Plucked Stringed Instruments

Fig. 2.1: The Pipa

2

琵琶
PIPA

HISTORY

The grand dame of plucked stringed instruments, the *pipa* is one of the most expressive instruments in the Chinese orchestra *(Fig. 2.1)*. Recent moves by some major Chinese orchestras include removing the instrument entirely from the orchestral formation due to its overpowering character and inability to blend. Its techniques, however, are applied to almost every plucked stringed instrument and its concepts have been borrowed for the reformations of various plucked stringed instruments.

The term *pipa* used today refers to the lute-shaped instrument which comprises of four strings and a fretted soundboard of 20 to 25 frets. In the ancient Chinese dynasties of Sui and Han, the term *pipa* was generic for any instrument that was plucked or had a plucked string aspect to it. The word *pipa* is made up of two Chinese characters – 琵 *pi* and 琶 *pa*[1]. The words describe how the instrument is played and the sounds it produced. The forward plucking of the string using one's right hand was termed *pi*, and the backward plucking of the string with the right hand was termed *pa*.

The first recorded connotation to the word *pipa* was found in 刘熙 *Liu Xi*'s 〈〈释名〉〉 *Shi Ming*, where it was recorded as *piba*[2].

Although greatly associated with the Chinese, the *pipa* is not native to China; the instrument was introduced to China by Asia Minor over 2000 years ago. As the instrument is foreign, its counterparts in the forms of lutes and mandolins can still be found in Central and Western Asia.

Researchers have been unable to discover remains of ancient *pipas*; it seems no one from the ancient civilisations thought to preserve it. Unlike the 瑟 *se* or 琴 *qin*, both zither-like instruments with great scholarly significance and illustrious histories, the *pipa* was not considered important enough to be preserved. It was common for an ancient scholar to be buried with a *qin*, but being buried with a *pipa* was unheard of.

It is argued that ancient *pipas* were not preserved as they were not considered objects of class and dignity. Another possibility put across was that the *pipa* could have been an extremely common item in the ancient civilisations. Hence, the Chinese did not see the need to preserve it.

However, historical connotations and drawings of the *pipa* can still be found in paintings on the walls of the 敦煌窟 *Dunhuang* caves in Gangshu, highlighting the instrument's great value in music. In any depiction of musical activity in the caves, there is at least one drawing of a *pipa*. As such, there were around 700 depictions of the *pipas* found on the cave walls, with 50 different types of *pipas* represented.

The *pipa*, adapted by the Chinese, spread to different countries where it has been modified and re-adapted. In Japan, it is termed *biwa*; in Mongolia, the instrument is known as *biba*; in Tibet, it is known as *piwang*. Variations of the instrument are too numerous and diverse to be fully recorded. Based on historical records, it was found that during the Qin and Han dynasties, there were two major types of *pipas*.

One had a straight neck and a round sound box, which had its front and back surfaces bound with animal skin. It was called a 直项琵琶 *zhixiang pipa* (straight-necked *pipa*). It is believed that this form of *pipa* descended from the instrument 弦鼗 *xiantao*, which emerged during the Qin Dynasty. Hence, it was also called 秦汉子 *qin hanzi* (See ***Sanxian***).

The second type of *pipa* came about around 105 BC and had influences from the 箏 *zheng*, 箜篌 *konghou* (See ***Zheng*** and ***Konghou***) and other plucked stringed instruments. This type of *pipa* had a straight neck, a round sound box, four strings, twelve frets and was made of wood. The instrument was also known as 阮 *ruan* or 阮咸 *ruanxian* (See ***Ruan***).

During the Dong and Jin dynasties, a crooked-necked version of the *pipa*, 曲项琵琶 *quxiang pipa (*crooked-necked *pipa)*, was brought to the Northern and Southern parts of China from the Western areas of Persia and Xinjiang. The crooked-necked *pipa* had four strings and only four neck (相 *xiang*) frets. It was played horizontally with the use of a plectrum.

The Tang Dynasty was believed to be the golden age of the *pipa*, when numerous developments were made on the instrument, its playing methods and its compositions. During this period, the *pipa* was reformed by combining the characteristics of the traditional straight-necked *pipa* and the foreign crooked-necked *pipa*. The distinctive pear shape of the crooked-necked *pipa* was kept in the reformed *pipa*, though the use of the plectrum was abolished. Instead, the reformed *pipa* was plucked using fingers, as was the straight-necked *pipa*. The crooked-necked *pipa's* four *xiang* frets were also done away with, and the straight-necked *pipa's* numerous frets were used instead. The frets, in turn, were increased from an original 12 to 14 to provide a greater range. The reformed *pipa* was played vertically like a straight-necked *pipa*.

