** In the song " Chang Tian Yao ", the handling of harmony is also one of the key links. By meticulously handling harmony, the depth and depth of the music are enhanced. At the same time, attention should be paid to the coordination between harmony and melody to create a harmonious and unified musical atmosphere.

**Performance style:** The performer's performance style is crucial to the performance of the music. In " Chang Tian Yao," the performance style should reflect respect and understanding of Zhuang culture, while incorporating personal feelings and innovation. By using a unique style of interpretation, the music is made more personalized and artistic.

### Summary

This chapter provides an in-depth examination of the Tianqin's performance techniques and expressive forms. It includes interviews with esteemed scholars and artists, such as Professor Tingzhong Lü from Guangxi Minzu Normal University and Haiyang Wei, a recipient of the China National Arts Fund. The chapter covers the Tianqin's range and tuning, basic performance techniques, and an analysis of representative pieces. It highlights the instrument's role in cultural heritage and emotional expression within Zhuang culture, detailing tuning methods and the practical adjustments made by performers. The text also describes fundamental playing skills like right-hand plucking and left-hand pressing, as well as performance postures. Notable works like "Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge" and "Huashan Ying Ke Ge" are analyzed for their artistic and musical characteristics. The chapter concludes with discussions on enhancing musical expressiveness through artistic processing and innovatively promoting Zhuang traditional culture and music.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Cultural Changes of the Tianqin

After hundreds of years of inheritance and development, Longzhou Tianqin culture has taken root in the unique and profound local ethnic and folk cultural soil, and has grown in the superior environment of harmonious coexistence and cultural integration among various ethnic groups. Nowadays, we can see and summarize some changes in music culture. Of course, the researcher's summary is limited to what he knows, and there may be more changes in other aspects. Here, only six aspects are elaborated, and if the researcher has new findings, he will continue to follow up and update. This chapter is based on literature review and interviews with key informants.

1. The Changes of Status and Function
2. The Change of Policy and Strategy
3. The Change of Business and Marketing
4. The Change of Craftsmanship and Technique
5. The Change of Transmission and Protection
6. The Change of Performances and Creations



Figure 42. Rural Zhuang religious practitioner Pray to God for Blessings

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in December 2023



## 1. The Changes of Status and Function

The Longzhou Tianqin culture originated from religious rituals. It is not only a musical instrument, but also a sacred symbol used to connect gods and the world as a bridge. However, with the passage of time and the development of society, the status and function of the Tianqin have undergone significant changes. This transformation not only changes people's understanding of Tianqin, but also greatly expands its social and cultural value. (See Figure 42)

Firstly, the Tianqin has gradually shifted from its exclusive use as a religious ritual to being a part of public entertainment activities. This transformation marks the popularization and secularization of Tianqin culture, allowing more people to come into contact with and appreciate Tianqin music. With the innovation of performance techniques and repertoire, Tianqin has been used in various public places and folk gatherings, becoming a popular form of performance art.

Secondly, the development of the comprehensive artistic form of Tianqin culture further enriches its connotation. In addition to traditional performance, the integration of elements such as singing and dancing makes the Tianqin performance more diverse and vivid. The emergence of this comprehensive art form not only enhances the artistic charm of Tianqin, but also enables it to better adapt to the cultural needs of modern society, attracting more attention and love from young audiences.

Finally, the status of the Tianqin in the folk has shifted from a mysterious religious instrument to a cultural symbol, greatly enhancing its social influence. Tianqin is no longer just a local cultural symbol, but has become an important medium for cultural exchange between Guangxi and even China. By participating in cultural exchange activities both domestically and internationally, Tianqin showcases the unique charm of traditional Chinese music and promotes cultural exchange and mutual learning.

In summary, the positioning and development of Longzhou Tianqin culture has undergone a profound transformation from religious rituals to mass entertainment, and then to comprehensive artistic forms. In this process, the Tianqin not only retained its traditional charm, but also successfully integrated modern elements, becoming a cultural bridge connecting ancient and modern times, and connecting China and foreign countries.



## 2. The Change of Policy and Strategy

In recent years, the Chongzuo Municipal Party Committee and the Municipal Government have attached great importance to the protection, inheritance, and development of the Zhuang Tianqin art, striving to build Chongzuo into a cultural brand. The Zhuang Tianqin art has participated in more than 80 national-level major performances and competitions, and has traveled to countries such as Germany, Austria, Thailand, and Vietnam, as well as Taiwan and Hong Kong, where it has performed repeatedly and won numerous accolades and deep praise. Among them, it has been invited to record programs at CCTV over 20 times and participated in the CCTV Spring Festival Gala three times, winning the Second Prize of the National Ethnic Minority Ballad Performance, the Third Prize and the Stage Presence Award of the 2004 CCTV Western Singer Competition, and the Gold Award of the 2022 Guangxi New Folk Song Competition.

At the mass cultural performance celebrating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in December 2018, the leaders of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China highly praised the Chongzuo Tianqin performance program with the word "aesthetic." In the second season of CCTV's "Charming China" competition in 2018, Chongzuo City topped the list of the "Top Ten Charming Cities of Charming China 2018" with the highest overall score. The sound of the Zhuang Tianqin, which echoes the roots of the Luoyue culture, left a profound impression on audiences nationwide, sparking a wave of "Tianqin fever" wherever it went.

On December 14, 2022, the Standing Committee of the Chongzuo Municipal People's Congress issued the "Regulations on the Inheritance and Development of the Zhuang Tianqin Art in Chongzuo City," which came into effect on January 1, 2023. This "Regulation" fills the gap in the legislative work of the Zhuang Tianqin art in Guangxi, playing a positive role in promoting the inheritance and development of the Zhuang Tianqin art, facilitating its creative transformation and innovative development, and upholding the fine traditional culture of the Chinese nation.

Today, the Zhuang Tianqin art of Chongzuo has become renowned in the literary and art circles, attracting the attention of audiences nationwide and even worldwide with its unique artistic charm. The Zhuang Tianqin art represents not only

Chongzuo and Guangxi but also an essential part of China's outstanding traditional ethnic culture. We firmly believe that with the efforts of all parties, the Zhuang Tianqin art will undoubtedly shine brightly on an even larger stage, further enhancing the popularity and influence of Chongzuo's ethnic culture, promoting the enhancement of China's cultural soft power, and leaving a splendid chapter in the history of Chinese culture.

### 3. The Change of Business and Marketing

With the revival and promotion of Longzhou Tianqin culture, it has also undergone significant changes in the fields of commerce and marketing. These changes are not only reflected in the market expansion of Tianqin as a commodity and cultural and artistic product, but also in the use of modern marketing methods to enhance the market influence of Tianqin culture.



Figure 43. The Tianqin Dream Team created by Mr. Huabei Qin

Source: Huabei Qin (2023)

In terms of commercial development, the production and sales of Tianqin have gradually formed an industry chain centered on culture. Craftsmen and enterprises are beginning to explore various business models, including customized services, tourism souvenir sales, and exhibition and sales activities that combine with cultural experiences. These models not only enhance the commercial value of Tianqin, but also promote the development of the local economy. For example, our key informant, Mr. Huabei Qin, established his own Tianqin band and Tianqin cultural dissemination

company in order to promote the better development of Longzhou Tianqin. As shown in Figure 43.



