

# The Role of Guqin Playing and Singing Ancient Poetry on Traditional Culture

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**Abstract:** Singing ancient poems with guqin is an important part of Chinese traditional culture, which has a long history and unique artistic charm. This paper firstly gives an overview of guqin playing and singing ancient poems, introduces the origin and development of guqin and ancient poems, as well as the formation process of guqin playing and singing ancient poems. Then, it analyzes the artistic characteristics of guqin playing and singing ancient poems, including the characteristics of guqin music and the language characteristics of ancient poems, as well as the artistic expression of playing and singing. Then, the role of guqin playing and singing ancient poems on the inheritance of traditional culture is discussed, including the integration of music and literature, the inheritance of traditional music culture and the inheritance of traditional aesthetic concepts. In addition, the effects of guqin playing and singing ancient poems on traditional culture, such as enhancing cultural literacy, cultivating moral sentiments and promoting cultural exchanges, are also studied. Finally, through case studies, famous guqin playing and singing ancient poems are analyzed, and the artistic achievements of representative performers are introduced. The research of this paper is of great significance to the in-depth understanding of the artistic value and cultural significance of guqin playing and singing ancient poems.

**Keywords:** Guqin playing and singing; Ancient poems; Traditional culture; Artistic characteristics; Inheritance role; Influence.

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## 1. Introduction

The guqin, as one of the oldest plucked instruments in China, has been closely connected with poems and songs since ancient times. Playing and singing ancient poems and lyrics on guqin is an art form that integrates music and literature, carrying the long history and culture and rich spiritual connotation of the Chinese nation. With the development of modern society, traditional culture has been paid more and more attention to, and the guqin playing and singing ancient poems has become the focus of people's attention again. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the inheritance and influence of guqin playing and singing ancient poems on traditional culture, in order to provide theoretical support for the promotion of national culture.

## 2. Artistic characteristics of guqin playing and singing ancient poems

### 2.1. Characteristics of guqin music

Guqin, as a representative of ancient Chinese traditional music, has a history of thousands of years and is an important part of ancient Chinese culture. Guqin music has a unique flavor and deep cultural connotation, and its characteristics are mainly manifested in the following aspects. First of all, the rhythm of guqin music is free and rich in changes. Different from the strict rhythm emphasized by western music, guqin music focuses on the close integration of music with poetry and literature, so in the performance, the rhythm can be freely adjusted according to the emotion and mood of the poem, making the music more expressive and infectious. Secondly, the tone of guqin music is quiet and distant. The timbre of guqin is as clear and melodious as high mountains and flowing water, which can create a peaceful and elegant atmosphere, and make people feel the inner peace and sublimation of thoughts in the process of enjoying the music.

Moreover, the playing techniques of guqin music are rich and varied. The playing techniques of the guqin include plucking with the right hand, pressing the strings with the left hand, glissando, overtones, vibrato, etc. The use of these techniques makes the guqin music have a unique flavor and artistic charm. Finally, guqin music emphasizes the mutual reflection of music and poetry. Guqin playing and singing ancient poems emphasizes the close combination of music and poetry, and through the performance of music, it makes the meaning of poetry extended and strengthened, presenting a unique artistic effect.

### 2.2. Language characteristics of ancient poems

Ancient poems are the treasures of Chinese traditional culture, and their unique language characteristics make them an important part of Chinese civilization. First of all, ancient poems pursue simplicity and conciseness in the use of words, conveying rich meanings with very few words. This characteristic is embodied in the words in ancient poems, where each word is carefully selected to achieve the effect of a finishing touch. For example, in Wang Zhilu's "Climbing to the Stork Tower", "The sun is over the mountains and the Yellow River flows into the sea", the words "over" and "into" are used to depict the sunset and the river succinctly, which give people an. The second thing is that ancient poems are concerned with the leveling of the ground and the flow of the river. Secondly, ancient poems pay attention to the rhythm of level and oblique, and the beauty of this rhythm is another major feature of ancient poems. Ping and oblique refers to the tones of the ancient Chinese language, which are divided into flat and oblique tones, while rhyme refers to the rhyming pattern of the verses. The use of such tones and rhymes makes ancient poems have a beautiful rhythm and musicality when they are read aloud, giving people an auditory enjoyment. For example, in Li Bai's "Silent Night Thoughts", "The moonlight in front of the bed is suspected to be frost on the ground", the

