

**CHUNG-HSING
CHINESE ORCHESTRA
AND
CHINESE MUSICAL
INSTRUMENTS**

**Printed by Taiwan Provincial Taichung Library
Department of Education of
Taiwan Provincial Government
Republic of China**

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Introduction to Chung-Hsing Chinese Orchestra

Chung-Hsing Chinese Orchestra, subordinate to Taiwan Provincial Taichung Library, was founded in October, 1974. It is an amateur organization of high quality, with members mostly consisting of school teachers and college students in the central region of Taiwan. During the past ten years, its performances have come approaching one hundred, and its sweet melody has spread all over the island. Moreover, it usually rearranges the musical composition to meet the local customs and practices with a view to carrying forward the traditional cultural essence of Chinese music.

Chinese Music and Musical Instruments

Chinese music, influenced by Confucianism, is mainly used for mental training and cultivation of virtue to arrive at a sublime mental condition of "heaven and men unification". Therefore, music played upon those instruments such as Ch'in and Cheng are so elegant and tranquil that it creates a wonderful world of peace in you.

Chinese musical instruments can be classified into three categories: string instruments, wind instruments and percussion instruments; in the following the instruments played in the performance by Chung-Hsing Chinese Orchestra are introduced accordingly:

(1) String instruments:

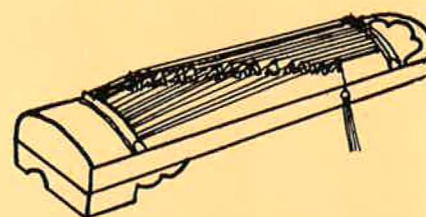
- a. Plucked: Ch'in (seven-stringed zither), cheng (16-stringed zither), pipa (Chinese lute), san-hsien (three-stringed banjo-like lute), juan-hsien (bass moon lute), etc.
- b. Bowed: Nan-hu (southern fiddle), kê-hu (large fiddle), etc.
- c. Hammered: Yang-ch'in (dulcimer), etc.

(2) Wind instruments:

- a. With flute: Tung-hsiao (vertical flute), pang-ti (Chinese piccolo), etc.
- b. With reed: Sheng (mouth organ), sona (conical oboe), etc.

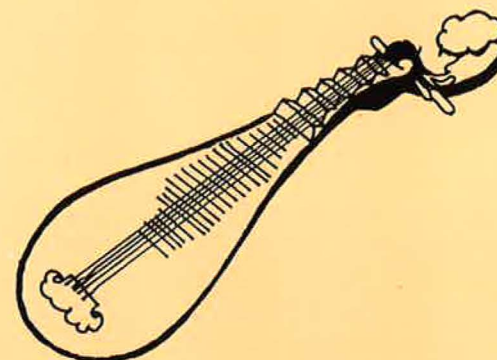
(3) Percussion instruments:

- a. Bells: Ch'un (kettle gong), ling, etc.
- b. Gongs: Ta-lo (large gong), etc.
- c. Cymbals: Ta-po (large cymbal), etc.
- d. Drums: Ta-ku (big drum), t'ang-ku (operatic drum), etc.
- e. Wood: Mu-yu (wooden fish), po-yu (wooden block), etc.



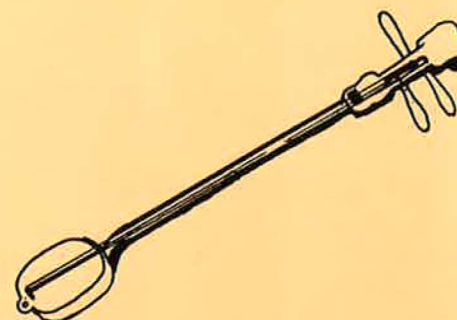
Cheng (& Ch'in)

This instrument, different from Ch'in which has seven strings, has 13 or 16 strings. The strings are made of silk or steel.



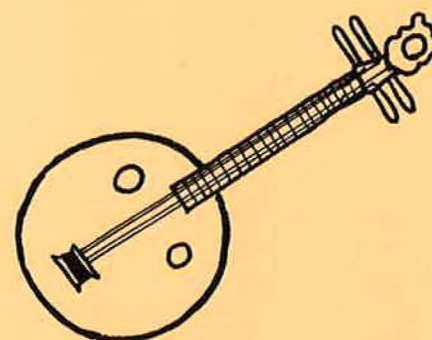
Pipa

The Chinese lute was introduced from the Western Territories. Techniques were quickly improved after fingering had been tried and the number of frets increased to provide a more complete chromatic scale.



