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**“Helping, striking, and singing”: The role of *qupai* in structuring
Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* performance**

Jain, Susan Pertel, Ph.D.

University of Hawaii, 1994

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"HELPING, STRIKING, AND SINGING:" THE ROLE OF *QUPAI* IN
STRUCTURING SICHUAN OPERA *GAOQIANG* PERFORMANCE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
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By

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In memory of my father,
Cdr. Joseph A. Pertel

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ABSTRACT

In Chinese music drama (*xiqu* 戏曲) performance, actors use both aural and visual means to create their dramatic characters and relate the dramatic narrative to the audience. Among performance elements, it is vocal music which is considered the primary means of dramatic communication for the actor. In performances of Sichuan opera (*chuanju* 川剧) which use *gaoqiang* (高腔) music, vocal music is created through the use of song forms called "*qupai*" (曲牌). Each of the over 350 *qupai* present in the *gaoqiang* musical system repertoire possesses a unique internal structure which gives all songs created from it a distinct aural signature, making them appropriate for use in a particular dramatic context. The internal structure of a *qupai* consists of three elements: a lyric form, a performer-assignment structure, and a musical structure.

In addition to the stage actor, *gaoqiang* performance is characterized by the use of a secondary vocalizing body, called a "helping chorus" (*bangqiang* 帮腔), and for its use of an exclusively percussion orchestra for vocal accompaniment. This performance coalition is described in Sichuan as "helping, striking, and singing," and is organized for performance through *qupai* selection and arrangement.

Qupai lyric form governs the organization of the song text. The distinct vocal styles of the helping chorus and actor help distinguish between the different dramatic functions which each entity serves in performance. *Qupai* performer-assignment structure refers to the assignment of these two bodies to sing specific parts of a *gaoqiang* song.

The musical structure of *qupai* controls the melodic and rhythmic features of songs. Characteristic of *xiqu* musical systems is the practice of

"recycling" musical material. Present in each musical system is a finite amount of musical material from which all theatre music for that form is created. Through repeated use of this material in plays, an identifiable aural signature for each opera form is created. This feature is seen as essential to the establishment of the form and the successful communication of dramatic material in performance. When opera songs are constructed from *qupai*, both the aural identity of the *qupai* and the opera form is manifested, and the song's ability to communicate dramatic meaning, realized.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Introduction to *Xiqu*

Xiqu (戏曲 lit., "theatre [of] song") is China's oldest and most widely-practiced music drama tradition. Usually translated into English as "Chinese opera," *xiqu* has roots dating back to the 13th century making it one of the world's oldest extant theatre traditions. Over the next seven hundred years, *xiqu* grew in popularity and geographical base to where today opera troupes performing over 360 discrete forms (*juzhong* 剧种) can be found throughout China.

Of the numerous opera forms, only a few can claim to have a national following. The vast majority are classified as "regional dramas" (*difangxi* 地方戏) because their audience appeal is limited to a specific geographical area of China. The regional association of the opera forms is usually apparent in their names. Most opera forms are identified using a Chinese term consisting of two written-characters. The first written-character makes reference to the particular geographical region where the form originated or became popular, and the second, being either the written-character for "drama" (*ju* 剧) or "theatre" (*xi* 戏). The popular opera form known in English as "Beijing opera," for example, is referred to in China as "*jingju*" (京剧 lit., "capital drama") or "*jingxi*" (京戏 lit., "capital theatre"). The geographic origins of this opera form which developed in the capital city of China during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, is clearly reflected in its title.

Defining Opera Forms: Language and Music

An important factor in the regionalization of opera forms is language. Although Mandarin is the official language of the People's Republic of China, a large number of regional dialects are still spoken throughout the country. Given the diverse geographic backgrounds and associations of the many *xiqu* forms, many different Chinese dialects can be heard in use on the opera stage. Despite differences in regional association and linguistic dialect, *xiqu* forms share common performance elements and practices which unite them as a single artistic tradition. Such commonalities include the mediums of dramatic communication (i.e., song, speech, and stylized movement), approaches to artistic interpretation and presentation, staging practices, and costuming and makeup styles.

As in its Italian opera counterpart, vocal music is perceived as being the most important vehicle of artistic communication in Chinese opera performance. So important is this medium, that in many parts of China theatregoers refer to a visit to the theatre as going to "listen to theatre" (*ting xi* 听戏) rather than going to "see theatre" (*kan xi* 看戏) (Wichmann 1991, 1). In addition to issues of geography and language, an important feature differentiating Chinese opera forms from one another is the nature of the music which is used in performance. Music's ability to distinguish the operatic traditions from one another, and its overall rank in the hierarchy of performance mediums, is an important feature of *xiqu* and a starting point for theatre research. One cannot comprehend how *xiqu* actors carry out their jobs as artistic communicators of the dramatic text, or how they reveal themselves as creative artists, without a thorough understanding of the nature of an opera form's musical tradition. To use a simile: music is to a *xiqu* form as a frame is to a house. While providing a

framework which defines both the external and internal nature of the structure, the ability to differentiate one house from others in the area is also made possible. Through its physical definition of the parameters of the structure, limitations are also placed upon those who dwell and work within its boundaries; limitations which fundamentally influence the nature of the activities carried out by the occupants. In a similar fashion, the musical structure of a *xiqu* form serves both to define the form itself, and to provide specific tools and guiding principles for the actors to use in the creation of their dramatic performances.

A characteristic feature of *xiqu* music is the presence of "musical systems" (*shengqiang* 声腔). In each Chinese opera form, one or more of these systems is used by theatre practitioners to create all music for performance. A musical system can be defined as a finite body of musical material containing identified melodic scales, melodic and rhythmic structures, rules regarding the arrangement of these musical elements into vocal and instrumental works, and conventions for the dramatic application of these musical works. Although the musical systems contained within *xiqu* forms share certain fundamental features, scholarship in the field reveals that musical systems not only differ in terms of musical content, but also in the way in which musical compositions are structured (e.g., Wichmann, 1991 and Yung, 1989). Within the *xiqu* tradition, it is the nature of the language dialect and musical system(s) used in performance which are the factors primarily responsible for the establishment of *xiqu* form identity.

Like the opera forms themselves, the origins of most musical systems can be traced back to a particular village or region of China. Due to the itinerant lifestyles led by most Chinese opera troupes during the

Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties (13th-20th centuries), the influence of musical systems often went far beyond their geographic points of origin. The principal musical system of Kun opera, (*kunqu* 昆曲 lit., "tunes [of] Kun" or *kunju* 昆劇 lit., "drama [of] Kun"), for example, known as "*kunshanqiang*" (昆山腔), developed in the town of Kunshan in central eastern China's Jiangsu province. A musical system which itself developed under the influence of other musical systems,¹ as well as popular vocal music traditions of the day, *kunshanqiang* became the most popular form of theatre music of the late Ming and early Qing (16th-18th centuries). As a result, troupes performing Kun opera found audiences all over the country. In many areas of China, the dramatic and musical repertoires of the Kun opera troupes were adopted by local theatre artists into their own regional theatre traditions. Over the years, indigenization of the musical system and dramatic repertoire occurred due to the linguistic disparities of Chinese dialects and the differences in cultural background and aesthetic sensibilities of the local theatre practitioners and their audiences. Today regional variations of the *kunshanqiang* musical system can be found in *xiqu* forms in such geographically diverse locations as Beijing, Hunan, Shanxi, and Sichuan provinces.² When examined, the musical systems found in most *xiqu* forms will also reveal similar inter-regional backgrounds and influences.

Perspectives on Music in Performance

Due to the presence of musical systems in *xiqu* performance, a fundamental difference in attitude towards theatre music can be seen in Chinese and Western operatic traditions. In Chinese opera, the concept that each theatre work must contain new music, that is, music which is

unrelated in either form or concept to any previous theatre music, is not valued. The Chinese opera tradition instead places emphasis on the reinterpretation of existent musical elements; elements which are well-known to both theatre practitioners and audience members. This practice of recycling musical material is reflected in the fact that most Chinese opera scores are not credited as being the works of individual musical composers. In the Chinese opera repertoire, one does not find operas associated with individual composers in the way that *La Nozze di Figaro* is with Mozart, or *Carmen* with Bizet. In *xiqu*, it is the musicians and actors who are predominantly responsible for constructing the music for each new opera work. Following the demands of the dramatic text, and in keeping with the performance abilities and aesthetic sensibilities of the stage performers, *xiqu* practitioners create the musical score of an opera work using the melodic and rhythmic materials present in the form's musical system. When two opera scores created using the same musical system, but performed by different theatre artists are compared, one immediately notices striking similarities in musical structure. Also apparent, however, is the presence of the artists' own creative insights and interpretations--a presence manifested through distinct melodic and rhythmic variations within the music. Although in Chinese theatre individual operas are not generally associated with a single composer figure, their association with specific theatre artists is common.

The use of musical systems to create theatre music results in the presence of an identifiable aural signature or sound for each *xiqu* form. For many Chinese theatregoers, hearing a single line of music from an opera song is all that is necessary to identify the form from which it is taken. So important is the need for the Chinese theatre audience to

recognize the aural signature of a form, that if it is not detectable in the music, the audience may not perceive the dramatic presentation as being a performance of that opera form. In such a situation, it is highly possible that the dramatic material presented onstage will not be interpreted by the audience in the manner in which the performers have intended.

Each style of theatre's vocal music has its characteristic fundamental tunes--for example Beijing opera's *erhuang*, *xipi*, Xi opera's *huangdiao*, Yang opera's *shuzhuangtai*, Huai opera's *huaidiao* and *ziyoudiao*, etc. [3] All of these tunes have an inseparable relationship with their theatre form's style, forming a complete and indivisible entity. If *huangdiao* or *shuzhuangtai* were used in place of *erhuang* [or] *xipi* in Beijing opera music--even though in every other aspect [it] was very Beijing opera-like--people would not recognize it as Beijing opera. Instead, [they would think that it] was another theatre form's 'farce' (Yao n.d., 1).

In many opera forms, the same musical systems have for centuries supplied the musical elements which constitute the form's theatre music. The audience's resultant familiarity with the form's musical system has become an important tool for the *xiqu* performer in manipulating how an audience perceives and understands a performance. When the audience hears a particular passage of music, their past experience with that music enhances its ability to convey dramatic meaning. This meaning works in conjunction with, but is distinct from, the meaning communicated through the song lyrics.

On the *xiqu* stage, vocal music is a very important technique for delineating the personalities of the play's characters, [and] expressing [their] ideas and feelings. . . . [A passage of] vocal music profoundly displays a . . . character's emotions, . . . ideas and personality, and shows their fates and hardships. Because the audience is moved, [they] will simultaneously be affected by [the characters'] happiness and suffering. Because vocal music possesses such an intense power to affect, [it] has continued

for so many years . . . [to] receive the ardent love of the masses (He 1985, 1).

The relative aural stability of the musical system is not perceived by Chinese opera practitioners or their audiences as being either monotonous or uncreative. Opera performers are required to possess a thorough knowledge of the structure and characteristics of their opera form's musical systems so that they can effectively communicate dramatic meaning through their vocal music. While serving to preserve the aural identity of the form, the performer's mastery of the musical systems also allows them to manipulate the musical elements so that their own unique creative talents and perspectives may be revealed. In a study of Cantonese opera, Bell Yung discusses a challenge faced by performers of that form which is common to all performers of the *xiqu* tradition. On the one hand, actors are expected to work within the parameters of the theatrical form to recreate its visual and aural stylizations. At the same time, however, they must also find ways to express their own individual artistry.

[Cantonese opera] performance has a 'creative' element because a play seldom remains unchanged in different performance situations, and a tune, when repeated, almost never sounds the same. On the other hand, being 'creative' is not being 'free'; a performer is bound, or led, by a complex set of rules which emanates from a tradition he shares with a community, from his individual habits and preferences, and from the unique performance situation. A performance may perhaps be compared to some forms of game or competitive sport in that the participants interact according to a set of general rules, but the details of the operation of the rules and the outcome of the 'game' are left to the players' own skill and ingenuity and circumstances of the moment (1989, ix).

The presence of musical systems are fundamental to the definition of the Chinese opera tradition as a whole, and to the establishment of

individual forms within that tradition. They are also, however, the cornerstones of the creative vocabulary used by *xiqu* artists. Following the guidelines (*guilǔ* 规律) present in each *xiqu* form's musical systems, songs are constructed for performance which simultaneously serve to aurally establish the performance tradition, and provide the most powerful avenue of dramatic communication between the stage and the audience. Not only is each musical system unique in terms of its musical content and methods of dramatic application, but also in its associated performance practice. Each of the musical systems, for example, has a unique style of vocal accompaniment which is provided by an orchestra. Differences in the musical structures of vocal songs constructed from the disparate musical systems, and variations in instrumentation and performance styles of the accompanying orchestras, result in there being a variety of different approaches toward vocal performance within *xiqu* forms. Given the importance of vocal music within the *xiqu* tradition, such variance can be found to have a fundamental effect on the overall nature of the dramatic performance. True insight into a *xiqu* form's performance tradition therefore requires not only an understanding of the structural elements which define the form's musical systems, but also an investigation into the way in which these elements are manipulated by performers to achieve their dramatic ends.

Features of Sichuan Opera's *Gaoqiang* Musical System

The opera form known as "Sichuan opera" or "*chuanju*" (川剧 lit., "river drama") is the most popular and widely-practiced form of opera in southwest China. Performed predominantly in the province of Sichuan⁴

where the Sichuan dialect is spoken, *chuanju* is one of the most highly respected--and unusual--forms of *xiqu* in China. Although noted for its unusually large and diverse dramatic repertoire, and for its expressive acting style, Sichuan opera's lofty position among *xiqu* forms is primarily due to the nature of one of its five musical systems, namely, "*gaoqiang*" (高腔 lit., "high tunes").

Each Sichuan opera performance which employs the *gaoqiang* musical system has a unique aural signature and dramatic stylization which is created partly through the musical material found within the musical system, and partly through the manner in which Sichuan opera artists perform this style of music. Unlike most world music drama forms which mandate melodic accompaniment for vocal performance, Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* performance stands out for its use of an orchestra made up of only percussion instruments. Further distinguishing the performance tradition is the use of a secondary vocalizing body--other than the stage actor--during dramatic presentations. This body, referred to as the "helping chorus" (*bangqiang* 帮腔 lit. "helped melodic-phrase"), joins with the stage actor in vocalizing passages of *gaoqiang* songs. The tripartite performance coalition created through the collective participation of the stage actor, helping chorus, and percussion orchestra in *gaoqiang* performance results in a highly distinct performance tradition which is unlike any other in China.

In addition to the *gaoqiang* musical system, Sichuan opera also utilizes the four musical systems: *kunqiang* (昆腔), *huqinqiang* (胡琴腔), *tanxi* (弹戏), and *dengxi* (登戏). Of the five, only *dengxi* is indigenous to Sichuan province. The remaining four are all thought to have been introduced into Sichuan from other parts of China during the Qing

dynasty.⁵ Although the origins of at least two of Sichuan opera's musical systems can be traced as far back as the Ming dynasty⁶, Sichuan opera itself is a relatively recent phenomenon. Until the early years of the twentieth century, opera troupes specializing in only one, or at most two, of the musical systems were common in Sichuan province. Due primarily to changes in the economic and transportation environments of the province which took place during the late Qing dynasty, the five musical systems eventually came together under the same performance roof to form Sichuan opera.⁷

"Helping, Striking, and Singing"

Although the use of the Sichuan dialect and a common approach to physical theatre performance practice are shared by the five musical systems of Sichuan opera, their variant geographical, cultural, and musical heritages give each its own unique aural identity. As a result, each of the musical systems has an associated dramatic repertoire which best suits its particular musical style. Although passages of *kunqiang* music periodically appear in plays from the *gaoqiang*, *huqinqiang*, and *tanxi* repertoires, the mixing of musical styles within a single dramatic work is rarely seen in Sichuan opera.⁸ An analysis of the plays presented annually on the Sichuan stage also reveals that not all of the musical systems are equally represented.

Among the traditional plays of the five musical systems, *kunqiang* and *dengxi* plays are extremely rare. Out of a thousand . . . plays, there are less than twenty *kunqiang* and *dengxi* plays which are regularly seen on the stage. There are a bit more *huqin* [*qiang*] plays, but most are individual scenes from multi-scene plays; the number of full-length plays is few. Not only does the number of *tanxi* plays exceed these three, but among them are a number of full-length plays. *Gaoqiang*,

however, is different. [*Gaoqiang*] plays make up seventy-percent of the total Sichuan opera dramatic repertoire (Zhang 1964, 3).

The dominance of the *gaoqiang* musical system in Sichuan opera is not only apparent from the number of plays from its repertoire which are presented, but also from the conventional way in which opera practitioners and audiences describe the characteristic features of Sichuan opera performance. When asked to summarize Sichuan opera performance, most people in Sichuan respond with the phrase: "helping, striking, [and] singing" (*bang, da, chang* 帮, 打, 唱). "Helping" refers to the participation of the helping chorus in *gaoqiang* performance, "striking" to the actions of the percussion orchestra, and "singing" to the contributions of the actor. In that none of the non-*gaoqiang* musical systems in Sichuan opera use either a helping chorus, or a solely percussion orchestra, this phrase can only be understood to be referring to the *gaoqiang* musical system. Not only is the role of the *gaoqiang* musical system in defining Sichuan opera implied by this simple three-word phrase, but also the impact of the musical system in shaping the defining features of this unique performance tradition revealed.

***Gupai* : "Labelled-Songs"**

Sichuan opera's *gaoqiang* musical system is a descendent of one of China's oldest musical systems, *yiyangqiang* (弋阳腔 lit., "tunes [of] Yiyang"). Originating in southeastern China's Jiangxi province during the early Ming dynasty, *yiyangqiang* music quickly spread over large portions of China. By the mid-sixteenth century, *yiyangqiang* had become the most popular theatre music in China. The exact date of *yiyangqiang*'s arrival and its route into Sichuan, are still a matter of debate and speculation among

theatre scholars. One popular theory suggests that the musical system came into the province via Hubei province along the Yangzi River trade route sometime during the early eighteenth century (Chen 1986, 10 and 28). This theory finds considerable support among scholars since other regional variants of the *yyangqiang* tradition can be found in those provinces bordering the Yangzi River; provinces such as Hunan, Hebei, Shanxi and Zhejiang.⁹

Sichuan opera *gaoqiang*'s musical ties to the *yyangqiang* musical system are apparent from its use of a non-melodic accompanying orchestra and the presence of a secondary vocalizing body in performance. *Gaoqiang*, like its historical progenitor, also uses the compositional unit known as "qupai" (曲牌 lit., "labelled-songs") as the fundamental organizing principle for aural performance. On a very basic level, *qupai* can be understood to be individual song forms containing set musical and lyric structures which are used by opera practitioners to create vocal compositions for performance. Upon closer examination of the structural features of *gaoqiang qupai*, however, one finds that each *qupai* contains elements which allow its influence on the nature of *gaoqiang* performance to extend far beyond the realm of a mere musical template. Through the selection and ordering of *qupai* Sichuan opera practitioners create the operatic score. As a result of these choices, however, the participation of the actor, helping chorus, and percussion orchestra in vocal performance is also coordinated. This tripartite performance coalition, as indicated earlier, is perceived as being the fundamental characterizing feature of both *gaoqiang* performance, and the Sichuan opera form itself. For this reason, *qupai* can be understood to be the single most important structural element in Sichuan opera performance.

Each *qupai* in the *gaoqiang* musical system repertoire is identified by a unique name called a "paiming" (牌名 lit., "label-name") that is usually three written-characters in length.¹⁰ For example, the *qupai* [*xin shui ling*] (新水令), [*duan zheng hao*] (端正好), and [*xiang luo dai*] (香罗带). Justifying their individual appellations is the fact that each *qupai* possesses an internal structure (*qupai jiegou* 曲牌结构) which is unlike any other in the musical system. This internal structure consists of three discrete sub-structures which govern the lyric and musical form of songs, and the assignment of specific song passages to the three performing entities (i.e., actor, helping chorus, and percussion orchestra). When practitioners follow the structural specifications for a *qupai*, the song created will bear the unique aural signature of that *qupai*.

The internal structure of a *gaoqiang qupai* is relatively codified. The permanence of this structure results in each individual *qupai* having its own unique identity within the musical system repertoire. Based on this individuality of structural form, Sichuan opera practitioners and audiences have come to associate different dramatic functions with each *qupai*. By repeated use of a *qupai* in a particular dramatic context, Sichuan opera practitioners have developed the ability to convey specific dramatic ideas to their opera audiences through song vocalizations. Some *qupai*, for example, are considered suitable only for tragic situations, while others are deemed all-purpose *qupai* which can be used in a variety of dramatic situations. In addition to having particular emotional associations, a number of *qupai* are either gender- or character-specific, meaning that they can only be sung by a particular sex of character, or by a particular dramatic character. Contained within the musical structure of each *qupai*, one not only finds the aural identity of the musical system (and the opera

form itself), but also elements which call forth in the minds of the audience members a particular dramatic perspective. In order for a *qupai* song to serve its designated dramatic function, therefore, it must contain the defining structural features of that *qupai*. In that each *qupai* in the repertoire is not entirely dissimilar from others in terms of its internal structure, it is imperative that those elements which distinguish a *qupai* are present each time a song is created. Liberal alterations to all or part of a *qupai*'s structural form may result in a song not containing the *qupai*'s recognizable aural signature. Without this, the ability of a *qupai* song to serve its designated dramatic function in performance could be adversely affected.

The concept of *qupai* is not unique to either *gaoqiang* or the *yi yangqiang* musical systems. *Qupai* are a common feature of many *xiqu* musical systems including Sichuan opera's own *kunqiang*, as well as a number of non-*xiqu* performance traditions in China. Although *qupai* first were used in *xiqu* during the Yuan dynasty in the opera form known as Yuan *zaju* (元杂剧 lit., "miscellaneous drama [of the] Yuan"), research indicates that *qupai* have served as the musical building blocks of many types of instrumental, vocal, and dance-drama forms dating as far back as the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) (Zhongguo 1983, 301).

Xiqu musical systems which use *qupai* are collectively referred to as "*qupai* [musical] systems" (*qupaiti* 曲牌体) or "joined-song [musical] systems" (*lianquti* 联曲体). In the *gaoqiang* musical system, as in many other *qupai* systems, the process of creating songs from *qupai* is often referred to as "filling-in [the] text" (*tianci* 填词). The impression given by this term is that *qupai* are rigid structural forms possessing highly codified musical and lyric structures into which new song texts are simply

inserted. One definition of *qupai* taken from one of the major reference works on Chinese theatre, the *Dictionary of Chinese xiqu and quyi*¹¹ (中国戏曲曲艺词典 *Zhongguo xiqu quyi cidian*), gives this impression to its readers:

Each *qupai* has a set melody, method of singing, number of written-characters, line structure, tonal patterns, . . . as well as a basic form which can be followed [so that] new lyrics can be filled-in (Shanghai 1981, 28).

Although Sichuan opera practitioners frequently use the term "filling-in [the] text" to describe creating music for *gaoqiang* performance, in reality the process is considerably more complex. The internal structures of most *qupai* possess a high degree of flexibility which preclude the possibility of simply writing text to fit a set musical and prosodic form. This flexibility allows Sichuan opera practitioners to adapt *qupai* to fit the various dramatic contexts in which they are employed. Present alongside this ability to accommodate the artist, however, is a codified nature which serves to establish the identity of a *qupai*. This balance between mutable and immutable elements within *gaoqiang qupai* internal structure is a characteristic feature of Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* music. Judging from the published *qupai* definition above, however, this is not be a feature which is characteristic to all *qupai* musical systems. This trait is referred to by one Sichuan opera scholar as the "standardized-nature and flexible-nature of *qupai*" (*qupai de guifanxing yu linghuoxing* 曲牌的规犯性与灵活性):

Without a standardized-nature a theatre form's distinguishing feature would be missing [which] is another way of saying that the music's distinguishing feature would be missing. For Sichuan opera, this means the 'Sichuan flavor' would be

missing. But without a flexible-nature, *qupai* could not develop and adapt to fit the needs of different playscripts and characters--the *qupai* would have no vitality (Jia 1982, 23).

Although the term "filling-in [the] text" is not indicative of the actual process by which Sichuan opera practitioners create music for *gaoqiang* performance, it is reflective of the historical origins of the *qupai* tradition in China.

The creative process of [filling-in the text] . . . has great significance in the history of Chinese poetry and opera. It is generally accepted that during the early stages in the development of Chinese poetic genres such as *chi* (*ci*) and *kuk* (*qu*),^[12] poems were composed to be sung rather than simply read. As certain tunes became popular among poets, new poems were composed to fit them. The procedure was feasible even for poets who were not musically oriented as long as the new texts followed the verse structure of the model with regard to patterns of beat, phrase structure, and, with some flexibility, the sequence of linguistic tones. Since, the verse structure was derived from the musical characteristics of the tune in the first place, conforming to it ensured that the new poems would automatically be suitable for musical performance. Known by the title of the tune that it fits, the verse structure came to be used as a model by poets who composed poems in ignorance of the original tune (Yung 1989, 128).

Elements of *Qupai* Internal Structure

Both Sichuan opera's *kunqiang* and *gaoqiang* systems belong to the *qupai* family of musical systems. An analysis of the *qupai* contained in their respective repertoires, however, reveals that *kunqiang* and *gaoqiang* *qupai* possess disparate structural natures. The *kunqiang* musical system is a melodically-accompanied tradition, and therefore, the musical structure of individual *kunqiang* *qupai* provides theatre practitioners with information regarding melodic accompaniment, and with information for a single vocalist: the actor. Although percussion articulation periodically occurs during passages of *kunqiang* music, melodic accompaniment is by

far the dominant form of non-vocal music heard during song performance. *Gaoqiang* music performance, in contrast, is characterized by the presence of percussion accompaniment and by its use of two discrete vocalizing entities: the actor and the helping chorus. The internal structures of *gaoqiang qupai* differ fundamentally from *kunqiang qupai* both in the type of musical information which they impart, and in the fact that *gaoqiang qupai* organize the vocal participation of the actor and the helping chorus. The assignment of different vocalizing bodies to specific parts of a *gaoqiang qupai* song, mandates the presence of an additional structural element which is not present in *kunqiang qupai*. I refer to this element as the "performer-assignment structure" of Sichuan opera *gaoqiang qupai*. A summary of the elements constituting *gaoqiang qupai* internal structure is provided below.

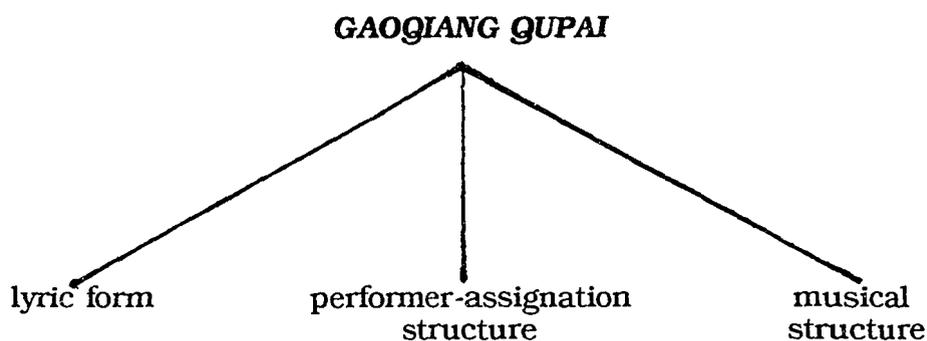


Figure 1.1

Sichuan Opera *Gaoqiang Qupai* Internal Structure

All aspects of *gaoqiang qupai* internal structure are integral to the issue of *qupai* identity. Although hundreds of *qupai* are found in the Sichuan opera repertoire, considerable overlapping of structural form

exists. A slight difference in one aspect of a *qupai*'s internal structure, such as the number of lyric lines assigned to the helping chorus versus those assigned to the actor, may be the only factor which distinguishes two, otherwise identical, *qupai* from each other. As stated above, *qupai* contain both mutable and immutable elements within their structural forms. When creating songs for performance, Sichuan opera artists must know which elements embody a *qupai*'s identity, and therefore, must be preserved. Without the preservation of such elements, the ability of a song to function dramatically may be compromised.

Organization of the Study

Inquiries into the nature of Sichuan opera must initiate with an examination of the *gaoqiang* musical system. To understand the salient features of the system, and the manner in which Sichuan opera practitioners organize and execute dramatic presentations of *gaoqiang* plays, one must begin with *qupai*. This study looks at *qupai* in their role as the primary organizing element, and most important interpretive vehicle, in the Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* performance tradition.

Gathering accurate information about the *gaoqiang* musical system is a formidable task for both the Chinese and non-Chinese researcher. This is partly due to the fact that prior to the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) ascendance to power in 1949, Sichuan opera was primarily an oral tradition. Formerly, the musical and dramatic repertoires of Sichuan opera were passed down from one generation of performers to the next without the aid of written documentation. Until the late 1950s, most information

concerning Sichuan opera performance practice was retained in the minds of its theatre artists.

Following Mao Zedong's 1942 address at Yan'an on the role of literature and the arts in communist society, a policy recognizing an inseparable relationship between politics and art became an integral part of the Chinese Communists' ideology.¹³ Under Mao's guidance, the Chinese Ministry of Culture began a number of energetic campaigns in the 1950s to preserve, document, and reform *xiqu* in China. From this period until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, a number of programs were undertaken in China to document, analyze, and publish materials on *xiqu* music, repertoire, and performance practice.

Among the earliest effects of this movement in Sichuan was the publication of the two-volume work, *Sichuan opera gaoqiang qupai* (川剧高腔曲牌 *Chuanju gaoqiang qupai*). Based on interviews with a number Sichuan opera artists, the staff of the newly-established Sichuan Province Sichuan Opera Research Office (四川省川剧研究室 *Sichuan sheng chuanju yanjiu shi*) compiled information on over 160 individual *qupai* for this study. A later 1959 work by Sichuan opera percussionist Peng Wenyan (彭文元) provided similar information on 231 *qupai*, while Sichuan opera actor Zhang Decheng's (张德成) 1964 study documented 317 *qupai*. To date, these three works represent the largest and most ambitious attempts at *gaoqiang qupai* documentation.

Despite the presence of these works, an accurate count of the number of *qupai* present in the *gaoqiang* musical system repertoire is still missing.

How many Sichuan opera *gaoqiang qupai* are there actually? This question was never made clear before Liberation.^[14] The reason [for this] is that there were not any [musical] scores or

books passed down. Only from the mouths of a few *gushi* [the leaders of the percussion orchestra] . . . and from the frequent performances of certain *gaoqiang* plays, [could we] really know [how] extremely abundant [*qupai* were]. In the final analysis, how many *qupai* are there? This is still a mystery! Not until after Liberation could clues to this 'mystery' be found (He Guojing 1985, 27).

A comparison of the contents of the three aforementioned works on *qupai* reveals that much duplication of information is present. Following a review of these works, however, Sichuan opera music scholar Peng Chaoyi (彭潮溢) estimated the number of *qupai* in the *gaoqiang* repertoire to be around 370 (1985, 57). To date, no new attempts to accurately document *gaoqiang qupai* has been undertaken. It is not, however, within the scope of the study to attempt such a formidable task.

Interviews conducted with various Sichuan opera performers and scholars and an examination of the organization and contents of the three published works described above, reveal that a standardized method of *qupai* description is lacking within the tradition. Few Sichuan opera actors are familiar with the particulars of a *qupai*'s structural form. If asked to cite the difference between two *qupai*, for example, most stage artists would say that the primary differentiating feature can be found in the melodic structure of the *qupai*. It is the leaders of the Sichuan opera percussion orchestra and helping chorus who possess the most comprehensive knowledge of *qupai* structural form. For this reason, it is usually musicians who have provided opera scholars with information on the musical system, not actors.

Despite their knowledge, Sichuan opera musicians do not always describe *qupai* structure in the same way. Perhaps this is due to the fact that within the Sichuan opera tradition regional variations exist. In certain

parts of Sichuan, for example, *qupai* can be found in the repertoires of opera companies which are not present in the repertoires of companies from other parts of the province. Sometimes *qupai* with identical structural forms are referred to by different names in different parts of Sichuan, or those with disparate structural forms share the same appellation.

Sichuan opera musicians often disagree on the specifics of a *qupai*'s structural form. Despite this fact, it is clear that musicians share the common belief that each *qupai* in repertoire has a unique internal structure which differentiates it from all others. Although published descriptions of *qupai* often provide conflicting information on the details of *qupai* lyric form, general agreement in the areas of *qupai* performer-assignment and musical structure, and dramatic application appear to be present. This suggests that there is not a single *qupai* standard which is observed throughout the tradition. The idea that a *qupai* contains certain immutable elements which allow its songs to achieve a specific dramatic effect in performance appears, however, to be recognized by all.

This is an initial study of the *gaoqiang* tradition, the first by a non-Chinese researcher. Given the nature of the topic, the information which will be presented here is both broad in scope and diverse in subject matter. I have focused this study on the isolation and analysis of structural elements and performance practices which are common throughout the tradition. I have consciously avoided such issues as regional variation within the tradition, and have not attempted to expose discrepancies in *qupai* structural description or appellation. From the data that I have assembled on *gaoqiang* performance, I hope to accurately determine the

salient features of the musical system and present a more systematic approach to their discussion and analysis.

Research for this study was carried out in Sichuan province during 1987-1988. The information presented on *gaoqiang qupai* internal structure and usage is primarily taken from analysis of published materials on Sichuan opera and the *gaoqiang* musical system, musical scores, and the unpublished teaching materials used by the faculty of the Sichuan Province Sichuan Opera School (四川省川剧学校 *Sichuan sheng chuanju xuexiao*). Interviews with theatre scholars at the Sichuan Province Academy of Sichuan Opera Art Research (四川省川剧艺术研究院 *Sichuan sheng chuanju yishu yanjiu yuan*) and the faculty of the opera school, observations of Sichuan opera performances, and classes taken in Sichuan opera performance technique, provided the remaining data included in this work.

With the exception of Chapters I and X which serve as an introduction and conclusion, this study can be divided into three discrete parts. The first part (Chapters II and III) looks at the human element in performance: the actor, helping chorus, and percussion orchestra. Chapter II looks specifically at the world of the actor. The chapter begins with an introduction to the nature of the physical stage, the various performance mediums and role categories used by stage actors, and the basic aesthetic concepts followed by practitioners of the tradition. The latter part of the chapter is devoted to a description of the *gaoqiang* dramatic repertoire, and the language and structure of its plays.

Chapter III describes the performance environment in which the percussion orchestra and helping chorus work. In this chapter information on the musicians and instruments which constitute the

percussion orchestra are given. An introduction to the structure of percussion music and the historical roots of the helping chorus, constitute the latter part of this chapter.

Chapters IV through VII form the second part of the study. In these chapters the elements which constitute the internal structure of *qupai* are examined. Chapter IV introduces *qupai* lyric form through an introduction to the organization of the linguistic elements used to construct song texts, as well as the fundamentals of Sichuan dialect. The issue of performer-assignment structure is undertaken in Chapter V through an analysis of the various patterns of performer assignment found in *qupai* songs. The latter part of this chapter looks at patterns of vocable placement and usage, and their relationship to *qupai* performer-assignment structure. Vocables are the non-lexical syllables employed by Sichuan opera performers to facilitate vocal production and creative expression in *gaoqiang* music.

Due to the complexity of the subject, the examination of *gaoqiang* musical structure is carried out in two stages. Chapter VI looks at the nature of *qupai* melodic structure through discussions of *qupai* modal structure, melodic variation in helping chorus and actor music, and *qupai* categorization practices. An analysis of the rhythmic aspect of *gaoqiang* music is undertaken in Chapter VII. In this chapter, information on the various metrical types present in the musical system and the nature of percussion accompaniment during passages of song, are provided.

Chapters VIII and IX constitute the final part of this study. In this section, the impact of *qupai* internal structure on shaping the nature of the dramatic presentation is discussed. Chapter VIII looks specifically at

helping chorus vocal performance practice, and introduces the various functions which the helping chorus serves the actor in performance.

Chapter IX focuses on the methods used by Sichuan opera practitioners to select and organize *qupai* for use in *gaoqiang* performance. In this chapter, the suggested dramatic applications of a number of *qupai* are examined, and an introduction to the guiding principles behind the ordering of *qupai* in performance, is provided.

Following the standard method used by Sichuan opera practitioners and scholars, the names of *gaoqiang qupai* will be indicated in this study through the use of brackets (e.g., [*duan zheng hao*] and [*xin shui ling*]). The names of the percussion patterns played by the *gaoqiang* orchestra are usually two-to-four written-characters in length. Whenever they appear in the text, these pattern names will be indicated by the presence of quotation marks (e.g., "*er hui tou*" and "*dan chui*"). In that the names of most *qupai* and percussion patterns do not reflect either the historical origins, structural features, or the dramatic applications of these compositional units, English translations of these names will not be given.

All Chinese terms are written using *pinyin*, the official romanization system of the People's Republic of China, and appear in the text in italics. As will be discussed in Chapter IV, Sichuan dialect and Mandarin are linguistically-related dialects. Although the two dialects each feature distinct speech-tone patterns, they share many common speech sounds. Because most non-Chinese readers are more familiar with the Mandarin dialect, all romanizations of Chinese terms in this study will reflect their pronunciation in Mandarin unless otherwise indicated.

Whenever possible I have tried to use the indigenous terminology of the Sichuan opera stage to describe *gaoqiang qupai* structure and

performance practice. In instances, however, where I have felt that the use of a Chinese term would confuse the reader or that an appropriate term is absent in the language, I have created a new English term. In each case, I have alerted the reader to this fact.

The musical examples included in this study have all been excerpted from published music scores of Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* performance. Whenever appearing in the text, the source of the music example is given in a bibliographic citation located in the endnotes of the respective chapter. All examples are transcribed using cipher notation.

All translations of Chinese language texts are my own unless otherwise indicated.

Notes to Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

¹ *Kunshanqiang* is said to have developed under the influence of the *Yiyangqiang* (弋阳腔) musical system which originated in the Yiyang region of southern China's Jiangxi province, and *haiyanqiang* (海盐腔) which came from the Zhejiang and Jiangsu province area (Dolby 1976, 91).

² Versions of the *kunshanqiang* musical system can be found in Beijing opera, Xiang opera (湘剧 *xiangju*) of Hunan province, Jin opera (晋剧 *jinju*) of Shanxi province, and Sichuan opera, respectively.

³ The italicized terms are the names of the primary musical systems found in each of the listed opera forms.

⁴ The literal meaning of the term "Sichuan" is "four rivers" (四||), referring to the four major waterways which bisect this mountainous province. The word "*chuan*" (||) in the opera form name refers to the province of Sichuan where the tradition developed. "*Ju*" (剧) is the Chinese word meaning "drama." Sichuan opera is also popular in areas bordering Sichuan province such as northern Yunnan and western Guizhou.

⁵ *Kunqiang* (lit., "tunes [of] Kun[shan]") is a regional variation of the aforementioned *kunshanqiang* musical system found in Kun opera. The musical system is thought to have been introduced into Sichuan via a group of Kun opera performers from Suzhou, Jiangsu province sometime during the late 17th or early 18th century (Chen 1986, 7). A derivative of the

pihuang (皮黄) musical system which developed in Beijing during the first half of the 18th century, the time and route of the *huqinqiang* (lit., "tunes of the *huqin*," [a two-stringed spiked fiddle]) musical system's arrival in Sichuan still remains a matter of debate among scholars. There is general agreement, however, that the musical system was present in Sichuan by the late 18th or early 19th centuries. Part of the *bangziqiang* (梆子腔 lit., "clapper tunes") musical system, *tanxi*'s roots lie in the music traditions of northwest China's Shaanxi and Shanxi provinces. During the first half of the 19th century, a troupe known as the Tai Hong Troupe (*Tai hong ban* 太洪班) who performed a style of *bangziqiang* known as "*qinqiang*" (秦腔), is reported to have brought the musical system to Sichuan from Shaanxi province (Chen 1986, 16). Information about the origins of the *gaoqiang* musical system are provided on page 11.

6 These two musical systems are *kunqiang* and *gaoqiang*. Along with the musical systems *haiyanqiang* and *yuyaoqiang* (余姚腔), *kunqiang* and *yiyangqiang* are collectively referred to as the "Four Great Musical Systems" (*si da shengqiang* 四大声腔) of the Ming dynasty (Zhongguo 1985, 367).

7 Sichuan is located in a very mountainous region of China where travel into and out of the region, as well as within the province itself, has always been difficult. The plethora of natural waterways which traverse the province were the main travel routes for centuries. Given the environmental conditions of the region, theatre troupes performing the various musical systems which now constitute Sichuan opera were once unable to travel freely about the province. As each musical system was

introduced into Sichuan, therefore, it tended to take root and flourish in a particular region of the province. The area around the city of Zigong in southeastern Sichuan, for example, became the major center of *gaoqiang* performance activity. In eastern Sichuan near the Yangzi River port city of Chongqing, the *huqinqiang* system flourished. The *tanxi* musical system, a derivative of the theatre musics of northcentral China, took root in the northern part of Sichuan. Since its inception, the *kurshanqiang* musical system enjoyed the patronage of China's ruling elite. For this reason, performances of this musical system were primarily focused in Sichuan's larger urban centers, such as Chengdu and Chongqing, where most of the government and economic leaders resided. As a musical system which is indigenous to Sichuan and one which is closely tied to the province's agrarian culture, performances of *dengxi* (lit., "lantern dramas") could be found throughout Sichuan.

Beginning in the latter half of the 19th century, the local economy in Sichuan began to prosper and transportation conditions improved. As theatre troupes began to broaden their geographical performance bases, an important change occurred in Sichuan theatre. Until this time the majority of theatre troupes in Sichuan performed a single musical system. Once exposed to the other music systems and repertoires which occurred as troupes left their regions of origin, many troupes saw economic opportunity in widening their performance repertoires. Soon troupes began adding plays performed using other musical styles to their own repertoires, as well as performing plays from their own repertoires using the new musical systems (Chen 1983, 32).

Beginning in 1903 with the opening of the Ke Yuan (可元) teahouse theatre in Chengdu, the final catalyst for the creation of Sichuan opera

appeared. With the establishment of teahouse theatres (*chalou* 茶楼 or *chayuan* 茶园) in the province, theatre troupes were provided with permanent indoor performance venues in which to practice their trade. No longer did they have to depend on sporadic invitations from local guilds and landlords, or occasional village festivals, to perform. On the teahouse stages, ticket-buying audience members were able to enjoy daily performances of the plays they loved. Troupes specializing in different musical systems now began to regularly share the same performance venues, allowing exchange between actors, musics, and repertoires to occur.

⁸ One notable exception is the one-act play *Three Memorials to the River* (*San ji jiang* 三祭江). This play, based on historical events of the Three Kingdoms Period (222-280 A.D.), depicts Sun Shangxiang (孙尚香), wife of the ruler of the Kingdom of Shu, Liu Bei (刘备), performing a series of funeral memorials in honor of her husband, and his two advisors, Guan Yu (关羽) and Zhang Fei (张飞). In the play, the actress playing Sun sings lengthy passages of *huqinqiang*, *tanxi*, as well as *gaoqiang* music.

⁹ Although in Sichuan opera "*gaoqiang*" is synonymous with the *yiayangqiang* musical tradition, in other *xiqu* forms which adopted *yiayangqiang* music, various appellations are used to refer to this tradition. Jiangxi province's Gan opera (赣剧), for example, still calls its *yiayangqiang*-derived system "*yiayangqiang*," but Anhui province's Hui opera (徽剧) calls it *huizhouqiang* (徽州腔) and *qingyangqiang* (青阳腔). Only *xiqu* forms in Sichuan, Hunan, Guangxi, and Zhejiang provinces use the term "*gaoqiang*". (Zhongguo minzu 1989, 34).

10 *Qupai paiming* are reflective of a wide variety of historical, geographical, cultural, and creative sources. Some *qupai* names, for example, make reference to a particular geographical region of China, such as [*Liang zhou ge*] (〔梁洲歌〕) meaning "song [of] Liang prefecture," or [*Chu jiang yin*] (〔楚江吟〕) meaning the "chant [of] the Chu River." Other names make mention of specific objects or animals such as [*qing na ao*] (〔青衲袄〕) meaning "blue mantle," [*shui di yu*] (〔水底渔〕), meaning "fish [from the] depths," or [*xia shan hu*] (〔下山虎〕), literally "lion descending [a] mountain." *Qupai* names may also describe natural or human actions such as [*feng ru song*] (〔风入松〕) meaning "wind through [the] pines," or [*dao hua chuan*] (〔倒划船〕) meaning "rowing [a] boat backwards." References to sacred figures can also be found in *qupai* names, such as [*pu sa man*] (〔菩萨蛮〕), literally "barbaric Buddha," or [*er lang sheng*] (〔二郎神〕) meaning the "Second Venerable God." Although infrequent, some *qupai* names refer to specific musical or prosodic features of the *qupai* such as in [*shuang shengzi*] (〔双声子〕) meaning "double sound," [*liu fan gong ci*] (〔六犯宫词〕) meaning "tune-[which]-changes-mode-six-times," or [*zi zi shuang*] (〔字字双〕), literally "double written-characters."

Qupai bearing the same names as those found in the Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* musical repertoire can also be found in other contemporary performance traditions, as well as in traditions which predate the *xiqu* tradition. *Qupai* which have the same name as those used over 600 years ago in Yuan *zaju* tradition, for example, are still present in the musical repertoires of a number of *xiqu* forms, including both the Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* and *kunqiang* musical systems. Attempts to establish musicological relationships between like-named *qupai* found in different

performance traditions, those in musical systems within the same *xiqu* form, or those found within the musical systems of historical and contemporary forms, however, have not revealed evidence which would confirm that all *qupai* originated from a common source, or that they share musical material today. For this reason, a correlation between the nature of a *qupai*'s internal structure and its appellation is also rarely detectable.

¹¹ Literally "song art," the term "*quyi*" has been used since 1949 to refer to a large number of performance traditions in which stories are told through song and speech acts. Most *quyi* forms are musically-accompanied and also use a stylized movement vocabulary in performance (Trapido 1985, 702).

¹² The terms "*ci*" and "*qu*" are the Mandarin pronunciations of the Cantonese terms "*chi*" and "*kuk*." Two common literary sources for many *qupai*, *ci* (詞) and *qu* (曲) were poetry traditions which reached their heights of popularity during the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties, respectively. Since both were literary forms known for their strict prosodic structures, the evolution of *qupai* from *ci* and *qu* compositions occurred when an artist composed music to fit the particular arrangement of textual elements described by Dr. Yung in the passage. Although *qupai* bearing the same names as those *qupai* which developed from these poetic forms can be found in many performing traditions today, an examination of their lyric and musical structures reveal the presence of a variety of different *qupai* structures. This would indicate that a common

appellation may be the only element left linking these contemporary *qupai* to the those created from *qu* and *ci* sources.

13 An English translation of this address was published in 1980 by Bonnie McDougall under the title, *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference On Literature and Art."* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies.

14 In China, the period before the Communist takeover in 1949 is commonly referred to as "before Liberation" or "pre-Liberation" (*jiefang zhi qian* 解放之前), and the period which followed as "after Liberation" or "post-Liberation" (*jiefang zhi hou* 解放之后).

CHAPTER II

THE ACTOR IN PERFORMANCE

An understanding of the relationship between the Sichuan opera actor, the helping chorus, and percussion orchestra in *gaoqiang* performance requires an understanding of the nature of these three performing entities, the mediums of communication used by them, and the rules which control the application of these mediums in performance. Of the three, it is the stage actor who possesses the fullest and most diversified palette of creative choices. Unlike either the helping chorus or the percussion orchestra, the Sichuan opera actor has both a physical and an aural dimension in performance. During the dramatic presentation, the actor moves throughout the performance space revealing aspects of dramatic character and plot to the audience through movement, speech, and song. The helping chorus' involvement in performance, in contrast, is limited to a single creative medium: song. Unlike the chorus used in the Greek theatre, Sichuan opera's chorus has no physical presence in performance. It is a stationary musical ensemble which, in performance today, is seated next to the percussion orchestra offstage, and similarly hidden from audience view. Like the helping chorus, the percussion orchestra contributes to the performance only through the individual and aggregate sounds of its various instruments. The orchestra also has no physical means of expression in the dramatic presentation.

The participation of the Sichuan opera actor in performances of *gaoqiang* plays is shaped by several factors. Following the structure and content of the dramatic narrative, the actor creates a visual and aural presence for the stage character which s/he is to enact. The nature of this

presence is determined mainly by i) the physical conditions of the performance space, ii) the performance mediums used, and iii) the aesthetic principles present in the dramatic form. Given the number of performance media used by Sichuan opera actors and the complex nature in which these media are manipulated for purposes of character portrayal, a system of role categories has been developed within the tradition. In the following pages, the various aspects of the Sichuan opera actor's dramatic presence in *gaoqiang* performance will be examined.

Conditions of the Physical Stage

The nature of the creative involvement of the actor, helping chorus, and percussion orchestra in Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* performance is influenced by the type of physical environment in which each entity works. In proscenium theatres where the majority of Sichuan opera performances now take place, both the helping chorus and percussion orchestra are positioned in the wings; physically stationary and outside the *mise en scène*. Only Sichuan opera actors conduct their craft in full view of the audience and are able to physically move about the performance space.

