

ILLUMINATING THE CLAPPERS: A PRACTICE-LED INQUIRY INTO DING HUAN'S *THE LIGHT OF THE MOUNTAIN*

Ding Huan¹

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Abstract

This research examines Ding Huan's *The Light of the Mountain*, scrutinizing its amalgamation of traditional *Jinqian Clapper* performance elements with modern themes. The study analyses the impact of rhythmic patterns, vocal styles, and narrative structure on the storytelling of *The Light of the Mountain*, which depicts the commitment and resilience of a volunteer teacher in rural China. This study utilizes a practice-led research methodology to critically examine Ding Huan's *The Light of the Mountain*, emphasizing the synthesis of traditional *Jinqian Clapper* performance elements with modern themes. The investigation demonstrated that the rhythmic foundation created by the bamboo clappers serves to drive the narrative forward while simultaneously emphasizing important thematic elements, such as those presented by Yun Li Bai and Ban Qiang. This research offers a performance guideline for presenting *The Light of the Mountain* with a vocal ensemble, emphasizing the need to balance traditional clapper styles with contemporary storytelling techniques. The study seeks to contribute to the preservation and evolution of *Jinqian Clapper* as a dynamic cultural art form by examining and contextualizing these elements, thereby enabling it to convey complex narratives in contemporary settings.

Keyword: Bamboo Clappers; *Jinqian Clapper*; Practice-Led Research; *The Light of the Mountain*; Yun Li Bai

Abstrak

Penelitian yang meneliti *The Light of the Mountain* karya Ding Huan, meneliti penggabungan elemen pertunjukan *Jinqian Clapper* tradisional dengan tema-tema modern. Penelitian ini menganalisis dampak dari pola ritme, gaya vokal, dan struktur naratif pada penceritaan *The Light of the Mountain*, yang menggambarkan komitmen dan ketangguhan seorang guru sukarelawan di daerah pedesaan Tiongkok. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi penelitian yang dipandu oleh praktik untuk memeriksa secara kritis *The Light of the Mountain* karya Ding Huan, dengan menekankan pada sintesis elemen pertunjukan *Jinqian Clapper* tradisional dengan tema-tema modern. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa fondasi ritmis yang diciptakan oleh genta bambu berfungsi untuk mendorong narasi ke depan sekaligus menekankan elemen tematik yang penting, seperti yang disajikan oleh Yun Li Bai dan Ban Qiang. Penelitian ini menawarkan sebuah pedoman pertunjukan untuk menyajikan *The Light of the Mountain* dengan ansambel vokal, yang menekankan perlunya menyeimbangkan gaya genta tradisional dengan teknik penceritaan kontemporer. Penelitian ini berusaha untuk berkontribusi pada pelestarian dan evolusi Genta *Jinqian* sebagai bentuk seni budaya yang dinamis dengan memeriksa dan mengkontekstualisasikan elemen-elemen ini, sehingga memungkinkannya untuk menyampaikan narasi yang kompleks dalam pengaturan kontemporer.

Kata kunci: Bamboo Clappers; *Jinqian Clapper*; Practice-Led Research; *The Light of the Mountain*; Yun Li Bai

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INTRODUCTION

The *Jinqian Clapper*'s singing form was initially developed for the minority community. The piece exhibits traits of solo vocal performance, a straightforward rhythmic structure, abundant resources, and content that is both humorous and engaging. Historically, this type of performance has yielded significant results. However, if performed in a concert hall with a capacity of approximately 1000 attendees, a significant issue arises; the voice of the solo performer will be inadequately projected. Improving the range of voices to accommodate a larger audience will, without a doubt, compromise the original style (Zhou, 2015). The search results from JSTOR, Google Scholar indicate a notable deficiency in references concerning the study of Sichuan *Jinqian Clapper*. The existing literature on *Sichuan Jinqian Clapper* is limited, with significantly fewer references than those available for other subjects within the realm of Chinese music. Searching JSTOR for "Sichuan Jinqian Clapper" produces only two results, both in Chinese, which concentrate on the historical context and evolution of Sichuan *Jinqianban*, a musical genre utilizing the *Jinqian Clapper*. In a comparable manner, conducting a search on Google Scholar for *Sichuan Jinqian Clapper* produces a limited number of results, the majority of which are in Chinese and concentrate on the historical and cultural importance of the instrument. A search on CNKI for "四川金钱板" (*Sichuan Jinqianban*) produces multiple results; however, the majority are in Chinese and concentrate on the history, development, and cultural significance of *Sichuan Jinqianban*, rather than providing detailed information about the instrument itself.