Because of these drastic reforms, there were great breakthroughs in *pipa* techniques and performances. Besides developing as an accompaniment or lead instrument in dances, the *pipa* now showed great value as a solo instrument. The number of famous *pipa* players also increased during this era. Famous Tang *pipa*

players include 曹善才 *Cao Shancai*, 曹保 *Cao Bao*, 王芬 *Wang Fen*, 米和 *Mi He* and 李士良 *Li Shiliang*.

By the Ming and Qin dynasties, the instrument had attained a standard structure. However, pieces and techniques used were rapidly evolving with new breakthroughs, especially in *pipa* scores and performance.

Among the early scores used were the 敦煌琵琶谱 *Dunhuang pipa pu* (*Dunhuang pipa* score), dated AD 933, which were found on the walls of the Dunhuang caves, and the五弦谱 *wuxian pu* (five stringed score), estimated to be composed around the 10th century for the five-stringed *pipa*. The *Dunhuang pipa* score contained 25 songs and the *wuxian pu* documented 28 songs.

It was during the Ming and Qin dynasties that two major sects of *pipa* began to develop – the Northern and Southern sect. A newer batch of excellent *pipa* players began to emerge, including 李芳园 *Li Fangyuan*, 华秋苹 *Hua Qiuping* and 汪昱庭 *Weng Yuting*.

The Southern sect had five sub-divisions, which were known as schools of playing. These schools of playing had distinctive playing styles and recruited their own members, passing down their own characteristic methods of performance. They included:

i. Jiangsu's 无锡派 *Wuxi* School which had *Hua Qiuping* and 杨荫浏 *Yang Yinliu* among its members;
ii. Zhejiang's 平湖派 *Pinghu* School, which had 李廷森 *Li Tingsen*, *Li Fangyuan*, 吴梦菲 *Wu Mengfei*, 程午嘉 *Cheng Wujia* and 吴柏君 *Wu Bojun* among others as its members;
iii. Jiangsu's 崇明派 *Chongming* School , which had 刘天华 *Liu Tianhua* and 曹安和 *Cao Anhe* among others as its members;
iv. Shanghai's 浦东派 *Pudong* School included *Weng Yuting* and 林石城 *Lin Shicheng* as its members;
v. Shanghai's 汪 *Weng* School, the youngest and most radical of all the five schools, by *Weng Yuting* and named after himself. The school had *Li Tingsen*, *Cheng Wujia,* 孙裕德 *Sun Yude*, 卫仲乐 *Wei Zhongle* among many others as its members.

In the 1950s, the *pipa*, like most other instruments, went through reformation to meet up with the demands for the Western scale system. As such, more frets were added – a total of 24 (possibly more) frets and six *xiang* frets. The steel string replaced the original silk string and artificial acrylic nails (*Fig. 2.2*) were introduced to *pipa* performance, creating improvements in the tonal colour, texture, technique and dynamic range of the *pipa*. As the *pipa* was considered one of the more successfully reformed instruments (and as most of the pioneers of the modern Chinese orchestra were *pipa* players themselves), the modified *pipa* quickly initiated a string of new *pipa* compositions.

Fig. 2.2: Artificial acrylic nails

TUNING & STRUCTURE

The *pipa* has three segments – the head, neck and body. The head section encompasses the head, tuning pegs and peg holes. The neck of the head is usually made of wood, and its pegs can be made of different materials such as ivory, bull's horn or wood. Common designs for the head include peony and lotus flowers, dragons, and phoenixes.

The neck section consists of the *xiang* frets, the 山口 s*hankou* and 琴枕 *qinzhen*. Popular materials for *xiang* frets include wood, ivory, bull's horn and jade.

The body of the *pipa* includes frets, soundboard, the back of the instrument, 复手 *fushou* and strings *(Fig. 2.3)*.

The frets allow different notes to be played *(Figs. 2.4a & 2.4b)*. The *fushou*, which is usually made of bamboo, holds the strings in place. The strings are usually made of nylon or steel. The choice of string material is usually based on personal preference.

The four strings of the *pipa* are named such – the first and thinnest string 子 *zi*, 中 z*hong* the second string, the third 老 *lao*, and the forth and thickest string 缠 *chan*.