The performance space in which the *xiqu* actor works can be described as austere. In traditional performance contexts, the Chinese opera stage is fundamentally bare of contextualizing scenery. A large carpet is positioned centerstage which serves to define the primary performance space for the dramatic presentation. According to the demands of the dramatic work, one or more tables adorned with embroidered silk cloth, or similarly covered chairs, may be placed within the carpeted space. Through the actions of the actor and the imagination of the audience

members, these tables and chairs can be transformed into such disparate items as a young lady's dressing table, a judge's courtroom bench, or an altar in a Buddhist temple. A simple three-poled bamboo frame supporting two satin curtains, when attached to two chairs, becomes the enclosure surrounding a traditional Chinese bed. Tables and chairs can also be manipulated by the stage performers to represent different types of physical environments. When actors stand upon a table and raise their eyes toward an imaginary horizon, for example, the audience understands that the table is no longer a table, and now has become a mountain lookout. Although in some recent opera productions specially designed backdrops, scenery, and set pieces can be found, the vast majority of Sichuan operas still utilize only the traditional carpet, tables, and chairs to contextualize the performance.

The relative simplicity of the physical environment in which the *xiqu* actor works developed as a response to the conditions faced by early theatre practitioners in China. Since its inception during the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), *xiqu* has been presented in a variety of performance venues. Temporary makeshift theatres erected in public spaces, permanent thrust stages attached to the sides of religious temples and guild halls, public teahouse stages, and the salons and banquet halls of China's economically privileged classes have all served as performance spaces for *xiqu* actors. Since the introduction of the Western realistic theatre tradition to China in the early years of the twentieth century, the proscenium stage has also been added to this list of venues. Although in the past *xiqu* performers sometimes found permanent positions at the imperial court, in the private homes of wealthy merchants and scholar-officials, or were regular performers at a single performance venue, the majority of *xiqu* actors

earned their livings as itinerant players. Without guarantee of steady income, *xiqu* troupes found it impossible to remain at a single performance venue for a long period of time, and therefore moved from place to place in search of performance opportunities. The geographical direction in which these troupes travelled was often dictated by the schedule of village festivals and clan celebrations¹ taking place in the particular region of the country in which they worked. The constant change of performance venue which resulted from the impermanent lifestyles of the opera troupes, coupled with the transportation limitations of the day, forced *xiqu* performers to develop a theatre presentation style which could respond easily to the ever-changing physical environments in which they worked. Rather than creating a performance style which could be negatively affected by the conditions of the physical stage, Chinese opera practitioners developed a theatre tradition which focused the performance on the abilities of the actor.

The simplicity of the physical stage lies in stark contrast to the richness and complexity of the visual aspect of the *xiqu* actor's performance. Chinese opera actors have traditionally worn beautifully embroidered silk costumes in performance. Male characters often wear helmets decorated with colorful cloth balls, imitation pearls, and silk tassels, or caps made of black velvet with foot-long wing-like extensions protruding above each ear. The headdresses worn by many female characters are adorned with jeweled hairpins and brightly colored cloth flowers. The makeup worn by both male and female characters equal the visual opulence of the costumes in terms of design and color. Colors used in the various makeup designs range from naturalistic tones, to bright blue, black, red, green, gold, and purple. The emphasis which is placed on the

costume and makeup of the *xiqu* actor is part of the tradition's emphasis on the actor, and away from the physical stage. Through self-adornment, *xiqu* performers are always able to create an exciting visual environment for the theatre spectator, no matter what the conditions of the physical environment are around them.

Performance Skills

In each *xiqu* performance, artists reveal the content of the dramatic narrative by articulating the thoughts and emotions, and enacting the movements of dramatic characters through their physical, vocal, and interpretive skills. Using the indigenous terminology of the Chinese opera stage, the tools which *xiqu* actors employ to create and communicate their dramatic roles are collectively referred to as the "four skills" (*si gong* 四功) of performance. The four skills are: song (*chang* 唱), speech (*nian* 念), stylized movement/acting (*zuo* 做), and (*da* 打) stage combat/acrobatics.

"Song" and "speech" are the two components constituting the *xiqu* actor's aural performance practice. These two skills are used to perform the vocal songs, and articulate the passages of poetry, monologue, and dialogue, found within the plays. The physical nature of the *xiqu* actor's performance is manifested through the use of the two skills: "stylized movement/acting" and "combat/acrobatics." In most world music drama traditions, the focus of the dramatic presentation is almost entirely on the aural aspect of performance. The *xiqu* tradition, in contrast, demands that actors not only have the vocal technique necessary to accurately and effectively perform passages of song and speech, but also possess the

physical skills needed to execute the stylized movement vocabulary present within the tradition. The high level of vocal and physical proficiency required of *xiqu* performers makes them among the world's most comprehensive theatre artists.

In dramatic performances, *xiqu* actors utilize a stylized movement vocabulary to physically reveal aspects of dramatic character and further plot development. The way in which this vocabulary is acquired by *xiqu* artists and applied in performance is not unlike what is found in the Western ballet tradition. Before ever taking the stage, both ballet dancers and *xiqu* actors must first undergo years of arduous physical training to master the various postures, positions, and combinations of physical gestures which constitute the physical language of their respective traditions. How this physical language is then used in performance, however, varies according to the conventions of the form, the physical ability and aesthetic sensibilities of the performer, and the demands of the dramatic context in which it is to be used.

Using the stylized movement vocabulary of the *xiqu* stage, Chinese theatre artists also must learn to execute specially choreographed passages of stage combat using different types of stage weaponry such as swords, knives, and spears, and to execute challenging gymnastic feats like front and back handsprings, and aerial somersaults. These movement displays take place according to the demands of the drama, and serve both to heighten the tension of the dramatic moment, and display the physical skills of the actor.

Characteristics of Performance

Stylization and Aesthetics

Given the Chinese audience's familiarity with the content of most *xiqu* plays, their primary interest in attending a dramatic presentation cannot be merely to witness the unfolding of the plot. The *xiqu* audience member goes to the theatre, rather, to observe how stage artists construct their dramatic characters and interpret the play's story through the use of the four performance skills. It is the proper balance between displays of pure vocal and physical technique, and a meaningful interpretation of dramatic character and story, which is sought by both *xiqu* artists and their audiences. In the passage below, Elizabeth Wichmann makes observations on Beijing opera performance aesthetics which are also true of other *xiqu* forms, including Sichuan opera.

In the performance of traditional Beijing opera, the stage is perceived as a platform upon which to display the performers' four skills . . . [of performance]. . . . These skills are displayed within the context of a drama, in which each performer portrays a dramatic character.

The display of skills, however, is not an end in itself. Even the most virtuoso technique will be criticized as "empty" (*kong*) if in performance it does not contribute to the pursuit of a larger aesthetic aim (1991, 2).

In short, artistry is recognized by Chinese opera audiences in those performers who demonstrate a high level of technical expertise, as well as creative insight in the application of these techniques for the purpose of revealing dramatic character and storyline.

Chinese opera, like many other Asian theatre forms, is a stylized tradition, meaning that the dramatic presentation is not intended to be an

exact reproduction of reality, but rather an interpretation of it. A *xiqu* performance does not attempt to fool its audience into believing that they are witnessing real life on the stage. On the contrary, everything about a Chinese opera production--from the colorful makeup and costume styles, to the sounds of the percussion orchestra offstage--makes it obvious to the *xiqu* audience that what they are witnessing is something beyond mere reality.

Xiqu practitioners, while acknowledging the presence of stylization, are quick to point out that everything presented on the stage is grounded in observation of natural phenomena and not merely the product of pure artistic abstraction or imagination. Each perceptible object, sound, physical action, or emotion which is presented in the context of the drama has an identifiable realistic source in nature. Chinese theatre director and theorist Ah Jia refers to the process which realistic phenomena undergo prior to their presentation on the *xiqu* stage as "re-forming" (*bianxing* 变形), and its effect as the "condens[ing], sum[m]ing up, exaggerat[ing], ornament[ing], and giv[ing] imaginative interpretation to life." (Liu 1988, 115). When *xiqu* actors execute a pointing gesture in performance, for example, they move their arms in a circular direction--in a direction away from the intended object--prior to extending their arms in its direction. Despite this superfluous circling, the gesture is still comprehensible--even to those unfamiliar with the stylization of the form--as being a pointing gesture. With the circling, however, the actor is adding a layer of ornamentation and exaggeration to a simple gesture which serves to refine (*tilian* 提炼) it, and bring it in line with a fundamental aesthetic tenet of the Chinese opera stage: beauty (*mei* 美).

The demand for beauty in *xiqu* performance is aimed primarily at the areas of visual and aural performance, and is not ideological in the sense of prohibiting the portrayal of negative or undesirable emotions or intentions by dramatic characters. But in all aspects of physical and aural performance, *xiqu* practitioners require that the aesthetic sensibilities of the audience not be violated. For this reason, a character's death is rarely enacted before the audience. When a character is mortally wounded, for example, realistic-looking blood is not spilled on the stage, nor is the character generally allowed to die before the audience. Prior to their deaths, wounded or suicidal characters usually exit the stage. Although the unpleasantries of life are not barred from presentation, how they are presented in the context of *xiqu* performance is controlled by the tradition's demand for beauty.

Performance Conventions

An important aspect of *xiqu* stylization is the use of performance conventions (*chengshi* 程式). These codified patterns of performance behavior are both physical and aural in nature, and when used, communicate specific information to the audience. One of the most frequently seen physical conventions in *xiqu* performance is the circling of the stage by a dramatic character. When a character executes a circular path around the carpeted space, the audience immediately understands the character to be in the process of changing geographical location. When the character has completed the movement sequence, the audience is not surprised to find that not only may hundreds of miles of distance been covered, but six months of time may have elapsed as well. Given the sparsity of the physical stage, the existence of visual conventions provides

xiqu performers with a method of imparting information to the audience which in many theatre forms can only be conveyed through verbalization or through a change in the physical setting of the stage itself.

Within the aural performance tradition, conventions are also present. The majority of these conventions are to be found within the melodic and rhythmic structures of the opera form's musical systems.

Role Categories

An early forerunner of the *xiqu* stage, popular from the Tang to the Song dynasties (approx. 7th to the 13th centuries), was the adjutant play (*canjunxi* 苍军戏) tradition. Although limited information is available about adjutant play performance, Chinese theatre scholars believe that one of the characteristic features of today's *xiqu* performance probably began over one thousand years ago in adjutant plays. This feature is the division of dramatic characters into "role categories" (*hangdang* 行当).

In each performance of an adjutant play, actors portraying one of the tradition's two role categories could be found.² The primary function of role categories in Tang adjutant plays, as in *xiqu* performance today, was to serve as a method of organizing the visual and aural aspects of dramatic character portrayal. Although during the subsequent dynasties new role categories bearing different appellations appeared as new theatre traditions arose, their function in Chinese theatre performance remained the same.

Dramatic characters like their live human counterparts can be distinguished from one another according to such features as age, gender, personality, and position in society. The particular combination of features affects the way in which the *xiqu* actor physically, aurally, and

psychologically portrays the character in performance. An actor playing the role of an aged imperial official, for example, will use a style of makeup, costume, movement and vocalization, which will best convey the nature of that character to the audience. An actor performing the role of a vivacious peasant girl will no doubt use a different performance vocabulary to construct the character. The performance vocabularies used by *xiqu* actors are determined mainly by the role category to which a dramatic character belongs.

The division of dramatic characters into role categories is particularly important in the *xiqu* tradition because of the presence of a stylized movement vocabulary. As indicated above, without several years of physical training *xiqu* actors will not be able to correctly execute the various stage walks, body postures, costume manipulations, and hand positions which constitute this vocabulary. Issues of gender and age are particularly important in distinguishing between the majority of Sichuan opera role categories. Actors trained to perform young female roles, for example, must master the movement vocabulary designated by the tradition as being appropriate for depicting characters of that age and gender. This includes becoming proficient at a difficult stage walking style known as "around-[the]-stage" (*yuanchang* 圆场). When executed correctly, this walking style gives the visual impression that the actor is floating across the stage. The time and energy needed to master this single performance technique is considerable, and would be completely unnecessary for an actor who specializes in elderly male roles. For those roles, a sense of weightedness and conviction in a stage step is more valuable for successful character portrayal than a sense of lightness and grace.

The physical demands of the individual role categories are just one area of performance which must be attended to by Chinese opera performers during their training period. Just as in real life, vocal range and timbre vary according to gender and age. Accordingly, this difference must also be reflected in the song and speech passages articulated by dramatic characters. Also essential to character identification is the type of makeup and costume which they wear. Elderly female characters wear a style of makeup which is the most recognizably naturalistic in origin. The "*jing*" (淨) role category, on the other hand, features a makeup style which uses a variety of non-naturalistic colors and designs that often appear to have no correspondence to the natural features of the human face. The exaggerated nature of the *jing*'s makeup style is designed, however, to aid the actor in conveying the "larger-than-life" personality traits which are common to most *jing* characters.

Given the difficulty in mastering the specific performance practices and techniques associated with each role category, *xiqu* actors usually focus on the study a single role category, or even on one of the subcategories within the larger categories, from the onset of their theatre training to the termination of their careers in theatre. The assignment of actors to role categories is based on several factors including their vocal range, physical build, facial features, and individual personality.

Five basic role categories are used in Sichuan opera: "*sheng*" (生), "*dan*" (旦), "*jing*" (淨), "*mo*" (末) and "*chou*" (丑). Within each of the five categories, numerous subcategories can also be found. The vast majority of female characters found within Sichuan opera plays fall within the *dan* role category. Female characters representing every age group and social background are present within this category. The *sheng*, *jing*,

mo, and *chou* role categories are all categories of male characters. The major factors differentiating these categories from one another are the personality traits of the dramatic characters, and the overall importance of the character in the telling of the dramatic story.

Sheng

The *sheng* role category first appeared in *nanxi* (南戏 lit., "southern drama"), a music drama form popular during the Song dynasty (960-1279). Male characters ranging in age from the very young to the very old, and representing a wide variety of social backgrounds are found within this category. A common feature uniting all *sheng* characters is the fact that they are generally cast as positive characters in plays. *Sheng* characters are thought to possess a high degree of personal integrity, and to exemplify such traditional Confucian values as humanity, justice, and moral character (*ren yi dao de* 仁义道德). When a negative male character appears in a play, the character is usually portrayed by either a *chou* or *jing* actor, rather than by a *sheng*.

Within the Sichuan opera *sheng* role category there are several subcategories. These subcategories divisions are based primarily upon the age of the character, and whether they are classified as a "martial" (*wu* 武) or "civil" (*wen* 文) character. A different emphasis on the four skills of performance can be found within each of the *sheng* subcategories. Some subcategories emphasize the aural skills of song and speech, while others focus more on the physical skills of stylized movement/acting and combat/acrobatics. Characters who fall into the subcategory "martial young *sheng*" (*wu xiaosheng* 武小生), for example, focus on the skills of stylized movement/acting and combat/acrobatics, while those in the civil

subcategories of "young *sheng* " (*xiaosheng* 小生), "principal *sheng* " and "old *sheng* " place more emphasis on song and speech skills. Such variation in skill emphasis is characteristic of all dramatic role subcategories within the Sichuan opera tradition.

Male characters who are youthful and as yet unmarried usually fall into either the young *sheng* or martial young *sheng* subcategories. Young *sheng* characters are "distinguished and admirable, learned, elegant, with ideals and integrity, sincere and poised" (Deng 1986, 204). In Sichuan opera, this subcategory is one of the most frequently seen onstage and often is cast as the romantic male lead in plays.³ In most *xiqu* plays, young *sheng* characters are impoverished young Confucian scholars who are attempting to pass the imperial examinations in order to gain positions in government. During the study period which precedes the taking of the examinations, these young scholar characters often fall in love with a beautiful and virtuous young woman. After considerable hardship, the scholars usually succeed in their exams, often receiving the highest score and being awarded the title of "First Graduate" (*zhuangyuan* 状元). At the end of the play, the young scholar is united with his love, to begin a life of marital and professional bliss.

Sichuan opera young *sheng* have a movement style which is steady, gentle, and flowing--a style requiring great strength and physical control, but which should not appear so. While wearing shoes with three-inch soles called "*chao yuan xie* " (朝元鞋), young *sheng* are expected to "stand like a graceful jade tree, and move like a falling leaf propelled by the wind" (Deng 204). Sichuan opera young *sheng* characters frequently wear a V-necked, side-opening garment called a *zhezi* (褶子) in performance. The Sichuan opera actor's skillful manipulation of the sleeves and the front and

back panels of this costume is a trademark of this subcategory, and is well-known throughout the *xiqu* world.⁴

The base makeup of young *sheng* characters is a combination of light pink and red tones. A long, narrow piece of cotton fabric is used to raise the temple area, giving a lifted effect to the eyes. Black makeup is then applied to the eye area which further articulates and exaggerates this rising quality. A similar approach to makeup in both color and design can be seen in the young female characters of the *dan* category. The seemingly feminine quality of the makeup, coupled with the gentleness of the physical movement style, conveys a sense of androgyny in young *sheng* characters. In many forms of *xiqu* such as Beijing opera, young *sheng* actors sing in a vocal style which is almost entirely falsetto-based and in a range which is close to the young female *dan* 's, further adding to feminine quality of the young *sheng* performance. Although the vocal range of the Sichuan opera young *sheng* is also quite high, most of their song and speech is in their natural voices, not falsetto. This performance feature makes the vocal stylization of this subcategory less feminine, but extremely difficult to master for a male actor.

There are two types of martial *sheng* seen in Sichuan opera: "long-armor" (*changkao* 长靠) and "short-combat" (*duanda* 短打). Named for the costumes that they each wear, the two types of martial *sheng* represent different ends of the social spectrum. Long-armor martial *sheng* are usually characters who are high-ranking military commanders. They wear the heavy, brocaded stage armor called "long-armor," thick-soled boots (*chaoxie* 朝鞋), and helmets (*kui* 盔) with pairs of long pheasant feathers (*lingzi* 翎子) extending from either side of the head. Short-combat martial *sheng*, on the other hand, wear a considerably

simpler costume consisting of a pair of black silk pants and a black top decorated with white front closures (*dayi* 打衣), black soft-soled boots (*sudaxie* 素打鞋), and a black silk cap (*suluomao* 素罗帽). Short-combat martial *sheng* usually portray greenwood hero-type characters from China's lower social strata. Both the long-armor and short-combat martial *sheng* use a makeup style which resembles the civil young *sheng*.

"Principal *sheng*" (*zhengsheng* 正生) are middle-aged male characters, most of whom are married. Sometimes called "bearded *sheng*" (*xusheng* 须生) because of the long tripartite black beards (*heisan* 黑三 lit., "black-three") which they wear, the principal *sheng* subcategory has both civil and martial divisions. Martial principal *sheng*, however, are considerably less common than their younger counterparts, the martial *young sheng*.

The makeup of the principal *sheng* is more naturalistic than the young *sheng* in its use of brown tones rather than pinks and reds. As principal *sheng* are older than young *sheng* characters, they often portray government officials who have already succeeded in the examinations. The social position of the principal *sheng* is reflected in the type of costume he wears, and immediately recognizable by the audience upon first entrance. Those who have passed the civil exams and hold imperial rank wear heavily embroidered robes, called "python robes" (*mangpao* 蟒袍), which feature an oversized jade hoop belt (*yudai* 玉带) at the waist. Those who wear an "official's robe" (*guanyi* 官衣), a round-necked robe with an embroidered square (often depicting a Chinese bird like a crane or Mandarin duck) on the chest and a jade belt at the waist, are also government officials, but of lower rank than those who wear the python robes. The color of the costume provides the audience with further

information about the rank of the character, with yellow indicating an emperor and black a low-ranking official. The costumes worn by the martial principal *sheng* are divided into long-armor and short-combat categories just as in the martial young *sheng* subcategory, and represent similar differences in social rank.

"Old *sheng* " (*laosheng* 老生) characters wear gray or white beards to indicate that they are older than principal *sheng* characters. Like the principal *sheng*, old *sheng* characters represent a wide variety of social backgrounds--from emperors to river boatmen. Usually supporting characters, the movement style of the old *sheng* is designed to reflect the advanced age of the character by using a slightly curved spinal posture and a more deliberate and heavy type of stage walk. Although usually emphasizing the skills of speech and song, there are a few old *sheng* characters who wear stage armour and perform movement and combat skills (Hu 1987, 124). These characters are called "armored old *sheng* " (*kaojia laosheng* 靠甲老生 or 靠架老生), and fall under the martial classification.

The "red *sheng* " (*hongsheng* 红生) is so-named for the red-colored makeup which is worn by these characters, a color representing the qualities of loyalty and honesty. Although similar in overall stylization to the principal *sheng*, the movement and vocal patterns of red *sheng* characters are generally larger and more exaggerated. Red *sheng* characters sing louder and more sonorously, and move using physical gestures and postures which are larger than the principal *sheng*. Sometimes referred to as a "red *jing* " (*hongjing* 红净), many Sichuan opera practitioners argue that largeness of the red *sheng* 's stylization, and the unusual color and nature of its makeup, make this *sheng* subcategory more appropriate for inclusion in

the *jing* role category. Such characters as Guan Yu (关羽), the military strategist of the Warring States period (475-221 B.C.), are portrayed by actors specializing in red *sheng* roles. In other *xiqu* traditions, such as Beijing opera, the character Guan Yu wears a similar red makeup, but is portrayed by a *jing* actor.

The final *sheng* subcategory is the "child *sheng* " (*wawa sheng* 娃娃生). Usually supporting, rather than leading characters in plays, the child *sheng* are pre-pubescent males. Although technically classified as part of the *sheng* role category, child *sheng* roles are generally played by actors specializing in young female *dan* roles. The movement stylization of the child *sheng* is quite naturalistic, although the makeup features a color scheme which is similar to that of the young *sheng*.

Dan

The *dan* role category is the primary category for female characters in Sichuan opera, and includes the largest number of subcategories in the tradition. The profusion of subcategories within the *dan* role category--more so than in many other *xiqu* forms--suggests the overall importance and attention given to this role type in Sichuan opera. As seen in the *sheng* role category, most *dan* subcategories are based upon the age of the character, and a civil versus martial designation. Within these general divisions, the social position and personality of the character becomes a basis for classification. To reflect such individual factors, each *dan* subcategory places different emphasis on the four areas of performance.

The most important of the younger *dan* characters in Sichuan opera is the "boudoir *dan* " (*guimen dan* 闺门旦). Usually the unmarried daughters of wealthy families, the boudoir *dan* takes its name from the fact

that in traditional society young women of elite families spent the greater part of their youth cloistered away in their chambers, entertaining themselves with embroidering or attending to their toilet. Contact with the outside world, particularly with non-familiar men, was strictly forbidden.

Boudoir *dan* are the most refined female dramatic characters in Sichuan opera. Through her physical actions and language, the boudoir *dan* actor reflects such traditional Chinese values as moral character, gentleness, kindness, serenity, and chastity.⁵ Actors portraying these characters move with a physical stylization that is slow-tempoed and legato, and avoid making any quick or sudden punctuating movements. Yang Youhe (阳友鹤), a renowned actor of *dan* roles, describes the proper physical posture of the boudoir *dan* character when she enters the stage for the first time as "[Her] eyes look to her nose, [her] nose looks to the heart, [she] walks without moving [her] skirt, smiles without revealing [her] teeth" (1980, 97).

The makeup of the boudoir *dan* is similar to the young *sheng*, but with more red tones. Black is also used to articulate the eye area by creating exaggerated eyebrows and extending the line of the eye toward the temple area. The eye area is raised in a similar fashion to the young *sheng* through the use of a long, narrow piece of cotton fabric.

The costume most often worn by the boudoir *dan* is the full-length pleated silk skirt (*qunzi* 裙子), and the "*pei*" (帔), a square-sleeved, front-opening garment which extends down to the knee area. Attached to the ends of the sleeves are "water sleeves" (*shuixiu* 水袖), which are white silk extensions approximately eighteen inches in length. The water sleeves are manipulated using a variety of movement patterns. Their

movements serve to heighten dramatic expression and aid in the actor's conveyance of the emotional state of the character. Boudoir *dan* characters are often seen carrying fans (*shanzi* 扇子) or small handkerchiefs (*shoujin* 手巾).⁶

Two *dan* subcategories which place particular emphasis on the moral fiber of the dramatic characters are the "blue-clothing *dan* " (*qingyi dan* 青衣旦) and "principal *dan* " (*zhengdan* 正旦) subcategories. Blue-clothing *dan* are young and middle-aged woman, both married and unmarried, who are "kind, gentle, steady and dignified with a natural and poised bearing, [and] able to endure hardship and physical labor" (Chou unpublished, 13). The appellation "blue-clothing" comes from the color of the costume which is worn by these characters. In actual practice, the costume, called a "hardship *zhezi* " (*ku zhezi* 苦褶子), is either solid blue, or black with blue trim around its edges. Although also made of silk like the costumes of the boudoir *dan* characters, the darker color of the blue-clothing *dan* 's costume conveys a state of hardship and suffering. Unlike the hair ornaments worn by the boudoir *dan* characters which consist of jeweled hairpins and brightly colored cloth flowers, the hair of the blue-clothing *dan* is usually covered with a blue scarf, with only the area along the face trimmed with simple, pewter-like ornaments. The physical vocabulary of the blue cloth *dan* is less refined than the boudoir *dan*, allowing for more expressive facial expression.

Principal *dan* are middle-aged women of high social position such as empresses, imperial concubines, or the wives of government officials. They are considered "virtuous, kind and gentle, and dignified" characters who move with steady assurance (Hu 1987, 125). Principal *dan* wear either an "official's costume" (*guan Zhuang* 官装), a multicolored costume featuring a

high collar, a rounded fringed chest piece, and a skirt consisting of strips of cloth sewn together, or the female version of the python robe worn by principal *sheng* characters. Principal *dan* share a similar movement stylization with the blue-clothing *dan*, but are slightly more refined. This allows the higher social status of the character to be reflected. Like the boudoir *dan*, both blue-clothing and the principal *dan* subcategories place heavy emphasis on song and speech skills.

Unlike the subtlety of the boudoir *dan* and the inner strength of the blue-clothing and principal *dan*, characters found in the "flower *dan*" (*huadan* 花旦) subcategory are vivacious and expressive. Described as "frank, unaffected, and warmhearted, [with] lithe steps, [and] brightly colored clothing," flower *dan* characters are young women possessing a quick wit and considerable personal charm (Chou unpublished, 13). Flower *dan* characters come from a variety of social backgrounds and include imperial concubines, daughters of wealthy families, Buddhist nuns, military leaders, heavenly spirits, and handmaids.

The movement stylization of the flower *dan* is described as "vigorous and nimble" (Yang 1980, 98). Two important features of this stylization are the expressive use of the eyes which are bright and active, and the slight side-to-side movement of the upper torso when the character walks. The visual result is a very lively and youthful appearance on stage. In the other *dan* subcategories mentioned so far, a more controlled physical attitude is preferred. Although the flower *dan* subcategory places considerable emphasis on stylized movement/acting skills, a number of plays featuring flower *dan* characters demand strong singing skills as well.

Because of the variety of characters which fall under the flower *dan* subcategory, great diversity can be seen in costuming styles. Sichuan opera

flower *dan* characters, however, are best known for their wearing of the "female commander's helmet" (*nü shuaikui* 女帅盔), a headdress similar to those worn by long-armor martial *sheng* characters. Flower *dan* characters gracefully manipulate the pheasant feathers which extend from either side of the helmet in a variety of both representational and non-representational ways to enhance dramatic expression.

Similar in movement stylization to the flower *dan*, but of lower social status, is the "bondservant *dan* " (*nudan* 奴旦). Often cast in the role of a handmaid to a boudoir *dan* character, bondservant *dan* are "clever, quick-witted, child-like, mischievous [characters], without scruples, [who] dare to speak bluntly" (Yang 1980, 98). Their forthright manner and sprightly charm are in sharp contrast to the reserved nature of the boudoir *dan*. The contrast between mistress and handmaid is a great source of humor in many Sichuan opera plays, especially when the bondservant character acts as a matchmaker for her shy mistress.

The bondservant *dan* resembles the flower *dan* in her use of quick, light, springing steps. One or both of the bondservant *dan* 's hands, however, is loosely fisted and resting on her hips as she moves. The costume of bondservant *dan* consists of a side-opening top and trousers, with an embroidered, high-necked vest (*huaduan beixin* 花缎背心) worn on top. Bondservant *dan* are frequently seen gesturing with round bamboo fans (*tuanshan* 团扇) that have scenes of nature, or passages of poetry, painted upon them.

Another *dan* subcategory is the "smoke-flower *dan* " (*yanhua dan* 烟花旦). These characters have the agility of the flower *dan* , but the delicacy and shy nature of the boudoir *dan*. The female characters in this role category are usually courtesans who are "irresolute, worthy, kind,

gentle, intelligent, and concerned, and sensitive" (Chou unpublished, 15). Despite their low social status, the smoke-flower *dan* possess considerable personal integrity and high moral standards. The smoke flower *dan* 's steps are more restrained than the flower *dan* 's, but more exaggerated than the boudoir *dan*.

The "ghost-fox *dan* " (*guihu dan* 鬼狐旦) subcategory includes supernatural characters. Ghost-fox *dan* are young women who are "beautiful, gorgeous, enchanting, lithe, possessing natural grace, outwardly demonstrative [with] emotions, [and with an] air of immortality" (Chou unpublished, 14). In Sichuan opera plays ghost-fox *dan* characters are commonly young women who have returned from the dead to aid their former lovers and husbands, to seek revenge, or to sexually tempt and destroy young men.⁷

The movement stylization used to portray female ghost characters is very unique, and meant to give the visual impression that they are floating across the stage. To achieve this effect, the actress must lift her chest, lean her upper torso slightly forward, and use small, quick, rolling steps. Her arms remain fully extended at her sides when she moves, just slightly behind the body, and her facial expression quite still. Ghost characters generally dress in either black or white *zhezi*, with full-length pleated white skirts underneath. Their headdresses feature two long strips of silk cloth (*lingzi* 綾子) that hang from the top of the head to almost the ground. As the actress moves through the performance space, the long strips of cloth stream behind her as if she were floating.

Fox characters move with a physical vocabulary which is similar to that of the flower *dan*. The costumes worn by female foxes come in a

variety of colors. Like flower *dan*, fox characters frequently wear the female commander headdress adorned with a pair of pheasant plumes.

The *dan* role category also includes subcategories of dramatic characters which specialize in stage combat and acrobatic techniques. The characters which fall within the "martial *dan* " (*wudan* 武旦) subcategory include young women from many different social classes. Actors specializing in martial *dan* characters usually fight both male and female combatants with such weaponry as swords (*jian* 劍) and spears (*qiang* 枪), rather than with hand-to-hand combat. Martial *dan* also incorporate difficult acrobatic movements into their dramatic presentations, but with less frequency than their male counterparts. Like the martial *sheng*, the costume of the martial *dan* characters reflects the social position of the character. High-ranking female commanders wear female stage armor (*nūkao* 女靠), while supernatural characters or women from lower social classes wear a considerably simpler two-pieced costume consisting of a pair of pants and a long-sleeved, high-collared top called "fighting-clothes" (*dayi* 打衣). Unlike the short-combat costume worn by the martial *sheng*, the martial *dan* fighting-clothes are light in color rather than black.

Like the martial *dan*, the "sword-horse *dan* " (*daoma dan* 刀马旦) also incorporates martial arts skills into her performance. However, sword-horse *dan* also frequently perform lengthy passages of song. These characters are young females who have "martial bearing, [are] straight forward, serious, able to do the civil [performance style, and] good at the martial" (Chou unpublished 15). In Sichuan opera, sword-horse *dan* characters fight less rigorously than martial *dan*, and place more emphasis on the skills of song, acting, and pure dance movement (Hu 1987, 126). Sword-horse *dan* characters are usually of high social status and have a

regal air about them. These characters often wear female armor and the female commander headdress.

"Bold-vigorous *dan* " (*pola dan* 泼辣旦) are negative female characters. Usually middle-aged women whose "external appearance is ferocious, and [whose] inner soul is venomous," the bold-vigorous *dan* subcategory includes characters from many different social positions, but all sharing the non-Confucian traits of selfishness, greed, and arrogance (Deng 1986, 214). The movement style of this *dan* subcategory has the strength of the principal *dan*, but can be more exaggerated and more outwardly expressive. This role category places emphasis on both singing and acting skills.

The "old *dan* " (*laodan* 老旦) subcategory is the major subcategory for female characters who are past middle-age. Often characters of great integrity, old *dan* characters sing using their natural voices in a lower range than the younger *dan* characters. The makeup style of the old *dan*, like that of the principal *sheng* and old *sheng* subcategories, is quite naturalistic and uses brown tones rather than pinks and reds. The old *dan* subcategory includes characters from diverse social positions, distinguished by the types of costumes worn.

Old *dan* characters who are of imperial rank are called "official's-robe old *dan* " (*guanyi laodan* 官衣老旦) because they wear the heavily embroidered python robes with full-length pleated skirts beneath. The stage walk used by this type of old *dan* is described as being "one part old male, [and] three parts principal *dan*," and is considered appropriate for conveying the advanced age and high social status of the character (Deng 1979, 7).

Still of high social status, but not of imperial rank, are the "*zhezi* old

dan " (*zhezi laodan* 褶子老旦). These characters wear a costume consisting of a front-opening *pei*, and a pleated-skirt. Although similar to the costume worn by the boudoir *dan*, the color of the old *dan*'s *pei* is considerably more somber in hue than the pastel tones worn by the younger *dan*.

The final type of old *dan* is the "*jinjin* old *dan*" (襟襟老旦), a subcategory so named for the style of front-buttoning jacket worn by the characters. Dressed in this jacket and pair of pants, the *jinjin* old *dan* walks with her upper body bent slightly forward and with her head lowered. In contrast to the regal nature of the official's-robe old *dan*, the feet of the *jinjin* old *dan* slide across the floor as if they were being dragged--indicating the presence of inner spirit, but the lack of physical strength (Deng 1979, 1).

"Rocking *dan*" (*yaodan* 摇旦) is a comprehensive *dan* subcategory which includes such characters as middle-aged married women of high social stature, as well as matchmakers, procuresses, and stepmothers. These characters, all of whom are "ruthless, malicious, or comical and humorous," are known for their verbal wit (Hu 1987, 126). The name "rocking *dan*" comes from the side-to-side movement of the upper body and the swinging of the arms from side-to-side, which occurs when the character walks. This movement style is somewhat similar to that of the flower and bondservant *dan*, but larger and more exaggerated. Other movements which are present in the physical acting style of the rocking *dan*, but which are rare in other *dan* subcategories, include sitting cross-legged on stage with the fingers laced over one knee, entering the stage while speaking and laughing, and carrying a long-stemmed tobacco pipe in the mouth. Rocking *dan* are also noted for their unique singing style

which incorporates a lot of melodic ornamentation (*huaqiang* 花腔), and frequently places such nonsensical syllables as "yo !" (哟) or "na !" (呐) at the ends of melodic phrases for comic effect.

"Ugly *dan* " (*chou dan* 丑旦) are sly, humorous, and sometimes caustic characters, who are physically unattractive.⁸ Usually playing opposite a male *chou* character, female *chou* characters are typically of low social position such as shopkeepers or farmers' wives. The rocking *dan* usually wears a hairstyle which is similar to that of the younger *dan* characters. This hairstyle consists of individual hairpieces tied together with a single long hairpiece hanging down the back. Imitation jewels and flowers are then used to decorate the entire head area. Ugly *dan* characters, in contrast, wear headdresses consisting of a single hair piece adorned with a simple piece of black velvet fabric, and decorated in the front with a jade or pearl ornament. The ugly *dan* 's movement shares a similar exaggerated quality with the rocking *dan*.

Like the child *sheng*, the "child *dan* " (*wawa dan* 娃娃旦) are pre-pubescent characters. They are generally supporting characters in plays rather than leading. The movement stylization of this *dan* subcategory is based on that of the bondservant *dan*.

Jing

Jing (净) characters are commonly referred to as "large painted-faces" (*da hualian* 大花脸 lit., "large flower faces") because of the fantastic full-face makeup designs (*lianpu* 脸谱) which they wear. An important criteria in the selection of *jing* actors is their face shape--preferably broad and round--so that the makeup designs can be properly displayed. Sichuan opera *jing* makeup encompasses a wide range of designs from relatively

realistic styles which appear to follow the natural features of the face and use somewhat naturalistic colors, to entirely abstract ones consisting only of swirling lines and patterns in such colors as gold, silver, blue, green, and purple.

Everything about the characters found in the *jing* category seems to be larger-than-life. Their gestures, stage walks, vocal timbres, range, and volume, as well as their makeup and costumes, are bigger and more fantastic than any other role category's. The *jing*'s bravura performance style is appropriate for portraying "men of action, warriors, swashbuckling outlaws, crafty ministers, upright judges, and loyal statesmen, as well as gods and supernatural beings" (Scott 1983, 125). In Sichuan opera there are four subcategories within the *jing* role category.

The "robe-belt painted-face" (*paodai hualian* 袍带花脸 lit., "robe-belt flower-face") subcategory derives its name from the official's or python robes, and jade belts, worn by its characters. These characters are ministers holding high government positions or members of the literati. Classified as a civil subcategory, the robe-belt painted-face characters focus on the skills of song and speech in performance. *Jing* characters usually wear full-length beards, the color of which reflects the age of the character (i.e., black for youth, gray for middle-aged, and white for old-aged). Unlike the tripartite beard worn by the *sheng* characters, the beards of the *jing*, called a "full" (*man* 满), is unpartitioned.

The "armored painted-face" (*kaojia hualian* 靠甲花脸 lit., "armored flower-face") subcategory is martial and includes characters who are military figures. Also referred to as "large painted-faces" (*da hualian* 大花脸 lit., "large flower-face"), armored painted-face characters wear a style of stage armor called a "dragon-arrow" (*longjian* 龙箭) which is

fashioned after the robes worn during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). Armored painted-face characters emphasize movement, rather than vocal skills.

A subcategory said to be unique to Sichuan opera is the "cat painted-face" (*maoer hualian* 猫儿花脸 lit., "cat flower-face"). Described as characters who are "crafty, sly, treacherous, outwardly strong, inwardly weak, [and] vile," the cat painted-face is easily recognizable onstage by its unique makeup style. Unlike the full-face makeup worn by most *jing* characters, the makeup of the cat painted-face consists only of a patch of white makeup around the nose and eye area. This style is similar to the "dried beancurd face" (*doufugan lian* 豆腐干脸) makeup worn by characters in the *chou* role category. The dried beancurd face takes its name from its resemblance to the rectangular soybean food product, but is elongated around the eyes to form two circles (Hu 127, 1987).⁹

The final *jing* subcategory, and one which is also said to be unique to Sichuan opera, is the "grass-shoes painted-face" (*caoxie hualian* 草鞋花脸 lit., "grass-shoes flower-face"). These characters are martial in nature, but are of lower social status than the armored painted-face. Grass-shoes painted-faces are usually greenwood hero-type, positive characters. Although they are the upholders of justice, these characters are often frank, humorous, hot-tempered, and crude in action and manner (Hu 1987, 126 and Chou unpublished, 16). Like the short-combat martial *sheng*, the grass-shoes painted-face wears a simple costume consisting of black pants and a black top with white closures. Despite their appellation, grass-shoes painted-face characters do not always wear grass sandals. Singing and recitation skills are focused on by this subcategory.

Mo

The *mo* (末) role category is one of the oldest in the *xiqu* tradition, having been part of the theatre vocabulary for almost a thousand years. Characters found in the *mo* role category are either middle-aged males, called "middle-aged *mo* " (*zhongmo* 中末), or old male characters, called "old *mo* " (*laomo* 老末). In Sichuan opera, the primary difference between the *sheng* and *mo* role categories lies in the social status of the character and their relative importance to plot development. Whereas *sheng* characters are often leading characters who are of high social status such as Confucian scholars, imperial generals, and prime ministers, *mo* characters are generally supporting characters such as housemen and court attendants. Although the movement stylization of the *mo* role category is similar to the *sheng*, the amount and type of aural input into the performance is quite different. Given their supporting role status, *mo* characters speak very little onstage, and rarely sing.

Because of the common performance styles of the two role categories, a separate *mo* role category no longer exists in many *xiqu* forms. In these traditions, the dramatic characters which would fall under the *mo* classification in Sichuan opera are now considered to be part of the *sheng* role category (Shanghai 1981, 75).

Chou

One of the most popular and frequently seen role categories in Sichuan opera is the *chou* (丑 lit., "ugly"). Sometimes referred to as the "small *chou* " (*xiaochou* 小丑) or "small painted-face" (*xiao hualian* 小花臉 lit., "small flower-face"), *chou* characters are immediately recognizable from their trademark makeup style which features a patch of white face

paint covering the eye and nose area. There are many plays in the Sichuan opera repertoire which feature *chou* characters in leading roles. This role category's overall importance to the opera tradition is demonstrated in the fact that Sichuan opera is described as being a theatre form of the "three smalls" (*sanxiao* 三小), meaning the young *sheng*, the young *dan*, and the small *chou* role categories.¹⁰

Because *chou* characters are often humorous, the word "clown" has become the most common English translation of the Chinese term. In practice, however, the *chou* role category includes a greater range of character types. Characters who are "clean, correct, honest, bright, kindhearted, [and] humorous, [with a] comical manner," as well as those who are "treacherous, sly, evil, miserly, base, hypocritical and malignant--beast[s] in human form" belong to this role category (Hu 1987, 127).

Although *chou* characters often sing short passages of song, the primary performance skills of this role category are speech and stylized movement/acting. Among role categories, the *chou* has always had a special relationship with the audience. Because of the diversity of education levels found among *xiqu* audience members, and the often difficult language of the playscripts, *chou* characters have traditionally served the function of helping to clarify meaning for the audience, or serving as commentators on the stage action. *Chou* characters are in fact the only stage characters who regularly address the audience directly.

The "*zhezi chou*" (褶子丑) subcategory is so named for the costumes which the characters wear, costumes which reflect their upper class backgrounds. Described as "frivolous, shallow [and] vulgar," *zhezi chou* characters are often portrayed as the pampered sons of wealthy officials (Deng 1986, 232). Although Sichuan opera *zhezi chou* resemble

young *sheng* in physical appearance, including both costuming and physical mannerism, there is a great contrast in personality. While young *sheng* characters exemplify positive virtues, *zhezi chou* characters commonly display such undesirable ones as greed, laziness, arrogance and lust.

Considered to be one of Sichuan opera's most unique *chou* subcategories is the "*jinjin chou*" (襟襟丑). Like its *dan* counterpart, this subcategory is named for the simple upper garment which is worn by people of the lower classes. In Sichuan opera plays, *jinjin chou* actors portray such characters as beggars, loafers and common laborers. Included in this role category are both positive and negative characters. An important trait of *jinjin chou* characters is that they are never satisfied with their lower social position, and are not afraid to speak out about it. Much of this subcategory's humor is generated by placing the *jinjin chou* characters in dramatic situations which allow them to confront, and eventually outwit, their more educated and wealthier countrymen.

"Robe-belt *chou*" (*paodai chou* 袍帶丑) are middle-aged and old male characters who are either members of the imperial family, or people who hold powerful government positions. Characters in this subcategory are described as "having authority and influence, [but] harboring evil, [and] considering everyone and everything beneath their notice" (Deng 1986, 230). Commensurate with their rank, *paodai chou* wear python robes and jade belts. In Sichuan opera, this type of *chou* incorporates both the young *sheng* and *jing* movement stylizations to help convey their elite and powerful status, and personality distortions (Chou unpublished, 18).

Similar to the robe-belt *chou* in status and personality, but martial in stylization, is the "dragon-arrow *chou*" (*longjian chou* 龙箭丑). This

subcategory wears the same costume as armored painted-face characters. On their heads, dragon-arrow *chou* wear special gold headdresses called "*guan guan*" (冠冠) which are decorated with colored balls, long silk tassels, and a pair of pheasant feathers. The movement style of the dragon-arrow *chou* not only borrows from the *jing* and young *sheng* categories, but also takes from the martial young *sheng* as well.

"Official's-robe *chou*" (*guanyi chou* 官衣丑) characters are officials or members of the literati. They are similar in personality to the robe-belt *chou* --"sneaky, sinister, [and] diabolical"--who for personal gain are "servile to their superiors and tyrannical to their subordinates" (Deng 1986, 231). Official's-robe *chou* do not wear python robes, but rather the official's costume, the solid-colored (usually red, blue, or black) costume featuring the one-foot square patch of embroidery on the chest, with a jade belt at the waist. On their heads the official's-robe *chou* wear black caps called "round *sha*" (*yuansha* 圆纱), named for the round wing-like extensions that protrude horizontally on either side.

The "square-hat *chou*" (*fangjin chou* 方巾丑) is another *chou* subcategory named for its particular costuming trait. Usually playing the roles of court advisors, pettifoggers, or imperial envoys, square-hat *chou* are characters who "flatter and toady, boast, . . . bow and scrape, showing modesty and respect in front of people, but behind their backs, plotting and scheming" (Deng 1986, 233). In addition to their square-shaped hats, characters in this subcategory wear *zhezi* robes tied with silk cords at the waist, and a type of short, thin tripartite beard called a "*chou* -three" (*chousan* 丑三). These characters are frequently portrayed carrying fans.

"Soot *chou*" (*yanzi chou* 烟子丑) are positive characters who derive their name from the soot that was once used to draw the lines

around their eyes. Usually cast as common laborers, soot *chou* characters are "sincere and kindly, honest, unaffected, usually humorous, kindhearted and forthright" (Deng 1986, 233). Unlike *jinjin chou* who, despite their lower status are quite verbally sophisticated, the soot *chou* are simple, without ulterior motivation. These characters should not be portrayed as being either "glib, fast-talking, or vulgar" (Deng 1986, 233).

"Old *chou* " (*laochou* 老丑) characters are "energetic, warmhearted, [and] humorous" old men (Deng 1986, 234). This subcategory of *chou* includes characters from various social levels. *Chou* of this type wear short white beards.

"Martial *chou* " (*wuchou* 武丑) are characters who combine the martial skills of the marital young *sheng* and the humor of the *chou*. Because these martial characters place emphasis on movement and acrobatic skills, much of the humor of this type of characters is visual rather than language-based.

Dramatic Repertoire and Structure

The playscript supplies the fundamental framework for the dramatic performance by providing theatre artists with dramatic characters, and creating a narrative structure in which these characters can interact. The nature of Sichuan opera performance is greatly affected by the structure of its dramatic literature.

Without the presence of stage scenery and sets, the Chinese audience member relies primarily on the information provided by opera actors to learn about the play's setting and the identities of the stage characters. During the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), the early *xiqu* playwrights

established dramatic conventions to aid the actors in these efforts--conventions which are still used today. When major dramatic characters enter the performance space for the first time, for example, they frequently utter a short passage of poetry, or give a self-introduction, before engaging in dialogue with other characters already in the scene. Through such speech forms, actors can establish the identities of their characters, provide insight into their psychological states, set an overall mood for the scene, and recapitulate dramatic action. Also included in the text of these monologue passages is information about the physical location of the drama. Without the use of a contextualizing stage environment, the Chinese opera actor assumes responsibility for communicating this information to the audience through physical action and vocalization. Thus, *xiqu* playwrights have developed a literary style which can provide actors with the materials to compensate for the lack of dramatic information conveyed by the physical environment of the performance space.

Play Classification

The plays of the Sichuan opera stage depict historical as well as contemporary figures and events. Stories taken from folklore, mythology, history, religion, and from such literary genres as novels have become sources of dramatic material for plays in the repertoire. Given the diversity of source types, the range of dramatic characters presented on the Sichuan opera stage is great: from gods, emperors, and imperial concubines to impoverished Confucian scholars, peasant farmers, and Communist party leaders. The time period covered in these plays is similarly grand. Stories set in the Qin dynasty (221-207 B.C.) as well as those depicting twentieth-century events and personalities can be seen. The plays which constitute

the Sichuan opera dramatic repertoire are classified according to the musical system used to construct the vocal music for performance, and according to their content.

Since the Communist leadership of China established the Drama Reform Committee in the early 1950s, plays which were written prior to 1949--depicting the lives of historical, literary, religious, and mythological figures and enacted using traditional performance techniques and aesthetics--have been officially termed "traditional plays" (*chuantongxi* 传统戏). These plays are not consciously intended to convey a particular political ideology or agenda. Despite this fact, changes in both play content and language have been made since Liberation so that no overt conflict with the CCP position is present.

The majority of traditional plays in the Sichuan opera repertoire came via the five musical systems during the tradition's formative years in the early part of the twentieth century. In 1962, the *Xiqu* Research Office of the Sichuan Province Cultural Bureau published *A listing of Sichuan opera's traditional repertoire* (川剧传统剧目目录 *Chuanju chuantong jumu mulu*), which gave the titles of over fifteen-hundred plays. Plays associated with each of Sichuan opera's five musical systems--*kunqiang*, *gaoqiang*, *huqinqiang*, *tanxi*, and *dengxi*--can be found in this volume.

Prior to uniting to form Sichuan opera, each of the individual musical systems possessed its own dramatic repertoire. Today in Sichuan opera, the dramatic repertoire can still be divided according to musical system. For example, the plays *The Chaste Woman of the Han* (*Han zhen lie* 汉贞烈) and *Spring and Autumn Unite* (*Chun qiu pei* 春秋配) were part of the *gaoqiang* and *tanxi* repertoires, respectively, prior to the establishment of Sichuan opera. Because the *kunqiang* repertoire also

contained the play *The Chaste Woman of the Han*, excerpts from both the *kunqiang* and *gaoqiang* versions of the play can still be seen on the Sichuan stage today. The play *Spring and Autumn Unite*, however, continues to be unique to the *tanxi* repertoire and is never heard performed using another of Sichuan opera's musical systems. Due to the unique aural natures of the five Sichuan opera musical systems, correlations can be found between play content and the type of musical system used in performance.

Gaoqiang is good at expressing undulating, bold and unconstrained tragedies; *tanxi* is good at expressing joyous and lively emotions; *huqin [qiang]* is often used for loud and sonorous, and depressed and gloomy stories; *dengxi* is used to express humorous, witty emotions (Xie 1984, 50).

