

# E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

April 2022



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*(from Linda Devine, Editor)*

I hope everyone is beginning to enjoy spring!

Thank you to those who submitted material for this issue. As always, I appreciate my husband Ed for his work in preparing the photos.

I continue to encourage OCAW members to write articles or submit information for the e-newsletter if there is something you think would be of interest to the membership. I aim to publish a wide variety of material to hopefully keep the issues interesting.

Please feel free to send me any suggestions or recommendations that you might have for any aspects of the e-newsletter. My email address is: [devinefive@comcast.net](mailto:devinefive@comcast.net)

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## **News from the Virginia Chapter**

*(from Maria Yang, President)*

### **FAPAC-USDA Lunch**

On Saturday, February 5, 2022, I participated in a lunch by the U.S. Department of Agriculture chapter of the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) to celebrate the Lunar New Year at Peking Gourmet Inn in Falls Church, Virginia. During the lunch, I had a chance to meet some members who are working at USDA, and discussed with the President of FAPAC-USDA, Fred Cheng, the possibility of the OCAW Virginia Chapter participating in some activities sponsored by FAPAC.

I have been involved with FAPAC since I first became the President of OCAW-VA in 2014. I feel deeply grateful that I received guidance and examples from FAPAC to design the flyers and banners for OCAW's National 40th Anniversary Conference and Celebration in 2017, and arranged activities for OCAW-VA during 2014-2017. FAPAC-USDA President Cheng has been helping OCAW-VA to co-sponsor its lecture activity at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



Maria Yang (President of OCAW-VA), *3rd from right*  
Fred Cheng (President of FAPAC-USDA), *4th from right*

I enjoyed the special Chinese New Year food with some members of the FAPAC-USDA chapter at the restaurant that day, which was our first meeting in person since before 2020. I also appreciated receiving a free treat of roast duck from the Peking Gourmet Inn paid for by the USDA chapter.



### **Virtual Activities**

The virtual activities in February 2022 for OCAW-VA:

- 1) The members and friends of OCAW-VA were invited by the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) to join in the Lunar New Year virtual gathering to celebrate the Year of the Tiger with games, prizes, and networking on Saturday, February 12 from 12 to 1 p.m.
- 2) On Thursday, February 17 at 7:30 p.m., the members and friends of OCAW-VA had the opportunity to view the “Visiting Filmmakers Series” online at George Mason University. The Series was hosting an engaging online conversation between filmmakers S. Leo Chiang and Laura Nix as they discussed Chiang’s documentary film, *Our Time Machine*.

### **MGM National Harbor Lunch**

*(from Amy Lee)*

On Thursday, March 24, 2022, members of the OCAW Virginia Chapter and spouses gathered for lunch at MGM National Harbor in Oxon Hill, Maryland. The get-together stemmed from the fact that I missed seeing my OCAW sisters – plus, in my opinion, MGM National Harbor is one of the most gorgeously decorated hotel casinos. So I matched up the two ideas, and we had a wonderful time catching up and enjoying good food.

I hope this is the start of a new tradition of combining great company and good food on a more regular basis.

*(The following photos were taken or provided by Amy Lee.)*







OCAW-VA members Barbara York, Cathy Roberts, Noreen Hom, Alice Way, Donna Byler, Jane Pan, and Amy Lee

## **News from the Silicon Valley Chapter**

*(from Anne Hu, President)*

### **Monthly East Meets West Dancercise**

The monthly East Meets West Dancercise schedule has been changed to the first Sundays of each month from 3 to 4 p.m. Pacific Time. All other chapters are welcome to join us.

We had our March dance on Sunday, March 6, 2022 and our April dance on April 3. Yufan Lu is leading us to dance Chinese folk dances, Zumba, and Hip Hop dances. She will adjust the pace based on participants' capabilities. Interested members and guests can contact Anne Hu at [huzash408@gmail.com](mailto:huzash408@gmail.com) for Zoom meeting link information.