Therefore, it appears that there is a lack of references in the study of *Sichuan Jinqian Clapper*, particularly in English-language academic literature. This is due to a lack of interest or funding for research on this topic, or it may be due to the fact that *Sichuan Jinqian Clapper* is a relatively niche instrument that is primarily used in Sichuan music. However, it is important to note that the lack of references does not necessarily mean that *Sichuan Jinqian Clapper* is not a significant or interesting topic of study.

The search results obtained, using the query "四川金钱板" (*Sichuan Jinqianban*), predominantly focus on the historical, developmental, and cultural aspects associated with *Sichuan Jinqianban*, while providing relatively limited attention to the instrument itself. Based on the aforementioned data, it can be deduced that there exists a notable deficiency in the body of English academic literature pertaining to the *Sichuan Jinqian Clapper*. Possible factors that could contribute to this phenomenon may encompass constraints in research financing, the instrument's particular association with Sichuan musical traditions, or the relative lack of scholarly attention devoted to this subject matter. However, it is important to note that the limited availability of comprehensive references should not diminish the possible scholarly worth or cultural importance attributed to the *Sichuan Jinqian Clapper*.

Howard (2011) emphasizes the necessity of identifying and analyzing attributes linked to performance elements to improve the preservation and dissemination of traditional music culture. This includes the preservation of traditional music culture, the documentation of cultural heritage, the transmission of knowledge, and the processes of adaptation and revival. In conclusion, Howard's assertion highlights the necessity of studying the identification and analysis of performance attributes within traditional music culture. An

identification and analysis of performance elements reveals a range of benefits, including cultural preservation, education, artistic innovation, and cross-cultural appreciation. Various traditional artistic forms, including music and musical instruments, represent a fundamental aspect of a society's cultural identity (Khan, & De Byl, 2011). Preserving these customs maintains a connection to historical heritage, thereby fostering a sense of cultural pride and individuality (Howard, 2016).

In the term of preservation of traditional music Elements in *Jinqian Clapper* Performances there is a need to analyze the musical and narrative elements in traditional *Jinqian Clapper* performances to preserve its unique cultural and artistic significance. Without a detailed understanding of these elements, critical aspects of the art form may be lost, risking cultural erosion. By systematically studying the musical structures, rhythmic patterns, and narrative techniques, this research will safeguard traditional knowledge and provide a foundation for future generations to appreciate and engage with this heritage.

Sichuan Jinqianban is a type of music that originated in Sichuan province and is characterized by its use of *Jinqian Clapper* (Yuan Jingfang, 2023). According to Zhao & Theerapan (2023) the phrase structures of Dagu lyrics used in *Danxian Paiziqu*, *Taiping'nian* used in *Danxian Paiziqu*, *Nancheng Diao* used in *Danxian Paiziqu*, *Qie'kuaishu* used in *Danxian Paiziqu*, *Liushui'ban* used in *Danxian Paiziqu*, and *Hongna'ao* used in *Sichuan Jinqianban* are some examples of the use of *Jinqian Clapper* in Sichuan music.

Storytelling holds great significance in Chinese opera, as it serves as a means to convey the plot and depict the characters in a performance (Chabrowski, 2022). Through vocal narration and storytelling, performers bring the narrative to life for the audience. Performers in these traditional arts use their voices in diverse ways, including singing, speaking lines, and conveying the narrative of the performance which can be categorized into five distinct types are as follows:

1. 半腔 (*BanQiang*)

In this type of singing, the first half of a lyric is typically spoken-like, and the second half is sung. This form is closest to a combination of speaking and singing, resembling a mix of speech and song which is a kind of chanting rap music

2. 满腔 (*ManQiang*)

This type of singing refers to both the upper and lower lines of the lyrics being sung, or a complete section of lyrics being sung from beginning to end which used to express more sorrowful emotions such as sadness, heroism, or indignation.