The *kunqiang* and *gaoqiang* musical systems are direct descendents of two of the "Four Great Musical Systems" (*si da shengqiang* 四大声腔) of the Ming dynasty, *kunshanqiang* and *yi yangqiang*. The traditional plays which these two musical systems bring to the Sichuan opera repertoire are thought to be among the oldest in *xiqu*. These two musical systems developed concurrently, were popular in the same geographical region of China, and both use *qupai* to construct their theatre music. For this reason, considerable duplication of dramatic material can be seen in the two repertoires. Because *gaoqiang* is the most frequently performed musical system in Sichuan opera today, and *kunqiang* the least, when two versions of the same play exist, the *gaoqiang* version is much more likely to be seen onstage.

The traditional repertoires of Sichuan opera's *kunqiang* and *gaoqiang* musical systems are dominated by *chuanqi* (传奇) plays, a playscript form

which developed in southern China during the Ming dynasty. *Chuanqi* plays are multi-scene plays which often contain over fifty individual scenes. Due to their length, a performance of a single play often required several days to complete. In order to accommodate the comings and goings of audience members during the performances, frequent recapitulation of dramatic action through prose speech, as well as reintroductions of dramatic characters through repeated self-introductions, became characteristic literary conventions of the playscript form. Because of these conventions, individual scenes from multi-scene plays could be extracted and used as independent dramatic units, called "zhezixi" (折子戏 lit., "broken-off dramas"). When time limitations prohibited the performance of an entire multi-scene play, a program consisting of selected *zhezixi* from different plays was often presented.

Due to the gradual decline in popularity of *kunqiang* music during the Qing dynasty, only excerpts from full-length *kunqiang* dramas remain in the dramatic repertoire today. *Kunqiang* performances therefore consist only of individual *zhezixi* taken from full-length *chuanqi* dramas. Although the *gaoqiang* repertoire includes a large number of multi-scene plays, programs consisting of individual *zhezixi* are the preferred presentation format in Sichuan opera.

The major works in the *gaoqiang* repertoire are often summarized as the: "Five Robes" (*wu pao* 五袍),¹¹ "Four Laurels" (*si gui* 四桂),¹² "Eighteen River-and-Lake Plays" (*jianghu shiba ben* 江湖十八本),¹³ and the "Four Great Plays" (*si da ben* 四大本).¹⁴ The majority of *gaoqiang* and *kunqiang* plays are romances and comedies, and therefore usually feature young *dan*, young *sheng*, and *chou* characters in the leading roles.

In contrast to the romances and comedies of the *gaoqiang* and *kunqiang* traditional repertoires, the *huqinqiang* musical system brought many historical plays to Sichuan opera. Plays about such figures as the venerable Song dynasty Judge Bao (Bao Gong 包公), the rulers of the Three Kingdoms period, and the women generals of the Yang Family (*Yang jia jiang* 杨家将), dominate the *huqinqiang* repertoire. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Sichuan playwright, Huang Ji'an (黄吉安 1836-1924) wrote over eighty plays for Sichuan opera, the majority of which use *huqinqiang* music. These plays, known collectively as the "Huang Plays" (*Huang ben* 黄本), drew from historical sources as well as from short stories and local folk tales. Because most *huqinqiang* plays focus on court intrigue and politics, dramatic characters from the principal *sheng* and *jing* role categories dominate the repertoire (Chen 1986, 15).

Although a number of plays found within the *tanxi* repertoire are derived from the same sources as *huqinqiang* plays, most *tanxi* plays are depictions of popular folk tales, novels, and romances, and therefore also feature the young *sheng*, young *dan*, and *chou* role categories. Unlike *gaoqiang* and *kunqiang* music which are southern musical traditions, the *tanxi* musical system originated in northern China. Compared to the two southern traditions, *tanxi* music is more straightforward and energetic in nature. When sung using the local language dialect of Sichuan, the music is said to take on a "rich everyday-life flavor, permeated with a strong shading of comedy" (Chen 1983, 22).

The *dengxi* musical system is the only one which is indigenous to Sichuan province, and the one which is most closely tied to local culture and lifestyle. *Dengxi* plays are mostly light-hearted comedies or farces

depicting the conditions of Sichuan's rural labor and farming classes (Hu and Liu 1987, 3). With titles such as *Letting Out the Ox* (*Xiao fang niu* 小放牛), *Giving New Year's Thanks* (*Bai xin nian* 拜新年) and *Old Lady Wang Scolds Her Chickens* (*Wang po ma ji* 王婆骂鸡), the thematic content of *dengxi* plays, and their roots in Sichuan's agrarian culture, are clear. Most *dengxi* plays are one-acts featuring two-to-four characters, with a female rocking *dan* and a male *chou* frequently cast in the leading roles (Sichuan 1987, 538).

The majority of plays in the traditional *kunqiang*, *gaoqiang*, *huqinqiang*, and *tanxi* repertoires are considered "large dramas" (*daxi* 大戏) because of the seriousness of their subject matter, the complexity of their play structures, the use of all four performance skills, and the diversity of role categories represented by their characters. The contrasting simplicity and lightness of *dengxi* plays places these plays in a category known as "small dramas" (*xiaoxi* 小戏).

Among traditional plays, the designations "martial play" (*wuxi* 武戏) and "civil play" (*wenxi* 文戏) are often used. These designations are based on the amount of martial material contained in the play. Martial plays feature those subcategories of dramatic characters which specialize in martial movement and performance skills. Conversely, civil plays feature characters who emphasize the performance skills of speech and song. A designation of martial or civil may be used to refer to an entire full-length drama, or to only a single scene within one. Although a full-length drama may be classified as a martial play because it contains a large number of individual scenes in which stage combat occurs, it may also have an almost equal number of scenes which can be classified as civil. For this reason,

the designation of a play as martial or civil does not indicate an exclusive state, but rather one which is relative.

Other types of play classification used in Sichuan opera include "contemporary drama" (*xiandaiju* 现代剧) and "newly-written historical drama" (*xinbian de lishu ju* 新编的历史剧). Contemporary dramas are those which are set in modern times and which deal with current social and political issues. The costuming and makeup styles for contemporary plays are realistic in nature. Because the costumes lack such features as water sleeves, traditional performance practices and movement stylizations must be modified for use in these plays. The music of contemporary dramas, although rooted in the musical systems of the form, are also subject to considerable innovation and change. Frequently Western instruments such as violins, standing basses, and electric pianos, are added to the melodic orchestra.

Newly-written historical dramas are plays which are set in the historical past, but which do not merely portray the lives of historical figures or events. The types of characters and stories depicted onstage in newly-written historical dramas are as diverse as they are in traditional dramas. The performance practices and aesthetics used in the production of these plays are fundamentally traditional. Innovations in the areas of music, lighting, and stage design, are, however, common.¹⁵ Unlike traditional plays, however, the authorship of most newly-written historical plays is known. In Sichuan opera, the works of playwrights Li Mingzhang (李明璋) and Wei Minglun (魏明伦) are among the most popular, and most respected, in this genre.

Play Structure

Many of the multi-scene plays in the traditional *gaoqiang* repertoire are epic in nature: scenes take place in a variety of different geographical locations and dramatic action sometimes span several years. The plot structure of most multi-scene plays features one dominant storyline which revolves around at least two major characters (usually a man and a woman). One or more secondary plots, however, may also be present. Each scene of the play focuses on one of the storylines which runs through the fabric of the drama.

During a scene only one of the four performance skills functions as the dominant means of dramatic communication for a character at a time. Although other performance skills may also be used by the actor, it is clear that these skills are used to support and complement the dominant one. Frequently onstage when the performance skill of song is being emphasized, for example, passages of stylized movement will also occur as the actor sings. During scenes in which the martial skills dominate, actors often will speak or sing while executing difficult movement passages. No matter the number of performance media occurring at a single moment in the play, it is clear that one performance skill dominates the others.

Not all scenes in a full-length drama are considered to be of equal dramatic or artistic value. Those which are of greatest importance in the play, those which Wichmann terms "focal scenes," can be excerpted for use as part of a program of *zhezixi* selections (1991, 20). These scenes are generally the longest in duration in the play, and are the scenes in which the stage performers are provided with the best opportunities for displaying their performance skills. The audience is provided with enough information at the onset of a scene to allow them to comprehend who the dramatic characters are, where they are located, and what has taken place

up to that point in the drama. The majority of the scene is then devoted to the characters' expression of their thoughts and emotions about the particular circumstances in which they find themselves. Wichmann refers to the internal structure of these focal scenes as "emotional-progression structure" (*cengcixing buju* 层次性布局).

The structure of most one-act plays and of most major scenes in multi-scene plays consists of a series of emotional states, each the reaction of the major character(s) to developments in the basic situation. After presenting as little expositional material as possible through speech and dance-acting, the major part of each one-act play and major scene is devoted to the concentrated display of performance skill in the presentation of these successive states (1991, 20).

Preceding these focal scenes are shorter scenes which serve primarily to move the plot forward so that during the subsequent focal scene, the dramatic characters can once again be given the opportunity to reflect on their condition. A non-focal scene is usually placed at the end of the play to allow the final thoughts of the characters to be expressed, and to allow them to assemble for a final group tableau before the curtain closes.

Language of the Playscript

The language found in Sichuan opera playscripts can be divided into two types: song lyrics (*changci* 唱词) and stage speech (*bai* 白). The nature and structure of song lyrics are dictated by *qupai* form, and will be discussed in Chapter III. Within the category of stage speech three main styles can be found: prose speech, recitation of classical poetry, and conventionalized stage speech.

Prose speech (*taici* 台词) is the least formalized style of stage language and includes the passages of dialogue and monologue which are

uttered between dramatic characters, and to the audience. In the past, and in certain dramatic contexts today, prose speech passages are improvised by the dramatic characters, particularly by the *chou*. Prose speech recapitulates and furthers plot development, and reveals information about the character's psychological and emotional state.

Although the performance skills of song and speech are regarded as being discrete forms of artistic communication within the *xiqu* tradition, aspects of the speech act reveal a high degree of aural similarity between the two mediums. When uttering any of the three forms of stage speech, the *xiqu* actor employs a vocal production style which is similar to that used when performing song passages. The nature of the Chinese language contributes further to the song-like quality of speech passages. Chinese is a tonal language, meaning that each individual word (represented in the writing system by a single written-character) has an assigned speech tone which is essential to oral clarification of word meaning. The number and nature of the speech tones in each Chinese dialect varies, but common to all is the fact that speech tones have specific pitch and directional properties. When Chinese words are uttered using their appropriate speech tones, not only are listeners able to comprehend their meaning, but a distinct musical flavor is created through the juxtaposition of contrasting speech tones. Stage performers interpretively manipulate the innate musical quality of their language by emphasizing and exaggerating differences in word pitch height and direction, while at the same time forming a rhythmic structure through variation in pitch duration. The effect of this manipulation, coupled with the non-naturalistic style of vocal production used to utter speech passages, gives the aural impression of a *capella* song. The degree of song-like quality, however, varies according to

the language form spoken: prose speech being less musical than poetry recitation.

Within the context of the play, dramatic characters can sometimes be heard reciting a passage of classical poetry (*gushi* 古诗). These poetic passages are often taken from works composed between the Han and Yuan dynasties (206 B.C.-1368 A.D.), and are usually works which are familiar to the audience. In a culture known for the richness of its poetic tradition, the number of different poetic forms which have appeared during this fifteen-hundred year period is great. For this reason, the prosodic structure of the poetry passages quoted in *xiqu* plays reveal considerable variation in style.

There are two language styles within the Chinese language: classical (*wenyan* 文言) and vernacular (*baihua* 白话). Classical Chinese is a literary language used in the past to compose passages of poetry and other forms of literature, and in all professional, governmental, and legal documentation. Vernacular Chinese is the language spoken by the people, and the language which is now used for most forms of written documentation and communication in China. Poetry passages appearing in Sichuan opera plays are composed in classical Chinese, while other forms of language such as dialogue and song lyrics appear in the vernacular. This difference adds to the aural individuality of poetry passages, and enables such passages to convey a strong sense of refinement and education when uttered in performance. Poetic quotations can also be the source of humor when comic characters such as the *chou* purposely misquote famous poems.

There are three types of conventionalized speech forms (*chengshi nianbai* 程式念白) found in *xiqu* plays: "prelude poems" (*yinzi* 引子),

"poetry passages" (*shi* 诗), and "self-introductions." Identifiable in each of the three forms are specific internal structures and patterns of application in performance.

In Sichuan opera, a prelude poem is often the first utterance made by a major character upon entering the stage. These poems appear in two forms: small (*xiao yinzi* 小引子) and large (*da yinzi* 大引子), a designation which is based on the overall length of the composition. Small preludes can be either one or two lines long. Although many feature the same number of words per line (i.e., 7 + 7, or 5 + 5), and feature a rhyme scheme based on the speech sound of the final word in each line, these are not requirements of the speech form. Large prelude poems are longer than small ones, usually not exceeding four lines in length.

Prelude poems may be performed strictly as speech passages in the stylized manner described above, or can be performed in a "half-spoken, half-sung" (*ban nian, ban chang* 半念半唱) manner whereby the first line, or lines, of the poem are spoken, and the final line is sung in *a capella*. The two-line prelude poem uttered by the *dan* character Red Maid (Hong Niang 红娘) in the scene "Red Receives a Beating" ("Kao Hong" 拷红), from the play *The Western Chamber* (*Xi xiang ji* 西厢记), is performed in this way.

Example 2.1

Two-Line Prelude Poem From the Scene "Red Receives a Beating"¹⁶

Red Maid:

line 1:

身虽为侍婢,
Shen sui wei shi bi,
 Although oneself only a servant-girl,

line 2:

$\underline{\underline{3}}$ $\overset{2}{\underset{1}{\curvearrowright}}$ $\overset{5}{\underset{1}{\curvearrowright}}$ $\overset{1}{\underset{1}{\curvearrowright}}$ $\underline{\underline{2}}$ $\underline{\underline{1}}$ $\underline{\underline{6}}$ $\underline{\underline{1}}$ $\underline{\underline{5}}$ $\underline{\underline{3}}$ $\underline{\underline{2}}$ — $\underline{\underline{3}}$ $\underline{\underline{1}}$ $\underline{\underline{2}}$ $\underline{\underline{1}}$ $\underline{\underline{6}}$ $\underline{\underline{1}}$ $\underline{\underline{5}}$ $\underline{\underline{5}}$ $\overset{v}{\underline{\underline{6}}}$ —
 却 怜 有 情 (哪) (呵) 人, (哪)
Que lian you qing (na) (a) ren, (na)
 Yet sympathizing with those in love.

In many instances, a short vocal song is heard in place of a prelude poem upon a character's entrance.

Passages of poetry containing seven, five, and sometimes ten words per line are frequently performed by actors immediately after an entrance song or prelude poem, or prior to exiting the performance space. These poetry passages are constructed using a couplet structure, and feature a single rhyme scheme throughout. Termed "entrance poems" (*shangchang shi* 上场诗) and "exit poems" (*xiachang shi* 下场诗) respectively, these poems contain content which is similar to that of prelude poems. When uttered as an entrance poem, the text serves to reveal the emotional state of the character, provide information about the physical setting, and establish a mood for the scene. For this reason, entrance poems are also known as "set-the-scene poems" (*dingchang shi* 定场诗). In the following four-line entrance poem spoken by the young Buddhist nun character in the one-act play *Longing for Laity* (*Si fan* 思凡), the audience learns the identity of the character and her feelings about monastic life.

Example 2.2

Entrance Poem From the One-Act Play *Longing for Laity*

Young Nun:

To become a nun so young is truly pitiable,
 A single meditation lamp accompanies my sleep,
 Time like an arrow urges one's aging,
 Disappointed that youth can never return.¹⁷

When uttered at the end of the scene, poetry passages also serve to reveal psychological information about the dramatic character, particularly their feelings about the situation at hand. The following example of an exit poem is from the scene "The Interrogation" ("Jiewen" 诘问), from the multi-scene play *The Lute* (*Pipa ji* 琵琶记). The young scholar Cai Bojie (蔡伯喈) leaves his wife and elderly parents to go to the capital to take the imperial examinations. After becoming First Graduate, Cai is forced by the Prime Minister to take a position in the capital and wed his daughter, Mistress Niu (牛小姐). In this scene, Mistress Niu finds out why her husband has been melancholy since their marriage, and insists that her father be informed of the situation. In this way, Cai may be allowed to return to his village to visit his family. Cai, however, remains unconvinced that the Prime Minister will allow him to go. He suspects that his father-in-law will assume that he will never return to his government responsibilities or his new wife once he has left the capital. The exit poem conveys both Mistress Niu's hope and Cai Bojie's doubt that the problem can be rectified by telling the Prime Minister.

Example 2.3

Exit Poem From the Scene "The Interrogation"

Mistress Niu:

The snow-hidden egret cannot be seen until it takes flight;
The parrot's presence in the willows is unknown until it speaks.

Cai Bojie:

Learning only today of household matters,
Still afraid Father's thinking will remain unchanged.¹⁸

Whereas prelude poems are often uttered from a position near downstage center, entrance poems are frequently spoken from a seated position upstage within the carpeted area. For this reason, entrance poems are sometimes referred to as "seated-poems" (*zuochang shi* 座场诗). When two or more characters simultaneously enter or exit the scene, a single poetry passage is often shared among the characters. In some cases, a single character recites the opening couplet while the others characters recite the remaining couplet in unison. At other times, the characters will utter the poem in alternation, with each speaking a couplet. The exit poem example above is performed in this way; the *dan* character Mistress Niu speaks the first couplet, while the *sheng* character Cai Bojie utters the second.

The final style of conventionalized speech is the self-introduction. Performed after the prelude poem, poetry passage, or entrance song, the self-introduction passage is written in prose style and begins with the character's announcing of his/her name (*tongming* 通名). Following the name saying, the character provides the audience with information about their background. In the self-introduction passage from the one-act play

Longing for Laity, the young Buddhist nun tells the audience how she came to the temple and what her life has been like there.

Example 2.4

Self-Introduction Speech From the One-Act Play *Longing for Laity*

Young Nun:

This young nun's secular name is "Zhao," her dharma name is "Colored Emptiness." When young, I left home and entered the Law of Splendor Nunnery. Each day I burn incense and chant the name of Buddha, the loneliness is unbearable! Thoughts arise, how miserable a person I am!¹⁹

The length of the self-introduction passage varies, as does the style of language used. Like the costume, makeup, and physical gestures of the character, the vocabulary and syntax of the language used in all forms of stage speech reflect the personality and social stature of the character, which in turn affects the way the character is perceived by the audience. The language used in all forms of stage speech must, therefore, always be in accordance with the role category of the dramatic character and the nature of the dramatic context in which it is used.

In summary, the dramatic narrative constitutes the foundation of Sichuan opera performance. The plot, characters, passages of dialogue, monologue, poetry and song text which are found in the Chinese opera script establish the parameters for the dramatic presentation and provide stage actors with the materials for its construction. Using the four skills of performance and following the aesthetic tenets of the tradition, opera actors bring the dramatic characters to life and enact their stories before the audience. The performance features and characteristics of each dramatic character's role category help actors find the appropriate visual and aural vocabulary to effectively and meaningfully carry out this task.

Supporting and complementing the dramatic efforts of the actor in *gaoqiang* performance, are the helping chorus and percussion orchestra. Chapter III introduces and discusses these two remaining entities in the "helping, striking, and singing performance coalition.

Notes to Chapter II
THE ACTOR IN PERFORMANCE

¹ Before 1949, *xiqu* performances were often held in conjunction with the religious ceremonies conducted by Chinese family units, or clans, in accordance with the the practice of ancestor worship. Religious rites of remembrance were held by living family members at specific yearly intervals. On these occasions, *xiqu* performances were frequently commissioned by the family to both honor and entertain the deceased family members and/or deities of the local temple. Although sponsored by a single clan, these performances were usually open to the entire community. For more information on the role of *xiqu* in religious ritual, see Issei Tanaka's article "Development of Chinese Local Plays in the 17th and 18th centuries," in *Acta Asiatica, Bulletin of the Institute of Eastern Culture*. 1972: 23, pp. 42-62.

² In adjutant plays, only two role categories are thought to have existed: an "adjutant" (*canjun* 参军), who was the recipient of comic abuse (the "butt"), and a "gray hawk" (*canggu* 苍鹗), who was the abuser (the "knave"). For more information on the adjutant play tradition, see William Dolby's *History of Chinese Drama*. London: Paul Elek, 1976.

³ In some categorization systems, a *sheng* subcategory called a "second young *sheng* " (*er xiaosheng* 二小生) is also mentioned. Although little information is available about this subcategory, it appears that the second young *sheng* is similar to the young *sheng* in terms of costume, makeup, and performance stylization. Rather than playing

leading male roles, however, second young *sheng* are usually supporting characters in plays.

⁴ In Sichuan opera, the manipulation of the *zhezi* costume is such an important part of young *sheng* 's performance technique that it has been given the name "zhezi skills" (褶子功). Sichuan opera *zhezi* are made of a silk crepe which is very light and easy to manipulate, and which features two slits running up either side of the costume. The height of these slits is much higher than what is seen in the costumes worn by young *sheng* characters in other *xiqu* traditions such as *kunqu* and Beijing opera. Some of the movement skills performed by the young *sheng* include kicking up of the front and back panels of the *zhezi* and catching them in the mouth, or rapid spinning of the body in place on the stage to force the panels to rise up and float in a position parallel to the floor. Unlike the *zhezi* used in other *xiqu* forms, Sichuan opera *zhezi* do not have the silk sleeve extensions known as "water sleeves" (*shuixiu* 水袖) attached to them. The sleeves of the Sichuan opera young *sheng* costume instead extend over the hands of the actor. Underneath the costume, a round-necked cotton undergarment called a "*xianghan yi* " (香汗衣 lit., "fragrant-perspiration garment") is worn. This undergarment extends several inches beyond the end of the sleeve forming a white cuff. It is the combination of the *zhezi* sleeve itself and the cuff which are manipulated by the actor, not a water sleeve.

⁵ Though most boudoir *dan* characters are the daughters of wealthy families, commonly referred to as "large family boudoir beauties" (*dajia guixiu* 大家闺秀), within the subcategory female characters from lower

class families, but possessing similar traditional virtues, can be found. These young women are referred to as "small family green jades" (*xiaojia biyu* 小家碧玉), and are overall less reserved in personality than the large family boudoir *dan*. Described as being "healthy, unaffected, candid, sprightly, [with a] pure and fresh disposition, vivacious and cute (Yang 1980, 97), the green jade *dan* uses a somewhat larger-stepped, and faster, stage walk than the large family boudoir *dan*. Green jade *dan* are considered less delicate than the large family boudoir *dan* and can at times be slightly coquettish (Yang 1980, 98).

⁶ The small home green jade boudoir *dan* is said to mostly use the handkerchief, while the large family boudoir beauty uses the fan (Yang 1980, 98).

⁷ In Chinese mythology, the fox is perceived as being a cunning animal possessing magical powers. It is said that when a fox turns fifty years of age it can turn itself into a woman, and at one hundred years of age, into a young girl. If the fox lives to be a thousand, it can become a "celestial fox." Many stories are told in China of foxes who come in female form to seduce young scholars. After each romantic encounter, the young man becomes physically weaker as the fox absorbs from him an "essence of immortality" (Eberhard 1991, 117).

⁸ In Sichuan opera, ugly *dan* are usually played by actor's specializing in male *chou* roles. For this reason, in some methods of role category classification this subcategory is listed under the *chou* role category rather than *dan*.

9 This makeup style is also referred to as "two cakes" (*er bing bing* 二饼饼) because of the two circles it forms below the eyes. For this reason, the cat *hualian* is also sometimes called a "two-cakes *hualian*" (*er bing bing hualian* 二饼饼化脸) (Hu 1987, 127)

10 The Chinese written-character "小" (*xiao*) can be translated into English as either "young" or "small."

11 The Five Robes are:

1. *The Blue Robe* (*Qing pao ji* 青袍记), also known as *The Hall of Five Fortunes* (*Wu fu tang* 五福堂)
2. *The Yellow Robe* (*Huang pao ji* 黄袍记), also known as *The Buddhist Scroll* (*Foer juan* 佛儿卷)
3. *The White Robe* (*Bai pao ji* 白袍记)
4. *The Red Robe* (*Hong pao ji* 红袍记), also known as *The White Rabbit* (*Bai tu ji* 白兔记)
5. *The Green Robe* (*Lü pao ji* 绿袍记 or *Lü pao xiang* 绿袍相), also known as *Beating Spring Peach* (*Kao Chuntao* 拷春桃)

12 The Four Laurels are:

1. *The Sky-Touching Laurel* (*Peng tian gui* 碰天桂)
2. *The Crystal Laurel* (*Shui jing gui* 水晶桂)
3. *The Nine Dragon Laurel* (*Jiu long gui* 九龙桂)
4. *Five Rows of Laurels* (*Wu hang gui* 五行桂)

13 The term "jianghu," which literally translates as "rivers and lakes," is also a term meaning "itinerant entertainers." The eighteen plays in this category are:

1. *The Secluded Chamber* (*You gui ji* 幽闺记), also known as *Moon Prayer* (*Bai yue ji* 拜月记)
2. *The Colored Building* (*Cai lou ji* 彩楼记)
3. *The Thorn Hairpin* (*Jing chai ji* 荆钗记), also known as *The Wooden Hairpin* (*Mu jing chai* 木荆钗)
4. *The Jade Hairpin* (*Yu zan ji* 玉簪记)
5. *The White Silk Handkerchief* (*Bai luopa* 白罗帕)
6. *The White Flower Pavilion* (*Bai hua ting* 白花亭)
7. *The Sunflower Well* (*Kuihua jing* 葵花井)
8. *Releasing White Snake* (*Fang bai she* 放白蛇), also known as *The Luan Hairpin* (*Luan chai ji* 鸾钗记)
9. *The White Parrot* (*Bai yingwu* 白鹦鹉)
10. *Three Filial Pieties* (*San xiao ji* 三孝记)
11. *In the Shade of the Scholartree* (*Huai yin ji* 槐荫记), also known as *The Rising Staircase* (*Shang tian ti* 上天梯)
12. *Topping the Three Examinations* (*Zhong san yuan* 中三元)
13. *Assembling the Old City* (*Ju gu cheng* 聚古城)
14. *The Iron Crown Map* (*Tie guan tu* 铁冠图)
15. *All Three Loyalties* (*Quan san jie* 全三节)
16. *The Chaste Woman of the Han* (*Han zhen lie* 汉贞烈)
17. *The Fragrance of the Five Laurels* (*Wu gui lian fang* 五桂联芳)
18. *Through Five Gates in the Snow* (*Wu guan zou xue* 五关走雪)

14 The Four Great Plays are:

1. *The Golden Seal* (*Huangjin yin* 黄金印)
2. *The Lute* (*Pipa ji* 琵琶记)
3. *The Red Plum* (*Hong mei ji* 红梅记)
4. *Ban Chao* (班超)

15 In productions of newly-written historical plays using *gaoqiang* music, the addition of melodic accompaniment for passages of song is a frequently seen musical innovation.

16 In cipher notation (*jianpu* 简谱), the Arabic numerals one through seven are used to represent the seven pitch degrees found in an octave (i.e., 1 = *do*, 2 = *re*, etc.). A zero is issued to indicate silence. When pitches located in the octaves above and below the base octave are present in a song, their relative positions to the base octave are indicated by placing one or more dots above or below the pitch degree. A 2 pitch (*re*) located in the octave immediately below the base octave, for example, would be written 2̣, while one which is located two octaves above would be 2̇. In cipher percussion notation, written-characters representing specific combinations of instrument soundings are used in place of Arabic numerals.

Time value in cipher notation is indicated by the number of lines placed beneath the pitch degree. Each line placed beneath a pitch cuts its duration in half. In a passage of 4/4 meter music, for example, a pitch with no lines beneath it is a quarter note where one with two lines beneath it is a sixteenth note. Dotted figures are indicated by the presence of a small dot placed immediately after the note whose time length is being extended.

Vertical lines are used in cipher notation to delineate metrical structure. When a passage of music contains no vertical lines, as in Example 2.1, the music can be understood to be in "free meter" (i.e., with no prescribed arrangement of accented- and unaccented-beats).

17 The Chinese and romanized text is as follows:

自幼为尼实可怜,	<i>Zi you wei ni shi ke lian,</i>
禅灯一盏伴奴眠,	<i>Chan deng yi zhan ban nu mian,</i>
光阴似箭催人老,	<i>Guang yin si jian cui ren lao,</i>
辜负青春去不还.	<i>Gu fu qing chun qu bu huan.</i>

18 The Chinese and romanized text is as follows:

雪隐鹭鸶飞始见,	<i>Xue yin lu si fei shi jian,</i>
柳藏鹦鹉语方知,	<i>Liu cang ying wu yu fang zhi,</i>
而今识破家中事,	<i>Er jin shi po jia zhong shi,</i>
犹恐伊父念不移.	<i>You kong yi fu nian bu yi.</i>

19 The Chinese and romanized text is as follows:

小尼俗家姓赵, 法名色空.
自幼在法华庵内出家,
每日烧香念佛, 寂寞不堪,
思想起来, 好不凄凉人也!

*Xiao ni su jia xing Zhao, Fa ming Se Kong.
Zi you zai fa hua nei chu jia,
Mei ri shao xiang nian fo, Ji mo bu kan,
Si xiang qi lai, Hao bu qi liang ren ye!*

CHAPTER III
THE OFFSTAGE PERFORMERS:
THE PERCUSSION ORCHESTRA AND HELPING CHORUS

Each time a Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* performance takes place, the dramatic presentation is created through the collective efforts of the stage actor, the helping chorus, and an ensemble of percussion musicians. The helping chorus and percussion orchestra are both stationary performing entities who contribute to the performance solely through aural means. Their primary function in performance is to support the efforts of the actor onstage. The amount and style of performance participation by the helping chorus and percussion orchestra is dictated by the demands of the dramatic script and structural features of the *qupai* used to create the vocal score.

The Percussion Orchestra

Participants and Placement in Performance

Until the 1940s, performances of Sichuan opera were often held on the permanent stages attached to the sides of temples and guild halls. Termed "ten-thousand year stages" (*wanniantai* 万年台), these raised performance spaces were thrust in design and usually protected from the elements by a roof. An audience member observing an opera performance stood either in the open area in front of the stage's three exposed sides, or was seated in the covered seating areas which lay beyond the open space in front of the stage. On the stage itself, a wooden partition called a "three-stars wall"¹ (*sarxingbi* 三星壁) was located in the upstage area, serving

to separate the backstage dressing area from the performance space. The actors entered the playing space by walking around the stageright side of the wall. Following their performances, the actors exited upstage left through an opening around the stageleft side of the partition.² In the past the Sichuan opera percussion orchestra was positioned in front of this partition, between the two pathways and in full view of the audience.

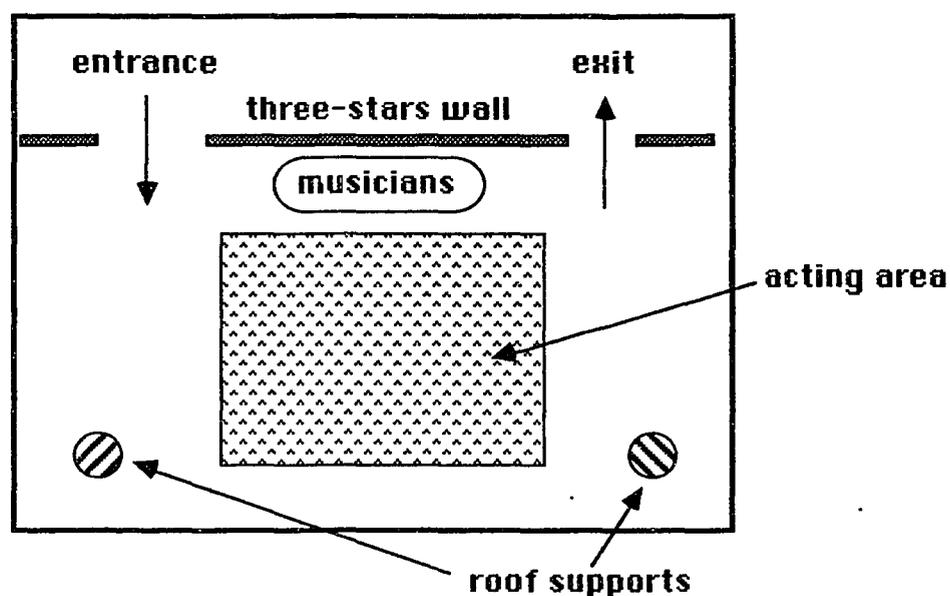


Figure 3.1

Sichuan Opera Performance Configuration on a Ten-Thousand Year Stage

In modern proscenium theatres where the majority of Sichuan opera performances now take place, fundamental changes in the performance space configuration can be seen. Although actors continue to enter the stage from upstage right and exit from upstage left, they now do so through the openings between the curtain legs which mask the stageright and stageleft wing spaces of the theatre. The three-stars wall is no longer present, having been replaced by an upstage curtain or cyclorama. The

positioning of the percussion orchestra in performance has also undergone fundamental changes. In today's performances, the musicians perform from a position just off stageleft or stageright in the wings. Although still able to view the actors onstage, they are no longer themselves visible to the audience.

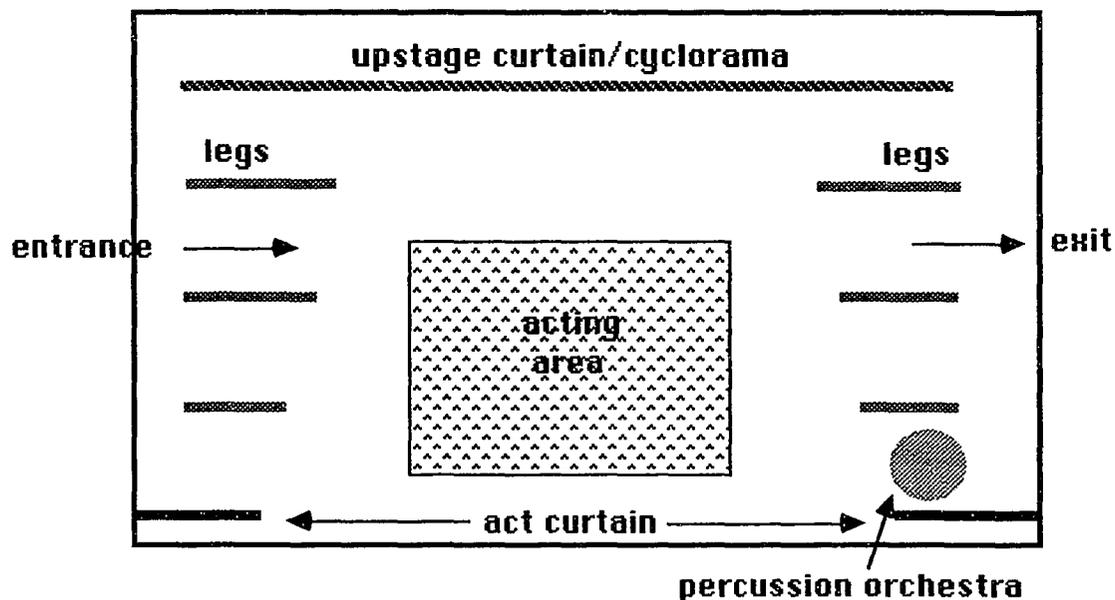


Figure 3.2

Sichuan Opera *Gaoqiang* Performance Configuration on a Proscenium Stage When Percussion Orchestra is Positioned Stageleft

Orchestra Instrumentation

One of the characteristic features of Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* music is its non-reliance on wind and string instruments (*bu tuo guan xian* 不托管弦) for use as melodic accompaniment during vocal performance. Although in recent years both string and wind instruments are sometimes added to the musical ensemble for productions of newly-written *gaoqiang*

plays, or updated versions of traditional ones, the vast majority of plays still continue to be performed with only percussion accompaniment.

There are five musicians in the Sichuan opera percussion ensemble (*dajiyuedui* 打击乐队 or *yingchangmian* 硬场面 lit., "hard scene"). The leader of the ensemble is called the "*gushi*" (鼓师 lit., "drum-teacher"), and the remaining four musicians are collectively referred to as the "assistants" (*xiashou* 下手) (Rao 1981, 22). During performances of *gaoqiang* plays, the musicians in the percussion ensemble play a total of eight percussion instruments between them.

Simultaneously playing two percussion instruments, the small drum (*xiaogu* 小鼓) and the wooden-clapper (*ban* 板), the *gushi* leads the percussion ensemble in the playing of percussion music, and bears the sole responsibility for making sure that the activities of the actor, helping chorus, and percussion ensemble are in complete synchronization with one another. The position of *gushi* is highly regarded in all forms of *xiqu*, but particularly so in Sichuan opera. Given the number of different musical systems in the form, each with its own unique dramatic repertoire and performance practices, the Sichuan opera *gushi* must absorb a tremendous amount of information during his³ training period, and be able to bring it forth at a moment's notice during a performance.

To be a good *gushi* is not easy. [One] must remember a broad range of things: more than two hundred percussion patterns, over three hundred *gaoqiang qupai*, one or two hundred *suona* tunes, more than ten *dizi* melodies, more than one hundred *kunqiang* tunes, as well as the changes in the melodies and metrical types of the various musical systems. . . . All these things must be mastered (Rao 1981, 23).

In the Sichuan opera world, the *gushi*'s comprehensive knowledge of the tradition is unmatched. Upon examination of the numerous

publications on Sichuan opera music which have appeared during the last thirty-five years, the importance of the *gushi* in Sichuan opera is apparent. In addition to authoring a number of texts themselves, Sichuan opera *gushi* are also the primary sources of information on the tradition for scholars studying the form. When transcriptions of passages of vocal music are provided in published works, most are versions credited to particular *gushi*, and not to Sichuan opera actors. In other words, within the Sichuan opera tradition, it is the *gushi* who possesses the most knowledge of the musical structure form--not the stage actor.

The role of the Sichuan opera *gushi* as expert can be more clearly understood if one remembers that each of the five musical systems in Sichuan opera has a different dramatic repertoire which emphasizes different role categories. *Gaoqiang* plays, for example, which feature romance and comedy focus on the "three small" role categories (i.e., young *sheng*, young *dan*, and *chou*). The historical dramas in *huqinqiang* style, on the other hand, feature painted-face and old *sheng* roles. Because Sichuan opera actors only perform in some of the total repertoire of the form, their knowledge is considerably more narrow than that of the *gushi* who must lead performances of each of the five musical systems. The extreme difficulty of the *gushi*'s job has led some in the tradition to remark that, "An actor can be produced in three years, but even in ten years it is difficult to produce a drummer" (三年能出一个演员, 十年难出一个鼓佬) (Zhongguo 1989, 48).

Formerly prospective *gushi* underwent years of training as apprentices under professional musicians attached to opera companies in order to gain the necessary musical knowledge and expertise. This system of apprenticeship still continues today in the Sichuan countryside and in

smaller urban centers around the province. Now also many young musicians train at established opera schools, such as the Sichuan Province Sichuan Opera School (四川省川剧学校 *Sichuan shen chuanju xuexiao*) in Chengdu.

The Sichuan opera . . . [*gushi*] were not training [school] cultivated. In the past all were taught orally by teachers (in a disciple-style), without any organized written materials. Training . . . qualified [*gushi*] within a Sichuan opera arts curriculum is a new task (Zuo 1985, 54).

Unlike conductors in Western symphonic music who primarily communicate with their musicians through gestures of the baton and hand, the Sichuan opera *gushi* communicates with the actors, the helping chorus, and other percussion musicians through aural as well as visual means. In performance, the helping chorus is seated immediately upstage of the percussion orchestra. The *gushi* relays information to the helping chorus and his fellow musicians by either striking the surface of the small drum with a pair of wooden beaters, or by periodically sounding a pair of wooden-clappers. Both the physical actions of the *gushi* playing his instruments and the sounds produced by these actions, tell the percussion orchestra and helping chorus what is about to occur. The actors onstage, however, are unable to see the hand movements of the *gushi*, and therefore must rely solely on the sounds of the instruments for direction.

On both the ten-thousand year stages of the past and in today's proscenium theatres, the percussion musicians play their music while seated in a semi-circle configuration with the *gushi* assuming the central position. Although the position of the *gushi* may at times be slightly forward of the other percussion musicians in the ensemble, and the exact seating arrangement of the remaining percussion musicians on either side

of the *gushi* may vary from performance to performance, the *gushi*'s position as the central figure of the ensemble never changes..

Whether in full view of the audience or hidden offstage, the percussion musicians always sit facing the direction of the performance space. In proscenium theatres, the helping chorus forms another semi-circle which is just upstage of the percussion musicians. Dependent on the *gushi* for musical leadership in performance, the helping chorus sits facing downstage towards the percussion orchestra, rather than towards the carpeted performance area onstage.

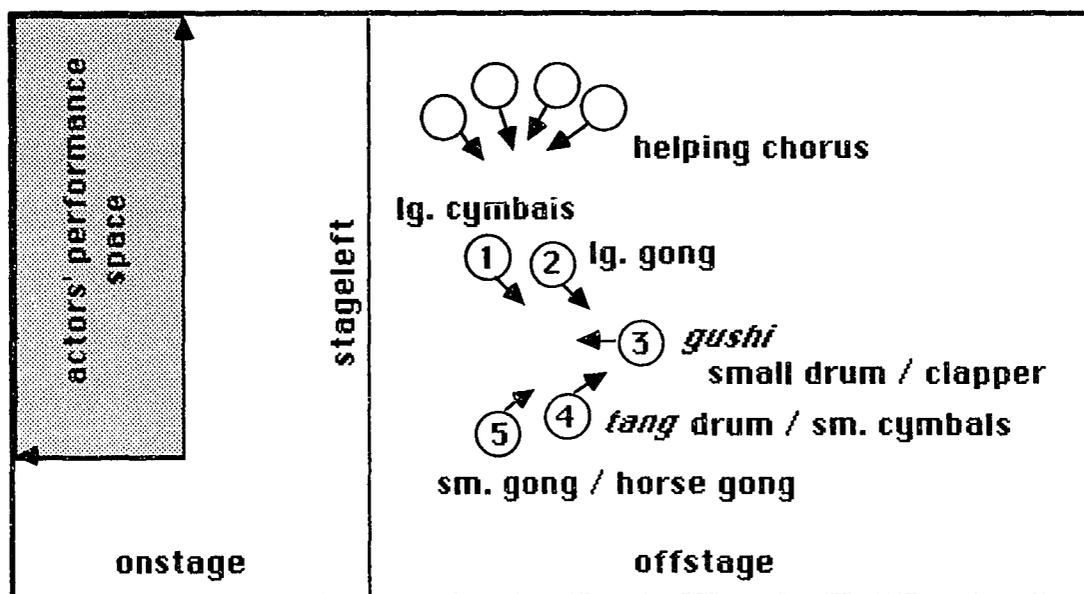


Figure 3.3

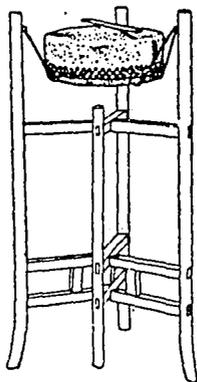
Typical Seating Configuration on a Proscenium Stage When the *Gaoqiang* Percussion Orchestra and Helping Chorus are Positioned Stageleft

In the following pages, descriptions of the various instruments found in the Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* percussion ensemble are given. Whenever possible a drawing of the instrument is provided.

The small drum played by the *gushi* is constructed of hardwood, and is approximately three inches thick around the edge and thirty-five centimeters in diameter. The drum is played resting atop a tripod wooden frame positioned directly in front of the seated musician.⁴ The height of the frame should be such that the surface of the drum is level with the top of the *gushi*'s thigh (Wang 1986, 37). The playing surface is convex in shape and covered with either pigskin or cowhide. Beneath this outer skin there is an opening in the wood which is approximately six centimeters in diameter, called the "drum heart" (*guxin* 鼓心). The area surrounding this opening is referred to as the "side of the heart" (*bianxin* 边心). The *gushi* strikes the drum surface using one or two unpadded bamboo beaters (*qian* 筴) which resemble a pair of chopsticks in shape. The musician strikes the drum's surface either in its center, or somewhere along the drum's edge. The sound produced by the small drum is described as "clear and melodious, loud and bright" (Hu, Liu and Fu 1987, 24).

Illustration 3.1

Small Drum

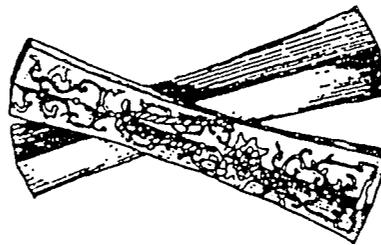


The wooden-clapper is called "*ban*" (板), "*paiban*" (拍板 lit., "beat [on the] accented-beat"), or "*tishou*" (提手 lit., "raise [the] hand"). In addition to being the name of a musical instrument, the Chinese term "*ban*" also refers to the accented beats found in a measure of music. In a 2/4 (two beats per measure) or 4/4 (four beats per measure) metrical structure, the initial beat in each measure is considered to be the strongest. They are the accented beats. One function of the wooden-clapper during passages of *gaoqiang* actor music is to articulate the accented beats in each measure of music.

The wooden-clapper is approximately ten inches long and made of three pieces of hard wood--two thin and one thick--which are held loosely together by pieces of cotton chord and string. The *ban* is normally held in the left hand of the *gushi* when played, and is sounded by swinging the instrument so that two of the wooden pieces (one thick and one thin) strike against the surface of the third which is held firmly in the palm-area

of the left hand. This instrument can be played either in conjunction with the small drum, or by itself.

Illustration 3.2
Wooden-Clapper



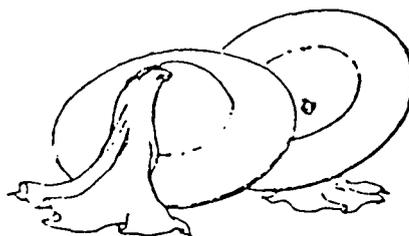
A musician playing the large gong (*dalu* 大锣) is seated to the immediate right of the *gushi*. The Sichuan opera large gong is brass, approximately one foot in diameter, and able to create a sound which is described as "grand and bright, thick and uncouth" (Zhongguo 1989, 48). The surface of the large gong is slightly convex with a flattened area in its center called the "gong heart" (*luoxin* 锣心). The instrument is played suspended on a wooden frame with the center facing towards the right--away from the *gushi*. The large gong hangs at a height which allows the gong heart to be even with the nose of the seated musician. The large gong player plays the instrument using a long narrow beater with a flat, rounded end (*chui* 槌 or 锤). He strikes the surface of the gong either in its center, or along its edge, frequently using his left hand to dampen the sound afterwards.

The musician seated to the right of the large gong player plays the large cymbals (*dabo* 大钹 or 大钵). The large cymbals are approximately one foot in diameter. They are round, flat pieces of brass which have

semispherical protrusions in their center covering half of their entire surface area. In the center of each half sphere is a small hole through which a strip of cotton cloth is threaded and knotted. The musician plays the cymbals by wrapping these pieces of cloth around his hands and bringing the two halves together.

Illustration 3.3

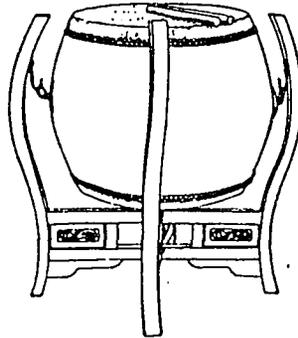
Large Cymbals



Seated to the left of the *gushi* is the musician who plays the *tang* drum (*tanggu* 堂鼓 lit., "hall drum"), and a pair of small cymbals called "*jiaozi*" (饺子). The *tang* drum is a double-headed barrel drum made of wood. It is approximately two feet in height and is played supported on a four-legged wooden frame which raises the drum's surface to a position level with the heart of the seated musician (Qian 1979, 3). The musician plays the *tang* drum while seated, using two unpadded beaters similar to those used for the small drum.

Illustration 3.4

***Tang* Drum**



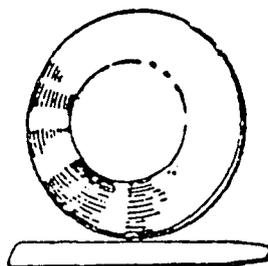
When not playing the *tang* drum, the musician plays a pair of small cymbals. These cymbals are similar in design to the large cymbals, but only approximately seven inches in diameter.

Second in importance to the *gushi* in the percussion ensemble is the musician seated to the left of the *tang* drum player. This musician plays both the small gong (*xiaoluo* 小锣) and the horse gong (*maluo* 马锣). His importance in the ensemble is due to the fact that, next to the small drum and the wooden-clapper, the small gong is the most frequently heard instrument in the ensemble. The musician also bears the additional responsibility of being the person in the ensemble who must help remind the *gushi* of a percussion pattern or performance sequence if he happens to forget.

Though similar in shape to the large gong, the Sichuan opera small gong is approximately half its size. Its sound is described as "bright, clear, and melodious" (Zhongguo 1989, 48). The small gong is played by supporting the the gong's narrow edge with the tips of the fingers, and then striking the gong's center with a flat, wide wooden beater.

Illustration 3.5

Small Gong



The horse gong is not only the smallest instrument in the percussion ensemble, but also the most unusual. Being only ten centimeters in diameter, the horse gong can be played while resting in the palm of the musician's hand. The sound which is created by striking the instrument with a thick, round, wooden beater, however, is disproportionate to its size. Described as being "high-pitched, piercing and penetrating, with powerful strength," the sound of the horse gong cuts through all others in the ensemble (Zhongguo 1989, 48).