use of its flat and oblique rhymes makes the poem catchy and gives people the feeling of tranquility and distance [1]. Again, ancient poems emphasize the use of imagery, which is another important feature of ancient poems. Imagery refers to the expression of the poet's emotions and thoughts through the depiction of scenery in the verse. Imagery in ancient poems is rich and varied, ranging from natural landscapes, such as mountains and waters, flowers and birds, to humanistic landscapes, such as ancient temples and long pavilions. Through the use of imagery, ancient poems can draw a vivid picture in the readers' mind and make the readers resonate. For example, in Wang Wei's "Lovesickness", "Red beans are born in the south, and a few branches are sprouted in spring", through the imagery of red beans, it conveys the poet's longing for his loved ones in a faraway place. Finally, ancient poems contain rich cultural connotations, which is their unique charm. Ancient poems have incorporated a large number of cultural elements such as history, philosophy, religion and folklore, which makes ancient poems not only a form of literature, but also a kind of cultural inheritance. For example, in Du Fu's "Spring Hope", "The country is broken and the grass is deep in the city in spring", which not only expresses the worry about the rise and fall of the country, but also contains the poet's firm adherence to the feelings of the family and the country [2].

### **2.3. The artistic expression of playing and singing**

Guqin playing and singing is an art form that combines guqin music and ancient poems, which not only shows the unique charm of guqin music, but also highlights the literary value of ancient poems. In the process of playing and singing, the performer utilizes rich playing techniques, such as plucking with the right hand, pressing the strings with the left hand, glissando, overtones, etc., as well as unique fingerings, such as hooking, picking, wiping, and resting, to bring the expressive power of guqin music to the fullest extent. At the same time, the performer also needs to use breath control and voice regulation, so that guqin music and poetry recitation are integrated with each other to form a harmonious and unified whole [3]. The artistic expression of guqin playing and singing includes both the melodic beauty of music and the rhythmic beauty of poetry. The melody of music is melodious, beautiful and poetic, which can arouse the resonance of the listeners. The rhymes of the poems are harmonious and catchy, showing the charm of ancient literature. In the process of singing, the performer should also pay attention to the change of tone and volume, as well as the grasp of emotion, so that the music and the poems reflect each other and complement each other. In addition, guqin singing also emphasizes the physical and mental cultivation of the performers. In the process of playing, the performer needs to maintain inner peace and smooth breath in order to play beautiful and touching music. At the same time, the performer also needs to have a certain literary literacy and a deep understanding of the connotation and meaning of ancient poems in order to accurately convey the flavor of the poems to the audience [4]. The artistic expression of guqin playing and singing has evolved in the long history of China, forming a rich variety of schools and styles. For example, the famous Zhejiang School, Yushan School, Guangling School, etc., each with its own characteristics. Players choose different schools and repertoires to learn and play according to their own preferences and specialties, which makes the art of guqin

playing and singing present diverse aesthetic interests [5].

## **3. The role of guqin playing and singing ancient poems on the inheritance of traditional culture**

### **3.1. The fusion of music and literature**

The fusion of music and literature is one of the important features of guqin playing and singing ancient poems. With its unique tone and playing style, guqin music provides a perfect accompaniment to the chanting of ancient poems. The sound of guqin is tranquil and distant, which can well express the mood and emotion of ancient poems. The ancient poems, with their beautiful language and far-reaching meanings, add rich connotations to the guqin music.

In the process of playing and singing ancient poems on the guqin, the player should not only master the playing techniques of the guqin, but also deeply understand the meaning and emotion of the ancient poems. In this way, music and literature can be perfectly fused together, making them complement each other. This fusion not only makes the guqin playing and singing ancient poems with unique artistic charm, but also has important significance for the inheritance and development of China's traditional culture [6].