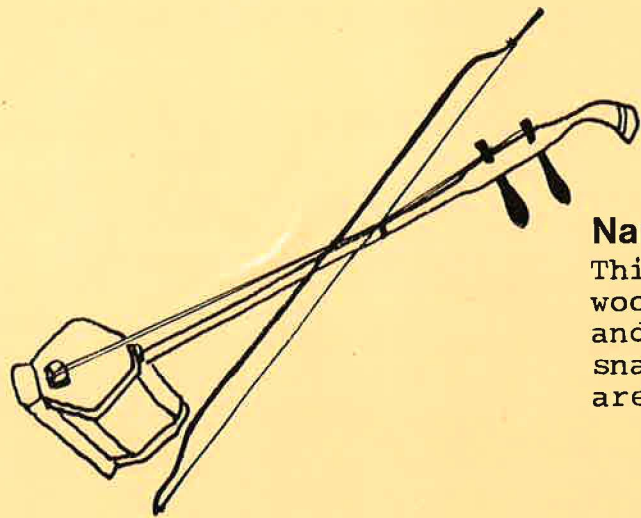
San-hsien

This instrument's body of the resonator is made of hardwood, and both sides of which are covered with snake skin.



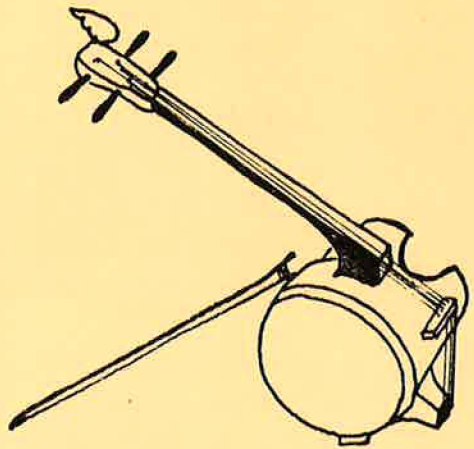
Juan-hsien

This bass lute's resonator has a moon-shaped body with four strings. The neck has become broader and shorter than before.



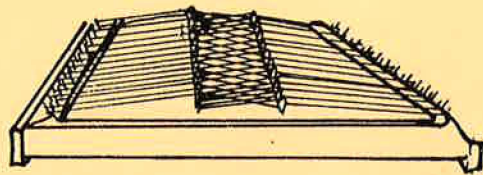
Nan-hu

This instrument's red sandal wood body is often octagonal, and has one end covered with snake skin, on which two strings are tuned in a',d'.



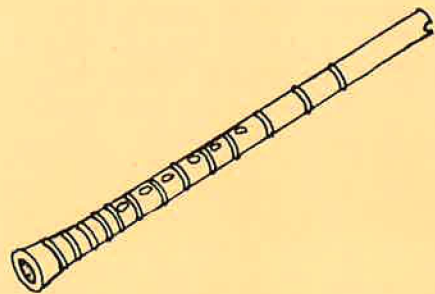
Ke-hu

The large fiddle has two types with two and four strings respectively. The strings of the former are tuned an octave lower than the nan-hu, while the latter corresponds to the Western cello.



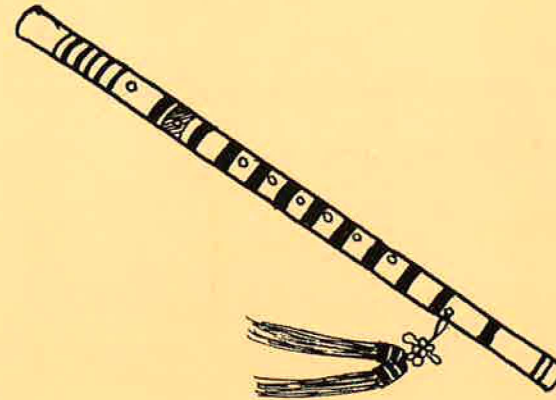
Yang-ch'in

Or dulcimer was introduced from Iran. The resonating box is made of tung wood. There are nine to 14 lines of strings, all made of steel, each line containing 3 or 4 strings struck with two flexible bamboo hammers.