The horse gong is the highest pitched instrument in the ensemble, and possesses unique tonal properties which allow it to immediately affect the nature of the Sichuan opera performance when played. Wang Guofu, one of Sichuan opera's most respected *gushi*, is quoted as saying:

. . . [The horse gong's] timbre is so peculiar, that all the percussion [orchestra needs] to have is for [the sound of] it to appear, and the atmosphere of the drama will immediately become tense. This is why artists call it the "guts" of the percussion orchestra (Rao 1981, 23).

Functions of Percussion Music in Performance

Percussion music in Sichuan opera contributes to the performance in several different ways. First, it provides a rhythmic framework, and establishes a performance tempo for passages of song, speech, stylized movement/acting, and combat. Second, percussion music can add dramatic emphasis. When a dramatic character hears shocking information, for example, a single, simultaneous sounding of several percussion instruments helps to heighten the feeling of surprise. Third, when percussion music accompanies the opening and closing of the act curtain at the beginning and end of the play, or between acts, it serves to delineate play structure. This music signals audience members to take their seats at the beginning of the play, or after intermission. Finally, percussion music can establish dramatic atmosphere either through direct imitation of reality, or through dramatic suggestion. Percussion instruments are commonly used, for example, to imitate the sounds of wind blowing, or a boat being rowed through water. A passage of fast-tempoed percussion music, on the other hand, played preceding the entrance of a character, establishes a sense of urgency and excitement about the upcoming stage action without attempting to reproduce any natural phenomena.

Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* performance, like most types of *xiqu*, can be described as multidimensional. At any given moment in the performance, the audience can concurrently observe two or more discrete mediums of artistic communication occurring. As actors speak their lines, or sing their songs, they also gesture or move about the stage. Further, these physical and aural displays, are accompanied by the sounds of percussion accompaniment and the vocalizations of the helping chorus. The

percussion orchestra, led by the *gushi*, is responsible for coordinating these various performance elements to create a cohesive and effective dramatic presentation.

Sichuan opera *gushi* are more than just [musical] conductors, [they] are also [stage] directors. The drumsticks they hold in their hands not only direct the orchestra, [but] more importantly direct the tempo of the entire play--giving expression to the actions of each role category (including [both] outward and inward) rhythm. Therefore, [*gushi*] pay attention to how a play is accompanied, how the dramatic characters are accompanied, how emotions are accompanied, delineating the plot divisions with meticulous care and artistry (Hou, et.al. 1982, 74).

The importance of percussion music to Sichuan opera practitioners is reflected in their descriptions of *gaoqiang* performance as consisting of "a half stage of percussion, [and] a half stage of drama" (*bantai lougu bantai xi* 半台锣鼓半台戏), or being "three parts singing, [and] seven parts striking" (*sanfen chang, qifen da* 三分唱, 七分打) (Rao 1981, 22).

Percussion Patterns and Notation

Sichuan opera actors use both physical and aural vocabularies to create their stage characters and convey the play's story to the audience. To accommodate the wide range of dramatic possibilities and conditions which may arise in the context of a play, a large pool of percussion music material exists. Similar to the *qupai* used in the *gaoqiang* and *kunqiang* musical systems, Sichuan opera percussion music is organized into individual titled units, or patterns, of percussion music called "*luogu paizi*" (锣鼓牌子 lit., "gong-and-drum labels"). In Sichuan opera, there are approximately two hundred percussion patterns. These patterns range in length from a single measure of music to up to twenty or more measures.

Many patterns have sections which can be repeated by musicians as long as the stage action requires. Percussion patterns can be used independently, or as part of a series of patterns. Like *gaoqiang qupai*, each percussion pattern has a unique appellation by which it is called, and an associated dramatic application. The identity of percussion patterns are also based on the nature of their internal structures in a manner similar to *qupai*. This structure is dual in nature, consisting of a musical structure which sets the rhythmic form of the pattern and its performance tempo, and an instrumentation organization which not only mandates which percussion instruments are to be played, but also when. The form of cipher notation which is used to transcribe Sichuan opera percussion music must, therefore, indicate not only the rhythmic structure of the pattern, but also its instrumentation.

The percussion pattern "er hui tou " ("二回头") is composed in 2/4 metrical structure and is performed at a moderate tempo. Only four measures in length, it accompanies passages of song, as well as non-martial movement sequences (Huang and Hu 1980, 124). This pattern is played by the small drum, wooden-clapper, large gong, large cymbals, small cymbals, and the small gong. Both the rhythmic structure and instrumentation of "er hui tou " are reflected in the percussion notation below.⁵

Example 3.1

Percussion Pattern "Er Hui Tou"⁶

1	2	3	4
$\frac{2}{4}$	课 课打打打	壮 乃 丑 乃 乃 丑	乃 丑 乃 次 丑 乃 壮

In this style of percussion notation, each Chinese written-character represents the sounding of one, or more, percussion instruments. The written-character "课" (*ke*) in measure one, for example, indicates that only the wooden-clapper is to be played. The first written-character in measure two: "壮" (*zhuang* [in Mandarin: *zhuang*]), tells the musicians that several different instruments are to be sounded together on this beat: the large gong, large cymbals, small cymbals, small gong, and the small drum. Some percussion symbols not only indicate which instrument is to be played, but also how. The written-character "打" (*da*) which follows "课" in measure one, represents the sounding of the small drum. It also indicates that the drum should be struck with the right beater. A strike using the left beater would be indicated by the written-character "把" (*ba*). A summary of the percussion notation symbols used in Sichuan opera is provided below.

Table 3.1

Sichuan Opera Percussion Notation Symbols

instrument name	written-character notation symbol	romanization in Sichuan dialect	description of action
Solo Soundings:			
small drum	打	<i>da</i>	one firm beat with the right beater
	把	<i>ba</i>	one firm beat with the left beater
	耳 or 尔	<i>er</i>	successive beats with one beater
	不耳 or 不尔	<i>buer</i>	short succession of beats with alternating beaters
	罢	<i>ba</i>	one firm simultaneous beat with both beaters
	那打	<i>nada</i>	one firm beat of each beater in succession (left, right)
wooden-clapper	课	<i>ke</i>	sounded alone
small gong	乃	<i>nai</i>	one beat to the center
	胎 or 太	<i>tai</i>	one firm beat to the center
	林 or 另	<i>nin</i> or <i>ning</i>	one light beat to the center
small cymbals	次 or 尺	<i>ci</i>	one sounding
horse gong	冷 or 弄	<i>nen</i> or <i>nong</i>	sounded alone
large gong	当	<i>dang</i>	one beat to the center
	仓, 弹, or 广	<i>cang, tan, or guang</i>	one beat along the edge

Table 3.1 (Continued)

Sichuan Opera Percussion Notation Symbols

instrument name	written-character notation symbol	romanization in Sichuan dialect	description of action
large cymbals	丑	<i>cou</i>	sounded alone
<i>tang</i> drum	共 or 工	<i>gong</i>	one beat to the center
	龙	<i>nong</i>	one light, quick beat to the center
	冬	<i>dong</i>	one beat along the edge
Group Soundings:			
gongs and cymbals	壮	<i>zhuang</i>	the large gong and large cymbals (and sometimes the <i>tang</i> drum) are sounded simultaneously, or with the small gong and cymbals
sm. gong and sm. cymbals	才 or 钹	<i>cai</i>	sounded simultaneously
sm. gong, large cymbals, and sm. cymbals	猜 or 差	<i>cai</i>	sounded simultaneously

The use of written-characters rather than musical notes in cipher percussion notation not only allows Sichuan opera practitioners to see how and when the various instruments are sounded in a particular pattern, but also creates a language of drum syllables. During the study and rehearsal periods which precede a performance, it is common to hear stage performers articulating aloud the drum syllables of a particular percussion pattern as actors rehearse their movement sequences. The percussion pattern "er hui tou " could be expressed orally by speaking the speech-sounds of the written-characters aloud in the rhythm structure indicated in the notation.

Example 3.2

Romanization of the Percussion Syllables of the Pattern "Er Hui Tou " in Sichuan Dialect

$\frac{2}{4}$	课	<u>课打打打</u>	壮	乃	<u>丑</u>	乃	乃	<u>丑</u>	乃	丑	乃	次	丑	乃	壮	
	<i>ke</i>	<i>ke da da da</i>	<i>zhuang</i>	<i>nai</i>	<i>chou</i>	<i>nai</i>	<i>nai</i>	<i>chou</i>	<i>nai</i>	<i>chou</i>	<i>nai</i>	<i>ci</i>	<i>chou</i>	<i>nai</i>	<i>zhuang</i>	

Martial and Civil Percussion Classification

In Sichuan opera, percussion instruments are recognized for their tonal properties, as well as for their timbres. Although some music scholars claim that percussion instruments are tuned to produce specific pitches, most agree only that a tonal relationship exists among the various instruments in the Sichuan opera percussion ensemble (Sichuan 1987, 557). The large gong and *tang* drum, for example, are thought to produce approximately the same pitch. The small gong is said to be approximately a fifth higher in pitch than the large gong, and the horse gong an octave higher. The large cymbals should produce a pitch slightly higher than the large gong (557).

The acoustical properties of the percussion instruments not only affect whether they are appropriate for use in a particular percussion pattern, but also where in the rhythmic structure of the percussion pattern they should be sounded:

Each [percussion instrument] also has [its own] unique acoustical properties. The sounds of the large gong and the *tang* drum have calming effects, so in percussion patterns [they] are usually used on the accented, concluding beats. The sound of the cymbals has an unstable effect. It usually appears on the off or weak beats. The small gong and the horse gong have leading sounds (leading sound here meaning in the sense of guiding along). The small gong or the horse gong always lead at the beginning of percussion [patterns] or when changing percussion patterns (Sichuan 1987, 557-558)

Based on their acoustical features, certain instruments are perceived as being better suited for some types of performance contexts than others. To facilitate the organization process for performance, the percussion ensemble has been divided into two sub-ensembles. With the exception of the *gushi*'s percussion instruments which are present in both, the instrumentation, and therefore percussion pattern repertoire, is different for each sub-ensemble. The two sub-ensembles are referred to as the "martial orchestra" (*wuchang* 武场) and the "civil orchestra" (*wenchang* 文场).⁷

In addition to the small drum and wooden-clapper, the instruments which make up the martial orchestra are the large gong, the large cymbals, the *tang* drum, and the horse gong. "Martial percussion music" (*wuda* 武打), is described as being "loud and sonorous, [with a] vigorous and firm tone. . . [and using] complex and powerful rhythms" (Zhongguo 1989, 48). It is most often heard in dramatic scenes where feelings of "power and might, seriousness and gravity, bustle and excitement, magnificence and

resplendence, combat and physical struggle" are being portrayed, as well as during large scale movement sequences, or when the "heightening [of] combat action, tension, gaiety, [and] jubilation" are needed (Zhongguo 1989, 49). Martial percussion music may be used to accompany both male as well as female dramatic characters from both the civil and martial role categories, and in either civil or martial plays. Although martial percussion music is heard more frequently accompanying martial characters, and in plays which are designated as being martial in content, the decision to use a martial pattern is predominantly based on the needs of the dramatic situation at hand.

The difference in instrumentation between the civil and martial orchestras can be seen in the absence of the horse gong, the limited use of the *tang* drum, and the addition of the small gong and small cymbals, in the civil orchestra. In contrast to the intense nature of martial music, the percussion patterns played by the civil orchestra are able to convey "quiet and comfort, peace, tenderness and sorrow" (Zhongguo 1989, 49). Because the dramatic repertoire of the *gaoqiang* musical system features a large number of romances, the civil style of percussion music (*wenda* 文打) is heard more often than the martial in performance.

Related to civil percussion music is the "small percussion" style (*xiaoda* 小打). Using only the small drum, wooden-clapper, small gong and small cymbals, this style of percussion music is described as being "light and delicate, lucid and lively" (Lu 1982, 76). The small percussion style of music is used mostly to accompany the young *dan*, young *sheng*, and *chou*, role categories. Among the three styles of percussion music, only the small percussion style can be used to accompany an entire play.

Plays in which either martial or non-small civil percussion music dominate, must also contain passages of at least one other percussion style.

A summary of the instrumentation used in the three styles of *gaoqiang* percussion music is provided below. The five musicians in the ensemble are identified by the seating position which they occupy in performance (see Figure 3.3). The instruments played by each of the musicians in the martial, civil, and small percussion ensembles are listed under each ensemble name.

	<i>Martial</i>	<i>Civil</i>	<i>Small</i>
musician 1	lg. cymbals	lg. cymbals	—
musician 2	lg. gong	lg. gong	—
musician 3	sm. drum/clapper	sm. drum/clapper	sm. drum/clapper
musician 4	<i>tang</i> drum	sm. cymbals	sm. cymbals
musician 5	horse gong	sm. gong	sm. gong

Figure 3.4

Summary of the Instrumentation in the Martial, Civil, and Small Percussion Music Ensembles

The Helping Chorus

Participants and Placement in Performance

The helping chorus is the third performing entity in the "helping, striking, and singing" performance structure of *gaoqiang* music, and arguably Sichuan opera's most unusual and characteristic performance feature. Today from their seated position offstage (just upstage of the percussion orchestra), the helping chorus performs its assigned passages

of *gaoqiang* vocal music. These vocalizations, like those of the stage actor, are given rhythmic support by the percussion orchestra. Until 40 years ago, however, the helping chorus was not a discrete physical entity in *gaoqiang* performance. Before Liberation, the helping chorus and percussion orchestra were one and the same.

The Sichuan opera helping chorus consists of two parts: a chorus leader (*lingqiang* 领腔 lit., "melodic-phrase leader") and a general chorus (*hechang* 合唱 lit., "sing together"). Before Sichuan opera practitioners created a separate helping chorus, independent of the percussion orchestra, the *gushi* functioned as leader of both the percussion orchestra and helping chorus. The four remaining percussion musicians in the orchestra constituted the general chorus.

Today the number of singers in today's Sichuan opera helping chorus generally ranges from two to five, one of whom is the chorus leader, with the remaining constituting a general chorus. The helping chorus is now seated upstage of the percussion orchestra in a semi-circle configuration with the chorus leader seated closest to the onstage performance area.⁸

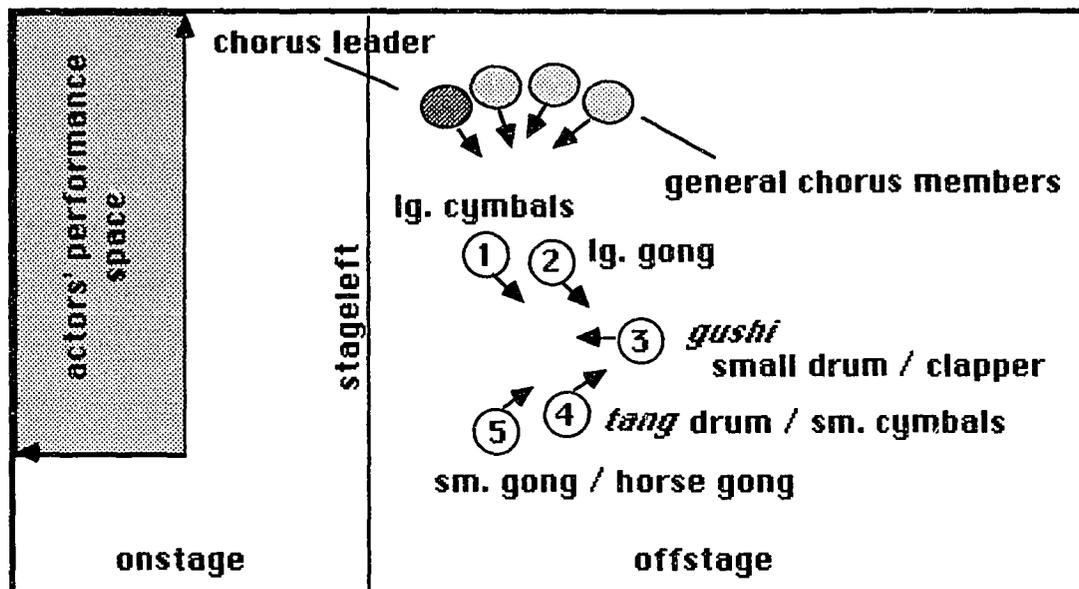


Figure 3.5

Typical Seating Configuration on a Proscenium Stage When the *Gaoqiang* Helping Chorus is Positioned Stageleft

To serve as both the leader of the percussion orchestra and the helping chorus no doubt aided the *gushi* in coordinating the various aspects of *gaoqiang* performance. After Liberation, however, the question of musical quality became an important issue in Sichuan opera. Assembling a group of musicians who sang as well as they played percussion instruments was not always possible. Being asked to listen to a helping chorus made up of unskilled vocalists was thought by some to be more than an audience member could endure.

Because each person's vocal ability was different, [it] naturally led to the appearance of high-low, large-small, light-heavy sounds--extremely un-united and unharmonious. Sometimes the helping chorus' shrill cries were [so] unpleasant . . . [that one] could not continue listening (Xu 1980, 95).

From the late 18th to the early 20th centuries, *xiqu* was a male-dominated theatre tradition. For this reason, it is not difficult to understand why the members of the Sichuan opera helping chorus were men. Given the limited economic resources of many opera troupes, it is also easy to comprehend the financial benefit of having members of the percussion orchestra serve dual musical functions.

Origins of the Female Helping Chorus

In the early years of the Communist regime, reform efforts were undertaken in all aspects of Chinese society to rid the country of its ties to its feudal past. In July of 1950, the Ministry of Culture set up a Drama Reform Committee to lead the way in reforming traditional theatre in China so that *xiqu* could "propagate values appropriate with the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] rather than the traditional attitudes of the feudal period" (Mackerras 1981, 12). During this time, considerable time, energy, and money was devoted to *xiqu* reform. Under such slogans as: "Let a hundred flowers bloom, weed through the old to let the new emerge," the Ministry of Culture carried out nationwide campaigns to bring *xiqu* in line with the accepted political and aesthetic perspectives of its leaders. In accordance with the Central Government Administration Council's 1951 "Directive Concerning Work to Reform *Xiqu* " ("*Guanyu xiqu gaige gongzuo de zhishi*" 关于戏曲改革工作的指示), such organizations as the Council to Improve *Xiqu* and *Quyì* (*Xiqu quyì gāijìn huì* 戏曲曲艺改进会) and the *Xiqu* Workers Committee (*Xiqu gongzuo weiyuanhui* 戏曲工作委员会) were established in southwest China. Soon after the appearance of these committees, Sichuan opera companies begun carrying out a program of theatre reform, following a policy of "three

changes" (*sangai* 三改), (i.e., change the people, change the plays, and change the system *gai ren, gai xi, gai zhi* 改人, 改戏, 改制) (Hu, Liu and Fu 1987, 277).

In addition to these reform efforts, the government sponsored such arts festivals such as the Ministry of Culture's First National *Xiqu* Inspection and Emulation Performances (*Quanguo diyi jie xiqu guanmo yanchu* 全国第一届戏曲观摩演出), in Beijing in fall of 1952. An important aim of these festivals was to build support around the reform movement by awarding artistic prizes, and publicly voicing Party approval, for the work being done by *xiqu* troupes around the country. Initially, the Sichuan opera helping chorus was reevaluated. During the initial phase of this evaluation effort, the helping chorus and percussion orchestra continued to remain the same entity. The primary focus was on improving the overall musical quality of the percussion musicians' vocal performances.

In the early years after Liberation, Sichuan opera began to pay attention to the problem of the helping chorus, [by] demanding [such] minimum standards as clear voices--not hoarse--[and] clear pronunciation. However, theatre companies still used all-male helping choruses . . . no fundamental transformation took place to break up the old pattern (Xu 1981, 95).

It is not clear from the above passage who exactly is being referred to by the term "Sichuan opera" in line one. Given the political climate of the period and the overt intervention of the government in *xiqu* reform efforts, I suspect that "Sichuan opera" includes people other than just practitioners of the form and audience members.

The "fundamental transformation" of Sichuan opera referred to by Xu finally occurred in November of 1952. At that time, a troupe made up of some of Sichuan opera's leading actors and musicians was assembled by the

Mayor of Chengdu, Li Zonglin (李宗林), for the purpose of representing the tradition in the aforementioned Beijing festival. Because it would be the first time for Sichuan opera to perform in the capital since Liberation, considerable time and effort was given to preparing the dramatic presentation.

. . . [The actors] rehearsed ten or so outstanding programs, preparing to leave on the eve of National Day to go to Beijing for the purposes of performing for a gathering of Chairman Mao and other leading central government cadres. Strict standards were set for the playscript, movement/acting, [instrumental] music, vocal music, stage design, etc. One day, after seeing a dress rehearsal of *Shan Bo Calls On A Friend*, Comrade Li Zonglin pointed out that the helping chorus [portion] of the play's *qupai* had the ability to move people [and asked] whether a bold action [might be taken], by changing the helping chorus voices to female (Xu 1980, 95-96).

In the same article on the origins of the all-female helping chorus, Xu goes on to report that when the work was later performed in Beijing using a female helping chorus, it "conquered the audience and gained critical acclaim" (1980, 96).

Due to the perceived success of the Beijing performances, from the 1950s onward all-female helping choruses became a common feature of Sichuan opera companies. Sichuan opera practitioners and critics feel today that the change to female voices improved the overall performance quality of Sichuan opera in two significant ways. First, because of the higher range of the female voice, female helping chorus members are better suited to handle the wide pitch range and high melodic passages that are characteristic of *gaoqiang* music. Secondly, by making the helping chorus a separate performing entity, the primary criteria for the selection of helping chorus singers has become the quality of the singer's voice, and not the singer's ability to master percussion instruments.

As with both Sichuan opera actors and percussion musicians, helping chorus singers must undergo years of intensive training. Although a number of students study helping chorus performance in the opera schools found in the province, many still apprentice with professional helping chorus singers in opera companies.

Descriptions of the performance practices of the Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* actor, helping chorus, and percussion orchestra, have shown that each of the three performing entities makes both an independent, as well as collective, contribution to the creation of the dramatic presentation. Formerly, the helping chorus consisted of members of the percussion ensemble. On ten-thousand year stages, this ensemble was positioned upstage of the actor's performance space, and in full view of the audience. The close physical proximity, and unobstructed sightlines, between the orchestra and actor no doubt aided in efforts to coordinate these three discrete aspects of *gaoqiang* aural performance. Since Liberation, the separation of the helping chorus from the percussion orchestra, and a move to proscenium theatre performance venues, has taken place. Despite these changes, the tripartite performance collective which distinguishes the performance tradition has remained fundamentally unaltered. The physical positioning of the helping chorus and percussion orchestra on either the stageright or stageleft sides of the stage still allows both the independent and group natures of the three entities to come forth in performance.

The principal organizing element behind the coordination of the actor, helping chorus, and percussion orchestra in *gaoqiang* aural performance is the *qupai*. Chapter IV begins to examine *gaoqiang qupai*

with an analysis of the first of three elements which constitute their internal structures: lyric form.

Notes to Chapter III
THE OFFSTAGE PERFORMERS: THE PERCUSSION ORCHESTRA AND
HELPING CHORUS

1 The "three-stars wall" is said to derive its name from the fact that the written-characters meaning "good fortune," "high position and handsome salary," and "longevity" (*fu, lu, shou* 福, 祿, 壽), were painted on its surface (Hu and Liu 1987, 170).

2 The opening through which the actors entered was called the "mounting-the-horse door" (*shangmamen* 上馬門), and the opening through which they exited was termed the "dismounting-the-horse door" (*xiamamen* 下馬門) (Hu and Liu 1987, 170).

3 Sichuan opera *gushi* are almost always men. During my fieldwork in Sichuan (1987-1988), I only encountered one female *gushi*. She was performing with a small Sichuan opera company from the Sichuan countryside.

4 Currently the tripod stand is also made of hardwood; previously however, it was constructed of bamboo (Wang 1986, 37).

5 See Chapter II, Note 16 for an explanation of the salient features of cipher notation.

6 (Huang and Hu 1980, 124).

⁷ In Sichuan opera's other musical systems the term "civil orchestra" (*wenchang*) is used to refer to the melodic orchestra. In *gaoqiang* music, however, this term is used primarily to mean a particular style of percussion music.

⁸ Like the *gushi*, in some *gaoqiang* performances the chorus leader may be seen sitting slightly in front of the other helping chorus members.

CHAPTER IV
GAOQIANG QUPAI LYRIC FORM

Lyric form, performer-assignment structure, and musical structure are the three elements which constitute *gaoqiang qupai*. internal form. When the relationship between these various structural elements is analyzed, a pattern of interdependence and mutual influence can be found. In other words, no single aspect of internal structure occupies a dominant position within the *qupai* form. All aspects contribute to the establishment of each *qupai* 's identity within the repertoire. To fully comprehend the relationship of structural elements, one should first isolate the components which make up each of the three aspects of *qupai* structural form. Once defined, the manner in which these components combine to form the numerous structural configurations of *qupai* can then be investigated.

Comprehending the structural nature of *qupai* first requires that one avoid perceiving *qupai* as songs. *Qupai* are not complete, unalterable musical entities with prescribed lyric forms that when copied, construct identical opera songs. On the contrary, *qupai* in the *gaoqiang* musical system function more like the recipes which a culinary chef follows to create particular food dishes. *Qupai* provide the opera practitioner with a list of ingredients and information on how these ingredients should be assembled. Like food recipes, some *qupai* possess very strict ingredients lists and methods of construction, while others are less specific. In some recipes, a slight variation in ingredient amounts may not alter the outcome of the dish. In others, however, such alteration would have disastrous

effects. Like recipes, *qupai* are not the products themselves, but rather the processes used to create the products.

The ingredients which go into the making of a *gaoqiang qupai* song are the individual components which constitute each of the three aspects of *qupai* internal structure. The way in which these ingredients are combined create what Sichuan opera *gushi*, Qiu Yonghe, calls a "*qupai*'s structural specifications" (*qupai guige* 曲牌规格) (n.d., 22). As indicated in Chapter I, no standardized method of *qupai* structural description exists within the Sichuan opera tradition. For this reason, I have chosen to use Qiu's term "specifications" to refer to the unique arrangement of structural elements within *qupai*. In this study, when information on a particular *qupai*'s structural specifications has been attained from a published source, a citation indicating the source will be provided. Although lacking standardized terminology to describe the unique configuration of structural elements within *gaoqiang qupai* internal form, the idea that each *qupai* is a unique structural entity is present throughout the tradition.

The first aspect of *gaoqiang qupai* internal structure to be analyzed is lyric form. Lyric form in the *gaoqiang* musical system refers to the structuring of the texts which are present in opera songs. The fundamental constituting element of all song texts is language. This chapter begins with a general overview of the characterizing features of the language of the Sichuan opera stage: Sichuan dialect. The linguistic features of this dialect play an important role in the shaping of both the lyric form and musical structure of *gaoqiang qupai*, as well as in the establishment of the Sichuan opera form as a whole. As described earlier, it is primarily the musical system(s) of a *xiqu* form and the language

dialect used in performance which distinguishes individual forms within the tradition. Following this introduction, the elements which constitute *qupai* lyric form will be introduced, and the structural patterns found among the various types of lyric forms, examined.

Sichuan Dialect

Elements of the Language

A Chinese word, as represented by a single Chinese written-character (*zi* 字), is the most fundamental unit in the Chinese language and in Sichuan opera *gaoqiang qupai* lyric form (*cige* 词格 lit., "word style"). Each word has a corresponding speech-sound (*yuyin* 语音) which consists of one syllable (*yinjie* 音节) of spoken language, and it has a unique ideograph, or "written-character," which represents that word in the written language. The ideograph "口," for example, refers to "an opening," and is pronounced with the speech-sound "kou." Although each word has the ability to express individual meaning, words are frequently used in conjunction with one or more words to form compound words. The written-character "出" (pronounced, "chu"), meaning "to go out," when placed immediately before the written-character for "opening," forms a single unit of meaning "exit" (*chukou* 出口). In *gaoqiang qupai* song texts, individual and compound Chinese words, are arranged to form larger units of connected meaning called "lines" (*ju* 句).

Analysis of Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* songs reveals that in addition to meaningful words, a number of meaningless syllables. Termed "voiced-syllables," or "vocables" (*yuqici* 语气词 lit., "tone-[of]-voice words"), these nonsensical syllables (e.g., "na" (哪) and "a" (啊)) are interspersed among

the morphemes in the song text. Their primary function is to aid the vocalist in song articulation and creative expression. For purposes of clarity, in the following discussion of *gaoqiang qupai* lyric form, those textual words which convey linguistic meaning will be referred to as "words," and those which do not, "vocables." Because there are correlations between the placement of vocables in the song text and *qupai* performer-assignment structure, these two subjects will be taken up together in Chapter V.

Gaoqiang qupai lyric form places restrictions on one or more of the following areas of song text structure: (i) the number of words per lyric line, (ii) the division of lyric lines into smaller semantical units, called "dou" (逗 or 读 lit., "pause in reading"), and (iii) the overall length of the song text. Not all *qupai*, however, place restrictions on all three aspects of lyric form. Some lyric form specifications control only one or two aspects, while others none at all. Also variant among *qupai* is the degree of specificity in governing each lyric form component. Some *qupai*, for example, only limit the total number of lyric lines in the song text, but do not stipulate how many words are to be in each lyric line. Other *qupai* mandate the number of words per line for specific lyric lines of song text, or place restrictions on the number of lines which are in certain sections of a song. Controls on the number of words on the other lines of song text, and on the total number of lines in the song composition, however, may not be set. A survey of several hundred *gaoqiang qupai* reveals a great degree of variation in lyric form within the musical system. This variation is manifested in the structure of the song texts themselves, as well as in the degree of control which individual *qupai* lyric forms exert over the various elements constituting these structures.

Speech-Tones

An important feature distinguishing words from vocables in *gaoqiang qupai* song text is the use of designated linguistic speech-tones (*shengdiao* 声调) to pronounce a word's speech-sound. Speech-tones in the Chinese language do not merely emphasize word meaning, they also differentiate between words sharing common speech-sounds:

A tonal language is one in which pitch is used not only as intonation for speech, but also as a syllable-differentiating agent, serving the same distinctive function as vowels or consonants: the relative pitch levels, the contour of pitch movement, and the duration of pitch, may all be phonemically significant. The term 'linguistic [or speech-] tone' refers to these pitch properties of a spoken syllable. (Yung 1989, 82).

In Mandarin, the written-characters "妈" and "马," meaning "mother" and "horse" respectively, are both written in the *pinyin* romanization system as "ma." Even for someone totally unfamiliar with the Chinese written language, it is possible to discern from the visual features of the two written-characters that they are different from one another. But even the native speaker cannot differentiate aurally between the word "ma" meaning "mother" and "ma" meaning "horse" without hearing a speech-tone (or without hearing the word used in its proper context).

Each Chinese speech-tone has an associated pitch level, contour, and duration. In Mandarin, the word "ma" meaning "mother" is pronounced using a speech-tone which is high in pitch, level in direction, and relatively short in duration. On a graded scale from one-to-five, with five being the highest pitch and one being the lowest, the relative duration and pitch of the speech-tone could be charted as "5 5." The word "ma" meaning "horse," in contrast, would be charted as "2 1 4." This tone is also

longer in duration, and quite different in terms of both pitch level and direction. This speech-tone begins on a semi-low pitch, but then moves to an even lower pitch before rising to a semi-high pitch, creating a dipping effect.

The number of speech-tones, as well as their pitch properties, differ among the various Chinese dialects. In Mandarin there are only four speech-tones, whereas in the Cantonese dialect (*Guangdonghua* 广东话 lit., "language [of] Guangdong [Canton]")¹ spoken in southeast China and Hong Kong, there are nine speech-tones. Sichuan dialect (*Sichuanhua* 四川话 lit., "language [of] Sichuan"), is the principal language spoken in Sichuan province. Within the dialect there are a number of regional variations. In some parts of the province four speech-tones are present, while in others parts there are five. Within these regional variations of the dialect, differences in the speech-tone properties can also be found. The Sichuan dialect used most often on the Sichuan opera stage is the language spoken in the provincial capital, Chengdu. For this reason, all comments concerning the nature of the Sichuan dialect in this study will be confined to this sub-dialect. In the Chengdu sub-dialect, four speech-tones are present. These are: "yin level-tone" (*yinpingsheng* 阴平声), "yang level-tone" (*yangpingsheng* 阳平声), "rising-tone" (*shangsheng* 上声), and the "leaving tone" (*qusheng* 去声). These speech-tones are commonly referred to as the "first tone," "second tone," "third tone," and "fourth tone," respectively. A comparison of the speech-tones found in the Chengdu and Mandarin dialects show fundamental differences between the two linguistically related dialects.

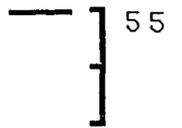
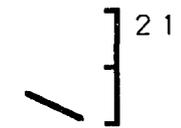
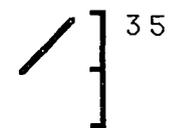
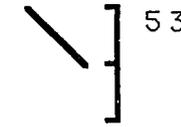
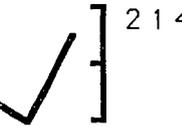
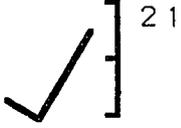
English:	Chinese ideograph:	<i>pinyin</i> romanization:	tone number:	Mandarin	Chengdu
<i>yin</i> level-tone	阴平声	(<i>yinpingsheng</i>)	1st		
<i>yang</i> level-tone	阳平声	(<i>yangpingsheng</i>)	2nd		
rising-tone	上声	(<i>shangsheng</i>)	3rd		
leaving-tone	去声	(<i>qusheng</i>)	4th		

Figure 4.1

Comparison of Speech-Tones in the Chengdu and Mandarin Dialects

Sichuan dialect and Mandarin both belong to the northern system of Chinese dialects (*beifang fangyan xitong* 北方方言系统). For this reason, the two dialects share the same writing system, and pronounce many of the written-characters using the same, or similar, speech sounds. However, except for the first tone, the speech-tones in the two dialects are quite different. In both Chengdu dialect and Mandarin, the first tone is pronounced using a pitch that is high and level. The second tone in Chengdu dialect, however, is a falling tone which has a pitch progression of "2 1." In Mandarin the same pitch is a rising tone having a "3 5" pitch progression. The third and fourth tones of Chengdu dialect are exactly opposite from Mandarin in pitch direction. The Chengdu third tone is a falling tone with a pitch progression of "5 3," while Mandarin's is a falling-then-rising tone with a "2 1 4" pitch progression. Conversely, the fourth

tone in Mandarin falls with a "5 1" pitch progression, while that of the Chengdu dialect falls before rising with a "2 1 4" pitch progression. The similarities in the speech sounds, but contrasting natures of some of the speech-tones of Mandarin and Chengdu dialects, no doubt make commercial transactions between Chengdu and Beijing a bit confusing. In both dialects the word "mai" (买) spoken with a 3rd tone means "to buy," but "mai" (卖), spoken with a 4th tone means "to sell."

Many *qupai* are thought to have derived from such early Chinese poetic styles as *ci* and *qu*. In these literary traditions, the regulation of speech-tone patterns in the text was an integral part of the poetic form. In the definition of *qupai* as given in the *Dictionary of Chinese xiqu and quyi* (Chapter I, p. 15), it seems that the regulation of tonal patterns within *qupai* song texts is a standard feature of all *qupai* musical systems. In some *qupai* musical systems this may be so, but in the Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* musical system the pattern of song text speech-tones is not controlled by *qupai* lyric form.

Rhyme

The speech-sounds of Chinese words can be divided into two structural parts: an "initial consonant" (*shengmu* 声母), and a "final vowel" (*yunmu* 韵母). The initial consonant of a Chinese word is the consonant, or consonant pair, which begin each syllable. For example, the / t /, / p /, and / ch / in the words "ta" "pan," and "chi."² The vowels / i / and / u / can also serve as initial consonants, but are considered "semi-vowels" when they do. When serving as initial consonants, the semi-vowels, / i / and / u / are written / y / and / w /, respectively.³ Excluding / y / and / w /, there are nineteen consonants which serve as initial

consonants in the Sichuan dialect spoken in Chengdu as compared to twenty-one in Mandarin.⁴ Although called a "final vowel," the concluding portion of a Chinese word may consist either of vowels alone, or a combination of vowels and the consonants / n / and / ng /.⁵

Rhyme is a characteristic feature of poetry traditions in China, including song lyric composition. In Sichuan opera, all song lyrics feature an identifiable rhyme scheme. This scheme is based on the speech-sound of the final word in each lyric line--specifically, on the final vowel portion of the speech-sound.

Example 4.1

Rhyme Scheme in a Passage of *Gaoqiang Qupai* Song Text⁶

茶不思想来饭不想,
Cha bu si xiang lai fan bu xiang,

每日花园中烧夜香.
Mei r hua yuan zhong shao ye xiang,

不保爹来不保娘,
Bu bao die lai bu bao niang,

单单保的那情郎.
Dan dan bao de na qing lang.

rhyming
words

In the song text example above, the words "xiang," "xiang," "niang" and "lang" are the final words found on each lyric line. These are the words on which the rhyme scheme for the song is based. These words are termed the "yunjiao" (韵脚 lit., "rhyme foot") of the song text. The consonants / x /, / n /, and / l / are the initial consonants of the four rhyme base words, but are not elements which determine the rhyme

scheme. This is based solely on the final vowel portions of the four words, which is either / iang / or / ang /. Although rhyme is a characteristic feature of all Sichuan opera *gaoqiang qupai* song texts, it is not one of the areas which is governed by lyric form specifications. A comparison of several songs created from the same *qupai* reveals that although a rhyme scheme is always present (usually the same throughout), the rhyme schemes are not based on the same final vowel combinations.

Dou

The words in *gaoqiang qupai* song texts are organized into lyric lines of various lengths. Each line constitutes a syntactically complete linguistic unit. Within each lyric line, words are further organized into one or more units called "*dou*." In her study of Beijing opera musical systems, Elizabeth Wichmann found the division of a lyric line into *dou* to be related to both the semantic and rhythmic properties of the lyric line (1991, 33). In *gaoqiang* music, the same conditions can be observed. The following example shows how a single line of song lyrics containing ten words is broken down into three *dou* :

1st <i>dou</i>	2nd <i>dou</i>	3rd <i>dou</i>
与奴家	在神前	焚香举誓
<i>yu nu jia</i>	<i>zai shen qian</i>	<i>fen xiang ju shi.</i>
You and I	before the gods	lit incense and vowed.

The first and second *dou* have three words each, while the third *dou* contains four. In both the Chinese and the English versions of the text, the division of the line into three discreet parts creates a rhythmic structure

which aids in the clarification of meaning rather than hindering or distorting it.

The number of words contained in a single lyric line of *gaoqiang qupai* music generally ranges from two to twelve. As a result, the number of *dou* per lyric line, as well as the number of words per *dou*, also varies. In lyric lines containing four words or less, the entire line is usually treated as a single semantic unit. Two *dou* are usually present in lines containing between four to seven words, while either two or three *dou* are found in lines comprised of eight to twelve words.

The following figure shows some common *dou* configurations found in *gaoqiang qupai* song lyrics. The number(s) placed within each pair of parentheses indicates the breakdown of lyric line words into *dou*. A lyric line containing five words, for example, which is divided into two *dou* --the first *dou* containing three words and the second *dou* containing two--would be expressed as: (3 + 2).

<u>words per line</u>	<u>dou per line</u>	<u>common dou configurations</u>
2	1	(2)
3	1	(3)
4	1	(4)
5	2	(3 + 2), (2 + 3)
6	2	(3 + 3)
7	2	(3 + 4), (4 + 3)
8	2	(4 + 4), (5 + 3), (3 + 5)
	3	(3 + 2 + 3)
9	2	(5 + 4), (4 + 5)
	3	(3 + 4 + 2), (4 + 3 + 2)
10	2	(4 + 6), (6 + 4) (5 + 5)
	3	(3 + 3 + 4), (3 + 4 + 3)
	4	(2 + 3 + 2 + 3) (3 + 2 + 3 + 2)

Figure 4.2

Typical Patterns of Lyric Line Division into *Dou* in *Gaoqiang Qupai* Songs

A number of *qupai* have lyric forms which require the division of certain lyric lines into *dou*. Such lyric forms control both the number of *dou* per line, as well as the number of words in each *dou*. A description of the lyric form of the *qupai* [*wu yun mei*] (五韵美), as published in the text *Chuanju gaoqiang qupai*, is provided below (Sichuan 1956, 76).

According to this source, the total number of lyric lines in a [*wu yun mei*] song is not controlled. Limitations are made, however, on the number of words in specific lyric lines. It is on these controlled lines that a specified breakdown of words into *dou* can be found.

<u>line number</u>	<u>words per line</u>	<u>dou configuration</u>
line: 1	6	(3 + 3)
line 2:	8	(3 + 5)
line 3:	7	(3 + 4)
line 4:	8	(4 + 4)
line 5:	7	(3 + 4)
line 6-onward:	unlimited	uncontrolled
final line:	7	(3 + 4)

total number of lines: unlimited

Figure 4.3

Lyric Form Specifications for a [Wu Yun Mei] Qupai Song

A characteristic of many *qupai* lyric forms can be seen in the [wu yun mei] example above. Lines which are controlled in terms of their length and *dou* division, are found predominantly in the opening and closing portions of the song. The structural configuration of the lyric lines in the central portion of the song, in contrast, is generally left up to the discretion of the person constructing the song.

The most commonly stipulated *dou* division in *gaoqiang* music is for lines containing seven words. Frequently *qupai* specifications call for either a "proper-order seven-word" (*shun qi zi* 顺七字) *dou* division, where the words are arranged in ascending numerical order (i.e., 3 + 4), or a "reverse-order seven-word" (*dao qi zi* 倒七字) division where the breakdown is by descending numerical order (i.e., 4 + 3). In some *qupai*, such as [gui po bu jin yang] ([桂坡不禁羊]), a combination of both proper-order and reverse-order seven-word *dou* divisions can be found (Sichuan 1956, 63).

<u>line number</u>	<u>words per line</u>	<u>dou configuration</u>
line 1:	7	(3 + 4)
line 2:	7	(3 + 4)
line 3:	9	uncontrolled
line 4:	7	(4 + 3)
line 5-onward:	unlimited	uncontrolled
total number of lines: unlimited		

Figure 4.4

Lyric Form of a [Gui Po Bu Jin Yang] Qupai Song

Limitations placed on lyric line length are common among many *gaoqiang qupai*. The majority of *qupai* lyric forms, however, do not dictate line division into *dou* as seen in the [*wu yun mei*] and [*gui po bu jin yang*] examples above. Among those which do, none have lyric forms which define *dou* configurations for an entire song composition.

Padding Words

Based on their semantic function in a lyric line, song lyrics can be divided into two types: "base words" (*zhengzi* 正字) and "padding words" (*chenzi* 衬字) (Johnson 1980, 30). Padding words are words which have been added to a lyric line to help clarify meaning. These words are generally of slighter meaning than the song text base words.

. . . very often [padding words are] more colloquial words or conventional phrases which are easily recognized as such. Many of them have meanings such as, "You might think he would . . .", "Do they not say that . . .", "There is a saying that . . .", and "By good fortune it happened that . . ."; they are somewhat similar to the storyteller's stock phrases and impart a similar narrative intimacy and directness (Dolby 1976, 56).

Many *gaoqiang qupai* lyric forms dictate the number of words per line for all, or some, of the lyric lines in the song text. Upon analysis of an actual song example, if the number of words on a given line turns out to be more than the limit set by the lyric form specifications, the presence of padding words is confirmed. The lyric form specifications for the *qupai [er lang shen]* indicate that line three of a song should contain only seven words. A comparison of two versions of the same *[er lang shen]* song indicates that a padding word has been added to the second.

Example 4.2

Comparison of a Single Line of Song Text in Two Versions of an *[Er Lang Shen]Qupai* Song

version 1:

两两黄莺相叫应。

Liang liang huang ying xiang jiao ying,

A pair of yellow orioles call to one other.

version 2:

[听]两两黄莺相叫应。

[Ting] liang liang huang ying xiang jiao ying,

[Hear] a pair of yellow orioles call to one other. ¶

It is obvious from the comparison of the two song texts that the word "Hear" (*ting* 听) in version 2 is a padding word. As stated above, the function of padding words is to aid in the clarification of song text meaning. Without them, however, the base words in the lyric line would still preserve the essential meaning of the text. Although the absence of

the word "Hear" in version 1 makes the song text less specific, the fundamental meaning of the line is still discernible.

Identifying which words in the song text lyric line are the base words and which are the padding words is not usually as easy as in the [*er lang shen*] example above. In many cases, it is nearly impossible.

In most cases, padding . . . [words] do not "pad" in the sense of adding only sound, and not meaning, to a line. Rather, they extend the line beyond its standard length to clarify meaning. Padding . . . [words] are usually added within *dou* and are an integral part of the *dou* as a semantic and rhythmic unit. Practically speaking, therefore, padding . . . [words] cannot be isolated as individual . . . [words]; it is only possible to point to a particular *dou* and say that, because it has more than the basic number of characters, it includes padding . . . [words] (Wichmann 1991, 34).

Xiqu musical systems which do not use *qupai* to create their theatre music fall into a category of systems which are collectively referred to as "accented-beat tune [musical] systems" (*banqiangti* 板腔体). Songs in these musical systems are constructed by combining one of a system's fundamental tune forms (*jiben qudiao* 基本曲调), with one its designated rhythmic structures, called "metrical types" (*banshi* 板式). Recent studies of accented-beat tune musical systems indicate that although padding words may only minimally affect the meaning of the song text, they do have a considerable effect on the melodic contour and rhythmic structure of the music. This effect is due primarily to the couplet-based lyric form which is commonly used in this type of musical system. Each lyric couplet typically consists of two lines of song text, each containing either five, seven, or ten words. The first line of the couplet, termed the "upper line" (*shangju* 上句), has specific melodic contour, cadence, and rhythmic features which are identified with it. Similarly, the

second line of the couplet, the "lower line" (*xiaju* 下句), also possesses musical material unique to it. Through alternating the musical material between the upper and lower lines of the couplet, "a feeling of suspense in line one and a sense of repose in line two" is created (Pian 1975, 66). Understandably, the addition of padding words to this even line length song text structure could disrupt the balanced nature of the lyric form and its music. Padding words are frequently found in Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* song lyrics. Because the lyric forms of most *qupai* in the tradition consist of lyric lines of uneven length, rather than the even length lines of couplets, the effect of altering the melodic and rhythmic structure through the presence of padding words is much less apparent.

Patterns of Lyric Form

Among the hundreds of *qupai* which constitute the *gaoqiang* musical system, only three basic types of lyric form are present. I will call these three types: regulated, semi-regulated and unregulated. I will categorize each lyric form as belonging to one of the three styles based on the amount of control placed on the number of words per lyric line (*zishu* 字数) and on the total number of lines (*jushu* 句数) in the song. Regulated lyric form *qupai* are those whose specifications mandate the number of words in each lyric line, as well as the overall number of lyric lines. For *qupai* featuring a semi-regulated lyric form, only the number of words in specific lyric lines are controlled. In this type of lyric form, however, limitations are not placed on the total number of lyric lines of text. Unregulated lyric form *qupai*, as the name suggests, are free from all lyric form control. These song texts can feature as many words per line as

desired, and have an unlimited number of lyric lines. Of the 164 *qupai* documented in the two-volume publication *Sichuan opera gaoqiang qupai*, sixty-five (or 40 %) featured a regulated lyric form, ninety-four (or 57%) had a semi-regulated form, but only five (or 3%) fell into the unregulated lyric form category (Sichuan 1956 and 1959).

Both regulated and semi-regulated lyric form *qupai* periodically stipulate the breakdown of specific lyric lines into *dou*. In both types of lyric forms, those lines which have specified *dou* breakdowns are located in the same portions of the song text--the beginning and end. Given however, the infrequency of stipulated *dou* divisions among *gaoqiang qupai* lyric forms, I have not considered this aspect of lyric form to be a significant factor in lyric form classification.

Regulated Lyric Form

Following the semi-regulated lyric form, the regulated lyric form is the most common type of lyric form in the *gaoqiang* musical system. *Qupai* featuring this lyric form are sometimes referred to as "uneven line [length]" (*changduanju* 长短句 lit., "long [and] short lines") *qupai* because they often have a different number of words in each lyric line of song text.⁷

Example 4.3

Regulated Lyric Form of an [*Er Lang Shen*] *Qupai* Song⁸

song text:	words per line:
花枝隱隱隔窗棧,	(7)
几度教人成孤另.	(7)
但愿东君常管领,	(7)
谁向高楼横笛声.	(7)
不由人栏杆斜凭,	(7)
怕听金钏犬吠声.	(7)
梦初醒!	(3)
满园春色嫩,	(5)
是谁巧妆成.	(5)

total number of lines: 9

In the [*er lang shen*] *qupai* song above, the first six lines in the song text each contain seven words. The irregular length of the last three lines in the song, however, breaks the regular pattern of line length established at the beginning of the song. It is not a requirement of regulated lyric form *qupai* that no two lines of song text contain the same number of words. A large number of regulated lyric form *qupai* are similar to the [*er lang shen*] example above. Among these *qupai*, the majority of lines may be the same length, while a few lines are either shorter or longer.

For the vast majority of regulated lyric form *qupai*, the exact number of words per line as well as the total number of lines in the song text is predetermined. However, padding words can be added to a lyric line of either a regulated or semi-regulated lyric form *qupai* song without altering the lyric form or changing the identity of the *qupai*.

The lyric form specifications for a number of regulated lyric form *qupai* are slightly more flexible in nature than what is seen in the [*er lang shen*] *qupai* example above. The lyric form specifications for the [*tian zhu yun*] (甜 駐 云) *qupai*, for example, allow the theatre practitioner to make specific choices in both individual line and overall song text length. These choices, however, are not without restrictions. The specifications for a [*tian zhu yun*] song state that the total number of lines be either "seven or eight" (Sichuan 1956, 135). The practitioner does not have the option of creating a larger or shorter song text. Doing this would not only alter the lyric form, but also the musical and performer-assignment structures of the *qupai*. Such changes could affect *qupai* identity and therefore, its ability to function dramatically in performance.