3. 数板 (*ShuBan*)

This type of singing is almost like speaking without singing, but still follows the rhythm and beats.

4. 大腔 (*DaQiang*)

This type of singing involves longer melodic prolongations between words, significant melodic variations, and is often used in the introduction or ending parts of a song, as well as at pivotal moments or climaxes in the storyline.

5. 云里白 (*YunLiBai*)

This type of singing refers to the alternation of speaking and singing within several lines of lyrics.

The rhythm of *Jinqian Clapper* is flexible according to the natural rhythm of language and the needs of emotion. The use of aria and panels is very flexible. In fact, in a performance, one principle is followed by performers: as long as the rules are met, the panel and aria can be flexibly used. Thus, this is the only way the performance art of *Jinqian Clapper* can be enriched (Zhong, 2020).

The rhythmic elements of the *Sichuan Jinqian Clapper* instrument are indeed unique and contribute to the distinctiveness of this traditional Chinese percussion instrument. The *Jinqian Clapper* is a handheld percussion instrument traditionally made from bamboo. It consists of two bamboo clappers or boards that are struck together to create rhythms. The design and construction of the clappers contribute to the specific sound and resonance they produce. One of the distinctive features of the *Jinqian Clapper* is its use of three clappers, creating a two-part rhythm. Performers hold one clapper in right hand, two clappers in left hand and strike them together. This dual-rhythm effect adds complexity and depth to the percussion sound. The *Jinqian Clapper* is known for its intricate and varied rhythmic patterns. These patterns can be fast and intricate, requiring skilled hand coordination to produce precise rhythms. The instrument offers a wide range of rhythmic possibilities, from rapid and syncopated beats to more melodic and flowing patterns.

The accompaniment pattern of the *Jinqian clapper* is characterized by its free structure and impromptu nature, much depending on the individual performer's interpretation of the piece. In reference to the nomenclature used for Sichuan Opera's accompaniment patterns, four main *JinQian* clapper rhythms exist. Though the names might seem akin to those in Sichuan Opera, their artistic meanings differ and are unique to the *JinQian* clapper.

1. 一字 (Yi Zi):

This pattern unfolds at a slow pace, typically employing the 4/4 time signature, adhering to the principle of "strong, weak, semi-strong, weak," knocking the clapper once for each beat.

2. 流 (Er Liu):

This pattern proceeds at a medium tempo, mainly utilizing the 2/4 time signature, following the "strong, weak" principle where the clapper is knocked once on each beat.

3. 三三 (San San):

This rhythm is quicker, frequently using the 2/4 time signature, and is guided by the "strong, weak-weak" principle, a single clapper knock on the strong beat and two knocks on the weak beats. This is the most commonly used pattern in *JinQian* clapper.

4. 荡板或散板 (Dang Ban or San Ban):

Characterized by its rhythmic freedom, this pattern is often employed during the introduction or conclusion of a piece, or at points of heightened emotion, often with continuous clapper knocks.

The basic gestures of Bamboo Clapper in *Jinqian Clapper* can be categorized into five distinct types.

1. 高位 (*GaoWei*)

Hold the two boards with a left hand and high above the head. Place it in front of the left eyebrow. Keep a distance of about 25cm from the body, and keep the elbow level with the height of the left ear.

2. 中高位 (*ZhongGaoWei*)

Place the lefthand holding the two boards about 25cm in front of the left eyebrow. Keep the left-hand flush with the left ear and keep the arm at an angle of 60° with the body.

3. 中位 (*ZhongWei*)

Place the left hand holding the two boards about 25cm in front of the left chest. Keep the left-hand flush with the left chest and the arm at an angle of 30° with the body.

4. 低位 (*DiWei*)

Hold the two boards with the left hand and place it about 25cm in front of the left abdomen, keeping the angle between the arm and the body at 30°.

5. 后位 (*HouWei*)

The left-hand holds the panel and baseboard, and the right hand holds the playing board behind the performer.