Figure 44. On site Tianqin Art Live Broadcast Room organized by Chongzuo Tianqin Art Inheritance Center

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in December 2023

In terms of marketing strategy, the use of digital tools and Internet platforms has become an important means to promote the spread of Tianqin culture. Through online video, social media, and e-commerce platforms, live streaming and sharing of Tianqin performances and productions have become possible, attracting the attention of global audiences. In addition, organizing online and offline Tianqin art exhibitions, concerts, and teaching activities has effectively increased the popularity and attractiveness of Tianqin. As shown in Figure 44.



Figure 45. Longzhou Tianqin Zhuang Village

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in December 2023

At the same time, Tianqin Culture has also begun to engage in cross-border cooperation with other industries, such as tourism and education. For example, Longzhou County has been developed into the hometown of Chinese Tianqin and has built characteristic scenic spots such as Tianqin Zhuang Village. As shown in Figure 45. By incorporating Tianqin performances into tourism packages, it has attracted a large number of tourists interested in ethnic culture, while also creating income and employment opportunities for local residents. In the field of education, the Tianqin has become an important part of music teaching and cultural inheritance, further deepening people's understanding and interest in this traditional instrument.

Brand building is also an indispensable part of Tianqin culture in marketing. By creating well-known Tianqin brands such as "Longzhou Tianqin" and combining it with geographical indication product protection, the added value of the products has been enhanced, and a good brand image has been established, thus occupying a favorable position in the fiercely competitive cultural market.

In summary, the changes in business and marketing of Longzhou Tianqin Culture reflect its flexibility and innovation in adapting to modern society and market demands. Through diversified business exploration and modern marketing strategies, Tianqin not only expands the market but also enhances the dissemination of culture, providing new possibilities for the sustainable development of traditional culture.

#### **4. The Change of Craftsmanship and Technique**

With the continuous development and promotion of Longzhou Tianqin culture, it has undergone a series of changes in craftsmanship and technology, aiming to improve the production quality, musical performance, and cultural value of Tianqin. These changes not only reflect respect and protection for traditional skills, but also demonstrate the necessity of innovation and adaptation to modern market demands.

In terms of material selection, traditional Tianqin often uses locally available wood, such as ordinary wood or bamboo. However, with the improvement of the status of Tianqin art and the increase of market value, the production materials have gradually been upgraded to more precious and better sound quality wood, such as Nanmu, Huanghuali, and Redwood. These high-end woods not only improve the sound quality

of the Tianqin, making its tone more full and round, but also enhance its collection value and ornamental value as an art piece.

In terms of production technology, traditional handicraft techniques have been preserved and inherited. At the same time, in order to improve production efficiency and product consistency, some production processes have begun to introduce mechanization and automation technology. For example, some preliminary cutting and forming processes may be completed by machinery, while more detailed and complex decoration processes still retain handmade craftsmanship to ensure that each piece of Tianqin is unique and showcases the unique charm of craftsmanship.

Technological innovation is not limited to the production process, but also involves the design and structural adjustment of the Tianqin. In order to meet the needs of modern music performance, some sky qin producers have attempted to change the size, shape, number of strings, and material of the qin body, thereby expanding the musical range and expressive power of the sky qin. These improvements enable the Tianqin to better integrate with other instruments and participate in more diverse musical works.

In addition, with the increasing awareness of cultural inheritance, the protection and research of Tianqin culture have also been strengthened. Scholars and experts have conducted in-depth research on the traditional production process of Tianqin through field investigations, historical literature sorting and analysis, ensuring the recording and dissemination of these valuable knowledge. At the same time, we also encourage and support young craftsmen to learn and master the art of making the heavenly qin, and pass on traditional skills to the next generation through workshops and training courses.

In summary, the changes in craftsmanship and technology of Longzhou Tianqin culture reflect its efforts to innovate on the basis of inheriting tradition. By using higher quality materials, introducing some modern production technologies, and constantly exploring design innovations, the production of the Tianqin not only retains the essence of traditional art, but also meets the needs of modern society and the market, giving this traditional instrument new vitality.



## 5. The Change of Transmission and Protection

In terms of the inheritance and protection of Longzhou Tianqin culture, with the improvement of social and cultural awareness and the development of technology, a series of innovative and effective measures have been taken. These measures aim to ensure that the Tianqin, a traditional musical instrument, can not only be properly protected but also adapt to the development needs of modern society, enabling the active inheritance of traditional culture.



Figure 46. Haiyang Wei and the Tianqin class students he teaches at Liusha Primary School in Nanning City  
Source: Haiyang Wei (2023)



Figure 47. The Tianqin performance team of Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities is performing  
Source: Qiyuan Yao (2023)



Firstly, within the education system, schools in various parts of Guangxi actively promote the integration of Tianqin culture. By offering Tianqin art courses in schools and organizing students to participate in Tianqin performance and production workshops, we aim to cultivate students' interest and sense of identification with Tianqin art from an early age. As shown in Figure 46. In addition, higher education institutions also participate in the education of Tianqin art, such as setting up Tianqin culture related subjects in university courses, cultivating professional Tianqin performers and craftsmen, and injecting new vitality into the inheritance of Tianqin culture. As shown in Figure 47.



Figure 48. The teacher from Longzhou Tianqin Cultural and Art Inheritance Center is giving a lesson to the students

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in August 2023



Figure 49. Mr. Shaowei Li, the inheritor of Tianqin, teaches Tianqin to students at Guangxi Academy of Arts

Source: Haiyang Wei (2023)

Secondly, establish specialized inheritance institutions, such as Chongzuo Tianqin Art Inheritance Center and Longzhou County Tianqin Culture and Art Inheritance Center, which focus on systematically protecting and inheriting Tianqin culture. Through organizing training courses, seminars, and exhibition activities, these centers have become important platforms for the dissemination and learning of Tianqin art. As shown in Figure 48. At the same time, senior Tianqin artists and craftsmen are invited to serve as lecturers and guides, using a master apprentice system for teaching to ensure that skills and knowledge can be fully and accurately transmitted. As shown in Figure 49.

At the technical level, utilizing digital tools to record and showcase Tianqin culture has become a new means of protection. By using recording, video recording, and digital modeling techniques, precious Tianqin performance pieces, production techniques, and related historical materials are digitally preserved. This is not only conducive to long-term preservation, but also convenient for more people to understand and contact the Tianqin culture through the Internet and other modern communication channels, so as to improve its global awareness and influence. As shown in Figure 44.



Figure 50. Longzhou Tianqin Women's Playing and Singing Group plays and sings  
"Chang Tian Yao"

Source: Li Yongqun (2017)

In addition, in order to strengthen the dissemination and protection of Tianqin culture, the government and cultural institutions actively carry out domestic and foreign cultural exchange projects. By participating in international ethnic music festivals, cultural exchange activities, and collaborative performances, Tianqin artists have the opportunity to showcase the unique charm of Tianqin culture to the world, while also absorbing other cultural elements to promote cultural innovation and development. As shown in Figure 50.