The fusion of music and literature makes the guqin playing and singing ancient poems a unique art form, which has both the rhythm and beauty of music and the connotation and depth of literature. This fusion not only provides people with the enjoyment of beauty, but also plays an important role in cultivating people's aesthetic taste and cultural literacy. At the same time, this fusion also provides rich materials and sources for the inheritance and development of China's traditional culture [7].

### **3.2. Inheritance of traditional music culture**

As an important part of Chinese traditional music culture, guqin playing and singing ancient poems plays an important role in the inheritance of traditional culture. First of all, as a unique musical art form, guqin playing and singing ancient poems carries rich historical and cultural information and aesthetic value. Through the inheritance of performers and singers, these ancient poems can be continued musically, enabling people to feel the flavor and emotional expression of ancient culture. Secondly, the inheritance of traditional music culture by playing and singing ancient poems on guqin is reflected in the inheritance of guqin music. As one of the traditional Chinese musical instruments, guqin has a long history and unique sound. Guqin playing and singing ancient poems combines guqin music with ancient poems, and through the virtuoso skills of the performers, the timbre, tone and playing skills of guqin are passed down, so that the guqin music can be passed down and developed in contemporary times [8]. In addition, the inheritance of traditional music culture by playing and singing ancient poems on guqin is also manifested in the inheritance of ancient music theory. Guqin playing and singing ancient poems are performed and composed according to ancient music theories, including the use of scales, rhythms, harmonies and other aspects. These music theories are reflected and inherited in Guqin Playing and Singing Ancient Poems, which provide valuable experience and reference for the development of music in later generations [9].

### **3.3. Inheritance of traditional aesthetic concepts**

As a product of the combination of traditional music and literature and art in China, Guqin Playing and Singing Ancient Poems carries rich traditional aesthetic concepts. In the process of long-term historical development, Guqin Playing and Singing Ancient Poetry has continuously absorbed and fused philosophical thoughts of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, and formed unique aesthetic concepts.

First of all, guqin sings and plays ancient poems, emphasizing the beauty of "mood". Context is an aesthetic realm beyond the material world pursued by ancient literati in their artistic creation. By playing and singing ancient poems on the guqin, poets and qin masters blend abstract emotions with natural scenery to create a poetic picture scroll. This aesthetic concept of pursuing mood not only reflects the noble pursuit of art by ancient literati, but also has a profound influence on the creation of literature, art, music and other art categories in later generations [10]. Secondly, the guqin plays and sings ancient poems focusing on the beauty of "qiyun". Charm is another important concept in the aesthetics of ancient art, which refers to the vitality and dynamic beauty contained in art works. In Guqin playing and singing ancient poems, the performer grasps the rhythm, melody and timbre of the music through exquisite skills, making the music full of vitality and vigor. This kind of vivid artistic expression not only shows the unique charm of ancient music and poetry, but also provides a rich inspiration for the artistic creation of later generations. In addition, the guqin plays and sings ancient poems, emphasizing the beauty of "literati spirit". Literati spirit refers to the unique temperament, demeanor and character of ancient literati. In playing and singing ancient poems on the guqin, the performer should not only have excellent skills, but also have profound literary literacy and noble moral character. This aesthetic concept that emphasizes the literati spirit is not only the inheritance of the ancient literati spirit, but also a revelation of the moral sentiments of modern people [11].

## **4. The influence of guqin playing and singing ancient poems on traditional culture**

### **4.1. Enhancement of cultural literacy**

As a unique art form, the guqin playing and singing ancient poems plays an important role in improving people's cultural literacy. First of all, singing and playing ancient poems on guqin is a treasure of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation, which integrates various artistic elements such as music, literature and dance, and shows the noble sentiment and aesthetic pursuit of the ancient literati. Through learning and appreciating guqin playing and singing ancient poems, people can deeply understand ancient culture and feel the beauty of traditional culture, so as to improve their cultural literacy [12]. Secondly, guqin playing and singing ancient poems emphasizes the close integration of music and literature, aiming to convey the connotation and emotion of the poems through music. This unique form of artistic expression makes people in the process of enjoying the guqin playing and singing ancient poems, not only can appreciate the beauty of music, but also can taste the rhythm of the poems and feel the charm of literature. Thus, people can be sublimated in terms of aesthetics, emotion and thought, and

further improve their cultural literacy. In addition, the guqin playing and singing ancient poems can also cultivate people's moral character. The rich emotions and profound connotations contained in ancient poems sung on the guqin can help people establish correct values and moral concepts and cultivate good moral character. Through the study and inheritance of ancient poems played and sung on the guqin, people can draw wisdom from them and improve their own moral cultivation [13].