For the [*tian zhu yun*] *qupai*, choices are also given in the area of line length. As shown below, lines three through seven may contain either five or seven words per line (1956, 135). The specifications dictate, however, that the final line in the song must contain seven words. Therefore, if a song contains eight lines of text, line seven may contain either five or seven words. If not, line seven must contain seven words.

<u>line number</u>	<u>words per line</u>
line 1:	4
line 2:	5
lines 3-7:	5 or 7
final line:	7
total number of lines: 7 or 8	

Figure 4.5

Regulated Lyric Form Specifications for a [Tian Zhu Yun] Qupai Song

The several hundred *qupai* which constitute the repertoire of the *gaoqiang* musical system, share a considerable amount of melodic material among them. Within the tradition, those *qupai* sharing such musical relationships are recognized, and referred to by such terminology as "same-category *qupai*" (*tonglei qupai* 同类曲牌) and "sworn-brother *qupai*" (*xiongli qupai* 兄弟曲牌). The most important distinguishing feature among musically-related *qupai* are their lyric forms and performer-assignment structures. [*Da ya gu*] ([大趵鼓]) and [*shao ye xiang*] ([烧夜香]), for example, are musically-related *qupai*, each comprised of seven lyric lines (Qiu unpublished, 27-28). Differences in lyric line length, however, can be found on lines one, six, and seven of the two *qupai*. Because of the strictness of the lyric structures among regulated lyric form *qupai*, this difference in line length becomes a primary means of distinguishing between the two *qupai*.

Example 4.4

Comparison of the Lyric Forms in a [Da Ya Gu] and a [Shao Ye Xiang] Qupai Song⁹

<i>[da ya gu]:</i>		<i>[shao ye xiang]:</i>	
→ 春日落残红,	(5)	绿树荫浓夏日长,	(7)
一片西来一片东.	(7)	楼台倒影入池塘.	(7)
堪羨海棠空结蕊,	(7)	水中微风涟漪动,	(7)
为王错听五更钟.	(7)	一架蔷薇满园香.	(7)
近皇宫!	(3)	饮霞觞!	(3)
→ 龙携凤,	(3)	珠帘高楼,	(4)
→ 用手撑起王梓童.	(6)	明月在上.	(4)

Semi-Regulated Lyric Form

Gaoqiang qupai featuring the second style of lyric form structure--the semi-regulated lyric form--are the most common in the repertoire. Semi-regulated lyric form *qupai* are distinguished by the fact that certain parts of the song are restricted in lyric structure, while others are not. Among most in this category, the total number of lyric lines in the song text is not controlled. Limitations on the number of words in specific lyric lines, however, are present.

There are two distinct types of semi-regulated lyric form *qupai*: (i) those having an uneven line length lyric form, and (ii) those having a couplet-based (i.e., even line length) lyric form. The lyric form of a [*zhe gu tian*] (鸪天) *qupai* song demonstrates a semi-regulated uneven line length lyric form (Sichuan 1959, 56).

<u>line number</u>	<u>words per line</u>
line 1:	4
line 2:	7
lines 3:	7 or 8
line 4:	7
line 5:	5
line 6-onward:	unlimited
final line:	7

total number of lines: unlimited

Figure 4.6

Lyric Form Specifications for a [Zhe Gu Tian] Qupai Song

The [*zhe gu tian*] *qupai* lyric form reveals a common characteristic of semi-regulated uneven line length lyric form *qupai*. Here, a portion of the *qupai* is not regulated in terms of the number of words per lyric line. This unregulated portion is usually located in the central part of the song text. Those portions of the song which are regulated surround on either side this unregulated portion. Within the regulated portions of the song, it is common to find lyric lines of uneven length. In the unregulated portion, however, a couplet-based lyric form consisting of either five- or seven-word-per-line couplets is generally found. Because of the use of a couplet-based structure, an even number of lyric lines is usually present in the unregulated portion of the song.

Example 4.5

Regulated and Unregulated Song Text Portions in a Semi-Regulated Lyric Form [*Zhe Gu Tian*]
Qupai Song¹⁰

断线风筝,	}	regulated (uneven line length)
银瓶坠井两离分!		
做夫妻好似阳台梦,		
滚油锅内捞寒冰.		
姻亲事难成!	}	unregulated (couplet-based)
姻亲既不成,		
只要回家庭,		
难解离别恨,		
纵死不忘情.	}	regulated (uneven line length)
纵死不忘贤弟情!		

A less common form of semi-regulated lyric form *qupai* are those constructed using a couplet-based lyric structure throughout. These even line length *qupai*¹¹ use five, seven, or ten words per line, and are unlimited in terms of the number of couplets, and therefore, lyric lines which they may contain.¹² Due to their couplet-based lyric form, however, the total number of lines in a song is usually even.

Example 4.6

Even Line Length Semi-Regulated Lyric Form of a [*Suo Chuang Lang*] *Qupai* Song¹³

他本沧海一明珠, (7)

休当作井底蛙蛆. (7)

儒生品质玉无瑕, (7)

执鞭坠镫母趋使. (7)

古来门下无虚士, (7)

论交友当尽终始. (7)

Among even line length *qupai*, a few have lyric forms which determine the exact length of the lyric lines constituting the song text. The specifications for the [*suo chuang lang*] ([锁窗郎]) *qupai*, for example, indicate that all songs should be constructed using seven-word-per-line couplets (Sichuan 1956, 268). However, specifications for other even line length *qupai* give the opera practitioner more freedom in this regard. [*Lao hong na ao*] ([老红衲袄]) *qupai* songs, for example, may use couplets of either seven or ten words per line (Sichuan 1956, 23).

Unregulated Lyric Form

The least common lyric form found in the *gaoqiang* musical system is the unregulated. The primary distinguishing feature of unregulated lyric form *qupai* is that neither the number of words per line, nor the total number of lines, is specified. Most unregulated lyric form *qupai* are classified as "declamatory *qupai*" (*langsong qupai* 朗诵曲牌) because their musical structures contain little or no melodic material. Many declamatory *qupai* feature only an underlying rhythmic structure over

which the *qupai* lyrics are uttered in a half-spoken, half-sung (*ban jiang ban chang* 半讲半唱) manner. A number of declamatory *qupai* such as [*ke ke zi*] ([课课子]), however, do not have a set rhythmic structure supporting the vocal articulation of the song text. In [*ke ke zi*] songs, a percussion pattern such as "*liang chui*" ("两捶") is instead played after the vocalization of each lyric line.

Example 4.7

Four Lines of an Unregulated Lyric Form [*Ke Ke Zi*] *Qupai* Song¹⁴

song text:

percussion pattern:

急得人须发倒竖双眉皱,	打打 以弄 壮
君上作事太昏庸.	打打 以弄 壮
都只为这些小人暗作弄,	打打 以弄 壮
引诱君王坏国风.	打打 以弄 壮 ...

A number of Sichuan opera scholars do not consider declamatory *qupai* to be part of the repertoire of the *gaoqiang* musical system because of the minimal amount of melodic material which they possess, and for the fact that most are also found in the other Sichuan opera musical systems such as *huqinqiang* and *tanxi*. Of the unregulated lyric form *qupai* identified in the publication *Sichuan opera gaoqiang qupai*, only the *qupai* [*yuan lin hao*] ([园林好]) is not considered a declamatory *qupai*. If declamatory *qupai* are excluded, the number of unregulated lyric form *qupai* in the *gaoqiang* musical system would drop to less than 1%. A comparison of the texts of two [*yuan lin hao*] *qupai* songs shows the degree of lyric form flexibility present in unregulated *qupai*.

Example 4.8

Comparison of the Unregulated Lyric Forms of Two [Yuan Lin Hao] Qupai Songs¹⁵

song 1	words per line:	song 2	words per line:
缓思裁,	3	都只为谨守节操,	7
权相待,	3	分国忧略尽臣道.	7
犹恐他从前恩爱依然在,	10	背地里把文武嘲笑,	8
好叫奴千回万转,	7	从君命不敢辞劳!	7
触目伤怀!	4		
total number of lines: 5		total number of lines: 4	

To summarize, among the several hundred *qupai* present in the repertoire of the *gaoqiang* musical system, three styles of song text organization can be found: regulated, semi-regulated, and unregulated lyric forms. Distinguishing the three from one another is the degree of structural control over song text organization which they exert. The regulated lyric form is the most restrictive because it limits both the number of words per lyric line and the total number of lines in a song. The unregulated lyric form, in contrast, demands no particular song text arrangement whatsoever. The semi-regulated lyric form falls somewhere in between these two extremes with controls being placed on certain portions of the song text, while not on others.

Each *gaoqiang qupai* is a complete song form providing theatre practitioners with the musical material, a pattern of helping chorus and actor vocalizations, and a particular textual arrangement, with which to construct an opera song. In that songs serve a variety of different

interpretive and communicative functions in performance, it is understandable that individual *qupai* provide practitioners with slightly different structural materials. Recreating the particular configuration of materials allows a song to serve its designated dramatic function. The ability to recreate a *qupai*'s structural configuration indicates that a degree of structural consistency is present within each *qupai*. Analysis of the three *qupai* lyric forms has shown that varying degrees of structural permanence are present. In the following chapters as patterns of performer assignment and musical structure are examined, correlations between the degree of rigidity in a *qupai*'s lyric form and the presence of specific musical and performer-assignment structures will be seen. This information will show the integrated nature of the *gaoqiang qupai* structural form.

Notes to Chapter IV
GAOQIANG GUPAI LYRIC FORM

1 "Canton" is the Cantonese pronunciation of the written-characters "广东." In Mandarin, the same two written-characters are pronounced "Guangdong."

2 Pairs of slanting lines (i.e., / /) are used to enclose the *pinyin* transliterations of all Chinese vowel and consonant sounds. Quotation marks are placed around individual letters or words.

3 In Mandarin, the vowel / a / as in the word "ai " (爱 meaning, "to love") can initiate a word, but is not counted as one of the initial consonants. In Sichuan dialect, only the vowels / i / and / u / in their consonant forms / y / and / w / can do this. In Sichuan dialect, the consonant blend / ng / is usually placed before the / a / in words like "ai ," creating the speech-sound / ngai /.

4 These nineteen are: / b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, m, n, n_o, ng, p, q, r, s, t, x, z /. The twenty-one initial consonants of Mandarin are: / b, c, ch, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, sh, t, x, z, zh /.

5 There are six vowels (*yuanyin* 元音) used in Chengdu, Sichuan dialect: / i /, / u /, / ü /, / a /, / o / and / ê /. In various combinations these vowels and consonants form the one thousand and twenty different speech-sounds in the dialect (Liang 1987, 16).

6 This passage of song text is performed by the *dan* character Wang Ruilan (王瑞兰) in the scene "Two Vow Before the Moon" ("Shuang bai yue," 双拜月), from the play *The Secluded Boudoir* (*You gui ji* 幽闺记).

7 Because *ci* poems were also characterized by their uneven line lengths, some Sichuan opera practitioners refer to the regulated lyric form as the "*ci* style" (*citi* 词体) (Qiu unpublished, 27). Unlike *ci* poems, however, *gaoqiang qupai* lyric form does not control speech-tone patterns or rhyme schemes

8 This [*er lang sheng*] song passage is sung by the *dan* character Lu Zhaorong (卢昭容) in the scene "Picking Red Plums" ("Zhai hong mei" 摘红梅), from the play *The Red Plum* (*Hong mei ji* 红梅记). The romanization of the text is as follows:

*Hua zhi yin yin ge chuang ling,
 Ji du jiao ren cheng gu ling.
 Dan yuan dong jun chang guan ling,
 Shui xiang gao lou heng di sheng.
 Bu you ren lan gan xie ping,
 Pa ting jin qiang quan fei sheng.
 Meng chu xing!
 Man yuan chun se nen,
 Shi shui qiao zhuang cheng.*

9 This [*da ya gu*] *qupai* song is sung by the character Liang Wudi (梁武帝) in the scene "Leaving the Palace on an Expedition" ("*Bie gong chu zheng*" 别宫出征), from the play *Celebration Cloud Palace* (*Qing*

yun gong 庆云宫). The *pinyin* romanization of the song text is as follows:

*Chun ri luo can hong,
Ci pian xi lai yi pian dong.
Kan xian hai tang kong jie rui,
Wei wang cuo ting wu geng zhong.
Jin huang gong!
Long xie feng,
Yong shou shan qi wang zi tong.*

Although ascribed to the houseman (*jiayuan* 家院) in the scene "Enjoying Summer" ("Shang xia" 赏夏), from the play *The Lute* (*Pipa ji* 琵琶记), this [*shao ye xiang*] *qupai* song is actually sung by the helping chorus. The *pinyin* romanization of the song text is as follows:

*Lǔ shu yin nong xia ri chang,
Lou tai dao ying ru chi tang.
Shui zhong wei feng lian yi dong,
Yi jia qiang wei man yuan xiang.
Yin xia shang!
Zhu lian gao lou,
Ming yue zai shang.*

10 This [*zhe gu tian*] *qupai* song is sung as a duet by the *sheng* and *dan* characters Liang Shanbo (梁山伯) and Zhu Yingtai (祝英台) in the scene "Calling On a Friend" ("Fang you" 访友), from the play *In the Shade of the Willows* (*Liu yin ji* 柳荫记). The romanization of the song text is as follows:

*Duan xian feng zheng,
Yin ping zhui jing liang li fen.
Zuo fu qi hao xi yang tai meng,
Gun you guo nei lao han bing.
Yin qin shi bu cheng!
Yin qin ji bu cheng,
Zhi yao hui jia ting,*

*Nan jie li bie hen,
Zong si bu wang qing.
Zong si bu wang xian di qing!*

11 Some in Sichuan opera circles refer to this style of lyric construction as the "lǔshī style" (*lǔshī tǐ* 律诗体 lit., "regulated verse"), because of its resemblance to the poetry tradition of the same name that was popular during the Tang dynasty (Qiu unpublished, 25). *Lǔshī* were eight lines in length and contained either five or seven words per line. Like the *cǐ*, the tonal patterns and rhyme schemes of *lǔshī* were also closely controlled. In Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* lyric structure, these latter two aspects of the *lǔshī* tradition are not preserved.

12 While most even line length *qupai* set no limitations on the overall length of the song text, a few do. For instance, specifications for [*suo chuang lang*] indicate that the number of lines should not exceed ten (Sichuan 1956, 268).

13 This song passage is sung by the character Xu Gan (徐干) in the play *Ban Chao* (班超). The *pinyin* romanization of the song text is as follows:

*Ta ben cang hai yi ming zhu,
Xiu dang zuo jing di wa qu.
Ru sheng pin zhi yu wu xia,
Zhi bian zhui deng mu qu shi.
Gu lai men xia wu xu shi,
Lun jiao you dang jin zhong shi.*

14 This [*ke ke zi*] *qupai* song is performed by the character Wu She (伍奢) in the scene "Golden Pavilion" ("Jin dian" 金殿), from the play

Leaving Tang County (*Chu tang yi* 出棠邑). The romanization of the song text is as follows:

*Ji de ren xu fa dao shu shuang mei zhou,
Jun shang zuo shi tai hun yong.
Dou zhi wei zhe xie xiao ren an zuo nong,
Yin you jun wang huai guo feng.*

15 Song 1 is sung by the *dan* character Jiao Guiying (焦桂英) in the scene "Checking Sentiments" ("Qing tan" 情探), from the play *Burning Incense* (*Fen xiang ji* 焚香记). The *pinyin* romanization of the song text is as follows:

*Huan si cai,
Quan xiang dai,
You kong ta cong qian en ai yi ran zai,
Hao jiao nu qian hui wan zhuan,
Chu mu shang huai!*

Song 2 is sung by the *dan* character Wang Zhaojun (王昭君) in the scene "Wenlin Temple" ("Wenlin miao" 文林庙), from the play *The Chaste Woman of the Han* (*Han zhen lie* 汉贞烈). The *pinyin* romanization of the song text is as follows:

*Dou zhi wei jin shou jie cao,
Fen guo you lue jin chen dao.
Bei di li ba wen wu chao xiao,
Cong jun ming bu gan ci lao!*

CHAPTER V

GAOQIANG QUPAI PERFORMER-ASSIGNATION STRUCTURE

The second element constituting the internal structure of Sichuan opera *gaoqiang qupai* is the performer-assignment structure. This area of *qupai* form is concerned with the assignment of specific parts of the *qupai* song to either the stage actor or the helping chorus to sing in performance. Never in *gaoqiang* performance will the actor and helping chorus be heard vocalizing the same passage together. Performer assignment is usually made in units of a single lyric line, but occasionally occurs by individual words within a lyric line.

An analysis of the various performer-assignment structures of *qupai* reveals the presence of a number of different patterns of vocal arrangement. Correlations between these patterns and specific types of *qupai* lyric form can be seen. From examination of performer-assignment structure patterns, it is also apparent that a relationship exists between the placement of nonsensical syllables (i.e., vocables) in the song text and the organization of helping chorus lines in *qupai* songs.

During the vocalizations of both the actor and the helping chorus, the percussion ensemble provides rhythmic support through the performance of percussion patterns. The exact nature of this percussion accompaniment varies considerably depending on whether it is for the actor or for the helping chorus. Nonetheless, percussion accompaniment is always present during song vocalizations regardless of who the vocalist is. By dictating who is to perform which parts of a song, the performer-assignment structure also affects the nature of the percussion music to be played. A similar effect on the melodic structure can also be found.

Each time a *qupai* song is performed, the assignment of vocalizing entities to specific parts of that song remains the same. Below the lyric forms and performer-assignment structures of two [*er lang shen*] *qupai* songs are compared. In this example, those portions of the song assigned to the helping chorus have been underlined. The initials "hc" or "a," indicating either the "helping chorus" or "actor," have also been placed after each lyric line of song text to indicate performer assignment.

song 1:		song 2:	
<u>时来风雨不稍停,</u>	(7) hc	<u>花枝隐隐隔窗棂,</u>	(7) hc
<u>且喜今朝是初晴.</u>	(7) hc	<u>几度教人成孤另.</u>	(7) hc
两两黄莺相叫应,	(7) a	但愿东君常管领,	(7) a
<u>早被它唤起春情.</u>	(7) hc	<u>谁向高楼横笛声.</u>	(7) hc
春色满园关不尽,	(7) a	不由人栏杆斜凭,	(7) a
<u>一枝红杏出墙垠.</u>	(7) hc	<u>怕听金铃犬吠声.</u>	(7) hc
<u>是红梅!</u>	(3) hc	<u>梦初醒!</u>	(3) hc
一夜东风至,	(4) a	满园色嫩,	(4) a
<u>吹放满园春.</u>	(5) hc	<u>是谁巧妆成.</u>	(5) hc

Figure 5.1

Comparison of the Lyric Forms and Performer-Assignment Structures of Two [*Er Lang Shen*] *Qupai* Songs¹

[*Er lang shen*] is a *qupai* which features a regulated lyric form. In both song examples above, the same number of lyric lines, as well as words per lyric line, can be found. Similar consistency in the assignment of vocalizing entities to specific lyric lines is present. Lines one, two, four, six, seven, and nine are designated as helping chorus lines, while lines three, five, and eight are given to the actor.

Like a *qupai*'s lyric form and musical structure, its performer-assignment structure is an important factor in defining *qupai* identity. Any variation in performer-assignment structure can result in the loss of *qupai* identity. If such stability were not present among structural elements, differentiating between the hundreds of *qupai* in the *gaoqiang* musical system repertoire would not be possible.

Although changes to one aspect of *qupai* internal structure can affect a *qupai*'s independent status in the repertoire, it is important to understand that the three aspects of *qupai* internal form are not completely independent of one another. In other words, changes to either the lyric form, performer-assignment structure, or musical structure of a *qupai*, not only affect that particular structure, but also may affect one or more of the others. If the lyric form of a *qupai* indicates that a song should contain seven lyric lines, and that four of these lines are to be sung by the helping chorus, then the addition or subtraction of a single lyric line will affect changes in two songs of *qupai* internal structure: lyric form and performer-assignment structure. As Chapter VI will show, fundamental differences exist between the musical structures of helping chorus and actor music. For this reason, changes in *qupai* performer-assignment structure will also alter the overall musical structure of the song. Hence, by changing one aspect of *qupai* internal structure (lyric form), alterations will be made to the two remaining aspects (performer-assignment and musical structure). Although differences in one aspect of internal structure is often cited by Sichuan opera practitioners and scholars as being the primary distinguishing feature between two *qupai*, in actuality it is more likely that other aspects of internal structure are also affected by such a change, albeit some to a lesser degree.

Methods of Description

In order to distinguish between the vocalizations of the actor and those of the helping chorus in the context of *qupai* song performance, Sichuan opera practitioners use different verbs to refer to the actions of each. "Singing" (*chang* 唱) is how Sichuan opera practitioners describe what the actor does onstage during passages of song, while the term "helping" (*bang* 帮) is used when discussing the same action performed by the helping chorus. Consequently, *qupai* such as [*er lang shen*], which are dominated by helping chorus lyric lines (six out of its nine lyrics lines are assigned to the helping chorus), are described as being "helped a lot, sung a little" (*bang duo chang shao* 帮多唱少). Conversely, those *qupai* which feature more actor lines than helping chorus lines are characterized as "sung a lot, helped a little" (*chang duo bang shao* 唱多帮少).

A *qupai*'s performer-assignment structure is described by Sichuan opera practitioners and scholars in terms of the assignment of passages to the helping chorus. By relaying information about the particular arrangement of helping chorus lines in a song, called its "method-of-helping" (*bangfa* 帮法), information is also conveyed about the actor's vocalization pattern. It is always understood that those lyric lines, or parts of lyric lines, which are not assigned to the helping chorus will be sung by the actor in performance.

There are two reasons why the performer-assignment structure of *gaoqiang qupai* is described in terms of the helping chorus. The first reason has to do with efficiency. It is the perception of native theatre practitioners that the dramatic presentation of *xiqu* in general, and

Sichuan opera specifically, is primarily the domain of the actor. Although in *gaoqiang* performance both the helping chorus and percussion orchestra play important roles in the dramatic presentation, neither replaces the function of the actor.

The nucleus of *xiqu* is acting/performance. The characteristic of the helping chorus is that through its connection with the actor, it provides [a vehicle of] expression. In other words, an independent function of the helping chorus is dissolved within the art of the actor's performance (Jia 1985, 51).

In *gaoqiang* performance, actors serve as the principal communicators of the dramatic text. The helping chorus and percussion orchestra are present to support, and complement, these efforts. As it is the actors who sing the majority of *qupai* song passages, to describe *qupai* performer-assignment structure in terms of helping chorus passages seems quite logical. Rather than addressing the rule by indicating which parts of a song are assigned to the actor, *qupai* descriptions make reference to the exceptions, which are the helping chorus lines.

Qupai performer-assignment structure is also described in terms of its helping chorus lines because of the ability of a *qupai*'s "method-of-helping" to define *qupai* identity.

[There are] several hundred *qupai* --each having its own method-of-helping, each having its own rules. Among some *qupai* the method-of-helping and rules are completely different, among others these differences are only slight. Some if altered just slightly, will become the contents of another *qupai*. Such changes are primarily embodied in the helping chorus (actor's passages can only differentiate between [general] types of *qupai*, but cannot be the difference between individual *qupai*). The differences between Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* music's several hundred *qupai*, are primarily produced by the various changes in the helping chorus. Different methods-of-helping form different *qupai*. The appearance of the helping chorus, therefore, expresses the *qupai*'s function and distinguishing features (Jia 1985, 50).

As indicated above, there is considerable interdependence among *qupai* structural elements--particularly between performer-assignation and musical structures. Therefore, when Jia calls a *qupai* 's "method-of-helping" the fundamental factor in determining its identity, he is also implying the presence of a certain type of musical structure. In other words, by assigning certain lines to the helping chorus both the vocalization pattern and musical structure of the song are determined.

Patterns of Performer Assignment

The majority of *qupai* performer-assignation structures assign individual lyric lines in the song text to either the actor or the helping chorus. In a number of *qupai*, however, this structure may divide the vocalization of a single lyric line between the two vocalizing entities. In such cases, performer assignment is indicated by word number. The *qupai* [*san xue shi*] (〔三学士〕) has a regulated lyric form which mandates a total of seven lyric lines of song text (Sichuan 1959, 270). The opening two lines of a [*san xue shi*] song should contain seven words each. The first four words in line one, and the first three in line two, are assigned to the actor. The final three words in line one, and the final four in line two, are given to the helping chorus. None of the remaining lines in the song, however, are divided between the helping chorus and the actor in this fashion. They have instead been assigned in their entirety to one or the other vocalizing bodies.

当今天子选贤英，	a + hc (4 + 3)
春雷动直上青云。	a + hc (3 + 4)
男儿有志龙虎榜，	hc
须待取际会风云。	hc
当努力！	hc
当努力龙门驰骋，	a
光闾里耀门庭。	hc

Figure 5.2

Performer-Assignment Structure of a [*San Xue Shi*]*Qupai* Song²

As indicated in Chapter IV, a number of *qupai* lyric forms mandate the division of certain lyric lines into *dou*. The published descriptions of the [*san xue shi*] lyric form do not specifically indicate how its lyric lines should be divided into *dou*. By dividing the vocalization assignments of lines one and two between the helping chorus and actor, however, these lines are in essence being divided into specific *dou* configurations. The specifications for the *qupai* [*wu yun mei*] (See Chapter IV, p. 135), in contrast, do indicate that specific lyric lines should be divided into *dou*, but do not assign vocalists according to these *dou* configurations. Unlike [*san xue shi*], [*wu yun mei*] performer assignment is by full lyric line. Although a *qupai*'s lyric form may mandate the breakdown of lines into *dou*, its performer-assignment structure does not always reflect these divisions. Frequently, the specified *dou* configurations in a song are related to the nature of the *qupai*'s musical structure, rather than its performer-assignment structure.

The exact assignment of vocalists in *qupai* songs varies as much as the details of the song text configurations upon which they are based. Just as identifiable styles of lyric form can be found, patterns in the assignment

of vocalists within *qupai* songs also appear. Not surprisingly, correlations exist between the various lyric forms and the performer-assignment patterns of *qupai*, thus indicating another aspect of mutual interrelationship and influence among *qupai* structural elements.

Based on the relative dominance of helping chorus vocalizations, and the consistent placement of these vocalizations within the song form, Sichuan opera practitioners have developed specific terminology for referring to different types of *qupai* performer-assignment structure. In the following passages, a number of this structural types will be discussed.

Entirely-Helped *Qupai*

The performer-assignment specifications for the *qupai* [*bu shi lu*] indicate that the entire song is to be sung by the helping chorus; no actor participation is allowed (Sichuan 1956, 226). The number of *qupai* like [*bu shi lu*] which are "entirely-helped *qupai*" (*quanbang qupai* 全帮曲牌) are few, comprising only two percent of the 164 *qupai* surveyed.

地复天翻,	hc
锦绣河山血染泉.	hc
城崩陷,	hc
白灯三盏挂高竿.	hc

Figure 5.3

The Entirely-Helped Performer-Assignment Structure of a [*Bu Shi Lu*]*Qupai* Song³

Only four lyric lines in length, [*bu shi lu*], like all other entirely-helped *qupai*, features a regulated lyric form which is relatively short in overall length. Not all regulated lyric form *qupai*, however, assign all of

their lyric lines to the helping chorus in the way that [*bu shi lu*] does. A number of *qupai*, such as [*er lang shen*], contain a mixture of both helping chorus and actor lines.

At the other end of the spectrum from entirely-helped *qupai* are those which exclude the helping chorus from vocal performance. All *qupai* featuring this pattern of performer-assignment structure are classified as declamatory *qupai*, and therefore feature an unregulated lyric form. As indicated in Chapter IV, many practitioners and scholars argue for the exclusion of declamatory *qupai* from the *gaoqiang qupai* repertoire. This perspective is due mainly to the scarcity of melodic material present in declamatory *qupai*, and for the fact that most are also found in non-*gaoqiang* musical systems. The number of *qupai* which feature an all-actor performer-assignment structure is even less than the number of entirely-helped *qupai*-they comprise only 1% of the *qupai* surveyed.

Mixed Performer-Assignment Structure

The most common form of performer-assignment structure is one which calls for a mixture of both helping chorus and actor music. Among such *qupai*, two distinct styles can be found. In both styles, the songs are opened and closed by a passage of music which is dominated by the helping chorus. The length of this passage ranges from a single lyric line to up to five. It is not uncommon, however, to see that either a portion of one of the lines (often the first few words of the first line of the song), or an entire lyric line, is assigned to the actor. These short passages of actor music, however, do not affect the overall sense of dominance by the helping chorus in the section.

The primary differentiating factor between the two styles of performer-assignment structure lies in how the central portion of the *qupai* is treated. In one style, as exemplified by the *qupai* [*er lang shen*], lines of helping chorus music are interspersed among actor lines--no particular pattern of performer assignment, or sense of one vocalist's dominance over the other, is apparent in this central portion. The majority of *qupai* structured in this manner feature a regulated lyric form.



Figure 5.4

Placement of Helping Chorus Lines in a Regulated Lyric Form [*Er Lang Shen*] *Qupai* Song⁴

The second, and more common, style of mixed performer-assignment structure can be seen in such *qupai* as [*suo suo gang*] (梭梭岗)). Like [*er lang shen*], [*suo suo gang*] also features clearly delineated opening and closing portions of the song which are dominated by helping chorus music. The central portion of a [*suo suo gang*] song, however, is clearly controlled by the actor. Such performer assignment results in the creation of a tripartite vocalizing pattern consisting of two helping chorus sections sandwiching a passage of actor music. Some in the tradition

describe such *qupai* as "rising with helping, [and] falling with helping" (*bang qi bang luo* 帮起帮落) (Feng 1982, 52).

lyric form:	semi-regulated			
number of lines:	unlimited			
line number:	words per line:			
line 1	5 or 7	青山多雅秀,	hc	} opening portion
line 2	5 or 7	绿水浪悠悠,	hc	
line 3-onward	unlimited	青山多雅秀,	a	} central portion
		绿水浪悠悠,	a	
		渔翁江边走,	a	
		农夫把歌讴,	a	
		樵夫山凹口,	a	
		儿童读春秋.	a	
third-from-the-last line	3	喜悠悠!	hc	← flying-line
second-to-the-last line	5 or 7	侍儿搭扶手,	a	} closing portion
final line	5 or 7	忙下荷叶舟.	hc	

Figure 5.5

Lyric Form and Performer-Assignment Structure of a [Suo Suo Gang] Qupai Song⁵

Most *qupai* featuring this style of performer assignment have semi-regulated lyric forms. In this lyric form, those portions of the song text which are controlled in terms of lyric line number and length are generally located in the opening and closing sections of the song. In terms of performer-assignment structure, these sections are where the majority of helping chorus music is located. The central portion of a semi-regulated lyric form *qupai* song is generally uncontrolled in terms of the number of lyric lines and words per line. Usually constructed using a couplet-based lyric form, this central portion is where the majority of actor music lies. This pattern of performer-assignment structure was found in 62 % of the

qupai surveyed, making it by far the most common pattern of performer assignment.

Elements of Performer-Assignment Structure

***Qupai* Anatomy**

This tripartite performance-assignment structure, which parallels the tripartite structure of the semi-regulated lyric form, is often described by Sichuan opera practitioners in anatomical terms. They refer to the helping chorus-dominated sections at the opening and closing of the *qupai* song as the "song-head" (*qutou* 曲头) and "song-tail" (*quwei* 曲尾), and call the actor-dominated passage in the center, the "song-belly" (*qufu* 曲腹) (Zeng 1988, 58).

[*suo suo gang*]:

青山多雅秀,
绿水浪悠悠,
青山多雅秀,
绿水浪悠悠,
渔翁江边走,
农夫把歌讴,
樵夫山凹口,
儿童读春秋。
喜悠悠!
侍儿搭扶手,
忙下荷叶舟。

hc
hc
a
a
a
a
a
a
hc
a
hc

song-head

song-belly

song-tail

[*jin lianzi*]:

孤身愁,
谁知目下这般忧。
耳听人马吼,
贼子下山丘,
忙往林中走,
恐怕有人搜!

hc
hc
a
a
a
hc

Figure 5.6

Song-Head, Song-Belly, and Song-Tail Positions in [*Suo Suo Gang*] and [*Jin Lianzi*] *Qupai* Songs⁶

Following a human anatomical model, these three sections are usually not proportionate to one another in size. Most *qupai* have shorter head and tail sections, and a longer torso.

In the term "method-of-helping," the overall pattern of performer assignment of a *qupai* song is referenced. Through the use of such terms as "erect-pillars" (*li zhu* 立柱), "putting-on-a-hat" (*fang maozi* 放帽子), and "flying-lines" (*feiju* 飞句), however, Sichuan opera practitioners describe specific aspects of the performer-assignment structure of a *qupai*. Each of these terms is associated with a particular position in the song structure, and refers to a specific pattern of performer assignment. In the following section, the salient features of these three styles of performer assignment description are examined.

Erecting Pillars

"How many pillars are erected?" ("Li ji zhu?" "立几柱?") is a question which is answered in the specifications of all *qupai* in the *gaoqiang* musical system. To calculate a *qupai*'s erect-pillars, the number of lyric lines assigned to the helping chorus at the very onset of a *qupai* song are counted. Specifications for a [*jin lianzi*] ([金莲子]) *qupai* song, for example, indicate that lines one and two are to be sung by the helping chorus. This *qupai*, therefore, is said to "erect two pillars" (*li er zhu* 立二柱) (Sichuan 1959, 233).

lyric form:	semi-regulated		
number of lines:	unlimited		
line number:	words per line:		
line 1	3	<u>孤身愁,</u>	hc
line 2	7	<u>谁知目下这般忧.</u>	hc
line 3-onward	5	耳听人马吼,	a
		贼子下山丘,	a
		忙往林中走,	a
final line	5	<u>恐怕有人搜!</u>	hc

} erect pillars

Figure 5.7

Erect-Pillars Location in a [*Jin Lianzi*] *Qupai* Song⁷

Although a lyric line may be divided between the actor and the helping chorus, as seen in the [*san xue shi*] example above, if such division occurs at the onset of a song, the line is still be calculated as part of the *qupai*'s erect-pillars. The number of erect-pillars found in most *gaoqiang* *qupai* ranges from one to five.

Not all *qupai* in the repertoire, however, erect-pillars. Some *qupai* descriptions, such as those of [*gui po yang*] (桂坡羊) and [*er lang shen*], indicate that these *qupai* are "not divided into pillars" (*bu fen zhu* 不分柱) (Sichuan 1956, 50 and 1). There may be a number of reasons for this. First, as the erect-pillars designation highlights the fact that a song opens with a passage of helping chorus music, an erect-pillars calculation for a song which opens with a passage of actor music, as a [*gui po yang*] song does, would be impossible. Secondly, although [*er lang shen*] songs open with two lines of helping chorus music, the overall performer-assignment structure of the *qupai* is dominated by the helping chorus. [*Er lang shen*] songs do not contain a large passage of actor-dominated music in its central portion the way that both [*jin lianzi*] and [*suo suo gang*] songs do. Perhaps because of the lack of clearly delineated actor section in [*er lang shen*] songs, no erect-pillars designation is made. The majority of *qupai* for which erect-pillars calculations are made, feature the distinct tripartite performer-assignment structure described above.

Flying-Lines

In approximately 15% of the *qupai* surveyed, the beginning of the closing portion of the song is signalled by the appearance of an unusually short lyric line. This line, called a "flying-line" (*feiju* 飞句), is usually only three or four written-characters in length. The majority of flying-lines are assigned to the helping chorus.⁸ A flying-line is therefore, defined by both its lyric form and by its performer-assignment structure.

Among the majority of *qupai* featuring flying-lines, the tripartite performer-assignment structure described above is also present. In these

songs, the flying-line is positioned so that it brings to an end the often lengthy passage of actor music located in the central portion of the song. Due to its relative length, flying-lines also serve to interrupt the even-line length couplet lyric structure which is common in actor passages. The positioning of the flying-line in a [*suo suo gang*] *qupai* song illustrates the common placement of these line.

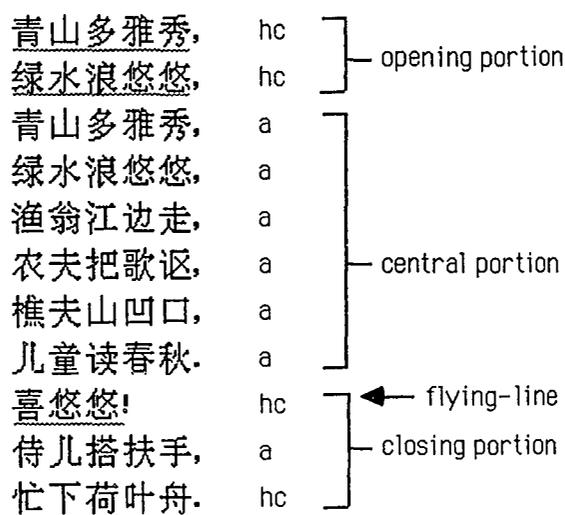


Figure 5.8

Flying-Line Position in a [*Suo Suo Gang*] *Qupai* Song

Although the closing portions of tripartite performer-assignment structure *qupai* are usually dominated by the helping chorus, when a flying-line is present, it is often immediately followed by a line of actor music. This single actor line is always longer in length than the flying-line, and usually followed by one, or more, helping chorus lines of similar length. Both the *qupai* [*suo suo gang*] above and the *qupai* [*hua qiaoer*] ([*铎儿*]) below share this feature.

lyric form:	semi-regulated		
number of lines:	unlimited		
line number:	words per line:		
line 1	4 or 7	<u>登山涉水非吾愿,</u>	hc
line 2	7	<u>君命一到敢留连!</u>	hc
line 3-onward	5 or 7	今朝开舟往福建,	a
		沿江之水多险滩,	a
		凡事谨慎免危险,	a
		唯愿一路多平安.	a
third-from-the-last line	3	<u>告苍天!</u>	hc ← flying-line
second-to-the-last line	5 or 7	告天赐方便,	a
final line	5 or 7	<u>风送滕王船.</u>	hc

Figure 5.9

Flying-Line Position in a [Hua Qiaoer] Qupai Song⁹

Among *qupai* which have flying-lines but do not feature a tripartite performer-assignment structure, the placement of the flying-line remains the same. Here again a single longer line of actor music is often placed immediately after the flying-line. Different however is the fact that these flying lines are usually preceded by one or more lines of helping chorus music. Although these lines are identical in terms of their performer-assignment structure, the shorter length of the flying-line results in the creation of a distinct aural effect. The vocalization of this shorter lyric line comes across as being more energetic and forceful than the preceding line. The limited length of flying lines affects the song text content and makes the vocalization of the line sound as if it were an exclamation. In published Sichuan opera scores, whereas most song lyric lines conclude with either a comma or period, the song texts of most flying lines terminate with an

exclamation mark indicating that a different type of vocal delivery is expected.

The flying-lines of the *qupai* [*san xue shi*] and [*er lang shen*] are examples of flying-lines which are preceded by longer helping chorus lines:

<i>[san xue shi]:</i>			<i>[er lang shen]:</i>	
当今天子选贤英,	a + hc		时来风雨不稍停,	hc
春雷动直上青云.	a + hc		且喜今朝是初晴.	hc
男儿有志龙虎榜,	hc		两两黄莺相叫应,	a
须待取际会风云.	hc		早被它唤起春情.	hc
当努力!	hc	← flying-line	春色满园关不尽,	a
当努力龙门驰骋,	a		一枝红杏出墙垠.	hc
光闾里耀门庭.	hc		是红梅!	hc ← flying-line
			一夜东风至,	a
			吹放满园春.	hc

Figure 5.10

Flying-Line Positions in [*San Xue Shi*] and [*Er Lang Shen*] *Qupai* Songs¹⁰

The flying-line affects the aural aspect of the dramatic performance in several different ways. The shorter line length of the flying-line causes a sudden change to occur in rhythmic structure. Among those *qupai* in which the flying-line immediately follows a passage of actor music, the shift in performer assignment furthers emphasizes this rhythmic change. Differences in the melodic and rhythmic structures of helping chorus and actor music are primarily responsible for this.

During song performances, the audience visually observes the actor onstage. The audience not only detects variation in the rhythmic and melodic structures of songs caused by changes in performer assignment,

but also senses a fundamental difference in the nature of the dramatic presentation when the source of the vocal performance is suddenly shifted from onstage to off. At one moment, the audience sees and hears the actor vocalizing the song text. At the next moment, although still visually following the stylized movement/acting skills of the actor, the source of the vocal music shifts to offstage. As suddenly as it left, the aural source returns once again to the stage, only to relocate once again offstage. Although a change in the aural source is experienced each time a switch from actor to helping chorus music takes place, the placement of flying-lines in the song text, their shorter length, and the type of textual information which they contain, make such changes more pronounced

Methods of *Qupai* Song Initiation

How a *qupai* song is initiated in performance (*qiqiang* 起腔 lit., "beginning the melodic-phrase") is described in terms of the performer-assignment structure of its opening lyric line. When a song is initiated by the helping chorus, for example, it is referred to as an "even-start" (*pingqi* 平起). This style of vocal initiation, as demonstrated in the *qupai* [*qing na ao*] ([青衲袄]) below, features the helping chorus singing the entire first line of song text. It is the most common style of song initiation, found in over half of the *qupai* surveyed.

Example 5.1

Even-Start Style of Initiation in a [Qing Na Ao] Qupai Song¹¹

helping chorus (sings):

$$\frac{4}{4} \left| 0 \quad \underline{\dot{2}} \quad \underline{\dot{3}} \quad \underline{\dot{3}} \quad \underline{\dot{3}} \quad \underline{\dot{3}} \quad \underline{\dot{2}} \quad \underline{\dot{1}} \quad \left| \quad \underline{\dot{3}} \quad \underline{\dot{2}} \quad \underline{\dot{1}} \quad 6 - \quad \left| \quad \underline{6} \quad \underline{\dot{1}} \quad \underline{\dot{2}} \quad \overset{2}{\dot{1}} \quad \underline{6} \quad \underline{5} \quad \underline{\dot{1}} \quad \underline{5} \quad \left| \quad 6 - - 0 \right. \right.$$

冷清清潘郎 今 何在? (呀)

Len qing qing Pan Lang jin he zai? (ya)

Cold and cheerless where is Master Pan today?

Although an even-start initiation line is sometimes followed by a line of actor music, more often one or more helping chorus lines will follow. Collectively, these helping chorus lines form the erect-pillars section of the song.

When the initiation of a song is shared between the actor and the helping chorus, it is referred to as "putting-on-a-hat" (放帽子 *fang maozi*). In this type of song initiation, the first line of song text is divided between the actor and the helping chorus, with the actor beginning the vocalization, and the helping chorus concluding it. This type of song initiation was found in approximately 30% of the *qupai* surveyed.

Among putting-on-a-hat song initiations, [†] 70 styles can be found. The first style, which I term the "half-line intonation style," features the actor intoning the first part of the lyric line (the exact number of words usually being dictated by *qupai* specifications), and the helping chorus singing the remaining part. The first line of the *qupai* [*tai shi yin*] (〔太师引〕) is performed in this way. Of the eight words contained in the opening line of a [*tai shi yin*] song, the actor sings only the first three words, and the helping chorus sings the final five. The parenthesized words "na" (哪), "e" (呃), and "a" (呵), seen in the helping chorus portion in the [*tai shi yin*] example below, are vocables. The presence of

vocables is never reflected in the word count of a lyric line, and therefore does not affect the line's performer-assignment structure. Although their presence is indicated in both the Chinese and romanized versions of the song text below, they are not reflected in the English translation.

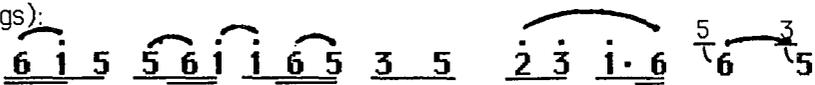
Example 5.2

Half-Line Intonation Style of Putting-On-A-Hat Initiation in a [Tai Shi Yin] Qupai Song¹²

actor (intones):

看 瑞 详...
Kan duan xiang...
 Looking over...

helping chorus (sings):



 ... 是 何 代 先 (哪) 王, (呵) (呢) (呵)
 ... *shi he dai xian (na) wang, (a) (e) (a)*
 ... the one who takes the place of the former king,

Unlike the helping chorus portion of the song text which has a musical structure that is relatively codified in terms of its melodic and rhythmic structures, the actor's vocalization is not predetermined in this way. The melodic and rhythmic features of the actor's intonation are based primarily on the speech-tones of the song text words, and further influenced by the dramatic context in which the song is to be used. Two actors performing the same passage, may therefore have quite different vocal interpretations, while the helping chorus vocalizations will show considerable similarity.

Qupai featuring the half-line intonation style of putting-on-a-hat song initiations are frequently heard at the beginning of scenes when a dramatic character is about to enter the performance space. The actor will intone

his/her portion of the lyric line from offstage right, hidden from audience view, and then enters the stage while the helping chorus sings the remaining portion of the line.

A second style of putting-on-the-hat song initiation has the actor intoning the entire first line, and the helping chorus repeating only the final portion. Because the helping chorus is repeating what the actor has just articulated, such lyric lines are referred to in *qupai* specifications as "repeated-lines" (*zhongju* 重句). The *qupai* [*san xue shi*] features this style of repeated-line putting-on-a-hat.

Example 5.3

Repeated-Line Style of Putting-On-A-Hat Initiation in a [*San Xue Shi*] *Qupai* Song¹³

actor (intones):

当今天子选贤英,

Dang jin tian zi xuan xian ying,

Selecting today [a] virtuous [and] able person,

helping chorus (sings):



Like the half-line intonation style, the repeated-line style does not have a set melodic or rhythmic structure that the actor must follow. *Qupai* featuring this style of song initiation are also frequently used as entrance arias for dramatic characters.

The final style of song initiation is one which features only the actor. Called a "kun -head" (*kun touzi* 昆头子), this style is the only one whose

appellation makes reference to the musical structure of the lyric line, rather than to its performer assignment. The *kun* -head song initiation takes its name from the fact that music said to be borrowed from the *kunqiang* musical system repertoire is used to construct its melody. As in *kunqiang* performance, the horizontal bamboo flute (*dizi* 笛子) accompanies the actor when singing a *kun* -head line. This short passage of music is always constructed in a free metrical form (i.e., with no set organization of accented- and unaccented-beats). *Kun* -head are the only instances in *gaoqiang* vocal performance when melodic accompaniment can be heard. The *qupai* [*duan zheng hao*] (端正好), one of the most frequently heard *qupai* in the repertoire, features a *kun* -head style of song initiation.¹⁴

Example 5.4

Kun -Head Style of Initiation in a [*Duan Zheng Hao*] *Qupai* Song¹⁵

actor (sings):

2̇	3̇	2̇	2̇	3̇	5̇	3̇	1̇	2̇	-	5̇	5̇	2̇	3̇	5̇	4̇	3̇	6̇	1̇	2̇	3̇	1̇	12̇	-	
	┌───┐		┌───┐		┌───┐		┌───┐	┌───┐	┌───┐	┌───┐		┌───┐		┌───┐		┌───┐		┌───┐		┌───┐		┌───┐	-	
	狠	漫		漫	苍	天	无		际,															
	<i>Hen</i>	<i>man</i>		<i>man</i>	<i>cang</i>	<i>tian</i>	<i>wu</i>		<i>ji,</i>															
	Hatred overflows [like the]			blue heavens		without			end,															

In a number of *gaoqiang* plays, entire arias from the *kunqiang* musical system can be heard. These arias are usually sung as entrance arias by such dramatic characters as Confucian scholars, imperial officials, or those associated with religious life. *Kun* -head song initiations, however, are not separate song forms, but rather characterizing features of certain

gaoqiang qupai. A *kun* -head song initiation is the only instance when the Sichuan opera actor initiates a *gaoqiang* song without the participation of the helping chorus. To contrast the actor's melodically-accompanied solo performance, *kun* -head lines are usually immediately followed by one or more lines of helping chorus music.

Vocables

Function and Selection

An analysis of most *gaoqiang qupai* arias will reveal the presence of such syllables as "a" (啊), "e" (呃), "na" (哪), and "wa" (哇), placed throughout the song text. Termed "vocables" (*yuqici* 语气词 lit., "tone-[of]-voice words"), these nonsensical syllables differ fundamentally from song text words (both base and padding words) in several ways. Possessing virtually no denotative meaning of their own, and lacking associated speech-tones, vocables do not fall under the control of *qupai* lyric form specifications.

Although sometimes outnumbering the words in the song text, vocables are never written in *gaoqiang* playscripts. Only by listening to a vocal performance of *gaoqiang* music, or by examining musical scores, can their presence be detected. Comparisons of two versions of the same *qupai* song will also reveal differences in vocable selection, placement, and number. Examination of song text features, as well as *qupai* performer-assignment and musical structures reveal important information about vocable usage in the tradition

The primary function of vocables is to facilitate the singing of passages of *gaoqiang qupai* vocal music. Differences in the speech-sounds

of song text words make some words more sympathetic to song vocalization than others. When singers are required to perform lengthy passages of music which are either melismatic or placed high in the vocal register, the nature of the speech-sounds of song text words becomes particularly important in determining how well the singer is able to execute the passage. In Sichuan opera, nine vocables are used.