In summary, the inheritance and protection of Longzhou Tianqin culture has achieved a transition from tradition to modernity through the integration of the education system, the establishment of professional inheritance institutions, the use of digital technology for protection, and cultural exchanges both domestically and internationally, ensuring the active inheritance and global dissemination of this precious cultural heritage. The implementation of these measures not only enhances the public's understanding and support for Tianqin culture, but also lays a solid foundation for the future development of Tianqin art.

## **6. The Change of Performances and Creations**

With the revival and promotion of Longzhou Tianqin culture, it has also shown significant changes in performance and creation. These changes are not only reflected in the diversification of artistic forms, but also in the innovation of content and expression techniques, making the Tianqin art more in line with the aesthetic needs of modern audiences, while maintaining its unique national characteristics.





Figure 51. Tianqin performance integrated with multimedia technology.

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in December 2023

In terms of performance form, traditional Tianqin performance has gradually evolved from a single instrument solo or accompaniment to a comprehensive performance that integrates multiple artistic elements. For example, the collaboration between Tianqin and modern bands combines traditional Tianqin music with modern music elements to create a brand new music style. In addition, the Tianqin performance has also begun to combine multimedia technology, enhancing the visual impact and appeal of the performance through stage background, lighting effects, and visual projection. As shown in Figure 51.

In terms of creative content, Tianqin music works have begun to explore more diverse themes, no longer limited to traditional ethnic or religious themes. Modern Tianqin artists have been influenced by globalization and have begun to try to integrate elements from different cultures into Tianqin music, reflecting the trend of cross-cultural communication. In addition, some Tianqin works have also begun to pay attention to modern social issues, such as environmental protection, social harmony, and other themes, making Tianqin music more in line with the pulse of the times and expanding its social influence.

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Figure 52. General informant Haiyang Wei uses Yukri's playing techniques to play the Tianqin

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in December 2023

In terms of expression techniques, the performance techniques of the Tianqin are also constantly innovating. Traditional performance techniques have been inherited and developed, and at the same time, Tianqin artists have begun to absorb the performance methods of other instruments, creating new performance techniques and enriching the musical expression of Tianqin. For example, using techniques such as plucking and sliding to make the music expression of the Tianqin more delicate and rich. As shown in Figure 52.







Figure 53. 2023 Exhibition and Performance of Innovation and Creation Achievements in Chongzuo Zhuang Tianqin Art

Source: Xinyang Chen, from fieldwork in December 2023

At the same time, in order to promote innovation and development of the Tianqin art, Longzhou County and Chongzuo City has held various Tianqin art competitions and creative activities, encouraging artists to create more Tianqin works with contemporary characteristics. These activities not only increased the popularity of Tianqin art, but also provided a platform for artists to showcase their talents and stimulate their creative enthusiasm. As shown in Figure 53.

In summary, the changes in performance and creation of Longzhou Tianqin culture reflect its efforts in adapting to and leading the trend of the times. Through the diversification of artistic forms, enrichment of content themes, and innovation of expression techniques, Tianqin art continuously attracts a wider audience and injects new vitality into the inheritance and development of traditional culture.

### Summary

Longzhou Tianqin, an ancient musical instrument in Guangxi, has undergone the baptism of time and is now revitalized on the cultural stage. From sacred religious rituals to the general public, Tianqin has not only become a popular entertainment activity, but also elevated to a comprehensive art form that integrates performance, singing, and dance. The support of policies and innovation in market strategies have enabled Tianqin art to transcend regions and become an ambassador for cultural





## CHAPTER VII

### Conclusion, Discussion, and Suggestions

#### 1. Conclusion

The Tianqin, a traditional Chinese folk musical instrument from Longzhou County, Guangxi, underscores the critical importance of material selection, meticulous craftsmanship, and innovative practices in the production of this culturally significant instrument. The study highlights the intricate processes involved in crafting the Tianqin, including the selection of high-quality materials such as wood, gourd, and strings, each contributing to the instrument's sound quality and durability. The production process, which encompasses two stages and multiple detailed steps, emphasizes the skillful manual operations required, particularly in carving and polishing, to achieve the desired tonal quality and aesthetic appeal. Innovations introduced by contemporary craftsmen, particularly in the neck, soundbox, strings, and sound range, have significantly enhanced the Tianqin's functionality and adaptability. These innovations include the use of alternative materials, adjustments to the soundbox design, and modifications to the string configuration, all of which have expanded the instrument's tonal range and improved its performance capabilities. The study concludes that the quality of the Tianqin is deeply rooted in both the preservation of traditional craftsmanship and the adoption of modern innovations, ensuring that the instrument continues to evolve while maintaining its cultural heritage. By meticulously adhering to established standards and embracing new technologies, the Tianqin remains a vital and dynamic component of Chinese musical culture.

The techniques used in playing the Tianqin are deeply rooted in traditional practices and innovative adaptations, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the Zhuang ethnic group while embracing contemporary influences. This chapter's exploration of the range and tuning of the Tianqin, performance techniques, and analysis of representative works reveals the instrument's versatility and emotional expressiveness. The Tianqin's broad range, covering over three octaves, and its flexible tuning methods allow performers to adapt the instrument to various musical styles, from traditional Zhuang melodies to more modern compositions. The detailed examination of right-

hand plucking, left-hand string pressing techniques, and the importance of posture highlights the intricate skill set required to master the Tianqin. The analysis of key works, such as "Zhuang Zu Jing Jiu Ge," "Huashan Ying Ke Ge," "Fang Yan," "Yao Xian Qu," and "Chang Tian Yao," further demonstrates how these techniques are applied to convey deep emotions and cultural narratives. Each piece, with its unique artistic and musical features, showcases Tianqin's ability to evoke a wide range of emotions, from the joyous and celebratory to the mysterious and profound. Integrating sliding, plucking, and vibrato techniques, alongside careful control of rhythm, strength, and speed, enables performers to create dynamic and layered musical expressions. Moreover, the chapter emphasizes the significance of emotional expression and artistic processing, which are crucial in conveying Zhuang music's cultural and spiritual essence through the Tianqin. Ultimately, the study underscores the importance of preserving traditional techniques while encouraging innovation, ensuring that the Tianqin continues to be a vital and evolving instrument in the landscape of Chinese folk music.

The cultural changes of the Longzhou Tianqin reflect its remarkable evolution from a sacred instrument rooted in religious rituals to a versatile symbol of cultural heritage, now intertwined with modern society. Over the centuries, Tianqin has transitioned from its exclusive use in spiritual ceremonies to becoming a prominent feature in public entertainment, enriching the social and cultural fabric of the community. This shift in status and function, coupled with policy support and strategic initiatives, has bolstered Tianqin's role as a cultural ambassador for Guangxi and China on national and international levels. The commercialization of Tianqin through innovative business models and marketing strategies has further expanded its reach, transforming it into a valuable cultural product with a significant economic impact. Advances in craftsmanship and technology have elevated the quality and artistic value of Tianqin, integrating modern materials and techniques while preserving traditional skills. The emphasis on education, specialized inheritance institutions, and digital preservation ensures the continuity and global dissemination of Tianqin culture. Moreover, the dynamic changes in performances and creative expressions have rejuvenated Tianqin art, making it relevant to contemporary audiences by incorporating multimedia elements, diverse themes, and cross-cultural influences. Through these

multifaceted developments, Tianqin has retained its traditional essence and adapted to the demands of modernity, securing its place as a vibrant and enduring cultural legacy.