### **4.2. Cultivating Moral Sentiments**

Guqin playing and singing ancient poems play an important role in cultivating moral sentiments. First of all, with its melodious and soothing melody and ancient and elegant temperament, guqin music can make people feel serenity and calmness in their hearing, so as to achieve spiritual purification. This form of music helps people precipitate their inner emotions, abandon worldly irritability and impulsiveness, and cultivate the moral sentiments of indifference to fame and fortune and the pursuit of inner peace [14]. Secondly, the rich emotion and profound meaning contained in ancient poems can inspire people to think deeply about life, nature and life. Through playing and singing ancient poems on guqin, people can appreciate the wisdom and talent of the ancients, and realize the poet's love for life, nature and his feelings about life. This kind of feeling helps to improve people's moral sentiment, make people pay more attention to inner cultivation and pursue high moral quality. In addition, as an art form, the performance process of playing and singing ancient poems on guqin has certain moral cultivation in itself. In the process of playing and singing, the performer requires the unity of mind and body and full concentration in order to achieve a tacit understanding with the music. This kind of rigorous artistic attitude and professional conduct has positive significance for cultivating people's moral sentiments [15]. Finally, the inheritance and development of guqin playing and singing ancient poems in modern society requires people to learn and practice continuously. This learning and practicing process can not only improve people's cultural literacy, but also cultivate generations of talents with noble moral sentiments, contributing to the harmonious development of society [16].

### **4.3. Promoting cultural exchange**

As a unique art form, guqin playing and singing ancient poems not only occupies an important position in Chinese traditional culture, but also plays a positive role in promoting cultural exchanges. First of all, as a comprehensive art, guqin playing and singing ancient poems integrates various elements such as music, literature and performance, making it an art form with wide appeal. The existence of this art form provides a common cultural exchange platform for people from different regions and backgrounds, enabling them to enhance mutual understanding and friendship through appreciating and playing guqin playing and singing ancient poems. Secondly, as a traditional art, guqin playing and singing ancient poems is rich in connotation and unique in expression, which can stimulate people's interest in and love for traditional culture. Through the exchange and learning of guqin playing and singing ancient poems, people can better understand and inherit traditional Chinese culture, thus promoting cultural exchange and dissemination [17]. In addition, the spread of guqin playing and singing ancient poems in modern society also plays a role in promoting

cultural exchange. With the development of science and technology and the popularization of media, guqin playing and singing ancient poems spread through the Internet, television, movies and other channels, so that more people understand and love this art form. At the same time, the organization of various guqin playing and singing competitions and performances also provides more opportunities for people to contact and exchange guqin playing and singing ancient poems, further promoting cultural exchange.

## 5. Case Analysis

### 5.1. Analysis of Famous Guqin Playing and Singing Ancient Poetry Works

In the history of ancient Chinese music, there are many works of ancient poems played and sung by guqin, among which, "High Mountains and Flowing Water", "Three Plum Blossoms", "Flat Sand and Falling Geese" and so on can be called classics. These works perfectly combine beautiful music with elegant poems, showing the unique charm of traditional Chinese culture.

Take "High Mountains and Flowing Water" as an example, this piece originated from the allusion of Boya and Ziqi, and has been passed down for more than 2,000 years. The tune is melodious and far-reaching, showing the scene of lofty mountains and gurgling water. When playing and singing, the performer utilizes rich fingerings and timbre changes to blend the music with the poem, making the listener feel as if he or she is in the middle of the mountains and water, and feel the magical charm of nature.

"Plum Blossom Song" takes the pride, elegance and toughness of the plum blossom as its theme, and glorifies the noble qualities of the plum blossom. The tune is refreshing, the melody is beautiful and touching, and the playing and singing pay attention to the matching of rhythms and the expression of emotions, so that people can appreciate the beauty and flavor of plum blossoms while enjoying the music.