<u>Chinese ideograph</u>	<u>Sichuan dialect romanization</u>	<u>linguistic description</u>	<u>pronunciation guide</u>
1. 呵	<i>a</i>	low back unrounded vowel	"a" in "as"
2. 呃	<i>e</i>	lower mid-front unrounded vowel	"e" in "pet"
3. ㄛ衣	<i>yi</i>	high front unrounded vowel	"ee" in "see"
4. ㄛ那	<i>na</i>	alveolar nasal + a low back unrounded vowel	"no" in "not"
5. ㄛ勒	<i>ne</i> ¹⁶	alveolar nasal + a lower mid-front unrounded vowel	"ne" in "net"
6. 呀	<i>ya</i>	diphthong consisting of an unrounded palatal on-glide + a low back unrounded vowel	"ya" in "yacht"
7. ㄛ也	<i>ye</i>	diphthong consisting of an unrounded palatal on-glide + a lower mid-front unrounded vowel	"ye" in "yes"
8. 哇	<i>wa</i>	rounded labiovelar on-glide + a low back unrounded vowel	"wa" in "watch"
9. ㄛ乃	<i>nai</i>	alveolar nasal followed by a diphthong consisting of a low back unrounded vowel + an unrounded palatal off-glide	"ni" in "night"

Figure 5.11

The Nine Vocables of Sichuan Opera Gaoqiang Music

Upon examining the above list, one can discern that the speech-sounds of *gaoqiang* vocables consist either of i) a single vowel (*a*, *e*, and *yi*

), ii) a semi-vowel plus a vowel (*ua*, *ya*, and *ye*), or iii) a single consonant followed by one, or two, vowels (*na*, *ne* and *nai*). No words ending in single consonants, or consonant pairs, such as seen in the words "*kan*" or "*pang*," serve as vocables.

It is generally acknowledged by vocalists worldwide that vowels are easier to sing than consonants. In order to correctly sing a passage of music on vowels such as / a / or / e /, the oral cavity of the singer must be opened, and the tongue and jaw in a relatively relaxed position. Vocalizing the same passage on the consonants / n / or / ng / would require that the oral cavity be smaller in size, and that the tongue be touching the alveolar ridge at the front of the roof of the mouth, just behind the upper front teeth. Not only is the physical process of vocal production made considerably more difficult by the use of such consonants, but the resultant sounds are likely to be much less pleasing to the ears of the listener.

Among the nine *gaoqiang* vocables, two types of vowels can be found: "open-mouth" (*kaikou* 开口) and "level-teeth" (*qichi* 齐齿). The open-mouth and level-teeth designations are based on the type of mouth position present when pronouncing the vowels; mouth positions which are considered favorable by vocalists. To utter an open-mouth vowel such as / a / or / e /, the singer is required to have "a fully opened mouth: separated lips and teeth, and a definite distance between the tongue and palate" (Wichmann 1991, 184). Seven of the nine *gaoqiang* vocables either consist solely of a open-mouthed vowel (i.e., *a* and *e*), or have them as final vowels (i.e., *na*, *ne*, *ya*, *ye*, and *ua*). Among vocables, *a* and *e* are the mostly commonly used in *gaoqiang* music.

Pronunciation of level-teeth vowels, such as / i /, requires the vocalist to have "only slightly separated lips and an even alignment between

the upper and lower front teeth that brings them almost to touch each other; the tongue is raised in the center to almost touch the palate and dropped in the front so that the tip almost touches the back of the lower front teeth" (184). The vocable *yi* consists of the single level-teeth vowel / i /, while the vocable *nai* concludes with one.

Among the nine vocables, only one consonant is used to initiate a speech-sound: / n /, as in the vocable *nai*. The vocables *ya*, *ye* and *wa*, in their romanized form begin with the consonants / y / and / w /. As indicated in Chapter IV, the vowels / i / and / u / may be used to initiate words in Chinese, but are written as / y / and / w / when they are. These vowels are classified as "semi-vowels." The consonant / n / is a nasal consonant which when pronounced helps to pull the voice towards the front of the facial mask. Once in this position, singers can easily open their mouths and comfortably produce either of the open-mouth vowels / a / or / e /.

The smallest unit of melody in *gaoqiang* music is the single musical pitch. The term "melodic-phrase" (*qiang* 腔) is used to refer to the pitch, or pitches, which are used to sing a single word of song text. Although in *gaoqiang* performance one occasionally hears a melodic-phrase which contains only a single musical note, more often several notes are used to sing each word in a song.

Example 5.5

Single Pitch Melodic-Phrases in a Line of [Duan Zheng Hao] Gupai Song Music¹⁷

actor (sings):

4/4 | 0 6̇ 6̇ 3̇ 5̇ 6̇ | 5̇ 3̇ 2̇ 1̇ 6̇ 6̇ |

当初 送 你 | 南 坡 地 |

Dang chu song ni nan po di,

Seeing you off at the southern hillsides,

In the example above, only the first two words in the lyric line ("dang" and "chu") have melodic-phrases consisting of only a single note. All others contain two or more pitches. When the singing of a word is drawn out over several pitches, it is common practice to sing the majority of the music on the vowel sound of the word, rather than on the consonants which may initiate or conclude it. In other words, an actor performing the song passage above would sing the third word in the lyric line "song," as "s-o-o-o-ng," devoting the most time to the vocalization of the vowel sound / o /, and little time to either the / s / or / ng /. The emphasis on vowel sounds over consonants is due primarily to the comparative ease with which vowels can be sung.

In *gaoqiang* music, vocables are regularly seen following those words in the song text which have melodic-phrases containing several musical pitches. A vocable may be used to facilitate the vocalization process when either i) the number of pitches is large, ii) the initial vowel of the word is not an open-mouth or level-teeth vowel,¹⁸ iii) the word ends with a consonant, or iv) the melodic line is unusually high. In these instances, the singing of the word occurs using the first one or two pitches of the melodic-phrase, leaving the majority of the musical pitches to be sung with the vocable.

Example 5.6

Vocable Placement in a Single Line of [Duan Zheng Hao] Qupai Song Music

helping chorus (sings):

$\frac{4}{4}$ | 0 3̣ 5̣ 2̣ 5̣ 3̣ · | 3̣ 2̣ 1̣ 2̣ 7̣ 6̣ 5̣ 6̣ | 0 3̣ 2̣ 1̣ · 2̣ 3̣ 2̣ | 1̣ 2̣ · 3̣ 2̣ 1̣ 2̣ |
 恨 王 魁 (呵) | 辜 恩 (哪) | (呵) 负 | 义! (呵)
Hen Wang Kui (ye) gu en (na) (a) fu yi! (a)
 Hating Wang Kui [who] failed [me] in kindness [and] loyalty,

| 0 3̣ 2̣ 1̣ 2̣ 1̣ 6̣ | 5 6 1 5 6 5 3 5 2 | 3 · 5 6 6 6 5 3 5 2 | 3 - - 0 |
 (呵) | (a) | (a)

In measure two of the [duan zheng hao] example above, one can observe how vocables are used to facilitate the vocalization of the song text. Rather than singing two full beats of music containing a total of five musical pitches in the melodic-phrase of the word "en" (a word which ends with a consonant), the vocable *na* has been placed immediately after the word, enabling the majority of the musical passage to be sung on the vowel / a /. The portion of the melodic-phrase sung using a vocable is referred to in *gaoqiang* music as a "vocable-phrase" (*yuqici tuoqiang* 语气词拖腔 lit., "vocable extended melodic-phrase").

When an unusually large amount of melodic material is attached to a single word, more than one vocable may be used. Following the word *yi* in measure four, for example, two vocables were used. In this case, the same vocable, *a*, was repeated twice. Often, however, the first vocable will be one which begins with a consonant or semi-vowel (i.e., *na*, *ne*, *ya*, *ye*, *wa*,

or *nai*), while the second will be one of the single-vowel vocables such as *a*, *e*, or *yi*. Once a single-vowel vocable has been sung, all subsequent vocables will be single-vowel vocables, albeit not necessarily the same one.

A few Sichuan opera scholars have tried to claim that specific rules exist which govern vocable selection and placement in *gaoqiang* music. An analysis of published music scores, however, indicates that in actual practice this is not the case. Among the scores examined, the choice of vocables appeared to be sometimes based on the speech-sound of the preceding song text word, sometimes on the nature of the accompanying melody, and sometimes on the individual preference of the vocalist. Based on my analysis, the following six observations regarding the selection and placement of vocables in *gaoqiang qupai* arias can be made:

1. Words in the song text which have speech-sounds ending in vowels, such as the words /*ta* /, /*dei* /, and /*kuai* /, are usually followed by a single-vowel, or semi-vowel-initiated vocable.

2. Words which have speech-sounds ending with the consonants / *n* / or / *ng* / are equally as likely to be followed by a single-vowel vocable or one which is initiated by a semi-vowel, as a vocable initiated by a consonant.

3. No practice exists which tries to match the final vowels of song text words with the vowel sounds of vocables. Only in the case of words ending with the vowel sound / *i* /, such as "*bi* " or "*xi* ," can it be observed that a particular vocable is avoided--the vowel-initiated vocable *a*. This single example, however, seems to be an exception rather than the rule.

4. The vocable *yi* is clearly favored for use in places where the musical pitch is unusually high.

5. When several vocables are used in a sequence, the first vocable may be any one of the nine found in *gaoqiang* music. Beginning from the second, however, only the vocables *e* and *a* are used. An exception, however, is when the melody becomes unusually high, then the vocable *yi* is favored. Once the melodic line has dropped, however, the vocable choice returns to *e* or *a*.

6. The vocable *e* is the only vocable which may precede the singing of the first song text word in a lyric line. When it is used in this manner *e* is always used alone, and never as part of a vocable sequence.

In addition to aiding both the actor and the helping chorus in the physical act of vocalizing a passage of *gaoqiang qupai* music, vocables are also perceived as being important tools for the expression of dramatic meaning through song. Those parts of the song where the majority of vocables can be found (i.e., the most melismatic parts), are where the musical core of the *qupai* is said to lie. Vocable-passages therefore, cannot be considered secondary in importance to the melodic-passages used to sing words in the song text merely because they do not convey linguistic meaning. On the contrary, according to Sichuan opera artists vocable-passages are the places in a song where the most artistic expression takes place.

Although [vocables] have the ability to express meaning, their ability to express individually is not strong.^[19] [Vocables] usually attach themselves to the contents of the song text--complementing, setting-off, enriching and deepening the effect of the song text. In terms of expressing song text meaning, [vocables] are not a fundamental part. [Vocables] do, however, allow the melody to freely evolve. For this reason, [the vocable portion] of a *qupai* is often the strongest musically, [and] the most focused in terms of expression . . . (Chen 1987, pp. 71-71).

Patterns of Song Text Placement

When the placement of the vocables in a *qupai* song is analyzed in terms of the features of the aria's musical structure, one immediately notices that vocables are generally found in those melodic-phrases of the song which are the most melismatic, and in those which are the highest in terms of melodic range. If the same subject is approached from the

perspective of *qupai* performer-assignation structure, specific patterns of vocable placement can also be found.

The song text of an [*er lang shen*] *qupai* song as sung by Sichuan opera *gushi* (leader of the percussion orchestra) Lan Shaoyun (蓝少云), is provided below. As in the published musical score, vocables have been placed within the song text, but are enclosed in parentheses in order to distinguish them from words (Sichuan 1956, 2-3). At the end of each lyric line, a numerical expression indicating the number of words versus vocables is given. Because [*er lang shen*] is a *qupai* featuring a regulated lyric form, the number of words per line is set. In the example below, the first number following the lyric line indicates the number of words mandated for that lyric line. The second number shows the number of vocables which have been added to the song text:

1.	<u>(e) Shi lai feng yu bu (a) (e) shao ting, (e) (a) (e) (a) (e) (a) (e)</u>	7:10	hc
2.	<u>Qie xi jin (e) chao (a) (e) (e) (yi) shi (a) (e) chu qing, (e) (a) (e)</u> <u>(a) (e) (a)</u>	7:13	hc
3.	Liang liang huang ying xiang jiao ying, (e)	7:1	a
4.	<u>Zao bei ta (a) huan qi chun qing, (e) (a) (e) (a) (e) (a)</u>	7:7	hc
5.	Chun se man yuan guan bu jin,	7:0	a
6.	<u>(e) Yi zhi hong (a) xing chu qiang yin, (e) (a)</u>	7:4	hc
7.	<u>Shi (e) hong (yi) mei! (e) (a) (e) (a) (e) (a) (e)</u>	3:9	hc
8.	Yi ye dong feng zhi, (a)	5:1	a
9.	<u>Chui fang man yuan (na) (a) chun, (na) (a)</u>	5:4	hc

Figure 5.12

Comparison of Song Text Word Number to Vocables in an [Er Lang Shen] Qupai Song²⁰

Clearly apparent from the [er lang shen] example, is the sheer number of vocables found in the song text. In *gaoqiang qupai* song performance, it is not unusual to find the number of vocables equaling or exceeding the number of words in a single lyric line. There are no upper or lower limits on the number of vocables which can appear in a single line of song text.

Although the number of vocables may exceed the number of words in one artist's version of a *qupai* song, it does not mean that all other versions will have either the same number of vocables per line or use the same vocables. A comparison of the first four lines of Lan Shaoyun's version of the [er lang shen] song with that of *gushi* Liu Hanzhang's (刘汉章), reveals how vocable use in *qupai* song performance varies among Sichuan opera artists.

<u>line 2</u>		
Lan:	<i>Qie xi jin (e) zhao (a) (e) (e) (yi) shi (a) (e) chu qing. (e) (a)</i> <i>(e)(a) (e) (a)</i>	7:13 hc
Liu:	<i>Qie xi jin (vi) zhao (a) (e) (vi) (a) (e) dei (va) chu qing. (a)</i> <i>(e) (a) (e) (a)²¹</i>	7:12 hc
		vocable difference: 1
<u>line 3</u>		
Lan:	<i>Liang liang huang ying xiang jiao ying, (e).</i>	7:1 a
Liu:	<i>Ting liang liang huang ying xiang jiao ying, (na) (a)</i>	8:2 a
		vocable difference: 1
<u>line 4</u>		
Lan:	<i>Zao bei ta (a) huan qi chun qing. (e) (a) (e) (a) (e) (a)</i>	7:7 hc
Liu:	<i>Zao (e) bei ta (ve) huan qi chun qing. (a) (e) (a) (e) (a)</i>	7:7 hc
		vocable difference: 0
<u>line 5</u>		
Lan:	<i>Chun se man yuan guan bu jin,</i>	7:0 a
Liu:	<i>Chun se man yuan guan bu jin,</i>	7:0 a
		vocable difference: 0
<u>line 6</u>		
Lan:	<i>(e) Yi zhi hong (a) xing chu qiang yin. (e) (a)</i>	7:4 hc
Liu:	<i>Yi zhi hong (a) xing (nai) chu qiang (a) yin. (na) (a)</i>	7:5 hc
		vocable difference: 1

Figure 5.13

Comparison of Vocables in Lines Two -to -Six of Lan Shaoyun's and Liu Hanzhang's Versions of an [Er Lang Shen] Qupai Song²²

In terms of vocable number, differences can be seen in three of the five lyric lines: lines two, three, and six. These disparities, however, are minimal, since in each instance the difference is only a single vocable. Because of the close relationship between vocable use and *qupai* melodic structure, such consistency in vocable number would seem to indicate the presence of a relatively stable musical structure in *gaoqiang qupai* music. When one examines the overall placement of the vocables within each of the lyric lines in the two versions, such musical stability is further suggested.

While the number of vocables in the two song versions is very close, differences in the placement of vocables within a lyric line can be observed. In most lyric lines, however, it is only when a single vocable is used alone that such variation occurs. The comparison of the two versions of line six above shows such variation in single vocable placement. In those sections of a lyric line where two or more vocables are used consecutively, however, considerable similarity in vocable placement can be seen. Vocable presence is primarily dictated by the nature of the accompanying melodic line--the more melodic material contained within a melodic phrase, the more vocables will be needed to sing the phrase. Due to the stability of *qupai* musical structure, the location of a *qupai*'s distinguishing melodic and rhythmic features will be identical in each song. For this reason, the overall pattern of vocable placement within two *qupai* arias, regardless of the exact nature of their song texts, will also reveal considerable consistency.

If one examines the issue of vocable placement from the perspective of *qupai* performer-assignment structure, a striking pattern is apparent: considerably more vocables can be found in lines of helping chorus music than actor music. In the [*er lang shen*] song comparison above, each of the six lines contains the same number of words--seven--with the exception of line three of the Liu Hanzhang version which contains an additional padding word. The number of vocables found in those lines which are designated as helping chorus lines (two, four, and six) ranges anywhere from four to thirteen. In contrast, the greatest number of vocables on any line of actor music is two, in the Liu Hanzhang version of line three. The great disparity between the number of vocables found in actor and helping chorus lines is due to the fundamentally different

musical structures of *gaoqiang qupai* helping chorus and actor music.

While the music which accompanies passages of helping chorus music is described by Sichuan opera practitioners as having "a lot of melody, [but] few words" (*qiang duo zi shao* 腔多字少), actor's music is characterized as containing "a lot of words, [but] little melody" (*zi duo qiang shao* 字多腔少).

In addition to finding more vocables used in lines assigned to the helping chorus, a discernable pattern of vocable placement within each helping chorus line can also be observed. As seen in Lan Shaoyun's version of line six of the [*er lang shen*] song, a vocable can precede the first word in a lyric line. In this case, the vocable *e* was placed before the opening word "*yin*." A more common place to find vocables, however, is either in the central part of the lyric line, or following the final word. In other words, the number of vocables increases the farther down the lyric line--the least in the beginning, the most at the end.

When the melodic-phrase of a word of song text is long enough to necessitate the use of two or more vocables, the vocable passage becomes a musical interlude separating the lyric line into *dou*. When appearing at the end of a line, these vocable passages serve as an indication that the final *dou* of the lyric line has been articulated. Line two in both versions of the [*er lang shen*] song above contain seven words. Despite slight disparities in the total number of vocables and their placement in the lyric line, both versions indicate the presence of a "reverse-order seven-word" *dou* configuration (i.e., 4 words + 3 words). Between the two *dou*, as well as following the final *dou* in the line, vocable-phrases containing three or more vocables can be found.

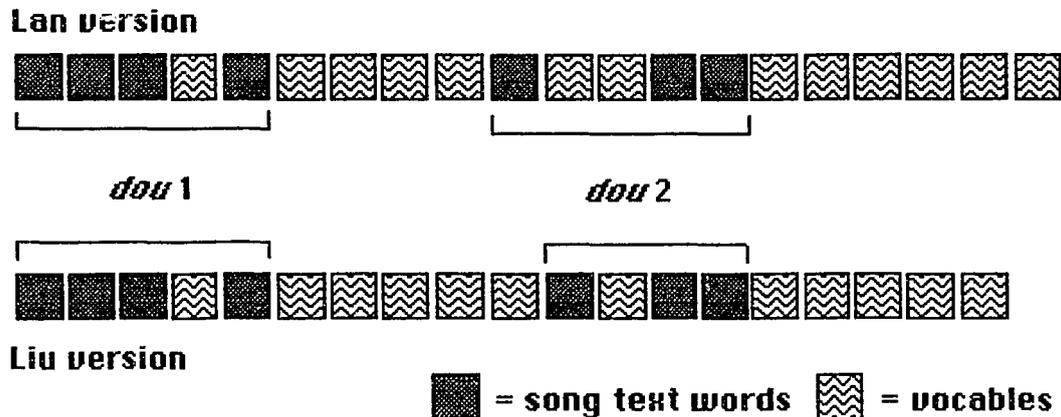


Figure 5.14

***Dou* Configuration and Vocable Placement in Line Two of Lan Shaoyun's and Liu Hanzhang's Versions of an [Er Lang Shen] *Qupai* Song**

The vocable-passages separating individual *dou* in a lyric line are referred to in Chinese as "post-*dou* [vocable-] phrases" (*dou wei tuoqiang* 逗未拖腔 or 读未拖腔 lit., "post-*dou* extended melodic-phrases"). Although most lyric lines containing four or more song text words are divided into at least two *dou*, not all have post-*dou* vocable-phrases. The lyric form of a *qupai* may mandate that one of its song text lines contain nine words, divided into three separate *dou* containing three words each. Unless the melodic structure of the *qupai* provides enough melodic material to warrant the presence of vocables, however, no post-*dou* vocable-phrases will be found in that line, or any other line in the song.

Although a *qupai* song may not contain post-*dou* vocable-phrases, the majority feature one or more lengthy vocable phrases at the ends of lyric lines. Termed, "post-lyric line phrases" (*ju wei tuoqiang* 句未拖腔 lit., "post-lyric line extended melodic-phrases"), this type of vocable-phrase is the most common in *gaoqiang* music. It is within post-lyric line

phrases where Sichuan opera practitioners feel the core of a *qupai*'s musical identity can be found.

An examination of *gaoqiang qupai* lyric form and performer-assignment structure has revealed the presence of distinct structural patterns. When lyric form patterns are compared to those found in performer-assignment structure, one can observe a distinct relationship between these two discrete aspects of *qupai* internal structure. Analysis of *qupai* featuring a semi-regulated lyric form, for example, has revealed that the majority of restrictions which are placed on song text organization occur within those passages of the song assigned to the helping chorus. It is within these passages that the greatest number of vocables are also found. Chapter VI begins the investigation into final element of *gaoqiang qupai* internal form-- musical structure--with a discussion of the characteristics of melodic form. Correlations between this aspect of *qupai* internal structure, and the patterns of lyric form and performer-assignment structure discussed earlier, will also be seen.

Notes to Chapter V

GAOQIANG QUPAI PERFORMER-ASSIGNATION STRUCTURE

¹ Song 1 is sung by the *sheng* character Pei Yu (裴禹) in the scene "Picking Red Plums" ("Zhai hong mei" 摘红梅), from the play *The Red Plum* (*Hong mei ji* 红梅记). The romanization of the text is as follows:

Shi lai feng yu bu shao ting,
Qie xi jin zhao shi chu qing.
Liang liang huang ying xiang jiao ying,
Zao bei ta huan qi chun qing.
Chun se man yuan guan bu jin,
Yi zhi hong xing chu qiang yin.
Shi hong mei!
Yi ye dong feng zhi,
Chui fang man yuan chun.

Song 2 is sung by the *dan* character Lu Zhaorong (卢昭容) in the same scene. A romanization of the song text can be found in Chapter IV, Note 8.

² This [*san xue shi*] *qupai* song is performed by the character Jiao Shu (焦叔) in the scene "Leaving Home" ("Bie jia" 别家), from the play *The Sunflower Well* (*Kuihua jing* 葵花井). The romanization of the song text is as follows:

Dang jin tian zi xuan xian ying,
Chun lei dong zhi shang qing yun.
Nan er hou zhi long hu bang,
Xu dai qu ji hui feng yun.
Dang nu li!
Dang nu li long men chi cheng,
Guang lu li yao men ting.

3 This passage of [*bu shi lu*] is sung by the *sheng* character Wang Chen'en (王承恩) in the scene "Murder in the Palace" ("Sha gong" 杀宫), from the play *The Iron Crown Map* (*Tie guan tu* 铁冠图). The romanization of the song text is as follows:

Di fu tian fan,
Jin xiu he shan xue ran chuan.
Cheng beng xian,
Bai deng san zhan gua gao gan.

4 See Note 1 (Song 1).

5 This song is sung by the *dan* character Bai Shan (白蟾 lit., "White Eel") in the scene "Leaving the Cave to View the Scenery" ("Bie dong guan jing" 别洞观景), from the play *The Courtiers' Well* (*Gong ren jing* 宫人井). The romanization of the song text is as follows:

Qing shan duo ya xiu,
Lü shui lang you you,
Qing shan duo ya xiu,
Lü shui lang you you,
Yu weng bian zou,
Nong fu ba ge ou,
Qiao fu shan ao kou,
Er tong du chun qiu.
Xi you you!
Shi er da fu shou,
Mang xia he ye zhou.

6 See Note 5 for information on this [*suo suo gang*] passage. The [*jin lianzi*] *qupai* song is sung by the character Wang Ruilan (王瑞兰) in the scene "Strolling With An Umbrella" ("Ta san" 踏伞), from the play *The Secluded Boudoir* (*You gui ji* 幽闺记). The romanization of the song text is as follows:

Gu shen chou,
Shei zhi mu xia zhe ban you.
Er ting ren ma hou,
Zeizi xia shan qiu,
Mang wang lin zhong zou,
Kong pa you ren sou.

7 See Note 6.

8 Although some *qupai* exist which have a flying-line that is either assigned to the actor, or found in a part of the song other than the closing portion, the vast majority of flying-lines display the characteristics described here.

9 This [*hua qiaoer*] *qupai* song is sung by the *sheng* character Qian Zaihe (钱在和) in the scene "Accepting the Woman" ("Shou nǚ" 收女), from the play *The Thorn Hairpin* (*Jing chai ji* 荆钗记). The romanization of the song text is as follows:

Deng shan she shui fei wu yuan,
Jun ming yi dao gan liu lian!
Jin chao kai zhou wan Fujian,
Yan jiang zhi shui duo xian tan,
Fan shi jin shen mian wei xian,
Wei yuan yi lu duo ping an.
Gao cang tian!
Gao tian ci fang bian,
Feng song Teng Wang chuan.

10 See Note 2 and Note 1 (Song 1) for background information on these songs and romanizations of the song texts.

11 This passage is sung by the *dan* character Chen Miaochang (陈妙常) in the scene "Autumn River" ("Qiu jiang" 秋江), from the play *The Jade Hairpin* (*Yu zan ji* 玉簪记) (Zhang 1964, 152).

12 This [*tai shi yin*] *qupai* song passage is sung by the character Zhu Youjian (朱由俭) in the scene "Looking at the Book" ("Guan ben" 观本), from the play *The Iron Crown Map* (*Tie guan tu* 铁冠图) (Sichuan 1959, 65).

13 See Note 2 for background information on this song excerpt (Zhang 1964, 222).

14 A few *qupai* in the *gaoqiang* repertoire give opera practitioners the choice between two styles of song initiation. Usually *qupai* which feature a *kun* -head song initiation can also be initiated with an even-start. [*Duan zheng hao*] is one of these *qupai*.

15 This passage of [*duan zheng hao*] music is sung by the *dan* character Jiao Guiying (焦桂英) in the scene "Striking the God" ("Da shen" 打神), from the play *Burning Incense* (*Fen xiang ji* 焚香记) (Wen 1983, 10).

16 The speech-sound of the Chinese ideograph "嘞" (*nē*) is pronounced "le" in Mandarin. In Sichuan dialect, all words that in Mandarin begin with the consonant / l /, are pronounced as if beginning with the consonant / n /.

17 See Note 15 for background information on this excerpt (Wen 1983, 11).

18 The other two types of vowels are "closed-mouth" (*hekou* 合口) and "scooped-lips" (*cuochun* 撮唇) which include such vowels as / u / and / ũ /, and the vowel combinations / ua, uo, uai, uan uang, ũe, ũan, ũn / and / uei/ and / uen / (the latter two are usually written as / ui / and / un /, respectively). Closed-mouth and scooped-lip vowels call for a less open mouth cavity than either open-mouth or level-teeth vowels, making them less sympathetic to vocalists.

19 Sichuan opera vocables do not possess linguistic meaning of their own. Like the English words "ah" and "oh," when used as part of a sentence, vocables may contribute to the overall meaning of the sentence. Out of context, however, vocables possess no denotative meaning.

20 See Note 1 (Song 1).

21 In addition to Liu Hanzhang's addition of a padding word to line 3 (i.e., "*ting*" 听, meaning "to hear"), there is only one other difference in the song texts of the two song versions. Whereas Lan Shaoyun's version of line two reads:

且喜今朝是初晴

Qie xi jin zhao shi chu qing

Pleased that today will clear.

Liu Hanzhang's version is:

且喜今朝得初晴。

Qie xi jin zhao dei chu qing.

Pleased that today [will be] suitably clear.

22 See Note 1 (Song 1).

CHAPTER VI

GAOQIANG QUPAI MELODIC STRUCTURE

The final element in the tripartite internal structure of Sichuan opera *gaoqiang qupai* is musical structure. Similar to both the lyric and performer-assignment structures, the musical structure of *qupai* are relatively stable in nature, and must be reproduced each time a new song composition is created for performance. As with the other two aspects of *qupai* internal structure, any adjustments made to the musical structure of a *qupai* can fundamentally alter the nature of the *qupai* and result in the loss of its identity. As indicated earlier, such loss of identity can affect a *qupai*'s ability to serve its associated dramatic function in performance. The degree of mutability in a *qupai*'s musical structure varies from *qupai* to *qupai*. Within individual *qupai*, certain parts of the musical structure are more sympathetic to change than others.

Sichuan opera practitioners primarily categorize and organize *qupai* based on their musical structures, despite the fact that observable patterns in both lyric form and performer-assignment exist. This music-based categorization system is not only used by Sichuan opera artists and scholars when *qupai* are discussed or learned, but also when *qupai* are organized for performance.

There are two components which constitute the musical structure of a *gaoqiang qupai* song: melody and rhythm. Melody refers to the specific musical pitches and their arrangement in sequential order in a passage of music. Rhythmic structure governs the temporal aspect of music; how much time value is assigned to each musical pitch. Within *gaoqiang qupai* song structure, an analysis of rhythm must also include

the percussion music which accompanies the singing of vocal music passages. The subject of rhythmic structure will be discussed in Chapter VII.

In most forms of *xiqu*, an analysis of the melodic structure of music would include both a discussion of the vocal music sung by the actor, and the instrumental music which accompanies the stage performer at various times during the dramatic presentation. *Gaoqiang* plays, in contrast, are traditionally performed without the aid of melodic accompaniment, but feature two different vocalizing entities in performance: the actor and helping chorus. This unique variation in performance practice must be taken into account during analysis of musical form. In addition to having distinctly different physical presences in performance, analysis of the music sung by the Sichuan opera actor and helping chorus also reveals fundamental differences in the melodic structures of their respective music. These differences help distinguish aurally between the discrete dramatic functions which the two performing bodies serve in performance. The presence of structural similarities between helping chorus and actor music, however, serve to remind the listener that their respective dramatic functions are not without some degree of interrelation and mutual influence.

Elements of Melodic Structure

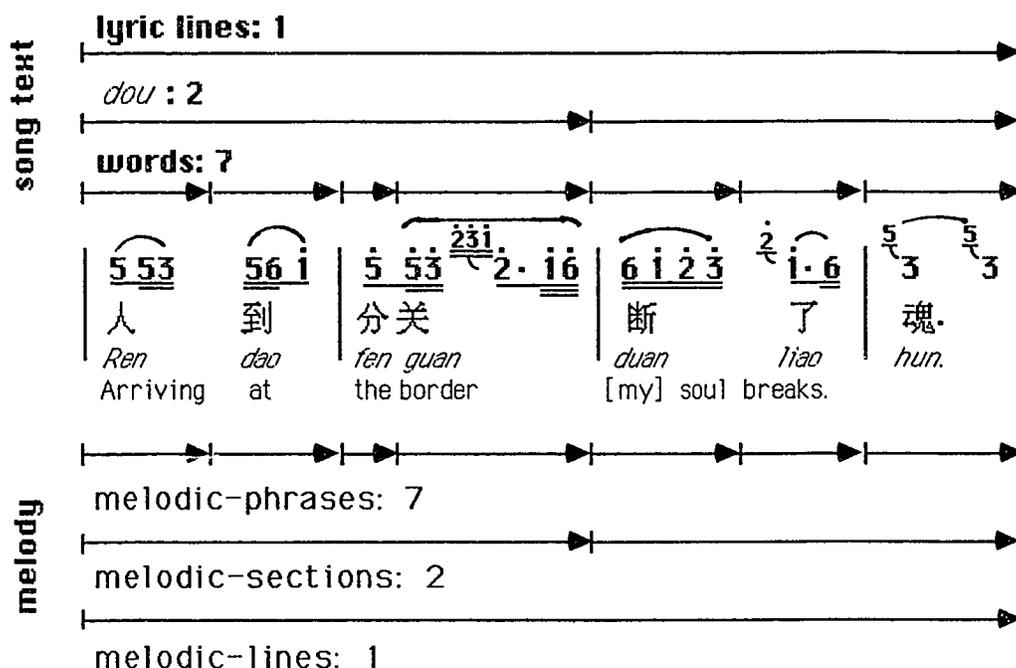
The melodic structure of any passage of *gaoqiang* vocal music is created through a hierarchical ordering of melodic elements. Just as a word is the basic unit of *qupai* lyric form, the music pitch (or pitches) used to sing a single word of song text is the basic unit of *qupai* melodic

structure. The length of these musical units, called "melodic-phrases," varies. Some melodic-phrases contain only a single musical pitch which lasts less than a single beat of music. Others melodic-phrases, however, contain several pitches spread over several measures of music. As indicated in Chapter V, when a melodic-phrase contains two or more pitches, one of the nine *gaoqiang* vocables is frequently placed immediately following that word of song text. The primary function of these nonsensical syllables is to facilitate vocalization and creative expression. Those pitches of the melodic-phrase which are sung on the vocable collectively form a "vocale-phrase."

Parallels in Song Text and Melodic-Line Form

Each lyric line of song text consists of one or more semantic units, called *dou*. The melodic-phrases of the words within each *dou* form a "melodic-section" (*qiangjie* 腔节). Just as one or more *dou* form a line of song text, a "melodic-line" (*qiangju* 腔句 lit., "line of melodic-phrases") of music is the summation of its melodic-sections. Two or more melodic-lines in a song constitute a "melodic-passage" (*changduan* 唱段). The following breakdown of a single line of [*chu jiang yin*] (楚江吟) *qupai* song music illustrates the relationship between the various textual elements, and their corresponding melodic units.¹

Example 6.1

Division of Song Text and Melodic Units in a Single Line of a [Chu Jiang Yin] *Qupai* Song Music²

The general term for vocal music in Sichuan opera is *changqiang* (唱腔 lit., "sung melodic-phrases"). In *gaoqiang* music, however, there is a need to differentiate between the two styles of vocal music found within a *qupai* song. For this reason, the term "*changqiang*" is generally used to refer to only those parts of the *qupai* song which are sung by the actor. As indicated in Chapter I, the Chinese term "helping chorus" (*bangqiang* 帮腔), literally translates into English as "helped melodic-phrases." In Sichuan opera, both the chorus of singers and the music which they perform are referred to by this term. In this study, I will use the terms "actor passage" and "actor music," and "helping chorus passage" and "helping chorus music," will be used to distinguish between the two types of vocal music.

Principal Tones

Like most styles of traditional Chinese music, Sichuan opera *gaoqiang qupai* songs are constructed using a pentatonic scale. In Chinese musicological terminology, the five pitches which constitute this scale are "gong" (宫), "shang" (商), "jue" (角),³ "zhi" (徵) and "yu" (羽); corresponding to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 6th pitch degrees of the traditional Chinese twelve-tone scale (*shier lu* 十二律). These five pitches equate roughly to the same pitch degrees in the Western major diatonic scale. For this reason, the five Chinese pitches are often referred to using the Western solmizations: *do*, *re*, *mi*, *sol*, and *la*, rather than by their indigenous Chinese names. In cipher notation, the five pitches are represented by their respective pitch degrees (i.e., *gong* = 1, *shang* = 2, etc.)

In addition to the five fundamental pitches, some *qupai* melodic structures contain two additional pitches corresponding roughly to the *fa* (4th pitch degree) and *ti* (7th pitch degree) of the Western scale.⁴ Termed "*bian zhi*" (变徵 lit. "modified zhi" [i.e., *sol*]) and "*bian gong*" (变宫 lit., "modified gong" [i.e., *do*]) respectively, these pitches are perceived as being unstable. When used in the context of a song, the 4 and 7 pitches are thought to convey the feeling of key modulation (*li diao* 离调 or *zan zhuan diao* 暂转调) (Sichuan 1987, 139). These two pitches are used mainly for the purposes of ornamentation and special effect, or when actual key modulation is performed. The periodic presence of these pitches, however, does not affect the perception that *gaoqiang* melodic structure is fundamentally pentatonic.

Each of the five pitches in the pentatonic scale serves as the base tone, or "principal tone" (*zhuyin* 主音), for one of the five modes (*diaoshi* 调式 lit., "key style") used in *gaoqiang* music. Each of these modes is referred to by the name of the principal tone on which it is based. The mode which is based on the sixth pitch degree of the scale (*yu*), for example, is called the "yu mode" (*yu diao* 羽调 lit., "key of *yu*"). This mode begins on the *yu* pitch (6) and ends on *zhi* (5), creating the melodic scale: 6, 1, 2, 3, 5.

The principal tone of a mode is the pitch on which most of the major cadences of the *qupai* song occur. When serving as the final pitch in a passage of music, principal tones, like tonic pitches in Western classical music, convey a sense of closure and completeness. In the opening two lines of an [*er lang shen*] *qupai* song, the principal tone of the mode, 6 (*yu*), serves as the final pitch.

Example 6.2

Positions of the Principal Tone as a Cadence Pitch in Two Lines of an [Er Lang Shen] Qupai Song⁵

helping chorus (sings):

$\frac{4}{4}$ | 6 i 2 2 2 ⁱ 6 | i 6 6 i 2 - | 3 2 3 i 6 5 i |

(呢) 时来 风 雨 | 不 (呵) (呢) | 稍 (呵)

(e) Shi lai feng yu bu (a) (e) hao (a)

Time passes the wind [and] rain do not

6 3 3 3 | 3 6 5 3 2 | 2 6 i 2 2 2 | 2 3 5 5 |

停 (呢) 且 喜 | 今 (呢) | 朝 (呵) (呢) | (呢)

ting, (e) Qie xi jin (yi) zhao (a) (e) (yi)

abate, Pleased that today

3 5 3 5 3 2 | i 2 6 i ²³ 2 - | 6 6 i 2 3 i 6 5 i | 6 - 6 6 i |

(呵) (呢) | 得 (呀) 初 | 晴 (呵)

(a) (e) dei (ya) chu qing (a)

clearing will begin.

2 2 i 6 i 5 i | 6 2 i 6 5 6 - |

(呢) (呵) | (呢) (呵)

(e) (a) (e) (a)

The final note in each melodic-line of music in a *gaoqiang* song is not always the principal tone; other notes in the mode can also serve as cadential pitches (*luoyin* 落音 lit., "falling-upon tones"). Within the song structure, however, there are a number of positions where the principal tone is regularly found serving as a cadential pitch. As indicated in Chapter V, the most common pattern of performer-assignment structure seen in *gaoqiang qupai* places passages of helping chorus music at the

beginning and ending portions of the song. The portion of the song allocated to the actor is usually sandwiched between these two passages. The principal tone of a *qupai*'s mode is frequently used as the cadential pitch for these lines of helping chorus music. When several helping-chorus lines occur consecutively, as in the erect-pillars section of a *qupai* song, the principal tone may not be used as the cadential pitch for each line, but it is almost always the final pitch of the final melodic-line in the helping chorus passage. Among *qupai* which feature a flying-line, the principal tone also frequently serves as the cadential pitch for that line. In the following [*suo suo gang*] *qupai* song example, the positions of the principal tone when serving as a cadence pitch are indicated.

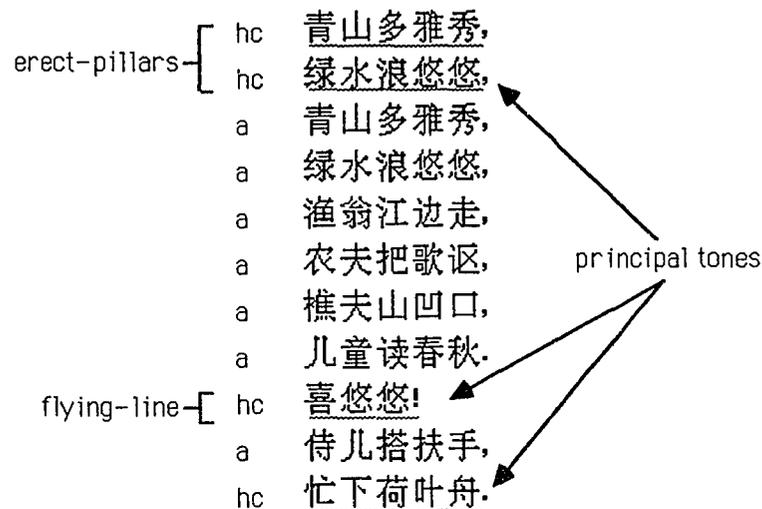


Figure 6.1

Positions of Principal Tone As Cadence Pitches in a [*Suo Suo Gang*] *Qupai* Song⁶

Although experimentation with the use of melodic accompaniment in *gaoqiang* performance has been going on for many years, the larger part of the dramatic repertoire is still performed with only the traditional

percussion accompaniment. In that *gaoqiang* has been primarily a melodically-unaccompanied opera tradition since its inception, the practice of linking the principal tone of a *qupai* mode to an absolute pitch found on such fixed-pitch instruments as the *dizi* (horizontal bamboo flute) or piano never developed. Although each *qupai* has a specific musical range in which it is usually performed, the *gaoqiang* musical system is based on the concept of relative pitch with a moveable *do*, rather than on absolute pitch and a predetermined key.

Qupai Modes

The melodies of all *gaoqiang* *qupai* songs are constructed using one of the five modes. The *qupai* [*duan zheng hao*] and [*er lang shen*], for example, are both said to composed in *yu* mode. All songs constructed from either of these *qupai* have melodies which emphasize the principal tone *yu* (6). The *qupai* [*suo suo gang*], in contrast, uses a mode based on the 1st pitch degree of the scale (*gong*). Each time a song is created using a particular *qupai*, the same modal structure must be present. Just as the choice of a major or minor key in Western art music gives a musical composition a distinct aural nature, a *qupai*'s mode affects the overall sound of the song. This aural nature in turn impacts the way practitioners select and arrange *qupai* for use in performance.

Not all *qupai* songs, however, are composed using a single mode. The *qupai* [*yi zhi hua*] for example, emphasizes the 3rd and the 6th degrees of the scale at different points in its songs. This phenomenon, referred to as "alternating modes" (*diaoshi de jiaoti* 调式的交替), leaves Sichuan opera practitioners arguing about which mode the *qupai* is in-*jue* mode (3) or *yu* mode (6), or a combination of the two. A few

qupai in the repertoire are recognized for the fact that they clearly change modes during the course of a song. The most well-known of these modulating *qupai* is [*liu fan gong ci*] (六犯宫词).⁷ Songs created from this *qupai* begin in the *yu* mode. However, as its name implies: "tune-[which]-changes-mode-six-times," this *qupai* modulates six times during a song before returning to the *yu* mode at the end of the composition.

	mode			mode	
你问咱因甚欢庆,	a + hc	6	她那里低低应声.	hc	
咱今朝有些侥幸,	hc		则见她半吞半吐,	a	
真可是价值连城,	hc	3	慢道无情无情却有情.	hc	
似美玉怀中抱,	a		你若问这枝红梅,	hc	
珍珠儿在我手内擎.	hc	2	是她亲相赠.	hc	1
你看画楼高处,	hc	6	赠裴生!	hc	6
一女郎如花娉婷.	hc		兰桥多雅韵,	a	
卢氏照容是她的名.	hc		天遭遇良姻.	hc	
但见她半钩新月羞眉黛,	a		咱为多娇美得下疯魔病,	hc	
爱煞人,	hc		四肢无力少精神.	hc	
满面春风笑来迎.	hc	2	你把那好曲儿多唱儿声,	hc	
俺这里轻轻呼唤,	hc	3			

Figure 6.2

Mode Changes in a [*Liu Fan Gong Ci*] *Qupai* Song⁸

From the example above, one can see that the [*liu fan gong ci*] *qupai* begins in the *yu* mode (6), but changes within two lines to the *jiao* mode (3). Continuing this pattern of modulation, the song moves from the *jiao* mode to the *shang* (2), then *yu* (6), *shang* (2), *jiao* (3), and *gong* (1). Characteristic of modulating *qupai* such as [*liu fan gong ci*], is the return

to the initial mode of the song (i.e., *yu*) before ending the composition. Also characteristic is that modulation always takes place during passages of helping chorus music, and never during passages of actor music. This is due to the relative melodic stability of helping chorus music.

Just as a *qupai* 's lyric form or performer-assignment structure must be present each time a new song composition is constructed, the musical pitches which constitute the *qupai* 's prescribed mode must be used to create the melodic structure of each new song. Regardless of whether the melodic structure of a *qupai* contains a single mode or many, the same modal structure must be maintained; its "modal identity" preserved.

Melodic Features of Actor and Helping Chorus Music

Qupai songs are created using the designated mode(s) for that *qupai*. How opera practitioners organize the pitches of a mode to create the melodic line of the song will depend on several different factors including the intended dramatic use of the song and the linguistic features of the song text. Another important factor influencing melodic construction is the performer-assignment structure of the *qupai*. This is due primarily to the fact that Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* actor and helping chorus music have fundamentally different melodic natures.

Sichuan opera practitioners describe passages of actor music as having "a lot of words, [but] little melody" (*zi duo qiang shao* 字多腔少), indicating that the melodic-phrases found in passages of actor music contain little melodic material. In contrast, helping chorus passages are said to have "a lot of melody, [but] few words" (*qiang duo zi shao* 腔多字少). Simply stated, helping chorus passages are more

melismatic than actor passages. A comparison of passages of 4/4 meter [xiang luo dai] ([香罗带]) actor and helping chorus music illustrates these differences.

Example 6.3

Comparison of Passages of [Xiang Luo Dai] Qupai Song Actor and Helping Chorus Music⁹

actor (sings):

line 1

4/4 | 0 $\overset{\frown}{\dot{1} \underline{65} \underline{5 \dot{2}} \underline{2 \cdot \dot{1}}}$ | 0 $\overset{\frown}{6 \dot{1}} \overset{\frown}{\dot{2} \dot{1}}$ | $\overset{\frown}{\dot{5} \dot{1} \underline{\dot{2} \dot{3} \dot{5}} \underline{\dot{2} \dot{3} \dot{1} \dot{2} \dot{1}}}$ $\overset{6}{\dot{5}} -$ |

想 当初 在 家 多快 活。

Xiang dang chu zai jia duo kuai huo,
Recalling when back at home how happy,

helping chorus (sings):

line 1

4/4 | $\overset{\frown}{\underline{56} \dot{1} \underline{5} \underline{65} \underline{3}}$ | $\underline{5} \underline{6} \underline{53}$ $\overset{\frown}{\underline{35} \underline{23} \underline{5}}$ | $\overset{\dot{2}}{\dot{3} \cdot}$ $\overset{\dot{2}}{\dot{5}}$ $\overset{\dot{2}}{\dot{1}}$ $\overset{\frown}{\underline{65}}$ |

这 凄凉(呵) 可(呵) 为(呀) (呢) (呵)

Zhei qi liang (a) ke (a) wei (ya) (e) (a)
What is the reason for this

a:

line 2

0 $\overset{\dot{5}}{\underline{5} \underline{7}}$ $\overset{\frown}{\underline{5 \dot{2} \dot{3} \dot{2} \dot{1}}}$ $\overset{6}{\dot{5}}$ | $\overset{\frown}{\underline{\dot{1} \dot{2} \underline{6}}}$ $\overset{6}{\dot{5}}$ |

身入空 门 受折 磨。

Shen ru kong men shou zhe ma.
Since becoming a nun enduring torment.

hc:

line 1 (cont.)

$\overset{\frown}{\dot{1} \underline{\dot{2} \dot{3}} \underline{\dot{1} \cdot \underline{6}}}$ $\underline{56} \dot{1}$ | $\underline{6} \underline{6} \underline{5} \underline{3} \underline{5} \underline{2} \underline{3}$ | $\overset{2/4}{\dot{5}} -$ |

何?(呢) (呵)

he? (e) (a)
misery?

In the above two-line passage of actor music a total of five measures of music are used to sing fifteen words of song text. The average length of

each musical-phrase is one beat of music or less. The one-line passage of *[xiang luo dai]* helping chorus music is taken from the same *qupai* song, and features the same metrical structure. This passage also lasts a total of five measures. Markedly different from the actor music, however, is the amount of song text which is sung: the helping chorus sings six words in the same amount of time the actor sings fifteen. Of the six words in the helping chorus line, two have melodic-phrases which last less than one beat of music. The melodic-phrases of the remaining four words, however, last three beats or more, with that of the final word lasting a full two measures of music.

When the two *[xiang luo dai]* passages are compared, it is clear that over twice the amount of musical material is needed to sing the same amount of song text in helping chorus music. Due to this fundamental disparity in melodic structure, vocables are regularly added to passages of helping chorus music to facilitate the singing of the longer melodic-phrases. The logogenic nature (*langsongxing* 朗诵性 lit., "declamatory nature") of *gaoqiang qupai* actor music, however, virtually precludes the utilization of vocables.

In all forms of *xiqu*, the speech-tones of the words in the song text play an important role in shaping the melodic structure of vocal songs. Due to the disparate natures of *gaoqiang* helping chorus and actor music, however, a striking difference in the degree of song text speech-tone influence can be seen in the two types of vocal music.

Language and Melody

Influence of Speech Tones on Melodic Structure

Although each word in the Chinese language has a unique ideograph by which it is represented in the writing system, speech-tones must be used when pronouncing words in order to distinguish them from others with the same speech-sound. For this reason, it is imperative that the melodic structure of a passage of vocal music be structured so that the tonal properties of the song text speech-tones be reflected. If not reflected, a passionate song describing the hardships suffered by one's mother (*ma* 妈), may be misinterpreted by the audience to be an ode to someone's horse (*ma* 马). In other words, disregarding the linguistic properties of the speech-tones can severely hinder, if not entirely obstruct, the ability of the song to function as the principal means of aural communication in performance.

The [pitch] height and movement of the speech-tones in song lyrics influence the [pitch] height and movement of the music's melody, so the [pitch] height and direction that the melody takes must be the same, or basically the same, as the speech-tone's. Otherwise, a different speech sound form will be conveyed, thus giving rise to misunderstanding (Chen 1986, 52).

The correct approach to the melodic construction of vocal music in Sichuan opera performance is described by theatre practitioners in the phrase, "move the melody according to the word" (*yi zi xing qiang* 依字行腔).