## 2. Discussion

The introduction of this research highlights the importance of investigating the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. It sets the stage for the subsequent sections by emphasizing the cultural significance and historical context of the Tianqin instrument in the region (Nong, 2023a; He, 2021).

The literature review presents a comprehensive overview of prior research on Tianqin and related topics. Scholars like Wang (2017) have delved into the etiquette and customs associated with Tianqin, shedding light on its cultural relevance. Additionally, Zhao (2019) explored the origin of Tianqin art within the context of Luoyue culture, contributing valuable insights into its historical roots. Li (2013) has also emphasized the impact of Tianqin culture on regional events like the ASEAN Expo, highlighting its role beyond music. Seeger (1983) and Merriam (1964) are worth mentioning in the literature review as they have made significant contributions to the broader field of ethnomusicology. Their works on the anthropology of music provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the cultural and social dimensions of musical instruments.

The research methods section is crucial for understanding how data related to Tianqin instrument creation, techniques, materials, and cultural changes were collected and analyzed. Yang (2022) presents an example of using a perspective rooted in rural revitalization to explore the inheritance and transformation of Tianqin production skills, which aligns with the research's objective to investigate techniques. He (2019) suggests using qualitative techniques like ethnographic research or interviews to gain a thorough understanding of Tianqin culture. Furthermore, Qin et al. (2008) suggested using quantitative data analysis techniques to examine trends in cultural changes over time.

While the specific research results were not provided, it is important to consider the potential findings in light of the research objectives. For example, if the study on Tianqin creation techniques reveals unique materials or processes used, it would align with the first objective (Nong, 2023a). Similarly, if the research results describe specific

playing techniques and their variations in Longzhou County, it would be consistent with the second objective (Yang, 2020). Additionally, if there are indications of cultural shifts, adaptations, or influences in Tianqin practice, it would correspond to the third objective (He, 2021).

The research conclusion is expected to synthesize the findings and address how they align with or deviate from the research objectives. It is essential to link the results back to the theoretical principles discussed in the literature review. For instance, the examination of cultural changes should consider how they conform to or challenge the theories of cultural evolution or acculturation (Seeger, 1983; Merriam, 1964). Incorporating the research's conclusions into the broader context of ethnomusicology and cultural studies, as Zhao (2020) does, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the significance of Tianqin culture within the Zhuang ethnic group. Additionally, discussing the implications of the findings for the preservation and promotion of Tianqin culture in a modern context can be valuable (Li & Wang, 2021).

In summary, this research integrates a wide range of scholarly perspectives and methodologies to explore the Tianqin Chinese Folk Musical Instrument. It aligns with the research objectives and utilizes a robust theoretical framework from ethnomusicology and cultural studies, contributing to our understanding of this culturally significant musical tradition in Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

### **3. Suggestions**

#### **3.1 Suggestions for applying the results of the study.**

**3.1.1 Cultural Preservation Initiatives:** Can serve as a valuable resource for cultural preservation initiatives. Local authorities and cultural organizations in Longzhou County, Guangxi, should consider developing programs and educational materials to raise awareness about the significance of Tianqin culture. This could include workshops, exhibitions, or cultural events that engage both residents and tourists, helping to ensure the continued vitality of this musical tradition.

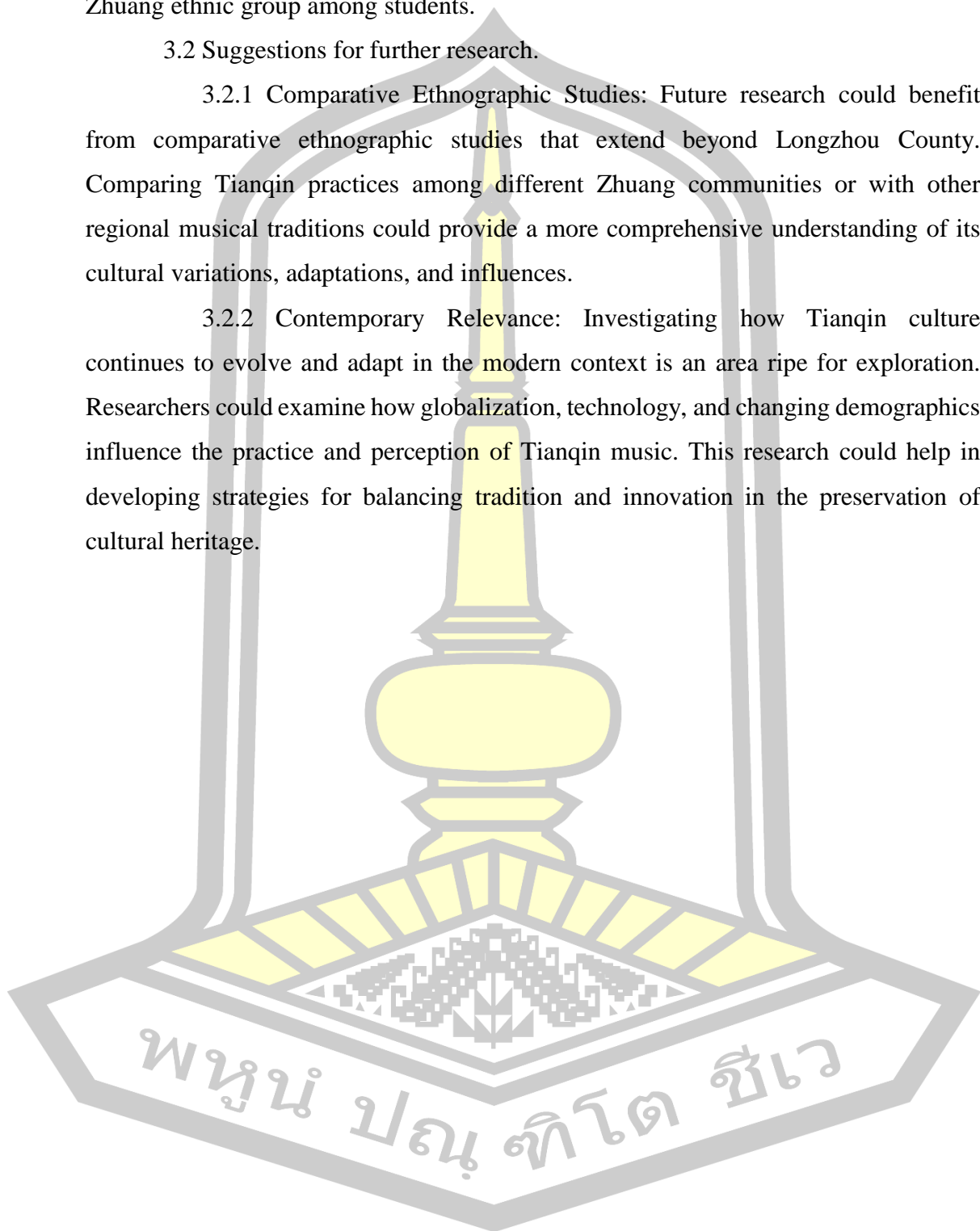
**3.1.2 Integration into Education:** Given the insights into Tianqin culture's impact on regional events and its cultural significance, educational institutions at various levels can incorporate Tianqin culture into their curricula. This would not only

promote the art form but also foster an understanding of the cultural heritage of the Zhuang ethnic group among students.