METHODOLOGY

This study, conducted as practice-led research, is particularly relevant because practice-led methodologies prioritize the practitioner's direct experience and creative process, allowing for deeper insights into the nuances of performing arts, especially traditional forms like Jinqian Clapper. Practice-led research is defined as a research strategy in which "the creative practice leads to new knowledge, insights, and understanding" (Candy, 2006; Mäkelä, M. (2007). In this study, the methodology is especially pertinent for examining Jinqian Clapper's musical and narrative elements since the researcher's active engagement in performance allows for an embodied understanding of rhythm, vocal style, and storytelling techniques that are otherwise challenging to capture in traditional research.

Furthermore, practice-led research is essential in this context because it facilitates a balance between preserving traditional forms and encouraging innovation. By directly engaging with Jinqian Clapper through performance, the researcher can test and refine the creative guidelines in real-time, thus ensuring that traditional methods are respected while also being adaptable for contemporary interpretations. This approach aligns with the notion that practice-led research "promotes the integration of theory and practice, making it possible to refine and extend the creative practice itself" (Nimkulrat, 2007; Smith, 2009). Such an approach is particularly relevant to Jinqian Clapper, where the fusion of vocal and rhythmic techniques must align with both cultural authenticity and audience engagement.

Moreover, practice-led research contributes to the field by creating a practical resource—guidelines for performing Jinqian Clapper—that is both instructional and innovative. By developing these guidelines through practice, the study provides a tool that is grounded in authentic experience, offering value for practitioners, educators, and researchers alike. Therefore, this study's approach is not only relevant but critical for

developing a performance framework that sustains cultural heritage while adapting to modern demands, fulfilling the dual goals of cultural preservation and creative evolution.

Phillips, and Hollander (2019) articulate that there exists a concept known as creative performance practice, which emphasizes the significance of integrating traditional music aspects with a creative approach. The table 1 provides a clear outline of the significance of integrating traditional music aspects with a creative approach for the methodology, covering each research objective with corresponding steps for data collection, analysis, interpretation.

No	Research Objectives	Finding	
		Data Collection	Data Analysis and interpretation
1	To analyze the musical and narrative elements in a traditional performance of the Jinqian Clapper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lyric • Bamboo clapper 	<p>Transcribe and examine vocal and rhythmic patterns to identify core musical elements.</p> <p>-Thematically analyze storytelling techniques for key narrative elements.</p> <p>- Interpret cultural symbolism and significance of musical patterns.</p>
2	To develop a guideline in performing the Jinqian Clapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vocal Story Lyric flow • The vocal Style • The <i>Bamboo Clapper arrangements</i> • The comprehensive guideline for performing 	<p>- Analyze collected techniques, rhythm patterns, and transitions to establish foundational guidelines.</p> <p>- Synthesize findings into a structured performance guideline.</p> <p>- Interpret effectiveness through performer feedback and refinement.</p>

Table 1 Research objectives and data collection

By analyzing the musical and narrative elements of *Jinqian Clapper* performances, this study aims to deepen the understanding of traditional aspects that are essential to the art form. In line with Phillips and Hollander's (2019) idea, this analysis provides a foundation upon which creative innovations can be introduced, ensuring that any modern adaptations respect and enhance the traditional elements rather than overshadowing them. Understanding these

core elements is crucial for performers to develop authentic yet innovative expressions within the tradition, supporting the fusion of tradition and creativity.

Developing a performance guideline for the *Jinqian Clapper* can foster a structured approach for artists who seek to integrate traditional techniques with creative expression. This guideline would incorporate foundational practices while encouraging adaptability and individual artistic input, embodying the principles of creative performance practice. According to Phillips and Hollander (2019), guidelines that emphasize both preservation and innovation empower performers to honor traditional music's roots while exploring new artistic directions. The guideline therefore supports a balance between maintaining authenticity and encouraging creative interpretation. In summary, the research objectives support Phillips and Hollander's (2019) concept by providing a structured analysis of traditional elements and by fostering a framework that encourages a creative, respectful approach to *Jinqian Clapper* performance. These objectives aim to preserve cultural heritage while opening up space for modern reinterpretation, thereby achieving a dynamic blend of tradition and innovation.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The performance of *The Light of the Mountain* stands as a powerful example of how a relatively small lineup and brief duration can still deliver a rich, emotionally layered experience. With 12 performers and a 20-minute runtime, Ding Huan's composition masterfully integrates traditional Jinqian Clapper techniques with innovative storytelling to create a meaningful exploration of ambition, education, and perseverance in rural China. The balance between modern and traditional elements ensures that this performance remains culturally significant while engaging with contemporary issues, making it a dynamic and accessible piece for a broad audience.