There are various ways in which the tuning of the *pipa* is appropriated. Among the common arrangements, from the thickest (*chan*) to the thinnest (*zi*) string, are:

i. A, d, e, a – This method of tuning is called 正调 *zhendiao* and is used most commonly and is the accepted form of tuning for the Chinese orchestra;

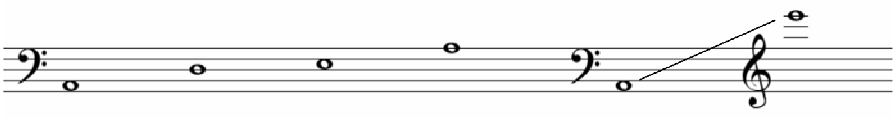
ii. G, d, e, a – This form of tuning, called 尺调 *chidiao*, is used in compositions like 刘阳河 *Liu Yang He* (*Liuyang* River);

iii. A, b, e, a – This form of tuning is called 正宫变调 *zhenggong biandiao*;

iv. A, d, a, a – This form of tuning is also called 正宫变调 *zhengong biandiao*;

v. d, g, a, d^1 – This tuning arrangement is used on 南音 *nanyin pipa*s.

The *pipa* has a range of A – e^3 and, with the exception of the note $d^{\#3}$, all semitones can be played. In recent years, extra frets have been added and the range of the *pipa* has in the process been expanded.



Tuning & Range of the Pipa

Fig. 2.3: Body of the pipa

Fig. 2.4a & 2.4b: Frets allow different notes to be played

TECHNIQUES & TONAL COLOUR

In *pipa* performance, symbols take on a special significance. Unlike most other instruments that have a few symbols, the *pipa's* symbols number in the hundreds. Each symbol defines and explains the technique that is used in the piece. These symbols, which are evolutions of calligraphy, are recognised by all *pipa* musicians.

The same symbols have become common to all plucked stringed instruments (with the exception of the *zheng* and *yangqin*). Despite this, the other plucked stringed instrumental symbols are all subsets of the *pipa's* symbols.

Numbers beside the note are used to instruct fingerings according to how the piece is to be played. Symbols at the bottom of a note tell the performer which string to use.

The symbols can be split into string symbols, right hand symbols and left hand symbols.

String Symbols

Symbol	String name	Denotation
	子弦 *Zi Xian*	The first and thinnest string
	中弦 *Zhong Xian*	The second string
	老弦 *Lao Xian*	The third string
	缠弦 *Chan Xian*	The forth and thickest string (Symbol does not apply to 三弦 *sanxian*)
	空弦 *Kong Xian*	A free string

When scored, the string symbols are written below a note.

Right Hand Symbols

Finger / Classification	Symbol	Name	Simplified Denotation
Forefinger		弹 *Tan*	Forefinger flicks outwards from right to left from the player's viewpoint, producing a single sound. Sound textures vary, depending on how the sting is plucked. Sounds can be solid, weak, soft, forceful, loose, tight, gentle, loud, thick, and thin among other textures.
		双弹 *Shuangtan*	Forefinger flicks outwards from right to left, simultaneously plucking the neighbouring string to achieve one sound.
		小扫 *Xiaosao*	Forefinger flicks outwards from right to left, simultaneously plucking three to achieve one sound.
		扫 *Sao*	Forefinger flicks outwards from right to left, simultaneously plucking all four strings to achieve one sound. Sounds produced by this technique are usually sweeping and loud.
		抹 *Ma*	Forefinger flicks string inwards from left to right, producing a crisp, thin sound.
		挂 *Gua*	Slow plucking from the inner strings to the outer strings, like *arpeggios*.
Thumb		挑 *Tiao*	Thumb plucks the string from left to right from the player's viewpoint, producing a single sound. Like *tan*, the sound textures produced are very dependent on the player.