### 3.2 Suggestions for further research.

3.2.1 Comparative Ethnographic Studies: Future research could benefit from comparative ethnographic studies that extend beyond Longzhou County. Comparing Tianqin practices among different Zhuang communities or with other regional musical traditions could provide a more comprehensive understanding of its cultural variations, adaptations, and influences.

3.2.2 Contemporary Relevance: Investigating how Tianqin culture continues to evolve and adapt in the modern context is an area ripe for exploration. Researchers could examine how globalization, technology, and changing demographics influence the practice and perception of Tianqin music. This research could help in developing strategies for balancing tradition and innovation in the preservation of cultural heritage.





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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A: Interview record of fieldwork

#### 1. Time

August 2023 to June 2024

#### 2. Location

Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

Chongzuo City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

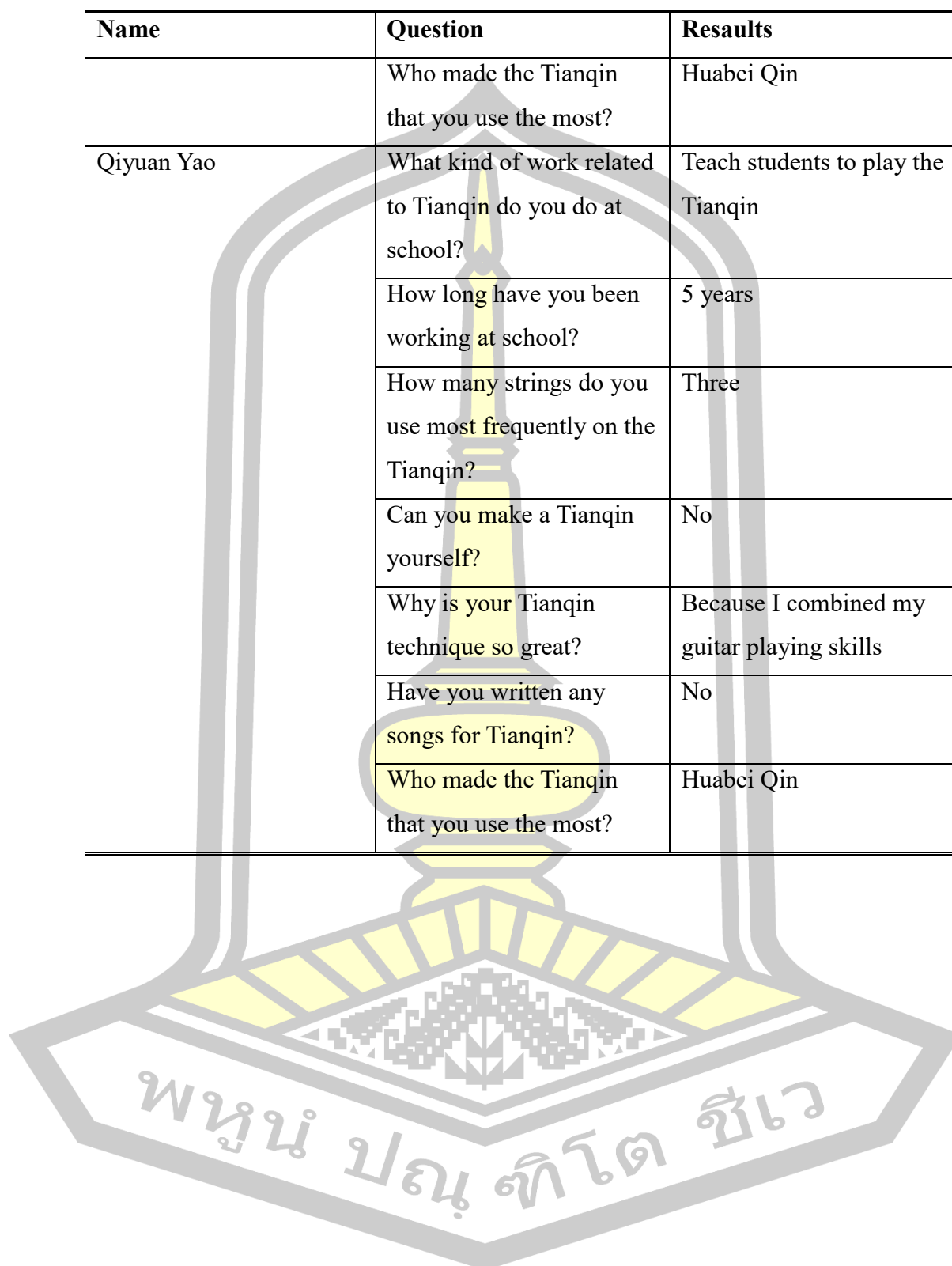
Name	Question	Results
Huabei Qin	How many years have you been making Longzhou Tianqin?	47 years
	How many strings do you use most frequently on the Tianqin?	Two
	Who did you learn the Longzhou Tianqin making techniques and playing skills from?	My Grandfather
	How many Longzhou Tianqin can be produced annually?	200-300
	What are the main aspects of your innovation in Longzhou Tianqin production?	The Form and Range of Longzhou Tianqin
	What qualities and capability should a qualified Tianqin maker have?	Production and performance technology.

Name	Question	Results
	Do you think there are environmental factors restricting the development of Longzhou Tianqin?	Yes
	When did Longzhou Tianqin become known to people?	2003
	What is the most difficult process in making Longzhou Tianqin?	Grinding and polishing
	Why hang many semi-finished Longzhou Tianqin Neck and Sounds box under the eaves?	Natural air drying
	Are there any special requirements for the painting of Longzhou Tianqin?	Choose when there is ample sunlight
Tingzhong Lü	Which university was the first to offer Tianqin teaching?	Guangxi Minzu Normal University, China
	Can you make a Tianqin yourself?	No
	Why write this Tianqin textbook?	Because I want more people to understand and learn about our Tianqin

Name	Question	Results
	Is there only one Tianqin textbook on the market?	Yes
	When was the Tianqin performance tutorial you wrote completed?	2017
	Do you prefer playing and teaching the three stringed Tianqin or the two stringed Tianqin?	Three
	How many playing positions are there for Tianqin?	Two
	How many chapters are there in the Tianqin performance textbook you wrote?	Seven
Haiyang Wei	How many strings do you use most frequently on the Tianqin?	Two
	Can you make a Tianqin yourself?	Yes
	Why is your Tianqin technique so great?	Because I combined guitar and ukulele playing skills
	Do you usually engage in teaching Tianqin besides its performances?	Yes
	Have you written any songs for Tianqin?	Yes



Name	Question	Results
	Who made the Tianqin that you use the most?	Huabei Qin
Qiyuan Yao	What kind of work related to Tianqin do you do at school?	Teach students to play the Tianqin
	How long have you been working at school?	5 years
	How many strings do you use most frequently on the Tianqin?	Three
	Can you make a Tianqin yourself?	No
	Why is your Tianqin technique so great?	Because I combined my guitar playing skills
	Have you written any songs for Tianqin?	No
	Who made the Tianqin that you use the most?	Huabei Qin