1 To analyse the musical and narrative elements in a traditional performance of the Jinqian Clapper.

The story of *The Light of the Mountain* focuses on education as a means of breaking the cycle of poverty for children in rural China. The protagonist, a volunteer teacher, is helping students develop aspirations beyond their current life circumstances. The story highlights ambition and perseverance in the face of adversity, a common theme in traditional Chinese storytelling but presented here with a modern, socially relevant twist.

The dialogue reflects the harsh realities of poverty, including the cultural and societal expectations placed on children in rural areas. Their dreams of higher education clash with the practical need to contribute to the family's income through labour. This commentary on the disparity between aspirations and social realities aligns with the critical reflection element in conceptual framework, where storytelling provides a platform for subtle critique of societal conditions.

In traditional Chinese performing arts, including Jinqian Clapper, vocal performances and storytelling are fundamental components. Storytelling holds great significance in Chinese opera, as it serves as a means to convey the plot and depict the characters in a

performance. Through vocal narration and storytelling, performers bring the narrative to life for the audience (Shi, 2016; Lam, 2022). These traditions have been passed down through generations, and preserving their essence is paramount (Li & Maneewattana, 2022).

In a typical Jinqian Clapper performance, the vocal delivery shifts between speaking and singing in the form of *BanQiang* and *ManQiang*. The text gives room for different vocal tones. In this case, the teacher's encouraging words would likely be delivered in a full-tone singing manner (*ManQiang*), conveying hope and optimism, while the children's dialogues could alternate between spoken-like delivery (*BanQiang*) for their skeptical remarks and more melodic lines when they express their dreams. *BanQiang* and *ManQiang* are representative of the "Original Ecological Singing" category, which embodies the intrinsic singing methods of Chinese nationalities, distinct from the "National Singing" that incorporates European vocal techniques (Tang, 2021).

The shift in tone from humour and mockery when the children dismiss their peer's ambitions (e.g., "Go back and feed your grandmother's pigs") to seriousness and determination (e.g., "You are all the lights in the mountain") creates emotional depth. This duality allows performers to explore the contrast of emotion, a crucial aspect of vocal storytelling in *Jinqian Clapper*. The metaphor of the students being the "lights in the mountain" symbolizes hope and the potential for enlightenment through education. This metaphor ties into traditional storytelling elements where natural imagery is often used to represent broader social or moral concepts. Here, the mountain represents the challenges of rural poverty, while the "lights" symbolize the students' ability to rise above their circumstances through education and ambition. The text emphasizes values such as perseverance, self-improvement, and the collective responsibility to contribute to society and the motherland (祖国). These values are echoed in traditional Chinese stories but are presented in a modern context, reflecting how traditional storytelling techniques are applied to contemporary themes. Currently, this adaptations become the trend in Chinese opera which is not only maintain the cultural essence of traditional operas but also provide new avenues for cultural dissemination and appreciation (Han, & Hamid, 2024).

In the dialogue of humour as a Social Tool, the mockery of a student's dream of going to college serves as a humorous yet realistic depiction of how ambition is often ridiculed in harsh, practical environments. The light-hearted teasing by peers about selling vegetables or feeding pigs provides moments of levity while also highlighting the tension between dreams and reality. The dialogue reflects genuine challenges faced by rural children, such as familial expectations and the pressure to work rather than pursue education. This realistic portrayal helps ground the performance in a context that resonates with contemporary audiences, aligning with the modern relevance discussed in your conceptual framework.