### **Alzheimer's Association events**

OCAW-SVC has been a longtime partner working with the Alzheimer's Association, Chinese Chapter for the Northern California and Northern Nevada region. Before the pandemic, the Chinese American chapter had hosted a full-day forum inviting experts in dealing with Alzheimer's and Dementia to speak. This year, presentations were held via Zoom, and were divided into three separate events:

- (1) Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia – the importance of early detection and care, the latest scientific developments, and how to avoid getting the disease. The event was held on Saturday, March 12, 2022 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- (2) Brain health awareness – learn the healthy habits for protecting our brains, and identify early signs of Alzheimer's. This event was held on Tuesday, March 15 from 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- (3) Understanding different stages of Alzheimer's. Learn how to communicate with your loved one who suffers from this disease, so we can fulfill their needs. This was held on Thursday, March 17 from 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

### **Hiking event**

As the weather warms up, it is time to go out and enjoy nature. OCAW-SVC organized a hiking event on Saturday, April 2, 2022 at the Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. About 12 people joined in for a good hike!

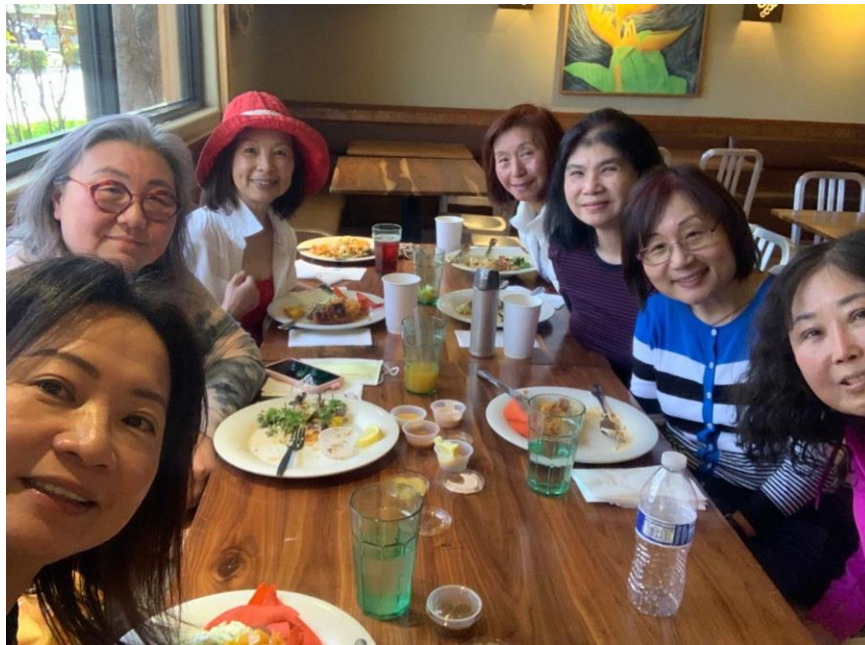
<https://www.openspace.org/preserves/picchetti-ranch>







Afterward, a few of us went to Aqui (Local Fresh Mex eatery) for lunch. It was great to have an in-person lunch meeting.



*(Photos taken by Alice Chiou)*

### Upcoming event

On Saturday, April 9, 2022, working with the City of Saratoga, Friends of the Saratoga Library, OCAW-SVC will have a booth in celebrating the Cherry Blossom Festival. The event will showcase antique cars, farm animals, food trucks, art, crafts, and more.

Our chapter will host a booth for children to cut Chinese scissor art, carving “Spring” Chinese characters, a calligraphy demonstration, and making paper lanterns. It is a great way to share Chinese culture with the local community clubs and associations. We will post photos in the next issue of the e-newsletter.



# THE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

**April 9, 2022 • 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Heritage Orchard & Civic Center  
(13777 Fruitvale Avenue)**

***Free, Family Fun***

**Sponsored by the City of Saratoga**

**Produced by the Saratoga Historical Foundation**

For more information go to  
[www.saratogahistory.com](http://www.saratogahistory.com) or e-mail  
[info@saratogahistory.com](mailto:info@saratogahistory.com)  
or call 408-867-4311.