## Appendix B: Chinese musical notation from Chapter 5 of Analysis of works

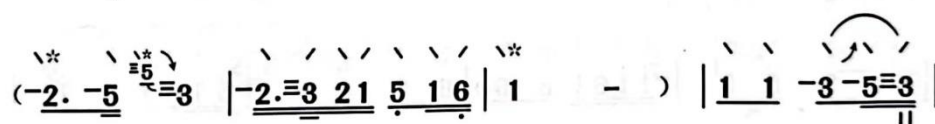
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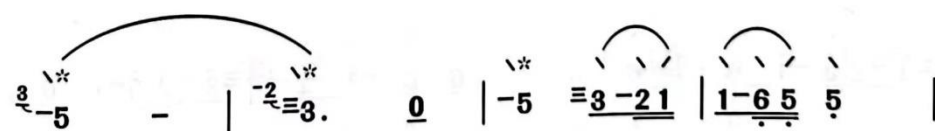
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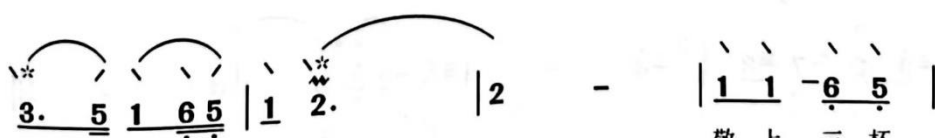


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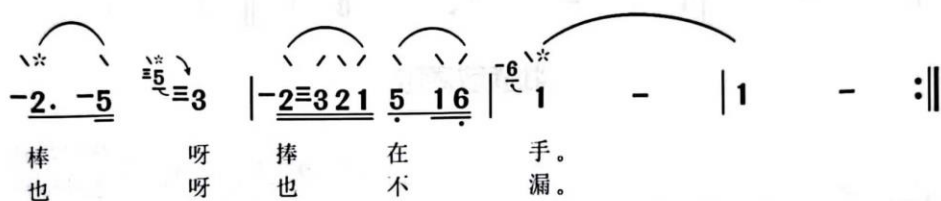
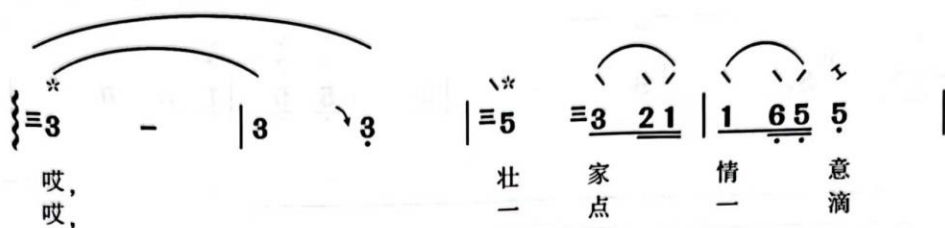
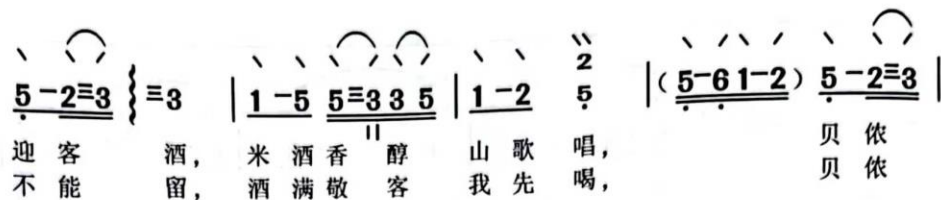
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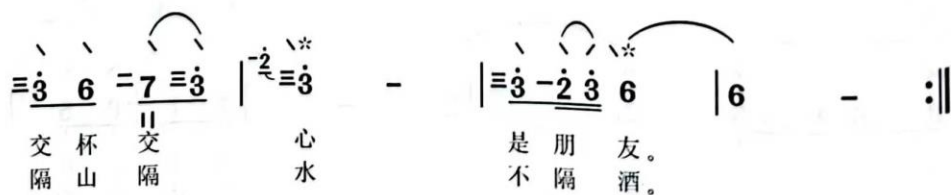
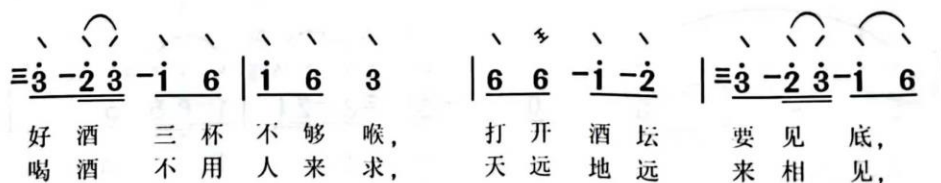
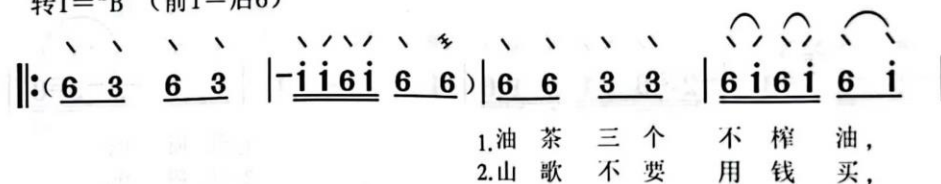
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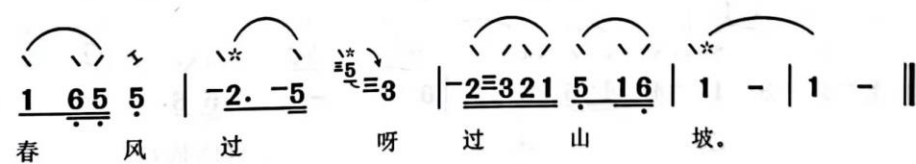
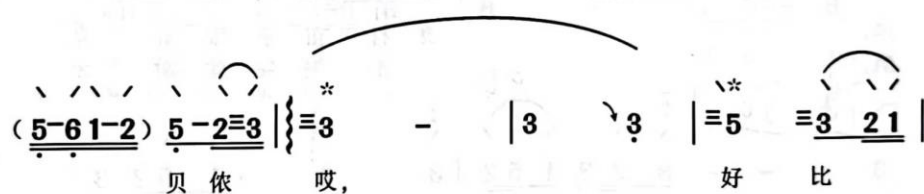
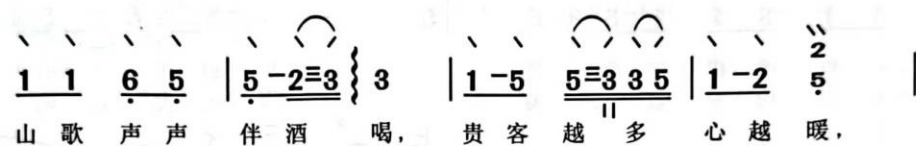
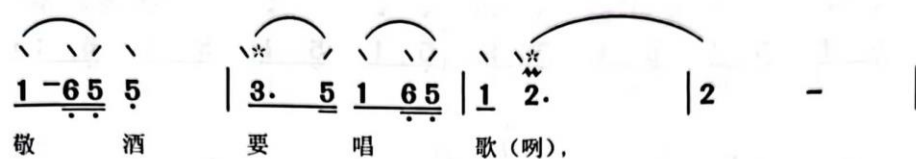
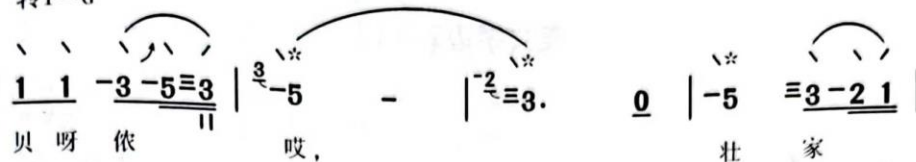