The lyric demonstrate Integration with modern themes. The text discusses modern issues like poverty, education, and social mobility, which are contemporary themes presented through a traditional narrative structure. The traditional storytelling of *Jinqian Clapper*, often focused on folk tales or historical events, can be adapted to include these modern issues, as seen here. The specific references to rural life—farming, hogweed, and familial duties—maintain an authentic connection to the realities of rural China, ensuring that the

performance stays true to its cultural roots while addressing current societal concerns. Modern issues in Chinese opera are prominently reflected in the "politicization" of performances from the 1930s to the 1970s, where operas became vehicles for social reform and revolutionary ideology (Wichmann, 1990; Jessup, 2001; Hsiao-t'i, 2019).

In terms of the storytelling aspect, *The Light in the Mountain* offers a rich narrative that integrates traditional elements of *Jinqian Clapper* with contemporary social themes. The use of humor, metaphor, and character development creates a layered performance that invites the audience to reflect on both the challenges and the opportunities presented by education in rural areas. This aligns with conceptual framework of this study which focus on preserving the tradition of *Jinqian Clapper* while making it relevant to modern audiences through social commentary and emotional engagement. In addition, modern issues in Chinese opera are prominently reflected in the "politicization" of performances from the 1930s to the 1970s, where operas became vehicles for social reform and revolutionary ideology (Wichmann, 1990; Jessup, 2001; Hsiao-t'i, 2019).

The Light in the Mountain composed based on the various vocal styles used in *Jinqian Clapper* performances include *Yun Li Bai*, *Da Qiang*, *Shu Ban*, *Man Qiang*, and *Ban Qiang*. Integrating these vocal styles—*Yun Li Bai*, *Da Qiang*, *Shu Ban*, *Man Qiang*, and *Ban Qiang*—into the performance of *The Light in the Mountain* will foster a vibrant and captivating narrative that harmonizes storytelling clarity with emotional depth. The application of these vocal techniques aims to maintain the traditional aspects of *Jinqian Clapper* while simultaneously increasing the performance's attractiveness to modern viewers, resulting in a deep and intricate storytelling experience. The combination of these bamboo clapper styles in the performance of *The Light of the Mountain* allows for dynamic transitions between emotionally charged moments and reflective interludes. Each position (*Hou Wei*, *Di Wei*, *Zhong Wei*, *Zhong Gao Wei*, *Gao Wei*) can be strategically used to match the emotional tone and narrative progression of the performance.

2 To develop a guideline in performing the Jinqian Clapper

The rehearsal of *The Light in the Mountain* is documented on You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsO4HyRqdoM>

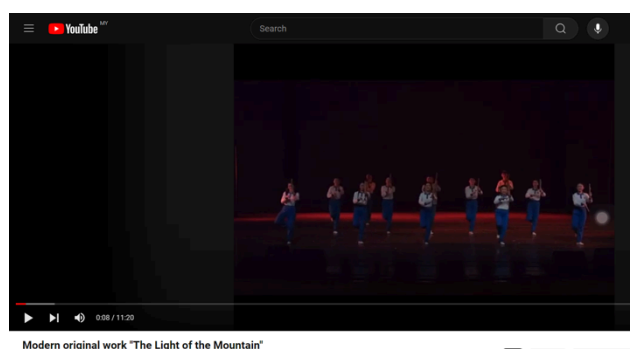


Figure 1 The rehearsal of *The Light in the Mountain*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsO4HyRqdoM>

Table 2 that provides a guideline for performing *The Light in the Mountain*

Time Stamp	Text (Original)	Translation
00:00:25	人之初，性本善，性相近，习相远。	"In the beginning, the heart is close, but over time, the heart drifts far. Love leads the feet straight until they return home."
00:00:50	我是一名支教的大学 生。"	"I am an immigrant, a volunteer teacher, and I carry dreams."
00:01:34	石柱土家族自治县的中 益乡小学，学校178个娃	"In the video, we captured 178 students from the Tujia autonomous area."
00:02:39	爸爸妈妈全在外，公公 婆婆伴左右。	"Their parents work outside, while their grandparents take care of them. They excel at chores, but not in school."
00:04:10	我要读书，我要考大学	"I want to study, work hard, and pursue my dreams."
00:06:05	老师我在帮你啊 强上强	"The teacher will not be here forever, but you must change your future with your dreams."
00:08:02	我都会记得你们的名字 ，梦想。	"I will remember your names and your dreams."
00:09:15	以后我一定会成为一名 作家。	"I will walk every path to achieve my dreams."
00:10:35	好好学习，立大志。	"Li Dazi, Yaozi, Aikun, you are all bright lights in the mountain."
00:11:00	你们都是大山里的启明 灯	"You are all the lights in the mountain."