The passage of [*duan zheng hao*] *qupai* song music below gives the speech-tones in the Sichuan dialect of Chengdu of all of the words in the song text.¹⁰ In this way, the relationship between the pitch and

directional properties of the speech-tones and the song melody can be examined.

Example 6.4

Song Text Speech-Tone Values in Two Lines of [Duan Zheng Hao] Gupai Song Music¹¹

actor (sings):

$\frac{4}{4}$	$0 \quad \overset{\cdot}{6} \quad \overset{\cdot}{6} \quad \overset{\cdot}{3} \quad \overset{\cdot}{5} \quad \overset{\cdot}{6}$ 当初送你	$\overset{\cdot}{6} \quad \overset{\cdot}{5} \quad \overset{\cdot}{3} \quad \overset{\cdot}{2} \quad \overset{\cdot}{1} \quad \overset{\cdot}{6} \quad \overset{\cdot}{6}$ 南坡地,
	<i>Dang</i> ¹ <i>chu</i> ¹ <i>song</i> ⁴ <i>ni</i> ³ Sending you off	<i>nan</i> ² <i>po</i> ¹ <i>di</i> ⁴ , at the southern hillsides,
	$0 \quad \overset{\cdot}{5} \quad \overset{\cdot}{3} \quad \overset{\cdot}{2} \quad \overset{\cdot}{3} \quad \overset{\cdot}{5} \quad \overset{\cdot}{1} \quad \overset{\cdot}{1}$ 海誓山盟	$\overset{\cdot}{3} \quad \overset{\cdot}{2} \quad \overset{\cdot}{3} \quad \overset{\cdot}{5} \quad \overset{\cdot}{7} \cdot \overset{\cdot}{6} \quad \overset{\cdot}{6} \quad \overset{\cdot}{5} \quad \overset{\cdot}{6}$ 永不渝.
	<i>Hai</i> ³ <i>shi</i> ⁴ <i>shan</i> ¹ <i>meng</i> ² Making a vow of love	<i>yong</i> ³ <i>bu</i> ⁴ <i>yu</i> ² . never to be broken.

In this passage, there are four words which are pronounced using a 1st speech-tone: "dang," (当) and "chu" (初) in measure one, "po" (坡) in measure two, and "shan" (山) in measure three. When the melodic-phrases of these four words are examined, the high and level pitch properties of the 1st speech-tone are found to be reflected in the music. For the words "dang," "chu," and "shan," this is achieved by constructing melodic-phrases which consist of a single, high pitched note (6̇, 6̇, and 5̇, respectively). The melodic-phrases of 1st tone words are frequently among the highest-pitched in a song.

The feeling of height which is necessary to convey the properties of a Chengdu 1st tone can also be created through contrast in pitch height. Since *dang* and *chu* are the first two words in the song text, such

contrast can not be observed. Although the first pitches in the melodic-phrases of the 1st tone words "po " and "shan " are lower than those pitches for "dang " and "chu," they are significantly higher than the final pitches in the melodic-phrases which follow them. The initial pitch in the "po " melodic-phrase (3̇) is a sixth higher than the final pitch in the melodic-phrase for the word "nan " (南) (5), while the initial pitch for "shan " (5̇) is a minor third higher than the final pitch in the melodic-phrase of "shi " (誓) (3̇).

Due to the monodirectional nature of the Chengdu dialect 1st tone, a single note of relative length is all that is needed to convey the speech-tone properties. The words "dang," "chu," and "shan," are all sung on a single eighth note. Although the melodic-phrase for the word "po " contains two pitches (the second of which is lower than the first), the properties of the 1st speech-tone are still communicated due to the relatively long time value of the first pitch (i.e., an eighth note). In general, it is usually only the first one or two pitches in a melodic-phrase which convey the speech-tone. Once the speech-tone properties of the word have been made clear to the audience, artists are given the freedom to move the melody in any direction they desire, so long as they do not hinder the conveyance of the following word's speech-tone.

In *gaoqiang* music, two or more musical pitches are usually necessary to communicate the falling directional pattern of the 2nd speech-tone. Unlike the 1st tone, the musical pitches assigned to 2nd tone words are normally located in the lower end of the melodic range. In the example above, all three 2nd tone words--"nan " (南) in measure two, "meng " (盟) in measure three, and "yu " (渝) in measure four--have a melodic-phrase which begins on a note that is lower in pitch than the

final note of the preceding melodic-phrase. In each case, this closing note is reiterated briefly using an ornamental glide (*yiyin* 倚音) before the initial melodic-phrase pitch is sung.

Although the pitches accompanying the singing of the words "nan " and "yu " are among the lowest in the scale (i.e., 5 and 6), the pitches in the melodic-phrase of the word "meng," are not (i.e., $\dot{5}$ and $\dot{1}$). Because the $\dot{1}$ pitch in the "meng " melodic-phrase is longer in duration and lower in pitch than the $\dot{5}$ pitch, however, the directional properties of the 2nd speech-tone can still be communicated.

Given the common pitch directions shared by the 2nd and 3rd speech-tones in Sichuan dialect, pitch height becomes an important issue in distinguishing between words sharing common speech-sounds. When the melodic-phrases for the 3rd tone word "hai " (海) in measure four, and the 2nd tone word "meng " in measure three, are compared, a difference in pitch height can clearly be seen in the two melodic-phrases. Although both melodic-phrases begin on a $\dot{5}$ pitch, the melody for the 3rd tone word "hai " drops a minor third to a $\dot{3}$ pitch, whereas the melody for the 2nd tone word "meng " falls a perfect fifth to a $\dot{1}$ pitch.

Another method used to differentiate between 2nd and 3rd tone words is through note value. According to the Sichuan opera music scholar Chen Mingdao (陈铭道), the first note of the melodic-phrase for a 2nd tone word is usually of lesser time value than the second note. This can be seen in each of the 2nd tone word melodic-phrases in the above [duan zheng hao] example. In the music accompanying the singing of 3rd tone words, however, the notes are usually of equal time value (1986, 53).

The dropping-then-rising directional quality of the 4th speech-tone can be conveyed in two ways. In some instances, this is achieved solely

through the structure of the melodic-phrase of the 4th tone word. At other times, however, a contrast in pitch degree between the final pitch of the preceding word's melodic-phrase, and the initial pitch of the 4th tone word's melodic-phrase is used. In the example above, the 4th tone of the words "song " (送) in measure one, "di " (地) in measure two, and "shi " (誓) in measure three, are all conveyed through this latter method. In each instance, only the rising portion of the speech-tone is contained within the melodic-phrase of the 4th tone word. The initial falling portion of the speech-tone is created through a contrast in pitch degree between the final note of the preceding melodic-phrase and the initial note of the 4th tone word's own melodic-phrase.

Unlike the *qupai* found in some other musical systems, Sichuan opera *gaoqiang qupai* do not control the arrangement of speech-tones in the song text. For this reason, the impact of speech-tones on shaping the overall melodic structure of *gaoqiang* vocal music is quite great. As illustrated in the example above, a good portion of the melodic structure of a passage of music can fall under the influence of speech-tones. Given the more melismatic nature of helping chorus music, however, the overall effect of speech-tones on helping chorus music melodic structure is considerably less than for actor music.

Vocable-Phrases

While *gaoqiang qupai* actor music is characterized by its logogenic nature and high degree of speech-tone influence, passages of helping chorus music are recognized for their melismatic nature and relative lack of speech-tone influence. As the analysis of *qupai* performer-assignment

structure in Chapter V has shown, the number of vocables present in passages of helping chorus music is considerably greater than in actor music. The amount of musical pitches found in passages of helping chorus music as compared to actor music, is the reason for this difference.

Not all helping chorus passages contain the same amount of melisma, and therefore, vocables. Music constructed using slower metrical structures such as a 4/4 meter, for example, will generally contain more vocables than music constructed using faster ones (e.g., 2/4 or 1/4 meter). This is due to the fact that the interval between accented beats (i.e., the initial beat in a measure of music) is longer, thus allowing more musical pitches to be sung by a vocalist. For this reason, a greater ratio of musical pitches to song text words can be found in 4/4 music than in 1/4 music, and hence more need for vocables in the former.

Within passages of helping chorus music constructed using the same metrical structure, the amount of melisma within each melodic-line of music varies depending on the portion of the melodic-line. In general, the amount of melisma increases the further down the melodic-line. This musical feature parallels the pattern of vocable placement within lyric lines described in Chapter V.

Inter-Dou and Cadential Vocable-Phrases

Understanding the salient features of helping chorus melodic form first requires an understanding of the relationship between vocables and melody. As indicated earlier, when a vocable is placed after a word in the song text, the portion of that word's melodic-phrase which is sung using the vocable becomes identified with the vocable. This portion is referred to as a "vocable-phrase." When a vocable-phrase lasts two or more beats of

music, one or more additional vocables are usually added to the vocable-phrase. Although the same vocable can be repeated, more often a number of different vocables are used.

Although most vocable-phrases in a song are located in passages of helping chorus music, some are present in passages of actor music as well. These vocable-phrases are relatively short in length, however, and usually last one beat of music or less. A notable exception is the melodic structure known as the "released melodic-phrase" (*fangqiang* 放腔).

In lyric lines which have a performer-assignation structure that divides the vocalization between the actor and the helping chorus, it is the actor who generally initiates the line, and the helping chorus who concludes it. On such lyric lines, it is not uncommon to find that one of the melodic-phrases in the actor's portion of the melodic-line is unusually melismatic and contains one or more vocables. This melodic-phrase, termed a "released melodic-phrase," is frequently the final one in the actor's portion of the line.¹² When the lyric line contains a large number of words (i.e., seven or more), the released melodic-phrase may occur earlier in the lyric line, dividing the actor's portion into two *dou*. Released melodic-phrases differ fundamentally from putting-on-a-hat song initiations in that they are not found on the first line of a *qupai* song, and for the fact that they feature a distinct melodic line which is sung, rather than intoned, by the actor.

Line four of a [*jiang tou jin gui*] *qupai* song contains a released melodic-phrase. The song text of the lyric line has nine words. The actor initiates the melodic-line by singing four of the words, performing a released melodic-phrase between the second and third words. To facilitate the vocalization of the released melodic-phrase, the single

vocable *a* (啊) has been placed immediately after the second word in the lyric line. The helping chorus sings the final five words in the lyric line, and as in many helping chorus lines, concludes the vocalization with a vocable-phrase of relatively long length and containing a number of different vocables.

Example 6.5

Positions of a Released Melodic-Phrase and Vocable-Phrase in a Single Line [*Jiang Tou Jin Gui Qupai Song Music*¹³]

actor (sings):

released melodic-phrase

4/4 | $\underline{\underline{5}} \underline{\underline{5}} \underline{\underline{4}} \underline{\underline{5}} \underline{\underline{4}} \underline{\underline{2}} \underline{\underline{4}} \underline{\underline{2}} \underline{\underline{1}} \underline{\underline{b7}} \underline{\underline{1}} \underline{\underline{7}} \underline{\underline{5}} - | \underline{\underline{1}} \underline{\underline{2}} \underline{\underline{b7}} \underline{\underline{7}} \underline{\underline{1}} \underline{\underline{7}} \underline{\underline{5}} - |$
 我想 (啊) 那 一 日...
Wo xiang (a) na yi ri...
 Recalling that day...

helping chorus (sings):

vocable-phrase

... 打扫山 门, (哪) (呢) (呢) (呢) (呢)
 ... *da sao shan men, (na) (e) (e) (e) (e)* ...
 ... sweeping by the mountain gate,

(啊) (呢) (啊) (呢) (呢)
(a) (e) (a) (e) (e)

The released melodic-phrase, with its large number of musical pitches, is the exception in *gaoqiang* actor music. When vocables-phrases are found in actor passages, the vast majority are relatively short. The vocable-phrases found in helping chorus music, in contrast, often contain

several vocables, and last one or more measures of music. As indicated in Chapter V, these large vocable-phrases are most often located between *dou* in the central portion of the lyric line, or following the final word in the line. The vocable-phrases found in these locations are referred to as "post-*dou* vocable-phrases" (*dou wei tuoqiang* 逗未拖腔 or 读未拖腔) and "post-lyric line vocable-phrases" (*ju wei tuoqiang* 句未拖腔), respectively. Because technically speaking both types of vocable-phrases are, in essence, "post-*dou* vocable-phrases," I have chosen to use the term "inter-*dou* vocable-phrase" to refer to those which are located between *dou* in the central portion of the lyric line. As post-lyric line vocable-phrases include the cadence pitch for the melodic-line, I will hereafter refer to them as "cadential vocable-phrases."

The following example of [*er lang shen*] *qupai* song helping chorus music contains both types of vocable-phrases. The lyric line contains seven words, with an inter-*dou* vocable-phrase situated between the fourth and fifth words in the line. The cadential vocable-phrase begins after the seventh word of the lyric line has been sung.

Example 6.6

Placement of Inter-Dou and Cadential Vocable-Phrases in a Seven-Word Line of [Er Lang Shen] Qupai Song Helping Chorus Music¹⁴

helping chorus (sings):

inter-dou vocable-phrase

dou 1: 4 words

$\frac{4}{4}$ | 0 3̣ 3̣ 3̣· | 3̣ 6̣ 5̣ 3̣ 2̣ | 2̣ 6̣ ị 2̣ 2̣ 2̣ | 2̣ 3̣ 5̣ 5̣ |

(呢) 且 喜 | 今 (呢) | 朝 (呵) (呢) | (呢)

(e) Qie xi jin (yi) | zhao (a) (e) | (yi)

Pleased that today

dou 2: 3 words

3̣ 5̣ 3̣ 5̣ 3̣ 2̣ | ị 2̣ 6̣ ị 2̣ - | 6̣ 6̣ ị 2̣ 3̣ ị 6̣ 5̣ ị | 6̣ - 6̣ 6̣ ị |

(呵) (呢) | 得(呀) 初 | 晴· (呵)

(a) (e) | dei (ya) chu | qing. (a)

clearing will begin.

cadential vocable-phrase

2̣ 2̣ ị 6̣ ị 5̣ ị | 6̣ 2̣ ị 6̣ 5̣ 6̣ - |

(呢) (呵) | (呢) (呵)

(e) (a) | (e) (a)

Melodic Stability

A characteristic feature of vocables is their lack of speech-tones. Unlike song text words, they exert no influence on the melodic structure of a passage of vocal music. A comparison of two songs created from the same *qupai*, but with different song texts, will display differences in vocable selection, and in the location of small vocable-phrases. The positions of the large inter-dou and cadential vocable-phrases will, however, be the same. When the melodic structures of these songs are examined, fundamental differences can be seen in the melodic contour of

those portions of the song which fall under the influence of song text speech-tones. The following example of two passages of [*er lang shen*] *qupai* song music demonstrates such melodic differences.

Example 6.7

Comparison of the Melodic Structure and Song Text Speech-Tones in Line Three of Two [*Er Lang Shen*] *Qupai* Song¹⁵

actor (sings):
song 1

$$\frac{4}{4} \left| 0 \overset{\cdot}{\underline{2}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{3}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{1}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{2}} \overset{\cdot}{3} \overset{\cdot}{3} \cdot \left| \overset{\cdot}{\underline{2}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{3}} \overset{\cdot}{3} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{3}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{2}} \overset{\cdot}{6} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{2}} - \right| \right.$$

但 愿 东 君 常 管 领, (哪) (呵)

Dan⁴ yuan² dong¹ jun¹ chang² guan³ ling³, (na) (a)
Hoping the Eastern Ruler will take care [of him],

song 2

$$\frac{4}{4} \left| 0 \overset{\cdot}{\underline{5}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{3}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{2}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{6}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{5}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{3}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{2}} \cdot \overset{\cdot}{\underline{3}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{5}} \overset{\cdot}{6} - \left| \overset{\cdot}{\underline{5}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{2}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{3}} \overset{\cdot}{3} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{3}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{5}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{1}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{6}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{1}} \overset{\cdot}{\underline{2}} - \right| \right.$$

听 两 两 黄 莺 唤 叫 应, (哪) (呵)

Ting¹ liang³ liang³ huang² ying¹ huan⁴ jiao⁴ ying⁴, (na) (a)
Hear the pair of yellow orioles calling back and forth,

A comparison of the song text speech-tones in the above two lines of actor music confirms the fact that *gaoqiang qupai* lyric form does not control song text speech-tone arrangement. The large extent to which speech-tones shape the nature of the melodic line is also apparent. Although the melodic-lines in each version conclude with some form of the the melodic sequence 6 $\dot{1}$ $\dot{2}$, in all other respects the two versions appear to be melodically distinct. When two corresponding lines of helping chorus music are compared, similar melodic disparities can be found in those portions of the melodic-line where song text is present.

Remarkable melodic consistency, however, can be seen in those portions which are not affected by speech-tones--the vocable-phrases.

Example 6.8

Comparison of Melodic Structure and Song Text Speech-Tones in Line Four of Two [Er Lang Shen] Qupai Songs¹⁶

helping chorus (sings):
song 1

4/4 | $\overset{i}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} - \overset{i}{\underset{2}{\dot{2}}} -$ | $\overset{3}{\underset{2}{\dot{3}}} \overset{2}{\underset{3}{\dot{2}}} \overset{3}{\underset{3}{\dot{3}}} \overset{i}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} -$ | $\overset{6}{\underset{2}{\dot{6}}} \overset{2}{\underset{3}{\dot{2}}} \overset{i}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} \overset{5}{\underset{i}{\dot{5}}} | \overset{6}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} - \overset{6}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} \overset{6}{\underset{i}{\dot{6}}} |$
 谁 向 高(呵) 楼 横 笛 (呀) (呵) 声。(呵)
Shui² xiang⁴ gao¹ (a) lou² heng² di² (ya) (a) sheng¹ (a)
 Someone sends sounds of the horizontal flute from the high tower.

song 2

4/4 | $\overset{3}{\underset{2}{\dot{3}}} \overset{2}{\underset{i}{\dot{2}}} \overset{i}{\underset{i}{\dot{1}}} | \overset{6}{\underset{i}{\dot{6}}} \overset{i}{\underset{i}{\dot{1}}} \overset{3}{\underset{3}{\dot{3}}} \overset{2}{\underset{.}{\dot{2}}} | \overset{6}{\underset{i}{\dot{6}}} \overset{2}{\underset{3}{\dot{2}}} \overset{i}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} \overset{5}{\underset{i}{\dot{5}}} | \overset{6}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} - \overset{6}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} \overset{6}{\underset{i}{\dot{6}}} |$
 早(呃) 被 它 (咂) 唤 起 春 情。(呵)
Zao³ (e) bei⁴ ta¹ (ye) huan⁴ qi³ chun¹ qing² (a)
 Already aroused early by his calls of spring sentiments.

song 1

cadential vocable-phrase

$\overset{2}{\underset{2}{\dot{2}}} \overset{2}{\underset{i}{\dot{2}}} \overset{6}{\underset{i}{\dot{6}}} \overset{5}{\underset{i}{\dot{5}}} | \overset{6}{\underset{2}{\dot{6}}} \overset{2}{\underset{i}{\dot{2}}} \overset{6}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} \overset{5}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} -$
 (呃) (呵) (呃) (呵)
 (e) (a) (e) (a)

song 2

$\overset{2}{\underset{2}{\dot{2}}} \overset{2}{\underset{i}{\dot{2}}} \overset{6}{\underset{i}{\dot{6}}} \overset{5}{\underset{i}{\dot{5}}} | \overset{6}{\underset{2}{\dot{6}}} \overset{2}{\underset{i}{\dot{2}}} \overset{6}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} \overset{5}{\underset{6}{\dot{6}}} -$
 (呃) (呵) (呃) (呵)
 (e) (a) (e) (a)

An examination of the melodic structures of the two passages of helping chorus music indicate why helping chorus music is considered

more stable than actor music. Due to the melismatic nature of helping chorus music, the effect of speech-tones on melody is greatly reduced. Through the presence of inter-*dou* and cadential vocable-phrases, the same melodic structure can consistently be reproduced. Without placing restrictions on song text speech-tones, Sichuan opera practitioners have no way of guaranteeing melodic stability in those portions of the melodic-line where song text is present. Through the use of vocable-phrases, however, the possibility of reproducing melodic material is made possible.

In different plays the song texts are different, the speech-tones are different, and [so] the music which follows the speech-tones of the words will be different. This [part of the] music changes, [and so] cannot be the characteristic music of a *qupai*. The only part [of the *qupai*] which can be the characteristic music of the *qupai* is the helping chorus part which remains fundamentally the same. This section of music stays in a relatively steady state, [and] is therefore easily distinguishable" (Chen 1985, 100).

The aural nature of a *qupai* is the primary element in determining how a *qupai* is used in performance. For this reason, all aspects of *qupai* internal structure contain immutable elements which serve to communicate this aural nature each time a new song is created. Without the presence of this nature, a song will be unable to affect the audience in the way in which opera practitioners intend. In *gaoqiang qupai* musical structure, it is the musical material found within vocable-phrases which is the signature music of the *qupai*. Somewhat surprising, however, is the fact that it is the helping chorus, not the stage actor, who conveys this important musical information to the Sichuan opera audience.

Zhuanqiang*: The Identifying Melodic Element of *Qupai

Many *qupai* in the *gaoqiang* repertoire contain a passage of music which is unique to that *qupai* alone, and which is considered by Sichuan opera practitioners to be the most important identifying element in the *qupai*'s melodic structure. Referred to as a "*zhuanqiang*" (专腔 lit., "special melodic-phrase"),¹⁷ this musical phrase has both melodic and rhythmic properties and is always located within passages of helping chorus music. In that each new song text impacts the nature of the melodic structure of a *qupai* song, Sichuan opera practitioners look upon *zhuanqiang* as the only element in a *qupai*'s melodic structure which can consistently convey the identifying aural signature of the *qupai*.

The . . . [*zhuanqiang*] is the richest and most characteristic melodic form in a *qupai*. No matter how the *qupai*'s melody is altered, its *zhuanqiang* will function as a stabilizing element, permeating throughout the *qupai* (Li 1985, 46).

Zhuanqiang are generally one melodic-line in length, although in a few *qupai* they are twice as long. Depending on the musical structure of the *qupai*, its *zhuanqiang* may appear once or several times during a song. The most common location for the first appearance of a *zhuanqiang* is in the opening passage of helping chorus music (i.e., the erect-pillars section) which initiates the majority of *qupai* songs. A [*han qiang*] (汉腔) *qupai* song, for example, opens with a putting-on-a-hat style of song initiation which is jointly carried out by the actor and the helping chorus. [*Han qiang*]'s *zhuanqiang* immediately follows this opening passage on line two.

Example 6.9

Zhuanqiang Passage on Line Two of a [Han Qiang] Qupai Song¹⁸

helping chorus (sings):

dou 1

$\frac{4}{4}$ | $\overset{\cdot}{1} \overset{\cdot}{2} \overset{\cdot}{6}$ | $\overset{\cdot}{1} \overset{\cdot}{2} \overset{\cdot}{6} \overset{\cdot}{1} \overset{\cdot}{2} -$ | $0 \overset{\cdot}{3} \overset{\cdot}{2} \overset{\cdot}{1}$ | $6 \overset{\cdot}{2} \overset{\cdot}{3} \overset{\cdot}{1} \overset{\cdot}{6}$ | 5 | $6 \overset{\cdot}{1} \overset{\cdot}{6} -$ |

为 桃 园 呢 呵 呢 呵 呵

Wei tao yuan (e) (a) (e) (a)

For the peach garden

dou 2

$0 \overset{\cdot}{1} \overset{\cdot}{5} \overset{\cdot}{6} -$ | $\overset{\cdot}{5} \overset{\cdot}{6} \overset{\cdot}{1} \overset{\cdot}{4} \overset{\cdot}{3} \overset{\cdot}{2} \overset{\cdot}{3}$ | *dou 3*

阻 断 在 万 哪 呵 水 呀 千 山 哪 呵

Zu duan zai wan (na) (a) shui (ya) qian shan. (nai) (a)

I am halted by the ten-thousand rivers, and thousand mountains

$5 - \overset{\cdot}{6} \overset{\cdot}{1} \overset{\cdot}{4} \overset{\cdot}{3}$ | $2 \cdot \overset{\cdot}{3} \overset{\cdot}{5} \overset{\cdot}{6} \overset{\cdot}{3} \overset{\cdot}{2} \overset{\cdot}{1} \overset{\cdot}{6} \overset{\cdot}{1}$ | $2 - \overset{\cdot}{3} \cdot \overset{\cdot}{2} \overset{\cdot}{1} \overset{\cdot}{2} \overset{\cdot}{3}$ | $2 - - 0$ |

呵 呵 呵

(a) (a)

Due to the fact that *zhuanqiang* passages always accompany song text, slight disparities in melodic structure will be present when songs using different texts are constructed from the same *qupai*. Variation in speech-tone pattern and lyric line length will be primarily responsible. In that the *zhuanqiang* of a *qupai* is frequently the most melismatic musical passage in a song, the effect of speech-tones is not only less than in passages of actor music, but also less than in non-*zhuanqiang* helping chorus passages.

In [han qiang] *qupai* songs, the *zhuanqiang* is repeated after each passage of actor music has been sung (Sichuan 1987, 73). A comparison of the *zhuanqiang* on line two and the subsequent *zhuanqiang* appearing

on line eight, reveals that although melodic disparities are present in those parts of the melodic-line where song text lies, the greater part of the melody is identical.¹⁹

Example 6.10

Zhuanqiang Passage on Line Eight of a [*Han Qiang*] *Qupai* Song

helping chorus (sings):

<i>dou 1</i>	<i>dou 2</i>
$\frac{4}{4}$ <u>6̇1̇5̇6̇</u> <u>ī</u> <u>5̇ 6̇ ī 4̇ 3̇ 2̇ 3̇5̇</u>	$\frac{4}{4}$ <u>6̇ 6̇·</u> <u>ī 2̇ 6̇ ī</u> <u>ī 2̇· ī· ī ī 6̇</u>
但 未 知 何 (啊)	日 (啊) 团 圆? (呀)(啊)
<i>Dan wei zhi he (a)</i> When we will be together again?	<i>ri (a) tuan yuan? (nai) (a)</i>
$\frac{4}{4}$ <u>5̇ - 6̇ ī 4̇ 3̇</u> <u>2̇· 3̇ 5̇ 6̇ 3̇ 2̇ 1̇ 6̇1̇</u> 2̇ - - 0	
(啊) (a)	

The *zhuanqiang* in Example 6.9 contains ten song text words, divided into three *dou* of 3 + 3 + 4 words. The *zhuanqiang* in Example 6.10 has only seven words, divided into two *dou* of 3 + 4. Because [*han qiang*] *qupai* lyric form does not dictate speech-tone pattern or place restrictions on line length, Sichuan opera practitioners are able to adjust the *zhuanqiang* passage to accommodate different song text conditions. Despite this flexibility, the [*han qiang*] *zhuanqiang* must be relatively codified in terms of its musical structure to aurally convey the identity of the *qupai*. Despite the differences in melodic-line length (thirteen versus seven measures), when the *zhuanqiang* of lines two (Example 6.9) and eight (Example 6.10) of the [*han qiang*] song are compared, one can see that the final six measures in each passage of music are virtually identical. This section of music begins just as the vocalization of the

second *dou* in line two, and of the first *dou* in line eight, conclude. Five of these six measures are sung using vocables, and are therefore free from speech-tone influence.

Among *qupai* featuring *zhuanqiang*, it is common to find that the melodic structures of the non-*zhuanqiang* helping chorus passages in the song contain musical material which is based on music presented in the *zhuanqiang* passage. Since *zhuanqiang* passages are considered to be the melodic core of a song, and usually first appear at the very beginning, it is logical to assume that the musical structures of the subsequent non-*zhuanqiang* passages are based on material presented in the *zhuanqiang* passage, and not vice versa. The borrowed material which appears in the non-*zhuanqiang* passages is taken from the cadential vocable-phrase portion of the *zhuanqiang* passage--usually the longest and most melismatic vocable-phrase of the song.

The [*er lang shen*] *qupai* is one of the few in the repertoire which has a *zhuanqiang* that is two melodic-lines in length. Lines one and two of an [*er lang shen*] song constitute its *zhuanqiang*. Due to the placement of the song text in the music, the cadential vocable-phrase in line one is considerably shorter in length than that of line two. Of the nine lyric lines present in an [*er lang shen*] song, seven are assigned to the helping chorus. A comparison of the musical material contained in the cadential vocable-phrases of these lines shows how musical ideas first presented in the *zhuanqiang* are reiterated throughout the course of the song.

Example 6.11

Melodic Patterns Contained in the Cadential Vocable-Phrases of the Six Helping Chorus
Lines in an [Er Lang Shen] Gupai Song

Zhuanqiang Cadential Vocable-Phrases:

line 1

$$\frac{4}{4} \left| - \overbrace{\underline{\dot{2}} \underline{\dot{3}} \underline{\dot{1} \cdot \underline{6}} \underline{5 \dot{1}}}^a \right| \underline{6} - - - \left| \right.$$

line 2

$$\frac{4}{4} \left| - \underline{\widehat{6 \dot{1}}} \underline{\dot{2}} \underline{\dot{2} \dot{2}} \left| \underline{\dot{2} \dot{3}} \underline{5 \underline{5 \underline{5}}} \right| \underline{\dot{3} \underline{5}} \underline{\underline{\dot{3} \underline{5}}} \underline{\underline{\dot{3} \underline{2}}} \right| \underline{\widehat{\dot{1} \underline{2}}} \underline{\widehat{6 \dot{1}}} \overset{\underline{\underline{\dot{2} \underline{3}}}}{\underline{2}} - \left| \right.$$

$$\begin{array}{c} a \qquad \qquad \qquad b \qquad \qquad \qquad c \\ \left| \underline{\widehat{6 \cdot \underline{\dot{1}}}} \underline{\underline{\dot{2} \underline{3}}} \underline{\underline{\dot{1} \cdot \underline{6}}} \underline{5 \dot{1}} \right| \underline{6} - \underline{6 \underline{6 \dot{1}}} \left| \underline{\dot{2} \underline{\dot{2} \dot{1}}} \underline{\underline{\widehat{6 \cdot \dot{1}}}} \underline{5 \dot{1}} \right| \underline{6} \underline{\underline{\widehat{2 \dot{1} \underline{6}}}} \overset{\underline{5}}{\underline{6}} - \left| \right. \end{array}$$
Non-Zhuanqiang Cadential Vocable-Phrases:

line 4

$$\frac{4}{4} \left| - \underline{\underline{\widehat{\dot{2} \underline{3}}}} \underline{\underline{\widehat{\dot{1} \cdot \underline{6}}}} \underline{\underline{\widehat{5 \dot{1}}}} \right| \underline{6} - \underline{6 \underline{6 \dot{1}}} \left| \underline{\widehat{\dot{2} \underline{\dot{2} \dot{1}}}} \underline{\underline{\widehat{6 \cdot \dot{1}}}} \underline{5 \dot{1}} \right| \underline{6} \underline{\underline{\widehat{2 \dot{1} \underline{6}}}} \overset{\underline{5}}{\underline{6}} - \left| \right.$$

line 6

$$\frac{4}{4} \left| - \underline{\underline{\widehat{\dot{2} \underline{3}}}} \underline{\underline{\widehat{\dot{1} \cdot \underline{6}}}} \underline{\underline{\widehat{5 \underline{6}}}} \right| \underline{\dot{3}} \underline{\dot{2} \underline{\dot{2} \dot{1}}} \left| \underline{\underline{\widehat{6 \dot{1}}}} \underline{5 \underline{6}} - \right|$$

line 7

$$\frac{4}{4} \left| - \underline{\underline{\widehat{\dot{3} \cdot \underline{\dot{2} \underline{\dot{1} \underline{6}}}}}} \right| \overset{\underline{5}}{\underline{6}} - - \underline{0} \left| \right.$$

line 9

$$\frac{2}{4} \left| - \underline{\underline{\widehat{\dot{1} \underline{\dot{2} \dot{1}}}}} \right| \underline{\underline{\widehat{6 \dot{1} \underline{5}}}} \underline{6} \left| \right.$$

The helping chorus passages in the majority of *qupai* songs are created through such alternation of *zhuanqiang* and non-*zhuanqiang* passages. As seen in the [*er lang shen*] example, the *zhuanqiang*'s cadential-vocable phrase is the longest in a song. When several lines of helping chorus music are found in succession, it is common practice to vary the lengths of the cadential-vocable phrases as a means to avert melodic or rhythmic monotony. By extracting and recycling all or part of the *zhuanqiang*'s cadential vocable-phrase for use in non-*zhuanqiang* passages, the song is given a varied musical texture, but is also provided with a comprehensive, and integrated, musical sound.

Composite *Qupai*

As indicated above, each *zhuanqiang* is intimately tied to the musical identity of a particular *qupai*. Among *qupai* which lack their own unique *zhuanqiang*, the practice of borrowing another *qupai*'s *zhuanqiang* is common. Although the presence of a borrowed-*zhuanqiang* within a *qupai*'s musical structure become an identifying musical feature of that *qupai*, the *zhuanqiang* never loses its association with the originating *qupai*. Whereas *qupai* such as [*han qiang*] and [*er lang shen*] each contain a single *zhuanqiang*, "composite *qupai*" (*jiqu* 集曲 lit., "collected-tunes") can contain *zhuanqiang* from several different sources. *Qupai* which have their own unique *zhuanqiang* usually do not incorporate borrowed *zhuanqiang* into their musical structures.

The *qupai* [*si bu xiang*] (四不像) has a regulated lyric form which is only four lyric lines in length, and a performer-assignment structure which is entirely-helped. [*Si bu xiang*] is one of the few *qupai* in the

repertoire which has a musical structure that is entirely composed of the *zhuanqiang* of other *qupai*.

	<u>performer</u>	<u>zhuanqiang</u> source	
line 1:	helping chorus	<i>[yi zhi hua]</i>	[一枝花]
line 2:	helping chorus	<i>[han qiang]</i>	[汉腔]
line 3:	helping chorus	<i>[gan zhou ge]</i>	[甘洲歌]
line 4:	helping chorus	<i>[dao hua chuan]</i>	[倒划船]

Figure 6.3

Origins of the *Zhuanqiang* Present in a [*Si Bu Xiang*] *Qupai* Song

All of the *zhuanqiang* which constitute a [*si bu xiang*] song are taken from *qupai* which are considered melodically-related to it. This is the case in most composite *qupai*, although sometimes *zhuanqiang* from unrelated melodic sources are used as well.

***Qupai* Classification**

Same-Category *Qupai*

Each *qupai* in the repertoire is a unique assemblage of structural elements representing each of the three aspects of *gaoqiang qupai* internal structure: lyric form, performer-assignment structure, and musical structure. Among *qupai* which feature a regulated lyric form and which have identical performer-assignment structures, it is often on the basis of a *qupai*'s musical structure that the *qupai*'s identity is established. If two such *qupai* also share a common rhythmic form, then their melodic structures become the determining factors in

distinguishing the two *qupai*. Slight variation in any aspect of *qupai* internal structure may result in the creation of a different *qupai*. Some in the Sichuan opera tradition find it taxing trying to remember the numerous structural variations which distinguish the hundreds of *qupai* in the repertoire from one another, and criticize the *gaoqiang* musical system as being too detail-oriented.

Some say that the *gaoqiang qupai* [musical system] is loaded down with trivial and tedious details. The melodies of so many *qupai* are basically the same, yet their names are different--too complicated. Some people remark [that] the difference between the two *qupai* [*huang niao er*] and [*wang er gui*] is small, and that a slight variation in the helping chorus music is the only difference between [*duan zheng hao*] and [*yi zhi hua*]. If not for one line of melody, [*bei xin shui ling*] and [*xin shui ling*] would be completely the same (Wu 1982, 18).

Recognizing the common features shared by many *gaoqiang qupai*, Sichuan opera practitioners often describe *qupai* as being "largely identical [but with] minor differences" (*datong xiaoyi* 大同小异). Over the past thirty years, a number of Sichuan opera practitioners (predominantly, *gushi*) have put forth methods of *qupai* classification to help deal with the plethora of *qupai*. All of these methods are based on the identification of common elements present in *qupai* melodic structure.²⁰

Sichuan opera practitioners believe that among the several hundred different *gaoqiang qupai*, there are actually only a small number of melodic types (*jiben qiang* 基本腔调 lit., "basic melodic-phrases"). Just how small this number is varies according to whether the melodic structure of the *qupai* is being analyzed from the perspective of its actor music, or from the perspective of its helping chorus music. In other

words, two different methods of evaluating *qupai* melodic kinship are used in *gaoqiang* music.

Even though the actor passages of *qupai* possess a high degree of flexibility, having melodic lines which are not as fixed as [those of] the helping chorus, from the perspective of development and change, [actor music] does have rules which must be followed. Firstly, actor music also possesses classifiable features. With the exception of declamatory *qupai*, generally speaking, although the differences in helping chorus [music] may be considerable among *qupai* which are in the same [melodic] category, there is only one basic melody used for the actor passages (Sichuan 1987, 244).

The materials used at the provincial opera school to teach student actors organize *qupai* according to the melodic structure of actor music. These materials claim that only five basic melodies are present in *gaoqiang* actor music (Du 1985, 36-56).²¹ These five are represented by the following *qupai* :

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. [<i>xin shui ling</i>] [新水令] | 4. [<i>jiang tou gui</i>] [江头桂] |
| 2. [<i>suo suo gang</i>] [梭梭刚] | 5. [<i>hong na ao</i>] [红衲袄] |
| 3. [<i>duan zheng hao</i>] [端正好] | |

Qupai which are melodically related based on common features found in their actor music are termed: "same-category *qupai* " (*tonglei qupai* 同类曲牌). Given the large number of *qupai* in the repertoire, and the relatively limited number of recognized melody types, a single *qupai* may then be melodically related to as many as sixty others.

Characterizing Melodic-Figures

Due to the logogenic nature of *gaoqiang* actor music, it is impossible to recreate the same melodic line each time a new song is constructed. For this reason, the melodic categorization of *gaoqiang qupai* actor music is based on the presence of a number of "characterizing melodic-figures" (*tezheng yinxing* 特征音型) in the music.

Characterizing melodic-figures have both melodic and rhythmic aspects. Usually consisting of two-to-five musical pitches, they generally last two beats of music or less. A few figures, however, are longer.

The actor passages of most *qupai* found within the same melodic category are created using the same mode. Despite this fact, same-category classification status is not determined by the modal structure of a *qupai*, but rather on the presence of characterizing melodic-figures. As described earlier in the chapter, a number of *qupai* in the repertoire modulate between different modes during a song. This modulation occurs, however, in passages of helping chorus music, not actor music. When the discussion of the helping chorus-based *qupai* classification system known as "sworn-brother *qupai*" is taken up, the modal structure of *qupai* will be shown to be a factor in the categorization process.

Although a basic rhythmic relationship exists between the musical pitches in each characterizing melodic-figure, slight variations in note value can be seen. Among those figures which contain several musical pitches, it is also not uncommon to find modified versions of the figures in which a few musical pitches have been omitted. One of the characterizing melodic-figures found in *qupai* belonging to the [*xin shui ling*] melodic category, for example, is $\underline{5} \underline{3} \overset{231}{\underline{\underline{2}}} \underline{1}$. Versions of this figure also appear in songs as $\underline{5} \cdot \underline{\underline{323}} \overset{1}{\underline{\underline{2}}} \underline{1}$, and $\underline{\underline{55}} \underline{3} \underline{2} \underline{1}$, but also

regularly as the greatly shortened $2 \cdot \underline{1}$. This flexibility of form allows the figures to be adjusted to accommodate the different rhythmic structures found in *gaoqiang* music. In that music constructed using a 2/4 meter is less melismatic than music in 4/4 time, characterizing melodic-figures must be able to be adapted to match the rhythmic structure of the music.

Each category of *gaoqiang* actor music employs between three-to-five characterizing melodic-figures to convey the aural identity of the melody type. In order for characterizing melodic-figures to serve the function of identifying the melodic group to which a *qupai* belongs, some, if not all, of the figures must be present in each song constructed. For those figures which consist of only one or two notes, it is possible to position them anywhere in the song text passage where their presence does not conflict with speech-tone communication. Those figures which contain a larger number of musical pitches, however, must be located in those parts of the music where the least amount of speech-tone influence occurs, such as at the ends of melodic-lines.

Due to their frequent placement at the ends of melodic-lines, characterizing melodic-figures usually conclude on one of the preferred cadence pitches for that melody type. As indicated earlier, each *gaoqiang qupai* song is constructed using the pitches present in the *qupai*'s associated mode(s). The tone on which a mode is based--its principal tone--often serves as a cadence pitch in helping chorus passages, but less frequently in passages of actor music. In many *qupai* melodic categories, pitches other than the principal tone serve as the primary cadence pitches for actor passages. Most *qupai* in the [*xan shui ling*] melodic category are constructed using the *zhi* mode (5). In addition to the principal tone *zhi* (5), the primary cadence pitches used to conclude

passages of actor music in this category are the *gong* (1) and *shang* (2) pitches, which are the subdominant (4th above the principal tone) and dominant (5th above the principal tone) pitches in the mode. Next to the principal tone, the dominant has the strongest ability to convey a feeling of closure, and for this reason these two pitches are the ones most often used to conclude the second line in a lyric couplet, whereas the 1 pitch is usually found at the end of the first line.

The three characterizing melodic-figures used to convey the [*xin shui ling*] melodic category are $\overset{6}{\underline{5}}$, $\underline{5\ 6\ 1}\ 2$, and $\underline{5\ 3}\ \overset{231}{\underline{2\ 1}}$. The presence of these three figures in the two-line passage of [*yan er luo*] (雁儿落) *qupai* song actor music below clearly reveals the *qupai*'s musical kinship to the [*xin shui ling*] melodic family.

Example 6.12

Characterizing Melodic-Figures in Two Lines of [*Yan Er Luo*]*Qupai* Song Actor Music²²

line 1

line 2

$\frac{4}{4}$

0 $\underline{2\ 3\ 5}$ 5 | 0 $\underline{5\ 2\ 1}$ $\overset{3}{\underline{2\ 1}}$ | $\overset{6}{\underline{5}}$ | $\underline{5\ 3}$ $\overset{231}{\underline{2\ 1}}$ | 0 $\overset{i}{\underline{6\ 3}}$ 3 $\underline{6\ 3\ 5}$ 5 |

俊书生 | 休得把 | 连理 | 占, | 损德行恐怕

Jun shu sheng | *xiu dei ba* | *lian li* | *zhan,* | *Sun de xing kong pa*

Handsome scholar do not touch me, | Such immoral conduct I am afraid

$\overset{?}{\underline{6\ 1}}$ 5 6 | $\overset{563}{\underline{5\ 3\ 2\ 1}}$ | $\underline{5\ 6\ 1\ 2}$ |

外人(哪)(呵) | 谈(哪)

wai ren (na) (a) | *tan. (na)*

will make people talk.

As can be seen in the above passage, it is common to find those characterizing melodic-figures containing the most musical pitches

placed at the ends of melodic-phrases, whereas the smaller figures can appear in other parts of the melodic-line.

The following four-line passage of [*xin shui ling*] *qupai* song actor music is constructed using a 2/4 meter rhythmic structure. Although less notes are present in each measure of music, making the passage more syllabic than 4/4 meter actor music, the characterizing melodic-figures of the [*xin shui ling*] melodic category are still present. These versions of the figures, however, contain fewer notes than those found in 4/4 metrical structure music.

Example 6.13

Characterizing Melodic-Figures in Four Lines of 2/4 Meter [*Xin Shui Ling*]/*Qupai* Song Actor Music²³

line 1

line 2

line 3

line 4

2/4 | 5·3 | 5 6 5 | 0 5 | 5 2 1 | 1 2 1 | 0 5 | 5 1 2 | 3 3 | 0 2 | 5 2 1 |

仔细 思量 真 不 错, 锦 绣 青春 暗 消

Zi xi si liang zhen bu cuo, Jin xiu qing chun an xiao

Carefully considering [it is] really not so bad, My golden youth slips away

磨; 不由 奴 心如 烈 火, 不由 奴 愁锁 双 蛾。

mo; Bu you nu xin ru lie huo, Bu you nu chou suo shuang e.

unnoticed; Unable to control my heart's raging fire, Unable to stop my eyes from expressing worry.

The characterizing melodic-figures of the [*xin shui ling*] category *qupai* display a rhythmic feature which is common among many other such figures in *gaoqiang* actor music. This feature is characterized by a

rhythmic imbalance created by a contrast in duration between the final two notes in a figure. Rather than ending a melodic-phrase or -line with two notes of equal time value, or a single sustained note, Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* actor music passages frequently conclude in one of two ways. Either the final note in a figure is preceded by an appoggiatura note of shorter time value, as in the $\frac{6}{\underline{5}}$ figure, or the final pitch is preceded by a note of longer duration, as in the $2 \cdot \underline{1}$ figure. The ability to properly execute these rhythmically-imbalanced figures is an important part of the vocal training of Sichuan opera actors. They are also a characteristic of *gaoqiang* music which is often pointed to by practitioners as embodying its flavor (*weidao* 味道).²⁴

Gender and Melody

In each melodic category, specific melodic features are present which serve to communicate the gender of the dramatic character to the audience. *Qupai* song female vocal music (*nūqiang* 女腔 lit., "female melodic-phrase") and male vocal music (*nanqiang* 男腔 lit., "male melodic-phrase") are primarily differentiated from one another by the choice of characterizing melodic-figures, cadence pitches, song range, and degree of ornamentation found in the vocal passage.

Although differences exist in the melodic structure of the vocal music sung by the dramatic characters in various role categories, these differences are much less pronounced than those which distinguish male and female music. The majority of *gaoqiang* plays in the repertoire feature the "three small" role categories (young *dan*, young *sheng*, and *chou*) in leading roles. Those plays which feature young *dan* and young *sheng* characters focus primarily on the performance skills of song,

speech, and stylized movement/acting, while those featuring *chou* characters emphasize speech and stylized movement/acting over song. The young *dan* and young *sheng* role categories place primary emphasis on vocal skills in performance. These role categories have the largest number of dramatic roles and have the highest vocal ranges. For these reasons, it is not surprising to find that *gaoqiang* music is primarily constructed with the vocal capabilities of actors playing these two role types in mind.

Sichuan opera's "role category" vocal music [distinctions] are not as complete as Beijing opera's . . . Except for the [young] *sheng* and [young] *dan*, . . . "role categories" such as old *dan*, martial *sheng*, *chou*, [and] *mo*, up to *wawa sheng*, etc., do not have their own vocal music [styles]. When the painted-face role category sings the *huqin* [*qiang* or] *tanxi* [musical systems], it is alright, but it is difficult [for them] to sing *gaoqiang*, . . . [because] painted-faces cannot use [their] falsettos voices. . . . Painted-face [and] principal *sheng* . . . play leading roles in dramas with historical subjects, and these types of plays are numerous in the *huqin* and *tanxi* [repertoires]. Young *dan* and young *sheng* predominantly perform romantic *gaoqiang* plays. (He 1981,127).

Within the Sichuan opera role categorization system, no role category specifically called "young *dan* " exists. The term is often used as a comprehensive term to include all those *dan* subcategories in which the dramatic characters sing using a mixture of natural voice and falsetto. The boudoir *dan*, flower *dan*, bondservant *dan*, principal *dan*, blue-clothing *dan*, smoke-flower *dan*, ghost-fox *dan*, sword-horse *dan*, martial *dan*, and bold-vigorous *dan*, would therefore fall under the heading "young *dan*." Characters from the subcategories old *dan*, rocking *dan*, and ugly *dan*,²⁵ however, would not be included as they all sing using primarily their natural voices. Each of the *dan* subcategories included under the heading "young *dan* " varies in terms of the degree of emphasis which is placed on

vocal skills. When characters from these subcategories do sing, however, their vocal range and production style is similar.

Within each of the five melodic categories gender distinction is achieved through slightly different means. Of the five, the [*jiang tou gui*] melodic category makes the clearest distinctions between male and female versions. In terms of vocal range, male [*jiang tou gui*] category vocal music is performed a fourth higher than female vocal music. This results in the use of different cadence pitches, as well as slightly different characterizing melodic-figures for the two gender types.

The gender distinction in other melodic categories is much less pronounced. In the [*duan zheng hao*] category, for example, although identical cadence pitches are used in both male and female vocal music, there are differences in the frequency of certain characterizing melodic-figures, the amount of melisma, the vocal range of the music, and in the overall direction of the melody. [*Duan zheng hao*] category male vocal music is described as being "bold and vigorous, strong and forceful" and has a melodic line which is "circuitous downward" (Sichuan 1987, 250). This downward directional pattern is further emphasized by the use of such characterizing melodic-figures as: $\underline{\underline{65^{\frac{3}{2}}2}} \quad \underline{2} \quad 3$ at the ends of melodic-phrases. Female music, in contrast, is said to be "mild and indirect, soft and gentle," with a melodic line which "moves upward and dwells there" (250). Due to the overall upward motion of the melodic line, such melodic-figures as $\underline{\underline{65^{\frac{3}{2}}2}} \quad \underline{2} \quad 3$ are less frequently employed in female [*duan zheng hao*] music. A more often seen figure is $\underline{1} \quad \underline{2} \quad \underline{\underline{6}}^{\frac{1}{6}}$, which although also featuring a descending melodic line, is higher in overall pitch and shorter in duration than the $\underline{\underline{65^{\frac{3}{2}}2}} \quad \underline{2} \quad 3$ figure used in male [*duan zheng hao*] music. The general upward tendency and high

melodic range of [*duan zheng hao*] female music conveys the gender of the character to the audience. This upward melodic motion is not always reflected in the characterizing melodic-figure, however, which primarily serves to communicate the melodic category of the *qupai*.