		双挑 *Shuangtiao*	Thumb plucks two strings from left to right to achieve one sound.
		小拂 *Xiaofu*	Thumb plucks three strings from left to right to achieve one sound.
		拂 *Fu*	Thumb plucks all four strings from left to right to achieve one sound. Often used together with *sao* for a sweeping effect. Sounds produced by this technique are usually forceful and loud.
		勾 *Gou*	Thumb plucks from right to left in a hooking manner, producing a thick but loose sound.
		临 *Lin*	Slow plucking from the outer strings to the inner strings, just like *arpeggios*.
Middle finger		剔 *Ti*	Middle finger flicks outwards from right to left, producing a single sound.
		中指抹 *Zhongzhima*	Middle finger flicks inwards from left to right, producing a thin single sound.
Combination of individual finger techniques	 or 	摇指 *Yaozi* (Finger *Tremelo*)	The forefinger, middle finger, ring finger or last finger plucks the strings rapidly and continuously, using the fingernail which is held at an angle to the strings. The head of the nail is used to pluck from left to right when placed almost parallel to the surface board. In ancient scores, the thumb was used to perform the *yaozi* technique, and the sounds produced are rapid and tight.

Combination of the forefinger/middle finger and thumb		分 *Fen*	Combination of *tiao* and *tan*, executed on two different strings to achieve a single sound.
		摭 *Zhe*	Combination of *gou* and *ma*, executed on two different strings to achieve a single sound.
		扣 *Kou*	Combination of *gou* and *tan*, executed on two different strings to produce a forceful single sound.
		扣双 *Koushuang*	Combination of *gou* and *shuangtan*, executed on three different strings to produce a single sound.
		滚 *Gun* (*Tremolo*)	Fast paced and continuous plucking of *tan* and *tiao* to produce a well rounded sound. This symbol can be written below a note, instead of above it.
		倒分 *Daofen*	Combination of *tiao* on an outer string and *ti* on an inner string to produce a single sound.
Combination of the forefinger and middle finger		弹剔双 Tantishuang	Combination of *tan* and *ti*, executed simultaneously to produce a single sound
		双抹 Shuangma	Combination of *ma* and *zhongzima*, executed simultaneously to produce a single sound.
Combination of the forefinger, middle finger and thumb		三分 *Sanfen*	Combination of *tiao*, *tan* and *ti*, executed simultaneously to produce a single sound.
		三摭 *Sanzhe*	Combination of *gou*, *ma* and *zhongzima*, executed simultaneously to produce a single sound.

		三扣 *Sankou*	Combination of *gou*, *tan* and *ti*, executed simultaneously to produce a single sound.
		分双 Fenshuang	Combination of *tiao* and *shuangtan*, executed simultaneously to produce a single sound.
Combination of the forefinger, middle finger, ring finger, and last finger		大扫 *Dasao*	All four fingers brush outwards from right to left. This technique is hardly used and the *sao* is preferred.
		大拂 *Dafu*	All four fingers brush the four strings inwards from left to right. This technique is hardly used and the *fu* is preferred.
Lun Variations		轮 *Lun* (*Tremolo*)	The forefinger, middle finger, ring finger and last finger flick outwards from right to left in order, while the thumb picks the string from left to right. This is a basic cycle of a *lun* and the perspective of right and left is from a performer's viewpoint. When the last finger, ring finger, middle finger, and forefinger flicks outwards from right to left in order, and the thumb picks the string from left to right, it is known as 下出轮 *xiachulun* or 下指轮 *xiazhilun*. The *lun* produces continuous tremolos of varying speeds and sound textures.
		长轮 *Changlun*	A combination of two or more *lun* cycles joined together.
		半轮 *Banlun*	The forefinger, middle finger, ring finger and last finger flick outwards from right to left in that order to form a cycle.

		四指长轮 *Sizhi* (Four-Fingered) *changlun*	Forefinger, middle finger, ring finger and last finger flick outwards from right to left in order for two or more cycles.
		三指轮 *Sanzhi* (Three Fingered) *lun*	Forefinger flicks outwards from right to left, middle finger flicks outwards from right to left, and the thumb picks the string from left to right.
		三指长轮 *Sanzhi* (Three Fingered) *changlun*	A combination of two or more *sanzhilun* joined together.
		轮带双 *Lundaishuang*	A disrupted *lun* cycle. The forefinger plays a *shuangtan*, while the other fingers *lun* on a single string. The *lun* cycle then goes back to normal.
		轮双 *Lunshuang*	*Lun* done on two strings.
		半轮双 *Banlunshuang*	*Banlun* done on two strings.
		满轮 *Manlun*	*Lun* done on all four or three strings.
		轮带扫 *Lundaisao*	A disrupted *lun* cycle. The forefinger plays a *sao*, while the other fingers continue with *lun* on a single string. The *lun* cycle then goes back to normal. This technique is usually used to signify that a loud *lun* is required.
		轮带拂 *Lundaifu*	A disrupted *lun* cycle. The thumb plays a *fu* while the fingers continue with *lun* on a single string. The *lun* cycle then goes back to normal.