Table 2 The Vocal Story Lyric flow of *The Light of the Mountain*

In developing a guide line in the performance of *The Light of the Mountain* in relation to the rhythmic elements of the *Bamboo Clapper* as outlined in conceptual framework, this study draw insights from the different performance styles of the bamboo clapper—*Hou Wei*, *Di Wei*, *Zhong Wei*, *Zhong Gao Wei*, and *Gao Wei*—each of which corresponds to specific gestures and rhythmic patterns that enhance the narrative and emotional delivery of the performance. The table 4 outlines how each position and its rhythmic variation contribute both to the storytelling and to the emotional tone of "The Light of the Mountain," enhancing the narrative with symbolic depth and character expression.

Position	Rhythmic Use	Narrative Impact
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Hou Wei (Back Position)	Hou Wei features a restrained, subtle movement, with the clapper held behind the performer, often used for introspective or low-energy moments. This position could be used in quieter parts of the narrative, such as the teacher reminiscing about their time at the rural school or children reflecting on internal struggles.	Symbolizes reflection and contemplation, adding emotional depth, such as during the teacher's departure from the village. The slower, subdued rhythm creates an intimate and introspective atmosphere, supporting reflective narrative moments.
Di Wei (Low Position)	Involves holding the clapper low and close to the body, producing a softer, grounded sound. Suitable for sections where the children discuss rural duties like farming and chores, highlighting the humble and grounded nature of their lives.	Emphasizes the earthiness of the children's lives, contrasting their educational dreams with rural hardships. Symbolizes the weight of daily responsibilities and the grounded nature of rural work, reflecting the challenges of poverty (e.g., cutting hogweed, feeding pigs).
Zhong Wei (Middle Position)	Zhong Wei is associated with a balanced, stable rhythm, with the clapper held at chest level, suitable for moments of narrative progression. This position would be fitting for interactions between the teacher and students, especially when giving advice and encouragement.	Reflects stability and guidance, aligning with the teacher's role as a calm, steady influence promoting education. The balanced rhythm symbolizes rationality and logic, reinforcing the teacher's supportive influence on the students' journey toward higher aspirations.
Zhong Gao Wei (Middle-High Position)	Involves holding the clapper higher in front of the body, introducing a dynamic and energetic rhythm. This technique could be used during parts of the narrative where students express their dreams with growing confidence and hope.	Enhances aspirational and motivational moments, such as when students express dreams of becoming writers, astronauts, or college students. The higher position represents rising energy and hope, emphasizing the students' ambitions to overcome their circumstances.
Gao Wei (High Position)	Gao Wei is the highest clapper position, creating a dramatic and pronounced rhythm, used for climactic or emotionally intense moments. It would be suitable for the performance's emotional peak, such	Represents the height of the children's aspirations and teacher's final encouragement before departing. The elevated rhythm underscores the emotional climax, symbolizing transformation and the commitment to ambition and

as when students pledge to change their futures through education.	perseverance as the students embrace their dreams and pledge to study hard.
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Table 3 The *Bamboo Clapper* of *The Light of the Mountain*

Table 4 outline comprehensive performance guide line of the application of various vocal styles – *Yun Li Bai*, *Da Qiang*, *Shu Ban*, *Man Qiang*, and *Ban Qiang* – to enhance the dynamism and engagement of a performance.