"Flat Sand and Falling Geese" depicts the scene of geese roosting on the beach, showing the tranquility and harmony of nature. The tune is broad and far-reaching, with a thick and heavy meaning. When playing and singing, it utilizes a variety of playing techniques to integrate the meaning of the poem with the beauty of the music, making the listener feel as if he or she is in the vast expanse of heaven and earth, and feel the magnificence and mystery of nature.

These famous works of ancient poems played and sung by guqin not only have high artistic value, but also are the treasures of traditional Chinese culture. They carry rich historical information and pass on the spiritual style of the Chinese nation, and are the excellent cultural heritage that we should cherish and pass on.

### 5.2. Artistic Achievements of Representative Performers

In the history of Chinese music, there are many famous guqin players who have made outstanding artistic achievements in the field of guqin playing and singing ancient poems, and have made great contributions to the inheritance and development of traditional culture. Among them, the most representative performers include Yu Bo Ya, Zhong Ziqi, Zhu Geliang, Ouyang Xiu and Su Shi.

The story of Yu Bo Ya and Zhong Ziqi has been passed down through the ages. Their tacit cooperation and emotional

integration perfectly combined guqin music with ancient poems, creating a precedent for guqin playing and singing. Zhuge Liang not only had outstanding achievements in politics and military, but was also a talented guqin player, and his "Crouching Dragon" is a treasure of guqin playing and singing. Ouyang Xiu's "Autumn Sound Fugue" combines music and literature, showing the deep feeling of autumn and the emotion of life. Su Shi's "Song of Water" expresses the author's love of life and his hopes for the future with its beautiful melody and heartfelt lyrics.

These performers have made outstanding artistic achievements in the field of playing and singing ancient poems on the guqin, and have made great contributions to the inheritance and development of traditional culture. Their works have been sung for thousands of years, influencing generations of musicians and poets. In contemporary times, the playing and singing of ancient poems on the guqin still receives widespread attention, and many performers, such as Li Xiangting, Wang Zhongshan, and Cheng Gongliang, continue to innovate on the basis of inheriting the tradition, pushing the art of playing and singing on the guqin to new heights. Through concerts, lectures and teaching, they make more people understand and love the guqin playing and singing ancient poems, contributing to the dissemination and promotion of traditional culture.

In conclusion, the artistic achievements of the representative performers are not only reflected in their personal musical talents, but also in their inheritance and development of the art of playing and singing ancient poems on the guqin. It is their efforts and dedication that have made it possible for the traditional cultural form of playing and singing ancient poems on the guqin to be handed down to the present day and continue to illuminate our spiritual world.

## 6. Conclusion

Guqin playing and singing ancient poems is a bright pearl in Chinese traditional culture, which not only contains rich musical and literary elements, but also carries the historical memory and aesthetic feelings of the Chinese nation. Through the study of guqin playing and singing ancient poems, we can see its important role in traditional culture. First of all, guqin playing and singing ancient poems is a perfect fusion of music and literature, which expresses the beautiful words of classical poems through the form of music, so that people can feel the charm of the poems while enjoying the music. This fusion not only enriches the expression of traditional culture, but also makes guqin playing and singing ancient poems become a unique art carrier, which inherits the excellent culture of the Chinese nation. Secondly, guqin playing and singing ancient poems plays an important role in the inheritance of traditional culture. As an important part of Chinese traditional music, guqin music is a cultural treasure of the Chinese nation with its unique sound and playing skills, as well as the poems accompanying it. Through playing and singing ancient poems with guqin, we can feel the charm of ancient music and literature and experience the historical emotions of the Chinese nation, so as to better understand and inherit traditional culture. In addition, guqin playing and singing ancient poems has a profound influence on traditional culture. It can enhance people's cultural literacy, so that people can understand and love their own national culture more; it can cultivate people's moral sentiments, so that people can draw moral nourishment from the wisdom of the ancients; it can promote cultural exchanges, so that people can

communicate and learn from each other through the art form of playing and singing ancient poems on the guqin to enhance their understanding and friendship.

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