转1=<sup>b</sup>B (前1=后6)



转1=G

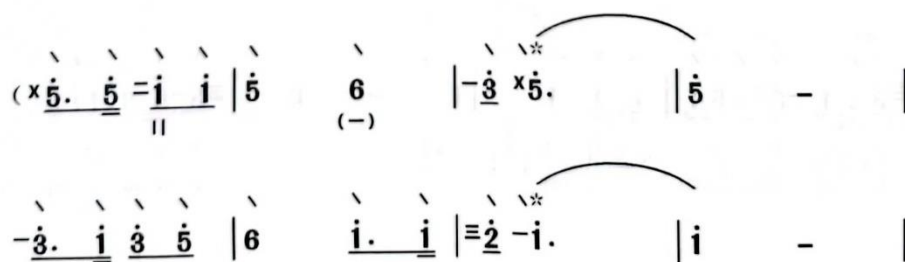


# 花山迎客歌

(壮语歌曲)

1 =  $\flat$ B  $\frac{2}{4}$  ♩ = 92 宁明山歌风 热情地

吕少贤 词曲  
吕挺中 编指法



184



5. 1 3 5 | 1 1 5 3 5 | 5. 1 3 5 | 1 1 3 0 |

5. 1 3 5 | 1 3 5 3 5 | 5. 1 3 5 | 6-1 6 1 0 ) |  
(-)

※

||: x 5 - 3. 5 | = 1 1 x 5 6 | - 3 x 5 5. | 5 - |

1. 3 (男) 客 贵 在 远 远 脑 闹 麻 (勒),  
2. 4 (女) 客 贵 麻 到 正 是 好 (勒),

- 3. = 1 1 1 | 6 x 5 5 3 1 | 1 - | 1 0 0 |  
刘 的 (啊) 布 土 正 逢 多 (勒);  
(3 5)  
麻 刘 (的) 齐 给 酌 茶 吃 (勒);

- 5 5 | - 1 1 5 - 3 | 5. - 2 = 3 | 2. 0 |  
凭 赖 上 面 带 头 走 好 多,  
凭 赖 上 面 想 的 计 好 好 多,

3 = 2 - 7 7 | 6. 6 2 3 | - 5 6 5. | 5 - :||  
(11) 尽 给 人 人 梅 (啊) 晒 赖 萌 (勒).  
齐 敬 人 人 萌 (呀) 酒 双 更 (勒).  
D.S.

พหุณ ปณ ทิโต ชเว

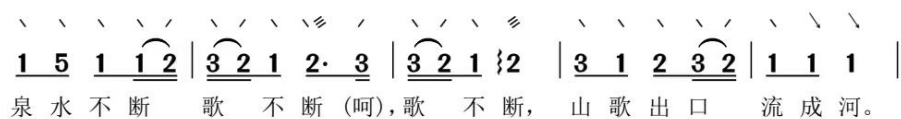
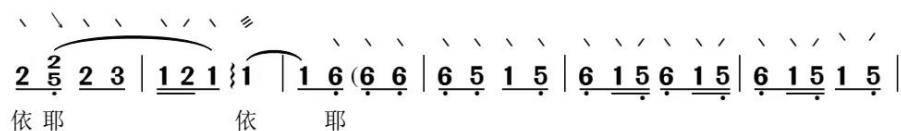
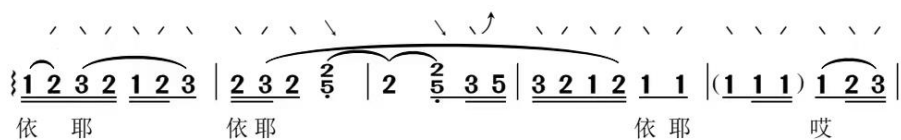
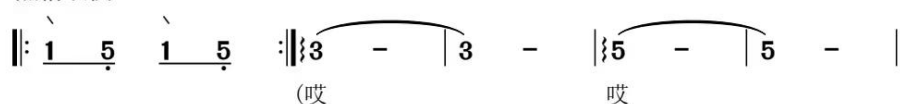


# 唱天谣

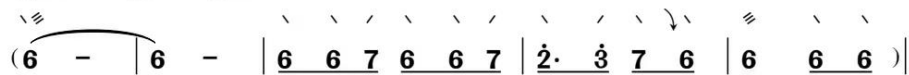
1=G  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$

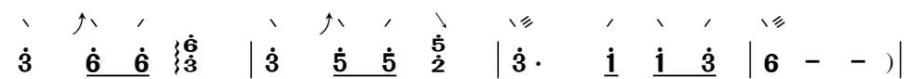
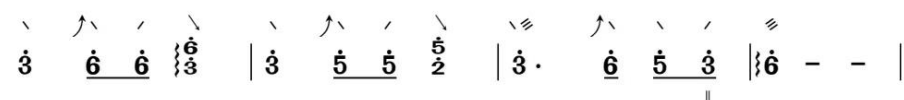
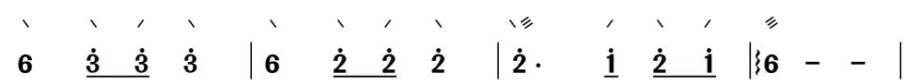
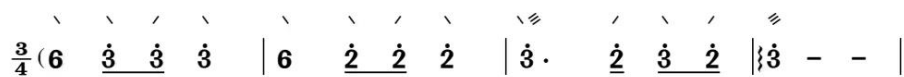
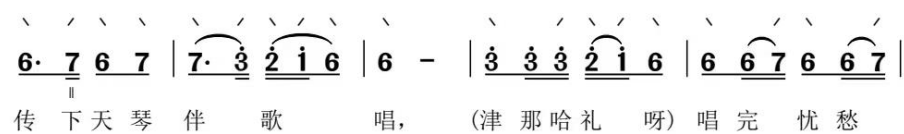
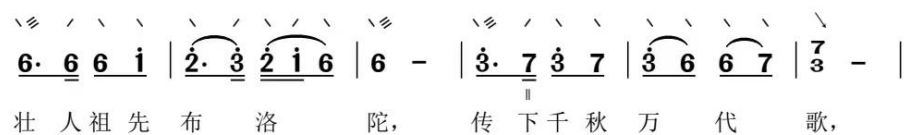
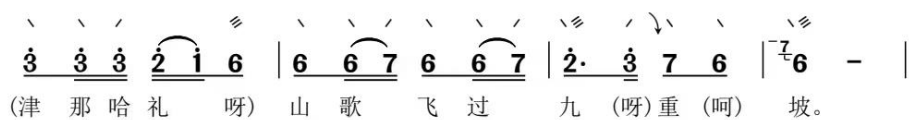
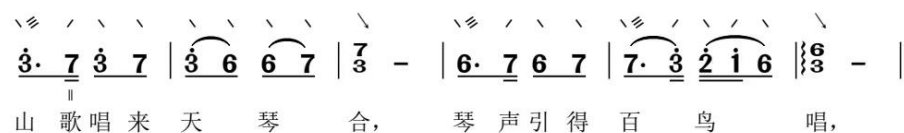
热情欢快