Vocal Style	Vocal Style Overview	Application in The Light in the Mountain	Guideline
Yun Li Bai (Alternation of Speaking and Singing)	Involves alternating between speaking and singing, adding a conversational tone and allowing fluid transitions between narration and melody.	Ideal for dialogue-heavy sections where students and the teacher interact. Speaking passages can narrate daily struggles (e.g., "Their parents work outside"), while singing emphasizes emotional moments (e.g., "You have to change your destiny").	Use Yun Li Bai to transition smoothly between narrative dialogue and emotional reflection, engaging the audience with both the story and its underlying emotions.
Da Qiang (Long Melodic Phrases)	Characterized by long, drawn-out melodic phrases, often used to highlight important or emotional moments.	Suitable for climactic moments, particularly when the teacher delivers motivational messages (e.g., "You are all the lights in the mountain" or "You have to go to college to make money").	Use Da Qiang during emotional peaks to add grandeur and significance, making the teacher's words resonate deeply with the audience.
Shu Ban (Speech-Like Rhythm)	Resembles natural speech with a rapid, rhythmic delivery, focusing on clarity and rhythm over melody.	Effective for scenes where students banter, such as humorous exchanges about college or selling vegetables. The fast-paced rhythm enhances realism and energy, making dialogue lively and relatable.	Use Shu Ban for quick dialogue and humor to maintain high energy and a conversational tone, especially in scenes reflecting the children's daily challenges.

Man Qiang (Full-Tone Singing)	Features full-tone singing throughout phrases, providing a smooth, melodic delivery.	Ideal for uplifting, aspirational sections where students declare their dreams (e.g., "I will definitely be a writer" or "I will study hard to become an astronaut").	Use Man Qiang for parts where students express hopes and dreams, as the melodic lines convey optimism and determination, enhancing the impact of these declarations.
Ban Qiang (Combination of Speech and Song)	Combines speech and song, with the first half of a phrase spoken and the second half sung, balancing narrative clarity and melodic expression.	Suitable for the teacher's dialogue, especially when shifting from instruction to emotional encouragement (e.g., "Help the poor, first help the ambition" spoken, followed by "Ambition and wisdom double support" sung).	Use Ban Qiang when the teacher transitions from instruction to inspiration, with the spoken part providing clarity and the sung part emphasizing emotional or moral significance.

Table 4 The vocal Style of *The Light of the Mountain*

Table 5 outlines specific guidelines for each vocal style, indicating how each contributes to the narrative flow, emotional depth, and character dynamics in *The Light in the Mountain*.

Vocal Style	Guideline
Yun Li Bai	Use Yun Li Bai for transitions between spoken narrative and emotional reflection, particularly in teacher-student dialogues.
Da Qiang	Apply Da Qiang at climactic moments, especially when delivering motivational or aspirational lines, to heighten the emotional impact.
Shu Ban	Use Shu Ban for lively, speech-like exchanges between students, especially during humorous or fast-paced sections, to keep the energy high and the dialogue engaging.
Man Qiang	Incorporate Man Qiang when students express their dreams and ambitions, using full melodic phrases to convey hope and determination.

Ban Qiang	Utilize Ban Qiang to balance spoken instructions with emotional, melodic conclusions, particularly in the teacher's role as a guide and mentor.
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Table 5 The comprehensive guideline for performing *The Light in the Mountain*

CONCLUSION

This study on "The Light of the Mountain" highlights key findings in the integration of traditional Jinqian Clapper performance elements with contemporary themes, emphasizing its role in both preserving and evolving Chinese cultural heritage. The rhythmic foundation of the bamboo clappers, combined with distinct vocal styles like Yun Li Bai and Ban Qiang, effectively supports narrative progression while enhancing the emotional and thematic depth of the story. The research also provides a practical guideline for performing "The Light of the Mountain," offering a balanced approach that respects traditional clapper techniques while engaging modern audiences through updated storytelling.

Key Findings:

1. The Jinqian Clapper's rhythmic complexity is integral to the performance's storytelling, effectively symbolizing thematic elements such as perseverance and ambition.
2. The use of varied vocal techniques contributes to a dynamic performance that aligns with both traditional and modern sensibilities.
3. The combination of music, narrative, and vocal styles creates an accessible medium for conveying complex narratives relevant to contemporary social themes.

Recommendations for Future Study:

1. Further research could examine how Jinqian Clapper performances can be adapted to diverse cultural contexts while retaining their traditional essence.
2. Studies could explore the potential of integrating digital media and technology to enhance the reach and presentation of traditional performances.
3. Comparative studies between Jinqian Clapper and other traditional Chinese music forms could provide insights into broader strategies for cultural preservation and innovation.

This approach ensures that Jinqian Clapper remains a vibrant and evolving art form, capable of resonating with both domestic and international audiences.

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