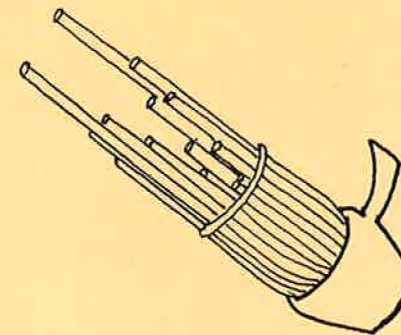
Tung-hsiao

Or hsiao, the vertical flute. There are six finger holes, five in the front and one in the back. At the top of the pipe, there is a "V"-shaped sharp edge used for blowing.



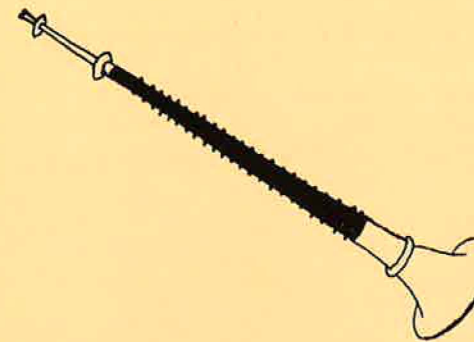
Pang-ti

The Chinese piccolo can play notes in rapid succession and has a piercing tone.



Sheng

The mouth organ instrument, of the Chinese musical instruments, is the only one that can produce harmonious sounds by exhaling or inhaling. On the side of the wind-cavity, there is a mouth-piece and 17 pipes with brass reeds.



So-na

This instrument is usually played in wedding or funerals. There are eight stops: seven in the front and one at the back.



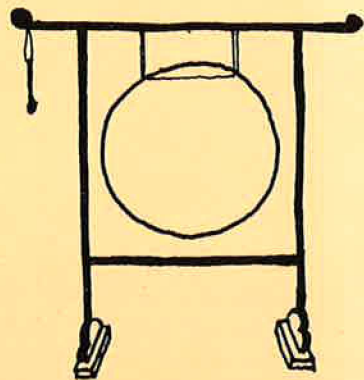
Ch'un

Also called t'ung-ch'ing or kettle gong, the Buddhist instrument can be arranged in different sizes to form a scale, or used separately.



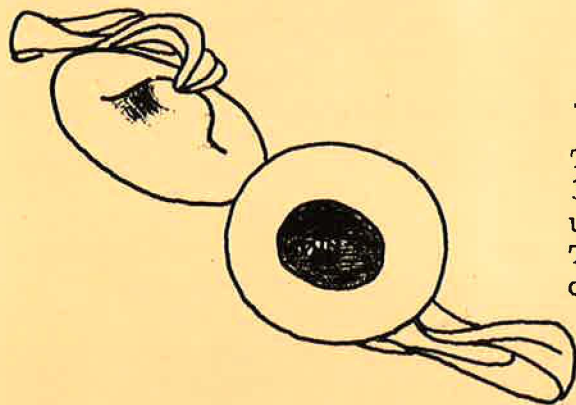
Ling

Two small bells attached by a string are brought together by hand to produce a sound.



Ta-lo

This large gong, 50-100cm. in diameter is often used in music ensembles, rites and ceremonies. It is supposed to sound like the waves striking a rocky shore.



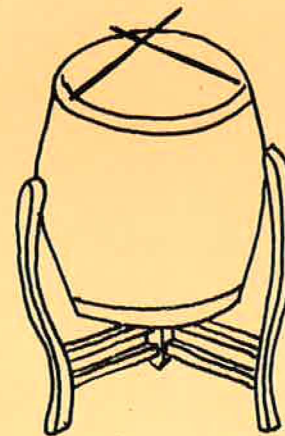
Ta-po

These medium-size cymbals, 30-60cm. in diameter. is often used in Chinese orchestras. The shape is round and the center of it is protuberant.



Ta-ku

Big drum, suspended on a four-legged frame, 60cm. in diameter. The pitch can be changed by tightening the skin with screws on the sides of the frame.



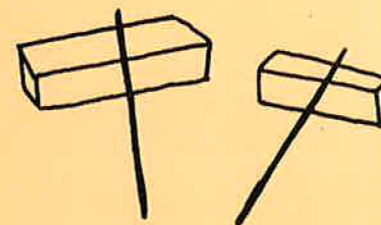
T'ang-ku

This barrel type operatic drum 20cm. in diameter, 36cm. in height, is suspended on a three-legged frame.



Mu-yu

The wooden fish, a Buddhist instrument, is made from a block of wood hollowed out inside.



Pu-yu

This consists of a hardwood rectangular block with a deep slit at one side. It produces a high-pitched note.