***Free parking in parking lot 4  
at West Valley College.***

**Enjoy**

- antique cars
- live music — jazz, rock and roll!
- vintage farm motors
- gourmet food trucks
- children's activities
- art by local artists
- interesting crafts
- orchard tour
- and more

Enjoy a day of family fun  
learning about local history and  
the community.

### **News from the Hawaii Chapter**

*(Edwina Lee, President)*

*(The following news is from Queenie Chee, Secretary and Special Event Chair.)*

#### **First Members Meeting of 2022 In Person!**

The Hawaii Chapter held its first in-person members meeting after two years, on Sunday, February 27, 2022.



Hawaii Chapter President Edwina Lee presided over the meeting.

The program featured a new member as guest speaker: a “Keto Queen snowbird,” Kelly Tan Peterson. Kelly is a certified Nutrition and Health Coach and an internationally renowned Keto diet expert, born and educated in Singapore. *(Editor’s Note: See the engaging article entitled “Food is Love,” written by Kelly which was published in the September 2021 OCAW E-Newsletter.)* Her American husband is a physician, and they reside in Jackson, Wyoming until winter approaches – flying in to stay until spring in Hawaii.

Longtime Hawaii Chapter member, Sylvia Young, introduced Kelly to OCAW. Thank you, Sylvia!

With her PowerPoint presentation, Kelly shared valuable tips and information to better manage our health in an energetic, entertaining, and fact-filled manner. She had just arrived on a long flight from Tahiti that morning, and showed no sign of jet lag! Kelly is a walking testament that the Keto-style of eating has definite benefits of looking young, feeling good, and being healthy.



Kelly Tan Peterson looking tan after returning from Tahiti that morning





Susan Chong Wong brought her husband to listen to the program. Calvin Wong is a cardiologist and was that day, our lone male guest. He listened intently to Kelly's presentation and agreed with her message – in fact, he was enthused.

The lunch boxes that day were specially prepared with the Keto diet in mind. Even the rice and noodles were a substitute of carbs, using a product from Japan called shirataki. Kelly donated her personal supply as it is currently available only in Asia, and taught the preparation to the cooks at the restaurant. It was delicious!

A successful first meeting for Hawaii, it was attended by 16 stalwart members and seven other guests. The popular option of eating at the restaurant or take-out after the talk and business meeting was much appreciated. Hawaii still required masks indoors at that time.







Lightly-used designer handbags went to any member or guest for a modest donation.

*(Photos taken by Queenie Chee and Robbieanna Leung)*

### **Blurring the Color Line**

In other exciting Chapter news, member Crystal Kwok has completed the production of her documentary film, *Blurring the Color Line*, where she explored the attitudes of the Chinese Americans living in Augusta, Georgia over half a century ago. Crystal's grandmother, uncles, aunts, and cousins who still reside in Georgia shared their personal feelings, experiences, and observations.

This film has already won acclaim and was first shown virtually through the Socially Relevant Film Festival of New York in February 2022. Then on March 26, it was shown before a live audience at the Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival in Sonoma County, California.

This April, the University of Oregon holds its DisOrient Film Festival and will screen it virtually. In mid-April, Hawaii finally will have an in-person screening as a part of the Hawaii International Film Festival at the Kahala Theater.

Congratulations, Crystal!

For more information, visit online: [www.blurringthecolorline.com](http://www.blurringthecolorline.com)

### **The Ching Ming Festival**

April is also the month of the Ching Ming Festival which many families in Hawaii continue to celebrate as they uphold the tradition of honoring their ancestors. As time goes by, it is a wonder that these rituals can still continue, drawing families back to pay respect to their past elders by visiting their graves and carrying out what they learned from their grandparents. It certainly helps to keep family connected!

Just wondering how widespread this might be across America among Asians?

## **From and About Our Members**

### **From Faith Breen, former National President**

***Happy Mother's Day!***



Chinese Evergreen in bloom

This is to honor all the OCAW mothers, grandmothers, and mothers-to-be. The above is a picture of a Chinese Evergreen that my mother gave to me when I got married 47 years ago. She gave me a plant, and this is a cutting from that plant. (The “mother” plant is now with my son. I gave it to him when he got married, and it is still doing well.)