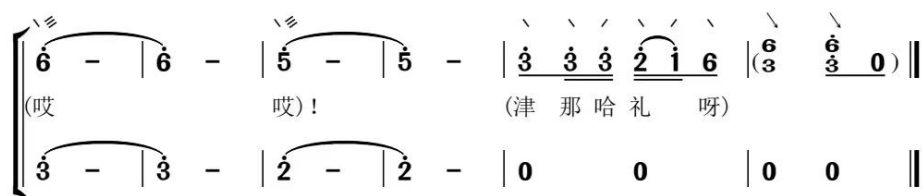
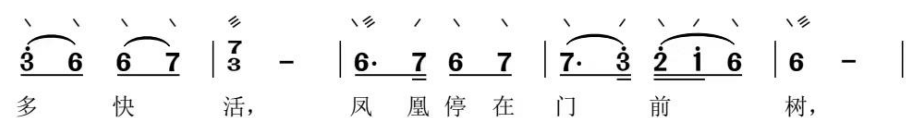
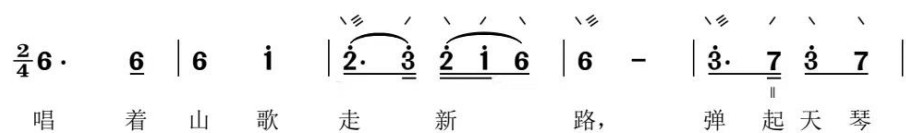
梁绍武 词  
范西姆 曲



转1=<sup>b</sup>B (前1=后6)



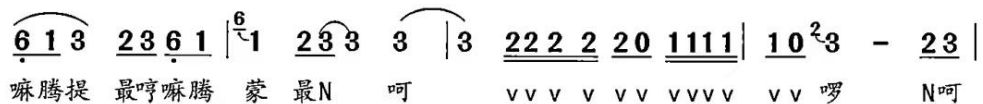
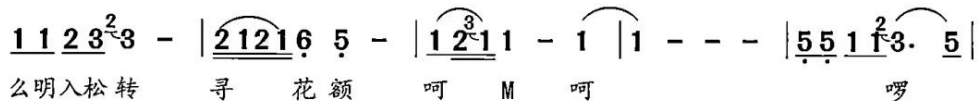
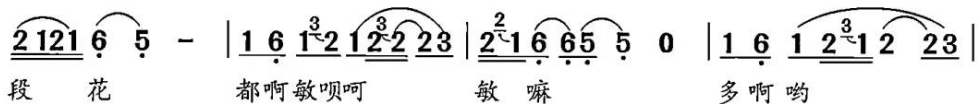
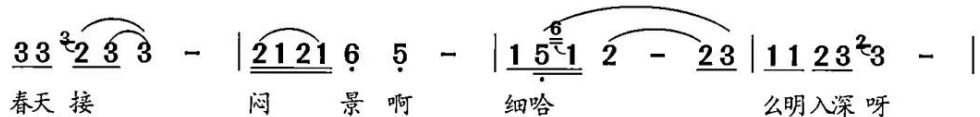
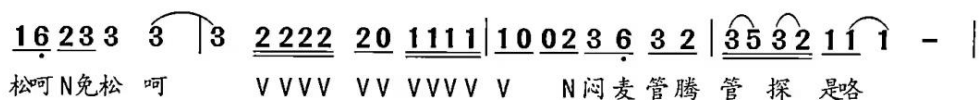
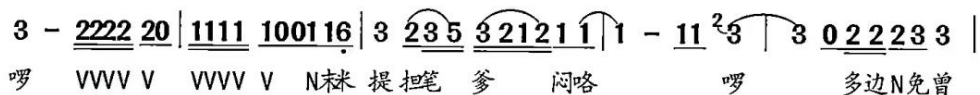
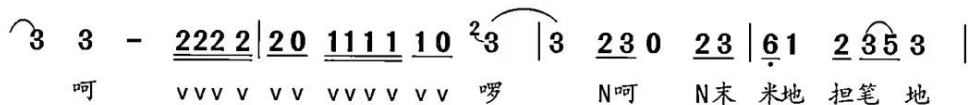
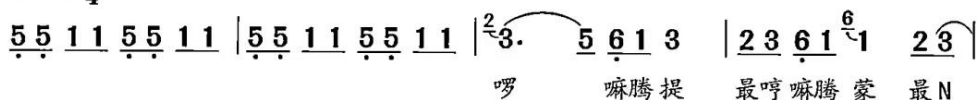




## 放雁

填词：李绍伟、龙灿明、翁最先

改编：龙灿明、翁最先、罗东斌

1=G  $\frac{4}{4}$ 

0 23 61 2 | 35 3 3 - | 2222 20 1111 10 | 01 16 3 235 |  
 N末米地 担 笔 地 啰 VVVV V VVVV V N末米提 担笔

3212 11 1 11 | <sup>2</sup>3 - 02223 | 3 16 23 3 | 3 - 2222 20 |  
 爹 闷咯 啰 多边N免曾 松 呵N免松呵 VVVV VV

转<sup>b</sup>B (前1=后6)  
1111 106666 | 1111 <sup>2</sup>3. 5 | 613 2361 | <sup>6</sup>1 23 3 3 | 3 3333 30 2222 |  
 VVVV 啰 嘛腾提 最哼嘛腾 蒙 最N 呵 VVVVV V VVVV

20 <sup>2</sup>3 - 23 | 0 23 61 2 | 35 3 3 - | 2222 20 1111 10 |  
 v 啰 N呵 N末米地 担 笔 地 啰 VVVV V VVVV V

2222 201 1 | 1 1 1 1 | 1 - - - | 1 - - - ||  
 VVVV V V V V V V V V V

### Appendix C: Fieldwork Pictures



Figure 54. Mr. Huabei Qin and researcher (the first in the left is Huabei Qin)

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)



Figure 55. Researchers use piano to accompany Huabei Qin's performance of Tianqin

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)





Figure 56. Huabei Qin's Tianqin Making Platform

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)



Figure 57. Huabei Qin is selecting semi-finished Tianqin products that have been air dried

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)



Figure 58. Researchers participate in the 2023 Guangxi Chongzuo Zhuang Tianqin Art Week Forum

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)



Figure 59. Mr. Haiyang Wei and researcher (the first in the left is Haiyang Wei)

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)



Figure 60. Mr. Haiyang Wei accepted an interview

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)



Figure 61. Researchers use piano to accompany Haiyang Wei's performance of Tianqin

Source: Xinyang Chen (2023)

## BIOGRAPHY

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