		挑轮 *Tiaolun*	A disrupted *lun* cycle. The thumb plays *tiao* on an inner string, followed by a *lun* on the outer string using all other fingers except the thumb.
		扣轮 *Koulun*	A disrupted *lun* cycle. The thumb plays *gou* on an inner string, followed by a *lun* on an outer string using all other fingers except the thumb.
Non-musical Techniques		拍 *Pai*	Thumb plucks string upwards and releases. A heavier force used in plucking would sound like the attack of the string.
		提 *Ti*	Thumb and forefinger pick up string and let go. A heavier force used in plucking would sound like the breaking of the string, while a lighter sound would sound like a musical note.
		摘 *Zhai*	Thumb presses against string while the forefinger or middle finger flicks outwards from right to left below the thumb. The sound produced has been likened to spoons being hit as percussion instruments.
		弹面板 *Tanmianban*	Forefinger or thumb uses surface of nails to hit surface of the board.
		轮板 *Lunban*	Fore, middle, ring and last fingers employ the *lun* technique on the surface of the board.

Artificial Harmonics		人工泛音 *Rengong Fanyin* (Artificial Harmonics)	The left hand presses a position on the fret board, while the right hand uses the last finger to press lightly on 1/2 or 1/3 of the rest of the open strings. The forefinger plucks the string at the same time to produce a harmonic.

Symbols of basic right hand techniques should be written above the musical notes.

When scoring for a repeated set of techniques, there is no need to score for every musical note. Instead, the set techniques are stated and put within brackets. This indicates that the player is to continue applying this set of techniques on subsequent notes until another new set of fingering techniques appear.

Left hand Symbols

Classification	Symbol	Name	Simplified Explanation
Expressive		吟，揉 *Yin, Rou* (*Vibrato*)	*Vibratos* by shaking of the fingers at the position on the string where the finger is pressing on to produce a wave-like effect. It should be noted that *yin* and *rou* are two different *vibratos*, despite being scored with the same symbol. *Yin*: The finger shakes left and right. *Rou*: The finger shakes up and down.
		摆 *Bai*	The finger presses the string and shakes left and right to produce a greater wave-like effect than the *yin* and *rou* technique; like the combination of the *tuifu* (push and rise) and *lafu* (pull and rise) techniques.

Resonant		带 *Dai*	After the right hand plays a musical note, the left finger brings out the sound that was played by plucking upward on the same string.
		掇 *Sou*	Tip of left finger scratches the string to produce sound.
		打 *Da*	The left finger hits with pressure above the fret to produce a sound.
Portamento (Gliding)		推，拉 *Tui, La*	*Tui*: Left finger pressing the string pushes inwards along a fret to raise the sound that the string produces. *La*: Left finger pressing the string pulls outwards along a fret to raise the sound that the string produces. Right hand techniques must be stated with this left hand technique, otherwise no sounds will be produced.
		绰，注 *Chuo, Zhu*	*Chuo*: To slide from a low musical note to a high musical note. *Zhu*: To slide from a high musical note to a low musical note. Right hand techniques must be stated, otherwise *chuo* and *zhu* techniques will be void.
		压 *Ya*	Finger presses hard on the string, causing the sound to bend higher than its intended pitch.
		撞 *Zhuang*	Finger uses the *tui* or *la* technique to cause the pitch of the string to go higher, then reverting to its former pitch.

		勒 *Le*	Forefinger and middle finger (or ring finger and middle finger) clamp the strings, while the right hand plucks the string to produce sound.
Decorative		颤 *Chan* (Trills)	Continuous downward hitting of the position below the left finger which is pressing on the string on the fret board, while the right hand is employing the *changlun* or *changgun* techniques.
Harmonic		泛音 *Fanyin* (Harmonics)	Left finger rests slightly on the string at harmonic positions, while the right finger plucks the string to produce sound.
Non-musical Techniques		虚按 *Xuan*	Left fingers do not fully depress strings while playing while the right hand plays to produce a muted sound that is not purely musical. This sound has been likened to harmonics.
		煞 *Sha*	Fingernail of left finger touches the string at the lower ends while the right hand plays *tan*, producing a '*sha*' sound that is not purely musical.
		绞二弦 *Jiaoerxian* *(Fig. 2.6)*	Twisting two strings together (possibly the first string under the second or vice versa), and pluck with the right hand.
		绞三弦 *Jiaosanxian*	Twisting three strings together and pluck.
		绞四弦 *Jiaosixian*	Twisting four strings together and pluck.