COVID has made the last two years difficult, and the fact that my husband and I moved to Houston, Texas three years ago has made it even more challenging. So, as COVID restrictions are being lifted, and Spring is bringing new life, I wanted to share this gift from my mother. It is particularly timely, because the plant bloomed on my grandson’s first birthday! So, as my mother taught me, I tied a red ribbon around the flower to say “thank you.”

In closing, thank you, Mom, for being such a great Mother. I love you!

Faith Breen, Ph.D.

### **Culture Corner**

#### **The Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery**

**by Cathy Roberts**

*(Editor’s Note: Cathy is National Vice President for Membership.)*

(Cathy’s Editor’s Note: I was very fortunate that my office was located within walking distance of various Smithsonian Museums before I retired. I could see the Smithsonian Castle and other museums from my office window. When I had free time, I spent my lunch hours visiting them. One of my favorite and most frequently visited ones was the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. I enjoyed beautiful exhibitions of art and being surrounded by the enhanced atmosphere.)

The Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery are located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Opened in 1923, the Freer Gallery of Art was the Smithsonian’s first art museum. It was joined by the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in 1987, and the two together form the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Asian Art.

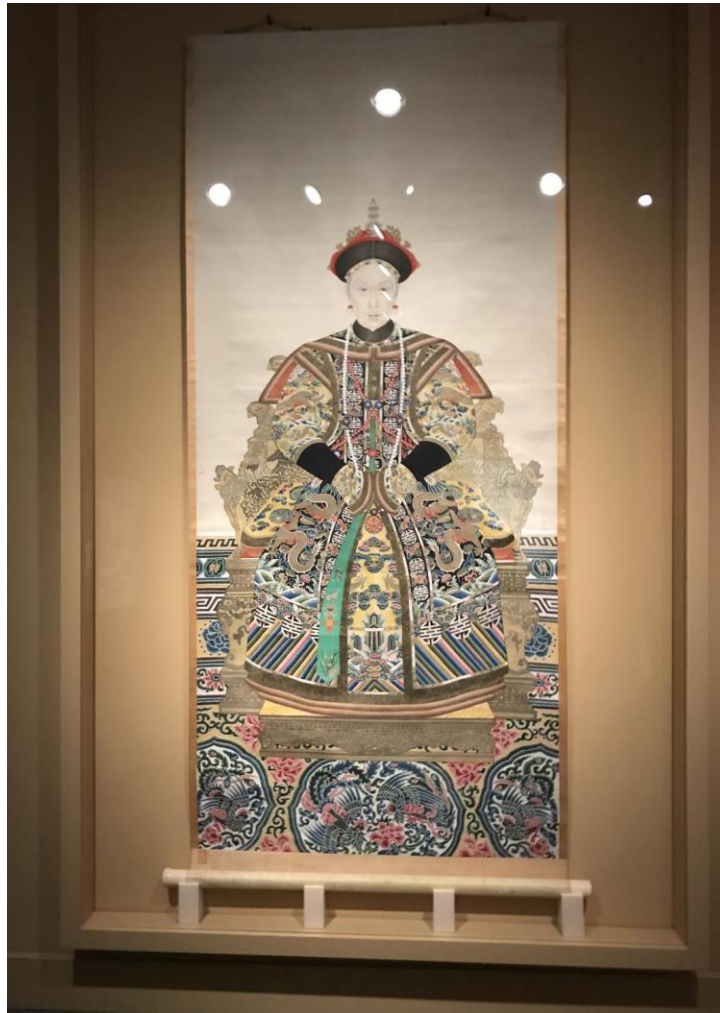
The National Museum of Asian Art is committed to preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting exemplary works of art. It addresses broad questions about culture, identity, and the contemporary world. The museum cares for exceptional collectors of Asian art, with more than 45,000 objects dating from the Neolithic period to today and originating from the ancient Near East to China, Japan, Korea, South and Southeast Asia, and the Islamic world.

Nearly a century old, the Freer Gallery of Art also holds a significant group of American works of art largely dating to the late 19th century. It houses the world’s largest collection of diverse works by James McNeill Whistler, including the famed Peacock Room.

The Freer and Sackler Library, one of the finest Asian art research libraries in the United States, contains approximately 86,000 volumes, including nearly 2000 rare books. The Freer and Sackler Archives collects, preserves, and makes available documentary materials that support the museum’s holdings and research.

Virginia and Maryland Chapter members visited the Sackler Gallery on May 26, 2019, to see the Empresses

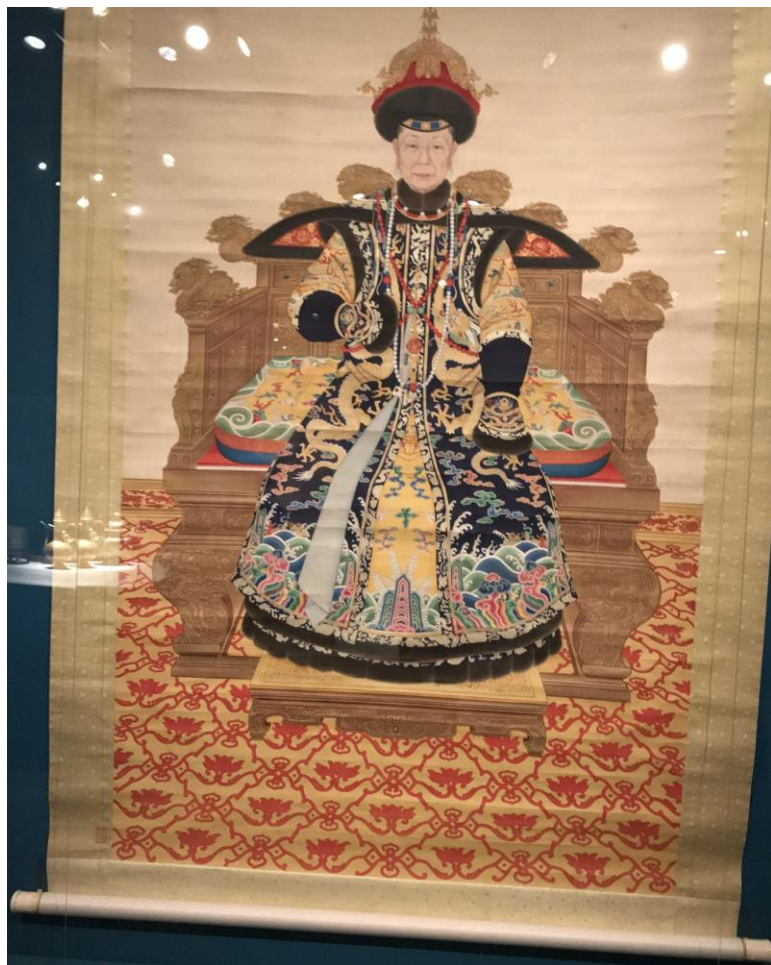
of China's Forbidden City, 1644-1912, exhibition. We were accompanied by a gallery docent who is a Maryland Chapter member and her colleague. They explained the lives of the Qing Dynasty empresses, including an in-depth explanation of the subject. The Empresses' vital presences over the 260-year course of the Qing, was brought to light through an unprecedented assembly of spectacular objects. Featured were royal portraits, paintings depicting court life, seals and symbols of imperial power, and Buddhist sutras and other objects of religion.



The exhibition allowed us to see how the empresses exerted influence through the arts, religion, politics, and diplomacy. Most of these artworks were from the Palace Museum in Beijing, China, and many had never been exhibited outside of the country. This extraordinary exhibition, accompanied by a major catalogue, was organized by the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts; the Freer/Sackler Gallery; and the Palace Museum. *(Editor's Note: See the extensive article of our exhibition tour, published in the June 2019 issue of the OCAW E-Newsletter.)*

If you are interested in visiting the gallery in person, you can take the Metro blue, orange, or silver line to the Smithsonian Museum Station, or the red line to Metro Center and transfer to the blue, orange, or silver line to the Smithsonian Museum Station. You can also book guaranteed parking in advance.