Fig. 2.6: 绞二弦 Jiaoerxian

		并二弦 *Bingerxian*	Binding two strings together using the left hand and pluck. Binding three strings together using the left hand and pluck. Binding four strings together using the left hand and pluck.
		并三弦 *Bingsanxian*	
		并四弦 *Bingsixian*	
		同轮板 *Tonglunban*	Right hand clamps and plays *sao* or *fu* while last, middle, ring and fore fingers of the left hand hit the soundboard to produce sounds of horse hoofs.
		伏 *Fu*	After the right hand plucks the string, the left hand or right finger immediately stops the vibration by pressing on it.

Resonant, *portamento*, decorative, harmonic and non-musical techniques symbols should be written above the musical note.

REPRESENTATIVES & REPERTOIRE

Pipa repertoire can be categorised into the traditional, the modern and the contemporary.

Traditional pieces, based on 养正轩琵琶谱 *Yang Zhen Xuan Pipa Pu* (The *Yang Zhen Xuan Pipa* Score), were sub categorised into 套曲 *taoqu* (set scores) and 小曲 *xiaoqu* (small pieces). The *xiaoqu* were in turn split into 68 different songs, while *taoqu* were sub-divided into 武曲 *wuqu* (martial pieces), 文曲 *wenqu* (civil pieces) and 大曲 *daqu* (grand pieces).

Martial pieces mainly follow storylines and describe scenes of war. They include 十面埋伏 *Shi Mian Mai Fu* (Ambush from All Sides) and 霸王卸甲 *Ba Wang Xie Jia* (The Conqueror Unarms).

Civil pieces mainly rely on emotion to convey messages. In terms of performance, there are different tugging and pulling techniques that help to convey heartfelt emotions. Examples of such songs include 月儿高 *Yue Er Gao* (The High Moon) and 汉宫秋月 *Han Gong Qiu Yue* (The Autumn Moon over the Han Palace).

Grand pieces consist of a mixture of martial and civil characteristics. Examples of such songs include 阳春古曲 *Yang Chun Gu Qu* (The Ancient Tune of a Sunny Spring) and 龙船 *Long Chuan* (Dragonboat).

Modern compositions refer to compositions that were written from 1949 to 1979. Some of the pieces include the first concerto with a symphony orchestra, 刘德海 *Liu Dehai*'s 草原小姐妹 *Cao Yuan Xiao Jie Mei* (Little Sisters on the Grasslands), 王惠然 *Wang Huiran*'s 彝族舞曲 *Yi Zu Wu Qu* (Dance of the Yi Tribe) and 王范地 *Wang Fandi*'s arrangement of 天山之春 *Tian Shan Zhi Chun* (Spring in *Tianshan*).

Contemporary compositions are pieces that have been composed from the 1980s onward, utilising new techniques and new compositional structures. Such pieces include 陈怡 *Chen Yi*'s 点 *Dian* (The Points), 唐建平 *Tang Jianping*'s concerto 春秋 *Chun Qiu*, 朱践耳 *Zhu Jianer*'s 玉 *Yu* (Jade), 罗永晖 *Law Wingfai*'s 千章扫 *Qian Zhang Sao* (A Thousand Sweeps) and 刘德海 *Liu Dehai*'s 秦俑 *Qin Yong* (Terracotta Warriors), 童年 *Tong Nian* (Childhood) and 一指禅 *Yi Zhi Chan* (Spirit of a Finger).

Representatives of the *pipa* include 刘德海 *Liu Dehai*, 王范地 *Wang Fandi*, 林石城 *Lin Shicheng*, 李光华 *Li Guang Hua*, 张强 *Zhang Qiang* and 杨惟 *Yang Wei*.

[1] 琵琶 – The Chinese character for the word *pipa*.

[2] 批把, 马上所鼓也. 推手前日批, 引手却日把, 像其鼓时, 因以为名也. The word had not evolved into *pipa*. *Piba* is the actual tone in pronunciation of the word during translation. In the translation, a drum is mentioned. Here, the drum refers to a musical instrument. As it was a period of time where the middle kingdom was undergoing strife, it was common for warriors to beat drums when going to war. A drum on a horse may refer to an instrument on a horse.