You can also visit the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery online. You will be able to enjoy the current, past, and future exhibitions and the collections. It will open your eyes and mind, and you will be immersed in a splendid art world. You can also check the events to select ones in which you would like to participate.

*(Photos taken by Cathy Roberts)*

## **The Enchantment of Guqin**

**by Camilla Ng**

*(Editor's Note: Camilla is a former Maryland Chapter President.)*

### **Why**

When I tell my friends that I am learning to play the guqin (pronounced *GOO-chin*), the response usually is, “you mean the guzheng?” or “why guqin?” I would reply, to stave off Alzheimer’s. The real answer is...I have fallen for Zhuge Liang! (Blush!) Who? What? Why?

My interest in the guqin all started with watching *Three Kingdoms*, the 2010 series based on the classical Chinese historic novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The series told the lengthy story of rivalry, intrigues, and wars during the late Eastern Han Dynasty (25-200 AD) and the Three Kingdoms period (220-280 AD). Amongst the many heroes, one whom I admire the most is Zhuge Liang, courtesy name Kongming, a brilliant statesman and military strategist. He was the chancellor and later on, regent to the state of Shu Han during the Three Kingdoms period. He was loved by many and feared by his enemies.

Zhuge Liang is recognized as the most accomplished strategist of his era, and has been compared to Sun Tzu, the author of *The Art of War*. His reputation as an intelligent and learned scholar grew even while he was living in relative seclusion, earning him the nickname “Wolong,” meaning “Sleeping Dragon.” Zhuge Liang is often depicted wearing a Daoist robe and holding a fan made of crane feathers.

One of the well-known stories about Zhuge Liang is the “Empty Fort Strategy.” Zhuge Liang had dispatched his main army to the east. He remained with a small group of soldiers at Xicheng. The Wei general, Sima Yi, led 200,000 soldiers to attack Xicheng. In the face of the imminent danger of being attacked by the Wei army, Zhuge Liang came up with a ploy to hold off the approaching enemy. He ordered all the soldiers and citizens of Yang Ping to leave the city, but he kept just a handful of soldiers disguised as civilians to sweep the streets and water plants, with the gates to the city wide open.

When Sima Yi, the Commander of the huge Wei army, arrived at the city, he was very surprised by the sight before him. He looked into the city and saw only a few civilians sweeping the streets and watering plants. He looked up at the city wall and saw Zhuge Liang attended by two page boys, calmly and confidently playing his guqin. He listened attentively to the guqin music for a while and was about to order his army to retreat when his son, Sima Zhao, rode up to him and said, “Father, the city is empty. Why don’t we just enter and take it?”

Sima Yi replied solemnly, “Because the city is empty, we should not just enter and take it. Look at Zhuge Liang up there. He is a great strategist who hardly takes risks. All the time he has been very careful. This may be his trick. If we enter the city, we shall fall into his ambush.” Sima Yi then turned around and ordered the army to retreat.

That image of Zhuge Liang playing the guqin with nerves of steel in the face of a powerful enemy at the gate which was about to storm the fort made a deep impression on me. With the music of the guqin, he had avoided the slaughter and had saved the day with reverse psychology; he had succeeded with a bluff.



Zhuge Liang playing the guqin on the city's wall, as the Wei army approaches

Later, I discovered a moving piece of music titled “You Wei Song” (The Promise Song) or “Wolong Yin” (Sleeping Dragon Chant), from the 1994 *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* series, which describes Liu Bei’s three visits to Zhuge Liang’s cottage. Moved by Liu Bei’s sincerity, Zhuge Liang left the mountain retreat and applied his wisdom to help Liu found the Shu Han kingdom, even though he could have helped far more powerful warlords who founded the Wei and Wu kingdoms. He promised to serve Liu Bei, which he fulfilled until his death, sadly never to return to his home. The history and the legendary hero who is still honored and loved, is all wrapped up in this moving piece of music. I began to look up guqin music online and discovered an entire genre of music that is new and speaks to me.

### What

So what is the guqin? It is a plucked, seven-strings Chinese instrument that has been played since ancient times, traditionally favored by the sages and literati. The guqin is at least 3,000 years old. It has the most well-documented history, corroborated by archeological finds and repertoire of all the Chinese instruments.

To learn to play the guqin used to be regarded as a very important element for education for the purpose of enriching the heart and elevating human spirit or spiritual communication (to associate with the values and

attitudes of the past sages). In China's historical past, monks, scholars, and ladies of the elite society were supposed to master the four traditional arts, namely, *qin* (or guqin), *qi* (Chinese chess), *shu* (calligraphy), and *hua* (Chinese painting).

Being the first of the four traditional arts, the guqin has historically been regarded as one of the most important symbols of Chinese high culture. Unfortunately, only a small number of people in China could play the instrument, because classical musical education was not readily available to the general public. The situation has recently improved and the popularity of guqin is on the rise.

In 1977, a recording of "Flowing Water" (*Liu Shui*), performed by Guan Pinghu (one of the best qin players of the 20th century), was chosen to be included in the Voyager Golden Record, a gold-plated LP recording containing music from around the world, which was sent into outer space by NASA on the Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 spacecraft. It is the longest excerpt included on the disc. The reason to select a work played on this specific instrument is that the tonal structure of the instrument, its musical scale, is derived from fundamental physical laws related to vibration and overtones, representing the intellectual capacity of human beings on this subject. In 2008, UNESCO inscribed the guqin and its music in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (originally proclaimed in 2003). [Guqin and its music - intangible heritage - Culture Sector - UNESCO](#)

At the Opening Ceremony of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, the guqin was featured. It is also seen in Zhang Yimou's films *Hero* (2002) and *Shadow* (2018).

## How

First of all, to learn to play an instrument, one must have an instrument and a teacher. Otherwise, the moving piece of music "Wolong Yin" that honors an ancient hero would just remain as history. I was fortunate to find a guqin teacher locally, Yuli Wang. Miss Wang recommended a guqin maker in Beijing. I was able to order the instrument just when COVID shut down the world in early 2020. I was able to have several in-person lessons, but then the pandemic kept us all at home for the next two years. Nevertheless, I was enthralled with the initial short pieces of music that I was taught. The first piece was composed in 1590 for the poem *Farewell to Meng Hoaran at Yellow Crane Tower* by Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai. Through the guqin, I am learning Chinese history and poetry. The second piece is of music that is extracted from the classical *The Three Stanzas of Meihua* (317-420 AD) which is entirely played by the *fan yin* technique.

Here I should give a quick introduction to how the guqin is played. The music of the guqin is created by plucking the strings in three different ways, each giving a distinct "sound." The first is *san yin*, which means "scattered sounds." This is produced by plucking the required string to sound an open note. The second is *fan yin*, or "floating sounds." These are harmonics in which the player touches the string with one or more fingers of the left hand very lightly, as the right hand plucks the string, creating a crisp and clear sound. The third is *an yin*, or "stopped sounds." This forms the bulk of most qin pieces and requires the player to press on a string with a finger or thumb of the left hand until it connects with the surface board, then the right hand plucks the string. The musician's hand often slides up and down, creating glissando and vibrato.

## Who

Miss Yuli Wang has been playing the guqin for more than 20 years. She received her B.A. from the Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts in Tianjin and her M.A. from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. Not only is she a passionate guqin musician and teacher, but she has also been teaching in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, in the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, at the University of Maryland in College Park since 2005. She teaches Chinese language courses, Chinese calligraphy, and ink painting.

Top of her passion is absolutely the guqin. It is very rare in modern times for a person to be well-versed in three of the four traditional arts as described above. As a professional teacher, Miss Wang is very patient in teaching the guqin, as this instrument is not easy to learn. However, in learning to play the guqin, one learns more than just fingering techniques on an instrument, but the breadth and depth of Chinese culture. The link below is a video of Miss Wang playing *Qin Master*, at Annapolis Rock in Maryland. Be enchanted.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=rLKo1txbNK8&feature=youtu.be>

Guqin player: Yuli Wang

Videography: Chun Chen

Editor: Hongli Xu



Image of Zhuge Liang playing the guqin