In all melodic categories, female vocal music is generally more melismatic and features more melodic ornamentation than male vocal music. "*Xiaoqiang*" (小腔 lit., "small melodic-phrases") is the primary form of melodic ornamentation used in *gaoqiang* vocal music. Each *xiaoqiang* contains several musical pitches (usually three or more), and features a rhythmic structure which is significantly faster than that of the surrounding pitches. The pitch which immediately follows the *xiaoqiang* figure is often included in the *xiaoqiang*. For instance, in the figure $\overset{231}{\underline{\underline{2}}}$ $\underline{1}$, the 2 pitch is not only the first pitch in the $\overset{231}{\underline{\underline{2}}}$ *xiaoqiang*, but is also the pitch to which the *xiaoqiang* is attached.

The construction and application of *xiaoqiang* is determined by the actor, and is an important avenue for creative expression in *gaoqiang* music. The melodic structure of a *xiaoqiang*, however, must always be in accordance with the features of the melodic category of the *qupai*, and not be in conflict with the song text speech-tones.

Gaoqiang actor passages have the characteristic of "following [one's] heart, to enter the music," because the performer's solo passage offers an opportunity to fully express [oneself]. This expression is not [without controls]. [An actor] must follow the restrictions of the *qupai*'s . . . mode, rules of melody, and structure . . . (Yang 1985, 82).

As mentioned above, among the dramatic characters seen on the Sichuan opera stage, female characters use more *xiaoqiang* than male. Among male characters, young *sheng* characters use more than other

male role categories. Among actors performing the same role type, not all incorporate the same amount or style of *xiaoqiang* into their vocal passages. The style and amount of *xiaoqiang* in a performer's vocal music is something which marks that individual's artistic style. Sichuan opera actress Jing Hua (竞华), a leading performer with The Third Company of the Chengdu City Sichuan Opera Company, is an artist known for the numerous and highly complex *xiaoqiang* present in her vocal performances. Jing Hua's skillful creation and execution of *xiaoqiang* is the artistic trademark of this actress, and the trademark of the young performers who now study her vocal style. Because of the number of notes, and the speed at which *xiaoqiang* are performed, their presence in a passage of actor music is rarely accurately reflected in published music scores.

Sworn-Brother *Qupai*

When Sichuan opera practitioners approach the task of *qupai* categorization from the perspective of the melodic structure of actor music, they often conclude that only five basic types of melodic form exist within *gaoqiang* music. Each passage of *qupai* song actor music reveals its membership in one of these five melodic categories primarily through the use of the characterizing melodic-figures. When the task of *qupai* categorization is approached from the perspective of helping chorus music, however, the categorization process becomes considerably more complex.

The 1987 publication *A general account of Sichuan Opera music* (川剧音乐概述 *Chuanju yinyue gaishu*), divides *qupai* into the

following ten categories based on the melodic structure of their helping chorus music (Sichuan 1987, pp. 2-5).

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| 1. [xin shui ling] | [新水令] | 6. [ju hua xin] | [菊花新] |
| 2. [duan zheng hao] | [端正好] | 7. [zhu yun fei] | [驻云飞] |
| 3. [xiang luo dai] | [香罗带] | 8. [hong na ao] | [红衲袄] |
| 4. [jiang tuo gui] | [江头桂] | 9. [suo suo gang] | [梭梭岗] |
| 5. [xiao nan zhi] | [孝南枝] | 10. [ke ke zi] | [课课子] |

Due to their lack of melodic material and questionable status as *gaoqiang qupai*, the Sichuan opera school faculty chose to exclude declamatory *qupai* from the melodic categorization system of *gaoqiang qupai* actor music published in the school's teaching materials. In the above categorization system, however, declamatory *qupai* are included under the category headed by the *qupai* [ke ke zi].

A *qupai*'s melodic identity is based on the collective nature of its actor and helping chorus music. As stated earlier, among the over three-hundred *qupai* present in the *gaoqiang* repertoire, only a total of five different types of actor music can be found. This would indicate that the melodic material which serves to distinguish a *qupai* from others in repertoire must be located in its helping chorus passages.

Gaoqiang has several hundred *qupai*, but among the vocal music sung by the actor there are only a few melody types. . . . [Because] a number of *qupai* share the same melody type, to say that a melody type is the characterizing music for several *qupai* is obviously unacceptable. . . . A *qupai*'s characteristic melody is not in the part of the *qupai* sung by the actor, but in the part sung by the helping chorus . . . (Chen 1986, 50-51).

The classification of *qupai* according to the melodic structure of their helping chorus music uses as a basis the "same-category *qupai*" distinction described above. In other words, *qupai* which are melodically related based on their helping chorus music, are also related based on their actor music. The reverse, however, is not always true. Through the presence of such melodic elements as *zhuanqiang*, *qupai* are distinguished from one another. When the different *zhuanqiang* of same-category *qupai* are examined, one can see that although each is unique in overall form, there are musical elements which reveal a *zhuanqiang*'s relationship to others in the same melodic category. Such musical elements include the sharing of the same modal structure and presence of specific melodic forms. Below the *zhuanqiang* cadential vocable-phrases of the two same-category *qupai* [*qing na ao*] ([青衲袄]) and [*bei zhu ma ting*] ([北驻马听]) are compared.

Example 6.14

Comparison of Musical Structure of the *Zhuanqiang* Cadential Vocable-Phrases of [*qing na ao*] and [*bei zhu ma ting*] *Qupai*

helping chorus (sings):
[*qing na ao*]

$$\frac{4}{4} \left| \underline{\underline{6 \dot{1} 5}} \underline{\underline{5}} \underline{\underline{6 5 3}} \underline{\underline{5}} \right| \overbrace{0 \underline{\underline{6 5 3}} \underline{\underline{5 6 \dot{1}}} | 6 \cdot 5 \underline{\underline{3 5}} \underline{\underline{2 3}} | 5 - - 0} \right|$$

[*bei zhu ma ting*]:

$$\frac{4}{4} \left| 1 - \underline{\underline{1 3}} \underline{\underline{2 1}} \right| \overbrace{\underline{\underline{6}} \underline{\underline{2}} \underline{\underline{1 6}} \underline{\underline{5 \cdot 6}} \underline{\underline{2 3}} | 1 \underline{\underline{2}} \underline{\underline{1}} -} \right|$$

Although an examination of the musical structure of the actor passages of [*qing na ao*] and [*bei zhu ma ting*] *qupai* songs would reveal the presence of similar characterizing melodic-figures, an analysis of the

helping chorus *zhuanqiang* cadential vocable-phrases of the two *qupai* reveal fundamental differences in musical structure. Similar commonalties and disparities can be seen in the actor and helping music of songs constructed from two other [*xin shui ling*] melodic category *qupai*: [*xiang luo dai*] and [*xin shui ling*]. When the *zhuanqiang* cadential vocable-phrases of a [*xiang luo dai*] song is compared to that of [*qing na ao*], and [*xin shui ling*] 's with [*bei zhu ma ting*], however, a higher degree of melodic similarity can be found.

Example 6.15

Comparison of the Musical Structure of the *Zhuanqiang* Cadential Vocable-Phrases of [*Xiang Luo Dai*] and [*Qing Na Ao*], and [*Xin Shui Ling*] and [*Bei Zhu Ma Ting*] *Qupai*

[*xiang luo dai*] and [*qing na ao*]:

4/4 | 2̇1̇ 2̇3̇ 1̇.6̇ 5 | 6̇. 5 3̇5 2̇3 | 5 - 6̇5 3̇2̇3̇ 5 - - 0

4/4 | 6̇1̇ 5̇5̇ 6̇5̇ 3̇5̇ | 0 6̇5̇ 3̇5̇ 6̇1̇ | 6̇. 5 3̇5 2̇3 | 5 - - 0

[*xin shui ling*] and [*bei zhu ma ting*]:

4/4 | 1 - 1̇3̇ 2̇1̇ | 6̇ 1 6̇ 5̇6̇5̇ 3̇5̇ | 6̇ 6̇ 5̇ - |

4/4 | 1 - 1̇3̇ 2̇1̇ | 6̇ 2 1̇6̇5̇6̇ 2̇3̇ | 1 2 1 - |

The categorization of *qupai* by helping chorus music is based on the music found in the cadential vocable-phrases of helping chorus passages. Among the *qupai* said to share similar helping chorus music, some

possess unique *zhuanqiang* (such as [*bei xin shui ling*] and [*qing na ao*]), some feature the *zhuanqiang* of other *qupai* (i.e., composite *qupai*), while others possess only the musical material contained in the non-*zhuanqiang* passages of *zhuanqiang* -possessing *qupai*. As indicated earlier, the melodic structure of non-*zhuanqiang* helping chorus passages is usually based on melodic elements contained in *zhuanqiang* passages.

Within each helping chorus melodic category, a number of *qupai* are thought to contain musical material in their helping chorus passages which indicates an unusually close melodic kinship. These *qupai* are given the special designation "sworn-brother *qupai* " (*xiongdi qupai* 兄弟曲牌). The four *qupai* shown in Example 6.15 form two pairs of sworn-brother *qupai* : [*qing na ao*] with [*xiang luo dai*], and [*bei xin shui ling*] with [*bei zhu ma ting*].

Within each melodic category, similar sworn-brother relationships can be found. Sworn-brother *qupai* relationships can be found occurring in pairs of *qupai*, or among several *qupai*. Sworn-brother relationships occur among *qupai* with the same *zhuanqiang*, as well as between *qupai* with different, yet melodically-related *zhuanqiang*. Some *qupai*, however, possess unique melodic material in their helping chorus passages which is not shared by other *qupai* in that helping chorus category. For these *qupai*, no sworn-brother *qupai* relationship exists.

While there seems to be general agreement that a secondary level of *qupai* categorization exists which is based on common features found in the helping chorus music, there is considerable amount of inconsistency and disagreement in the tradition with regards to the issue of sworn-brother *qupai*. Although all seem to agree, for example, that the helping chorus passages of the *qupai* [*duan zheng hao*], [*dao dao ling*] ([叨叨令]),

[*yi zhi hua*] and [*er lang shen*] all share common melodic features, there is not always agreement as to which *qupai* share sworn-brother relationships.

The practice of classifying *qupai* based on the nature of their melodic structures reveals several important things about the *gaoqiang* musical system. First, as no classification systems exist which organize *qupai* based on either their lyric form or performer-assignment structure, the musical structure of *qupai* can be understood to be where practitioners feel that most *qupai* reveal their independent identities. Secondly, the fact that the classification of *qupai* based on melodic form is even possible, indicates that *qupai* found in the repertoire of the *gaoqiang* music system are not entirely melodically unique from others.

Analysis of *qupai* actor and helping chorus music has revealed striking differences in the melodic structure of these two types of vocal music. The hundreds of *qupai* present in the *gaoqiang* musical system can be divided into only five melodic types based on the nature of their actor music. When the subject of categorization is approached from the perspective of helping chorus music, however, considerably more melodic diversification is recognized. It is within passages of helping chorus music that the distinguishing features of a *qupai*'s musical form are found. In many instances, these features are what establishes the identity of a *qupai*. The most common way in which a *qupai* expresses its unique musical form is through the presence of a *zhuangqiang*. By the existence of the designation "sworn-brother *qupai*," one learns that even among those musical elements which are said to distinguish *qupai*, the sharing of melodic material is still present.

The second element constituting *qupai* musical structure is rhythmic form. Just as analysis of *qupai* melodic form has revealed fundamental differences in helping chorus and actor music, an examination of rhythmic form will also show that disparities in metrical structure and styles of percussion accompaniment serve to further distinguish the two types of *gaoqiang* vocal music from one another. These differences in turn support the discrete dramatic functions served by the two entities in *gaoqiang* performance.

Notes to Chapter VI

GAOQIANG QUPAI MELODIC STRUCTURE

1 See Chapter II, Note 16 for an explanation of the salient features of cipher notation.

2 This song passage is performed by the *dan* character Wang Zhaojun (王昭君) in the scene "Crossing the Northern Frontier" ("Chu bei sai" 出北塞), from the play *The Chaste Woman of the Han* (*Han zhen lie* 汉贞烈) (Zhang 1964, 185).

3 Also pronounced "jiao "

4 In some *gaoqiang* musical scores both a 7 and a 7^b pitch appear.

5 This passage is sung by the *sheng* character Pei Yu (裴禹) in the scene "Picking Red Plums" ("Zhai hong mei" 摘红梅), from the play *The Red Plum* (*Hong mei ji* 红梅记) (Zhang 1964, 456-457).

6 For background information on the song, and the romanization of the song text, see Chapter V, Note 5.

7 In Sichuan opera *qupai* such as [*liu fan gong ci*] which change modes during a song are commonly referred to as "'violating-[the]-key *qupai* " (*fandiao qupai* 犯调曲牌).

8 This song is sung by the *sheng* character Pei Ruiqing (裴瑞卿) in the scene "Picking Red Plums" ("Zhai hong mei" 摘红梅), from the

play *The Red Plum* (*Hong Mei Ji* 红梅记). The romanization of the song text is as follows:

*Ni wen zan yin shen huan qin,
 Zan jin zhao you xie jiao xing.
 Zhen ke shi jie zhi lian cheng.
 Si mei yu huai zhong bao,
 Zhen zhu er zai wo shou nei qing.
 Ni kan na hua lou gao chu,
 Yi nu lang ru hua ping ting.
 Lu shi Zhaorong shi ta de ming.
 Dan jian ta ban gou xin yue xiu mei dai,
 Ai sha ren,
 Man mian chun feng xiao lai ying.
 An zhe li qing qing hu huan,
 Ta na li di di ying sheng.
 Ze jian ta ban tun ban tu,
 Man dao wu qing qu qing que you qing.
 Ni ruo wen zhe zhi hong mei,
 Shi ta qin xiang zang.
 Lan qiao duo ya yun,
 Tian qian yu liang yin,
 Zan wei duo jiao mei de xia feng mo bing,
 Si zhi wu li shao jing shen.
 Ni ba na hao qu er duo chang er sheng,*

9 This song passage is performed by the Young Buddhist Nun (Xiao Nigu 小尼姑) *dan* character in the one-act play *Longing for Laity* (*Si fan* 思凡) (Wen 1983, 91).

10 For a summary of the speech-tone properties of the Sichuan dialect of Chengdu, see Chapter IV, pg. 129.

11 This song passage is sung by the *dan* character Jiao Guiying (焦桂英) in the scene "Striking the God" ("Da shen" 打神), from the play *Burning Incense* (*Fen xiang ji* 焚香记) (Wen 1983, 11).

12 Released melodic-phrases can also be found on lyric lines which are assigned only to the actor, but are more common on those lines which are shared between the actor and helping chorus.

13 See Note 9.

14 See Note 5.

15 This passage is performed by the *dan* character Lu Zhaorong (卢昭容) in the scene "Picking Red Plums" ("Zhai hong mei" 摘红梅), from the play *The Red Plum* (*Hong mei ji* 红梅记) (Zhang 1964, 454 and 457).

16 See Note 15.

17 Also referred to as a "principal melodic-phrase" (*zhuqiang* 主腔).

18 This passage is sung by the *sheng* character Guan Yu (关羽) in the scene "Rewarded a Horse at the Banquet" ("Da yan ci ma" 大宴赐马) (Sichuan 1987, 73-74).

19 The speech tone pattern in Example 6.9 is:

Wei⁴ tao² yuan² zu³ duan⁴ zai⁴ wan⁴ shui³ qian¹ shan¹.

The speech-tone pattern in Example 6.10 is:

Dan⁴ wei⁴ zhi¹ he² ri⁴ tuan² yuan²

20 It is unclear whether there ever existed a formal method of *qupai* categorization in Sichuan opera that predates the various categorization systems proposed since Liberation. Given the similarity in approaches which these systems share, however, it seems likely that *qupai* have traditionally been discussed in terms of their melodic structures and that shared melodic features among *qupai* have always been recognized.

21 Among the other actor music-based categorization systems the number of melodic categories ranges from five to eight. There are several reasons for this difference in category number. First, in some methods of classification a category for declamatory *qupai* is present. Secondly, some argue that the *qupai* [*xiao nan zhi*] and [*xiang luo dai*] (and all *qupai* melodically related to them) deserve independent categories. Others, however, argue that these *qupai* belong to the [*suo suo gang*] and [*xin shui ling*] melodic categories, respectively.

22 This passage is sung by the *dan* character Qin Xuemei (秦雪梅) in the scene "Presenting the Hairpin" ("Zeng chai" 赠钗), from the play *Zhong san yuan* (中三元) (Zhang 1964, 538).

23 See Note 9.

24 Based on information acquired through classes and conversations with faculty members Liu Shiyu (刘世玉) and Du Fengzhu (杜奉铸) of the Sichuan Province Sichuan Opera School.

25 Frequently, ugly *dan* characters parody young Confucian women in plays. In such cases, the actor playing the ugly *dan* role would use a vocal production style which is similar to that of the young *dan*.

CHAPTER VII
GAOQIANG QUPAI RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE

The second structural element in *gaoqiang* music is rhythm. Within each *qupai*, two discrete areas of rhythmic organization can be found. The first area is the temporal organization of the musical pitches in a song. The fundamental organizing principle behind this aspect of rhythmic structure is the metrical type (*banshi* 板式 lit., "pattern of accented-beats"). Seven basic metrical types are used in Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* music. Each metrical type represents a unique arrangement of accented- and unaccented-beats within a measure of music. Although metrical types bearing the same name are found in both passages of helping chorus and actor music, an analysis of their rhythmic structures and performance styles reveals that the nature of metrical types changes according to *qupai* performer-assignment structure.

The second area of *qupai* rhythmic structure is the percussion music used to accompany passages of vocal music. Throughout the performance of a *qupai* song, percussion music played by the offstage orchestra can be heard. At times during a song vocalization, the percussion orchestra performs complete percussion patterns beneath the vocal line. At other times, however, only the sounds of the *gushi*'s wooden-clapper and small drum can be heard articulating specific beats in the music. The type of percussion music heard during passages of *gaoqiang* vocal music is dictated by *qupai* musical structure, and is also related to the nature of its performer-assignment structure.

Like other aspects of *qupai* internal structure, each *qupai* has a distinct rhythmic organization which is intimately tied to its identity. The

nature of this organization affects the way in which theatre practitioners use *qupai* in performance, and therefore must be present each time a new song is created for dramatic use.

Metrical Types

The metrical structure of a *gaoqiang qupai* song is discussed in terms of the number of accented-beats (*ban* 板), and the number of "eyes" (*yan* 眼) or unaccented-beats, present in a single measure of music. A measure of 4/4 meter music, for example, has four beats. Each quarter note in the measure is given the time value of one beat. The first beat in the measure is perceived as being accented, and the three remaining, unaccented. For this reason, 4/4 meter music is described as having "one accented-beat and three eyes" (*yi ban san yan* 一板三眼), while 2/4 meter music has "one accented-beat and one eye" (*yi ban yi yan* 一板一眼) per measure. Music which is considered to have a free metrical structure contains no particular organization of accented- and unaccented-beats, and hence is referred to as possessing "diffused accented-beats" (*sanban* 散板).

There are seven metrical types used in *gaoqiang* music, five of which are metered and two of which are not. Each metrical type not only features a specific arrangement of accented- and unaccented-beats, but also a suggested performance tempo and an associated dramatic application. Just as *qupai* have unique lyric forms, performer-assignments, and melodic structures, they also possess predetermined metrical organizations which must be used when constructing a song. Although

some *qupai* in the repertoire feature a single metrical type throughout a song, many have metrical structures which change several times.

As indicated earlier, a characterizing feature of Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* musical structure is the disparate natures of helping chorus and actor music. Like melodic structure, fundamental differences in the behavior of metrical types can be seen in the two different vocal styles. Figure 7.1 summarizes the metrical types found in the *gaoqiang* musical system, and indicates some of the differences in rhythmic organization of these metrical types when found in actor and helping chorus music.

metrical type	Chinese ideograph	<i>pinyin</i> romanization	meter	
			actor	hc
one-character	一字	<i>yizi</i>	free	4/4
two-flowing	二流	<i>erliu</i>	1/4	2/4
<i>pengban</i> two-flowing	碰板二流	<i>pengban erliu</i>	2/4	2/4
slow two-flowing	慢二流	<i>man erliu</i>	1/4	2/4
fast two-flowing	快二流	<i>kuai erliu</i>	1/4	1/4
strolling-meter	走板	<i>zouban</i>	free	free
shaking-meter	搖板	<i>yaoban</i>	free	free

Figure 7.1

Summary of Sichuan Opera *Gaoqiang* Metrical Types**One-Character Meter**

The most widely used, and perhaps most unusual, metrical type in the *gaoqiang* musical system is "one [written]-character" (*yizi* 一字) meter. This metrical type is the most melismatic, and is usually performed at a relaxed, slow tempo, although in certain dramatic conditions one-character music may be performed slightly faster. One-character meter is considered appropriate for passages of song text in which dramatic characters express their inner thoughts and emotions about the situations which they face or describe events which took place in the past.

One-character meter has different metrical structures depending on whether it is used in passages of helping chorus music or actor music. In

helping chorus music, one-character meter is described as "having accented-beats [and] having eyes" (*you ban you yan* 有板有眼), indicating the presence of a codified arrangement of accented- and unaccented-beats in each measure. One-character meter is constructed in 4/4 time, with one accented-beat followed by three unaccented-beats in each measure. A summary of the metrical organization in one line of [*xiang luo dai*] *qupai* song helping chorus music is shown below:

Example 7.1

Arrangement of Accented- and Unaccented-Beats in a Single Line of [*Xiang Luo Dai*] *Qupai* Song One-Character Meter Helping Chorus Music¹

helping chorus (sings):

X	0	0	0	X	0	0	0	X	0	0	0	X	0	0	0																	
$\frac{4}{4}$	0	$\overset{2}{\underline{3}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{1}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{2}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{3}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{1}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{1}}$		$\overset{2}{\underline{2}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{3}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{2}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{1}}$	6	-	$\overset{2}{\underline{1}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{2}}$	6	$\overset{2}{\underline{1}}$	6	$\overset{2}{\underline{1}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{5}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{1}}$	$\overset{2}{\underline{5}}$		6	-	.	0				
		仔	细	思	量	命	(呀)		(啊)		运	薄,	(啊)																			
		<i>Zi</i>	<i>xi</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>liang</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>(nai)</i>		<i>(a)</i>		<i>yun</i>	<i>bo,</i>	<i>(a)</i>																			
		Carefully considering an unfortunate fate,																														

X = accented-beats 0 = unaccented-beats

Songs composed using one-character meter are transcribed throughout as 4/4 music. In performance, however, the rhythmic structure of this metrical type departs from a strict duple meter structure when passages of actor music begin. In *gaoqiang* actor music, one-character meter has no prescribed arrangement of accented- and unaccented-beats, and is therefore regarded as a free metrical type.

During all passages of actor music, it is common practice for the *gushi* to provide a rhythmic framework by sounding the wooden-clapper. In one-character meter actor music, the wooden-clapper is used to mark

the passing of accented-beats, despite the fact that no accented-beats are present in free meter music. In other words, the *gushi* is accenting beats which do not exist. Due to this unusual performance practice, Sichuan opera practitioners describe *gaoqiang* one-character meter actor music as "having accented-beats, [but] no eyes" (*you ban wu yan* 有板无眼). The decision of when to sound the wooden-clapper is one which is jointly made by the actor and the *gushi* prior to performance. The principal factors influencing this decision are, i) the arrangement of the song text into *dou* within each lyric line, ii) the dramatic context of the song, and iii) the stage performer's own interpretive style.

In one-character meter actor music, the sounding of the wooden-clapper occurs either immediately before, or simultaneously with, the singing of the first word in each *dou*. Depending on the *dou* configurations in the lyric line, one or more articulations may be heard. For lyric lines containing five or more song text words, it is common practice to divide the lyric line into at least two *dou*. In certain dramatic contexts, however, an actor may choose to treat a longer lyric line (i.e., five or more words in length) as a single language unit, or even choose to treat two lyric lines as one unit. In such cases, the *gushi* sounds the wooden-clapper only at the beginning of the first *dou* of the first lyric line. These situations, however, are more common among faster metrical types than they are in one-character meter music. The relationship between the *dou* configuration of a lyric line and the articulations of the *gushi*'s wooden-clapper can be seen in the [*xiang luo dai*] *qupai* song example below.

practitioners as: "[When] the melody stops, the wooden-clapper drops" (*ting qiang luo ban* 停腔落板) (28).

The interpretive freedom which is given to Sichuan opera actors during passages of one-character meter music is viewed by theatre artists as being one of the most important opportunities for dramatic expression in *gaoqiang* performance. In order to successfully manipulate the music for creative purposes, however, an actor must possess a thorough understanding of the nature of the melodic and rhythmic structures of one-character meter music.

[One-character meter actor music] . . . is not without rules. Using a *qupai*'s basic melodic contour as a foundation, [and] following the *qupai*'s specifications for creating the melody, [the actor] must be able to fully express the various thoughts and feelings of the stage character. . . . Those artistically gifted performers . . . can create exquisite, moving songs which pull at the heart strings. [There are also those, however,] who lack the intimate knowledge, [and who] are at a loss as how to perform . . . [this metrical type's] special features--[those who] do not know which way the melody should move, where the music should [cadence], . . . [and] lack an overall pattern of when to *pengban*, and when to let the wooden-clapper pass before beginning to sing . . . (Peng 1985, 62).

Two-Flowing Meter

"Two-flowing" (*erliu* 二流) meter is a metrical type consisting of one accented-, and one unaccented-beat per measure, or a 2/4 meter metrical structure. This metrical type is performed at a moderate tempo, and is considered appropriate for "narrating a story or expressing intense sentiments" (Sichuan 1987, 32). Like one-character meter, two-flowing meter has slightly different rhythmic configurations when found in passages of helping chorus and actor music.

In passages of helping chorus music, two-flowing meter is performed with a relatively steady tempo and rhythm. Because of its faster rhythmic structure, there are less notes per melodic-phrase in two-flowing meter than in one-character meter helping chorus music, resulting in less need for vocables. Lacking the melisma of one-character meter music, the cadential vocable-phrases in two-flowing meter helping chorus passages are considerably smaller in size. In the two line example below from a [*suo suo gang*] *qupai* song, only two vocables can be found. The cadential vocable-phrase at the end of line two contains one of these vocables, and is only three measures of music in length.

Example 7.4

Two Lines of [*Suo Suo Gang*] *Qupai* Song Two-Flowing Meter Helping Chorus Music⁶

helping chorus (sings):

$\dot{3}$ $\dot{3}$ $\overset{\dot{3}}{\curvearrowright} \dot{2} \dot{1} \underline{\underline{6}}$	$\dot{3}$ $\dot{3}$ $\dot{2}$ $\overset{\dot{1}}{\curvearrowright} \dot{1} \dot{2} \underline{\underline{6}}$	5 $\overset{\dot{2}}{\curvearrowright} \dot{1} \underline{\underline{6}}$	$\underline{\underline{5}}$ $\underline{\underline{6}}$ $\dot{1}$ $\overset{\dot{1}}{\curvearrowright} \dot{1} \underline{\underline{6}}$	$\overset{\dot{1}}{\curvearrowright} \dot{2} -$
青山(哪)	多雅 秀,	绿水	漫悠 悠.	(呢)
<i>Qing shan (na)</i>	<i>duo ya xiu,</i>	<i>Lü shui</i>	<i>man you you.</i>	<i>(e)</i>
Green mountains so elegant and refined, Green waters flowing free and unrestrained.				
$\dot{2} -$ $\overset{7}{\curvearrowright} \dot{1} -$				

In passages of two-flowing meter which begin with a *rangban* style of percussion articulation, both the accented- and unaccented-beats in each of the subsequent measures are articulated by the wooden-clapper.

Example 7.5

Percussion Articulations in Four Lines of [Suo Suo Gang] Qupai Song Two-Flowing Meter Actor Music⁷

actor (sings):

$\frac{2}{4}$ | 0 5 2̣3̣ 6̣ 3̣5̣5̣ | 1̣2̣1̣6̣ 5 | 3̣ 3̣ 2̣ | 6̣1̣3̣2̣ | 6̣ 1̣2̣ 6̣ 1̣6̣ |
 青 山 | 翠 谷 多 | 雅 秀, (呵)
Qing shan cui gu duo ya xiu, (a)
 Green mountains emerald valleys so elegant and refined,

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼
0 5 3̣ 2̣ ⁵ 3̣ 1̣ 6̣ | 0 6̣ 1̣ | 2̣ 7̣ 6̣ 5̣ 6̣ | 1̣ 1̣ 6̣ — |
 碧 波 绿 水 | 漫 悠 (呵) | 悠.
Bi bo lu shui man you (a) you.
 Jade ripples green waters flowing free and unrestrained.

▼ = wooden-clapper articulations

By articulating both beats in a measure of 2/4 music, the music appears to have no "eyes," and hence becomes a 1/4 metrical structure. For this reason, *rangban* two-flowing actor music is transcribed in two different ways. In the example below of [*yao pian*] (《爻篇》) *qupai* song actor music, a 1/4 meter notation is used.

Example 7.6

Four Lines of [Yao Pian] Qupai Song Two-Flowing Meter Actor Music Transcribed in 1/4 Time⁸

actor (sings):

$\frac{1}{4}$	0 3̣ 5̣	3̣ 5̣ 2̣ 3̣	3̣ 5̣ 3̣ 5̣	5̣ i	i 2̣	0 5̣	i 2̣	3̣ 2̣	2̣ i 6̣	3̣
	这	妇人你	做事	不	对,	你	发气	我就	吃	亏.
	<i>Zhe</i>	<i>fu ren ni</i>	<i>zuo shi</i>	<i>bu</i>	<i>dui,</i>	<i>Ni</i>	<i>fa qi</i>	<i>wo jiu</i>	<i>chi</i>	<i>kui.</i>
	This	married	woman	acted	improperly,	You	got	angry	[and]	I
	suffered	for	it.							

0 i i	3̣	3̣ i 2̣	2̣ 3̣	3̣ 2̣	0 5̣	3̣ 5̣	2̣ 3̣ i	i i	3̣
谁不	知	我是	小	鬼,	你	把我	当着	王	魁.
<i>Sui bu</i>	<i>zhi</i>	<i>wo shi</i>	<i>xiao</i>	<i>gui,</i>	<i>Ni</i>	<i>ba wo</i>	<i>dang zhe</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kui.</i>
Who	dosen't	know	I'm	a	little	devil,	You	mistook	me
for	Wang	Kui.							

Despite the difference in notation format, the overall tempo of the music does not change when two-flowing meter is transcribed in 1/4 time.

Although passages of two-flowing meter music which use a *rangban* style of percussion articulation throughout are rare in *gaoqiang* music, those which use the *pengban* style are not. This metrical type is called "pengban two-flowing" meter, and is always transcribed as 2/4 music.⁹ In *pengban* two-flowing meter, the *gushi* sounds the wooden-clapper on the first beat of each measure as the actor's sings the first song text word. *Pengban* two-flowing meter is performed at a slightly slower tempo than regular two-flowing meter, but is faster in tempo than passages of one-character meter. Similar to one-character meter, *pengban* two-flowing meter music gives the actor the interpretive freedom to vary the tempo of the music. *Pengban* two-flowing meter is frequently used for song passages containing a large number of lyric lines. The following excerpt of [*chu jiang yin*] *qupai* song music is taken from a song which contains over fifty actor lyric lines.

Example 7.7

Two Lines of [Chu Jiang Yin]Gupai Song Pengban Two-Flowing Meter Actor Music¹⁰

actor (sings):

$\frac{2}{4}$ | $\overset{5}{\underline{5}} \overset{5}{\underline{3}}$ | $\overset{5}{\underline{6}} \overset{1}{\underline{1}}$ | $\overset{5}{\underline{5}} \overset{5}{\underline{3}}$ | $\overset{2}{\underline{2}} \overset{1}{\underline{1}} \overset{6}{\underline{6}}$ | $\overset{6}{\underline{1}} \overset{2}{\underline{2}} \overset{3}{\underline{3}}$ | $\overset{2}{\underline{1}} \overset{6}{\underline{6}}$ | $\overset{5}{\underline{3}}$ | $\overset{5}{\underline{3}}$ |

人 到 分 关 断 了 魂。
Ren dao fen guan duan liao hun.
 Arriving at the border [my] soul breaks.

$\overset{5}{\underline{3}}$ | $\overset{1}{\underline{1}} \overset{1}{\underline{1}} \overset{6}{\underline{6}}$ | $\overset{5}{\underline{3}}$ | $\overset{1}{\underline{1}} \overset{6}{\underline{6}} \overset{5}{\underline{5}} \overset{6}{\underline{6}} \overset{5}{\underline{3}}$ | $\overset{5}{\underline{6}} \overset{1}{\underline{1}}$ | $\overset{3}{\underline{2}} \overset{3}{\underline{2}} \overset{1}{\underline{1}} \overset{2}{\underline{2}}$ | $\overset{1}{\underline{6}} \overset{5}{\underline{5}} \overset{6}{\underline{6}}$ | $\overset{5}{\underline{3}}$ |

停 鞭 无 语 泪 滚 滚, (哪)
Ting bian wu yu lei gun gun, (na)
 Still the horse whip without speaking tears roll [and] roll,

▼ = wooden-clapper articulations

"Slow two-flowing" (*man erliu* 慢二流) meter is a metrical type which is slower in tempo than *pengban* two-flowing meter, and slightly more melismatic. Unlike *pengban* two-flowing meter, however, the wooden clapper is sounded on both the accented- and unaccented-beats in each measure of slow two-flowing meter music. Slow two-flowing meter music contains a mixture of both *rangban* and *pengban* percussion articulations, and is usually transcribed as 2/4 meter music.

"Fast two-flowing" (*kuai erliu* 快二流) meter is the fastest metered metrical type used in *gaoqiang* music. Each measure of fast two-flowing meter contains one accented-beat, but no unaccented beats (*yi ban wu yan* 一板无眼 lit., "one accented-beat, no eyes"). Although featuring a 1/4 meter rhythmic structure, fast two-flowing meter is usually transcribed as 2/4 music. The reason for this is unclear. This metrical

As its name might suggest, strolling-meter is performed at a slow and relaxed tempo. Because strolling-meter music lacks a codified arrangement of accented- and unaccented-beats, it is quite melismatic and therefore most often found in passages of helping chorus music. Some entirely-helped *qupai* such as [*bu shi lu*] are constructed entirely using a strolling-meter metrical structure. More often, however, one finds strolling-meter used during the erect-pillars portion of those *qupai* songs which begin with an even-start style of vocal initiation (i.e., the helping chorus sings the entire first line). Once this helping chorus passage is completed, the metrical structure of the song usually changes to one of the metered metrical types for the actor's portion. The *qupai* [*xin shui ling*] opens with five lines of helping chorus strolling-meter music before changing the metrical structure to one-character meter for the actor's portion of the song.

Example 7.9

Opening Strolling-Meter Helping Chorus Passage in a [Xin Shui Ling] Gupai Song¹²

helping chorus (sings):

5 5 6·5 3 3 6 5 3 5 6 5 3 2 -

出了(呢) 云房转廊角,(呵)

Chu tiao (e) yun fang zhuan lang jiao, (a)

Leaving the Cloud Room turning down the corridor,

6 5 5 3 5 2 3 5 2 3 6 5 1 1 6 5

好鸟 枝头在唱歌,(呵)

Hao niao zhi tou zai chang ge, (a)

A fine bird sings from the branch tip,

3 6 5 6 5 3 5 5 6 5 3 2

榴花照眼红似火,(呵)

Liu hua zhao yan hong si huo, (a)

Pomegranate blossoms light up the eyes red like fire,

6 5 5 3 5 2 2 2 3 5 5 1 1 6 5

心想 消愁愁更多,(呵)

Xin xiang xiao chou chou geng duo, (a)

Wanting the worries to leave [my] mind yet they increase,

5 2 1 1 6 1 1 3 5 3 5 2 3 5 1 1 6 5

无心 观花上殿角,(呵)

Wu xin guan hua shang dian jiao. (a)

No spirit to view the flowers I reascend into the temple.

During passages of strolling-meter music it is common to hear the percussion orchestra perform a percussion pattern following the vocalization of each lyric line. In *xiqu* forms which feature melodic accompaniment, instrumental interludes would normally be performed at these points.

In *qupai* featuring a putting-on-a-hat style of song initiation, the portion of the lyric line which is sung by the helping chorus is constructed using strolling-meter. Following this short passage of music, the metrical structure of the song usually changes to one of the metered metrical forms.

Shaking-Meter

Described as "half-speaking, half-singing " (*ban jiang ban chang* 半讲半唱), passages of shaking-meter music are used in dramatic situations where stage characters are revealing their "sorrowful and suffering states of mind, or intense inner conflicts" (Sichuan 1987, 33). In contrast to the melismatic nature of strolling-meter music, passages of shaking-meter music have considerably less melodic material, and are therefore more often heard sung by the actor than the helping chorus. As a free metrical type shaking-meter lacks a prescribed arrangement of accented- and unaccented beats. Beneath passages of shaking-meter music, however, continuous and quick-tempoed articulations of the wooden-clapper can be heard. The effect created by juxtaposing these contrasting rhythmic structures against one another adds to the overall feeling of intensity and urgency associated with shaking-meter music. Although the wooden-clapper articulations which take place beneath the melodic-line are not represented in the example below, the relationship of words to musical pitches reveals this to be a passage of shaking-meter music rather than strolling-meter.

Example 7.10

Three Lines of [Mian Da Xu] (棉搭絮) Qupai Song Shaking-Meter Actor Music¹³

actor (sings):

$\underline{0} \quad \underline{\overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{2}} \quad \underline{5} \quad \underline{2} \quad \underline{2} \quad \underline{3} \quad \underline{3} \quad \underline{2} \quad \underline{5} \quad \underline{3} \quad \underline{5} \quad \underline{3} \quad \underline{1} \quad \underline{2} \quad \underline{\overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{1} \overset{\frown}{2}} \quad \underline{\overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{2} \overset{\frown}{1} \overset{\frown}{6}}$
 玉莲今日投江身故，将我尸首留在万丈深潭，
Yulian jin ri tou jiang shen gu, Jiang wo shi shou liu zai wan zhang shen tan,
 Today Yulian throws herself Placing my corpse in a pool ten-thousand zhang deep,
 into the river,

$\underline{2} \underline{2} \underline{3} \underline{5} \quad \underline{2} \underline{\overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{5}} \quad \underline{2} \quad \underline{5} \quad \underline{5} \underline{3} \quad \underline{2} \cdot \underline{7} \quad \underline{6} \quad \underline{6} \quad \underline{2} \quad \underline{\overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{5}} \quad \underline{6}$
 切莫要留在那浅水沙(呀)滩。
Qie mo yao liu zai na qian shui sha (ya) tan,
 Not wanting to remain on that shallow water sandy beach,

Some Sichuan opera scholars believe that the shaking-meter metrical type evolved out of the practice of "rolling-singing" (*gunchang* 滚唱), a structural feature of *yiyangqiang*, the musical system which preceded *gaoqiang* (Zhang 1964, 34). During the Ming dynasty, theatre troupes that sang *yiyangqiang* music often performed plays from the *kunqu* repertoire. Because *kunqu* scripts were known both for their high literary value and elegant language, many theatregoers had trouble comprehending the difficult texts. In *kunqu*, like *yiyangqiang*, *qupai* are used to construct theatre music. The majority of *kunqu qupai* feature strict lyric forms which control the number of words per line, the overall number of lines in a song, and have lyric lines of uneven lengths. The rolling-singing tradition began when lyric couplets consisting of either five or seven words per line were placed before, between, or following the lines of song text in *kunqu qupai* songs. The addition of these lyric couplets is thought to have affected the performance in several different ways:

From the perspective of the playscript, the addition of rolling-lines made difficult lyric lines easier to understand and more lively; [they] broke the original lyric structure of the *qupai*, allowing [them] to hold more content, and strengthened their theatricality. From the perspective of music, the expressive nature of musical passages was increased; a speak-sing flavor [and] narrative elements were added. Due to the changes in rhythm [caused by the insertion of rolling-singing lines], a contrast with the helping chorus [music] was created; changes in dynamics, timbre, and melody resulted, [and] musicality [was increased] (Zhongguo 1989, 34).

By the Qing dynasty, rolling-singing lines could be found in the lyric forms of many *yi yangqiang qupai*. In Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* music, the shaking-meter metrical type is found mostly in *qupai* which have a semi-regulated lyric structure. In the majority of these *qupai*, the opening and closing portions of the song (normally assigned to the helping chorus) are controlled in terms of length and number. The central portion of the *qupai* is constructed used a couplet-based lyric form. This portion of the *qupai* is usually assigned to the actor, and is where most passages of shaking-meter music occur. For these reasons, a number of theatre scholars see a relationship between *gaoqiang*'s shaking-meter and the practice of rolling-singing in *yi yangqiang qupai* performance.

***Qupai* Metrical Form**

Each of the Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* metrical types has a unique rhythmic structure and performance tempo which is appropriate for use in a distinct dramatic context. Generally speaking, the metrical types which are performed at a slower tempo are used for scenes in which the dramatic character is describing the physical environment, expressing inner thoughts and feelings, or narrating a story, in a relatively relaxed and

controlled manner. The quicker-paced metrical types such as fast two-flowing and shaking-meters are better suited for use in dramatic contexts where feelings of intensity or extreme urgency must be conveyed. Due to the faster tempo of these metrical types, singers are able to sing fewer notes per measure, resulting in a more syllabic style of music. In the figure below, the relationship between the suggested performance tempos of metrical types and the degree of melisma present in the melodic structures of their music are summarized.

melismatic	metrical type	performance tempo
	one-character	slow
	strolling-meter	slow
	<i>pengban</i> two-flowing	moderately slow
	slow two-flowing	moderately slow
	two-flowing	moderate
	fast two-flowing	fast
	shaking-meter	fast
syllabic		

Figure 7.3

Relationship Between Performance Tempo and Degree of Melisma in *Gaoqiang* Metrical Types

Passages of music which use those metrical types calling for a slower performance tempo are more melismatic than passages of music using faster tempoed metrical types. Due to the fact that helping chorus music is considerably more melismatic than actor music, it is not surprising to

discover that the slower tempoed metrical types, such as strolling meter and one-character meter, are the most frequently used metrical types in passages of helping chorus music.

The choice of metrical types present in a *gaoqiang qupai* song is determined by the *qupai* 's predetermined rhythmic structure. Some *qupai*, such as [*bu shi lu*] and [*suo suo gang*] , feature only one metrical type throughout an entire song (strolling meter and two-flowing meter, respectively). Other *qupai*, however, use several different metrical types-- both metered and unmetered. Among those *qupai* which are considered melodically-related, differences in the metrical structure are often the most important musical elements distinguishing between *qupai*. In the following list of *qupai* belonging to the [*xin shui ling*] melodic category, the variety of metrical structures among the *qupai* can be seen.

		strolling-meter	one-character	two-flowing	total
1.	[<i>xin shui ling</i>] [新水令]	X	X	X	3
2.	[<i>zhe gui ling</i>] [折桂令] ¹⁴	X	X	X	3
3.	[<i>gao guo jin zhan hua</i>] [高过金盏花]	X	X	X	3
4.	[<i>jiao jiao ling</i>] [饶饶令]		X	X	2
5.	[<i>shou jiang nan</i>] [收江南]		X	X	2
6.	[<i>bei xin shui ling</i>] [北新水令]	X			1
7.	[<i>bu bu jiao</i>] [步步娇]		X		1
8.	[<i>jiang er shui</i>] [江儿水]		X		1
9.	[<i>yan er luo</i>] [雁儿落]		X		1
10.	[<i>bei zhu ma ting</i>] [北驻马听]		X		1
11.	[<i>chen zui dong feng</i>] [沉醉东风]		X		1
12.	[<i>shua hai er</i>] [耍孩儿]			X	1
13.	[<i>yuan liu qing</i>] [园柳青] ¹⁵			X	1
14.	[<i>gu mei jiu</i>] [沽美酒]			X	1
15.	[<i>qing jiang yin</i>] [清江引]			X	1
16.	[<i>xi jiang nan</i>] [喜江南]			X	1
17.	[<i>jian zhan hua</i>] [剪绽花]			X	1

Figure 7.4

Summary of Metrical Types Found in Seventeen [*Xin Shui Ling*] Melodic Category *Qupai*

From the above list, one can see that none of the *qupai* feature a fast two-flowing meter, slow two-flowing meter, or shaking-meter metrical structure. The most common metrical types in *gaoqiang* music are the one-character and two-flowing meters. Within the repertoire, a large number of *qupai* are entirely constructed using either one-character or two-flowing meter, or both. A very small number of *qupai*, however, are entirely constructed using strolling-meter. Shaking-meter and fast two-flowing meter are the least common metrical-types in *gaoqiang* music and are always found within *qupai* which contain other metrical types as well.

No *qupai* surveyed was found to be constructed using only shaking-meter or fast two-flowing meter metrical types.

Among *qupai* which feature two or more metrical types, such as [*xin shui ling*], [*zhe gui ling*], and [*gao guo jin zhan hua*], the progression of metrical types is always from the slowest tempoed/most melismatic metrical type to the quickest tempoed/least melismatic metrical type. All three of the aforementioned *qupai* songs open with a passage of strolling-meter music. This passage is followed by one-character meter music, with a passage of two-flowing meter music concluding the song. This metrical progression parallels the type of dramatic build-up found in many scenes throughout *xiqu*, where the emotional state of the singing character moves from one of relative calmness to one of great anxiety and distress.

Percussion *Taoda*

In almost all of the over three-hundred-and-fifty *xiqu* traditions, the primary form of musical accompaniment during vocal performance is melodic. However, for Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* vocal music, the only style of musical accompaniment is percussion. The presence of percussion music in a *gaoqiang qupai* song is as integral a part of the song's musical structure as the vocal participation of the actor and helping chorus. For this reason, percussion music is equally important in defining the *qupai*'s identity.

As discussed earlier, fundamental differences exist in the lyric form and melodic structures of helping chorus and actor music. An analysis of the nature of the percussion accompaniment for these two vocal styles reveals similar disparities. During passages of actor music, percussion

involvement is limited to the *gushi*'s periodic articulations of musical beats using the wooden-clapper. These articulations provide an overall metrical structure during the often lengthy passages of actor music. They also help to establish an appropriate performance tempo for the song, and to lead the actor through changes in metrical structure as they occur. When the metrical structure of a song is altered during a passage of actor music, the *gushi* uses a combination of both wooden-clapper and the small drum articulations to execute the change.

The relatively simple percussion accompaniment style and limited instrumentation heard in *gaoqiang* actor music, is a striking contrast to the percussion music of helping chorus music. Throughout helping chorus passages, the performance of complex percussion patterns involving the use of several different instruments in the orchestra can be heard. As indicated in Chapter VI, the vocal music performed by the helping chorus is perceived as being the core of the *gaoqiang* tradition. Similarly, the percussion music which is played during helping chorus vocalizations is where the representative percussion music of the musical system can be heard.

Defining *Gupai Taoda*

The term "*taoda*" (套打 lit., "percussion sets") is used in Sichuan opera as a comprehensive term for all types of percussion music heard in performance. The term encompasses all the music used to provide rhythmic structure, set performance tempo, and heighten dramatic interpretation, during passages of speech, song, stylized movement/acting, and combat, as well as the percussion music used specifically to create dramatic atmosphere, add sound effects, and delineate play structure.

A narrower meaning of the term *taoda* is the percussion music which is played during passages of *gaoqiang* helping chorus music. This percussion music is an inseparable part of the rhythmic structure of the melodic-line. The choice and placement of such *qupai taoda* percussion patterns in helping chorus passages is determined by the musical structure of the *qupai*, and is therefore integral to *qupai* identity. Henceforth, the term "*taoda*" will be used in this study to refer to this second, more specific, concept.

Non-*taoda* percussion patterns are heard before, during, and after, *qupai* songs. Before the helping chorus or actor sings the first word in a song, a percussion pattern is generally played to help establish an appropriate performance tempo and dramatic feeling for the song. These patterns, referred to as "starting-the-melodic-phrase [percussion] patterns" (*qiqiang paizi* 起腔牌子), are interchangeable and are not considered part of the rhythmic structure of the *qupai*. Similarly, percussion patterns which are played between the singing of lyric lines (as in passages of strolling-meter music) are also interchangeable. In contrast to such non-*taoda* percussion patterns are *qupai* song *taoda* which are played concurrently with the artist's singing of the vocal line. These patterns are integrally related to the musical structure of the line and cannot be exchanged freely without risking loss of *qupai* identity.

***Taoda* Structure**

Of the hundreds of percussion patterns in the tradition, approximately thirty serve as *qupai taoda*. Among these patterns, two basic types can be found: "general" and "specific." General percussion patterns, such as "*yizi qingban*" ("一字清板") and "*baozi tou*" ("豹子头"), are

patterns which are used by a large number *qupai* in the repertoire. Each pattern is composed using one of the various *gaoqiang* metrical types, and is used in *qupai* songs during helping chorus music passages featuring a common metrical structure. Although a number of general percussion patterns may feature the same metrical structure, they cannot be freely exchanged with one another in *qupai* songs. Each percussion pattern has a unique rhythmic structure and instrumentation style which is like no other in the repertoire. Similarly, each *qupai* has its own unique organization of percussion patterns which must be maintained each time a song is created. Among general patterns, the usage of some patterns is restricted to only *taoda* for vocal music. Others, however, can also be used in non-*taoda* performance contexts.

"Specific" percussion patterns, in contrast, are associated with a single *qupai*. Among the forty or so *taoda* patterns, approximately fifteen can be classified as being specific. Usually the name of a specific percussion pattern reveals the *qupai* to which it is associated. The pattern "*xiao nan zhi zhuanqiang*" ("孝南枝专腔"), for example, is a pattern which is only played during the *zhuanqiang* passages of a [*xiao nan zhi*] *qupai* song. Just as the *zhuanqiang* of some *qupai* may become part of a composite *qupai*'s musical structure, so may the specific percussion pattern which accompanies the *zhuanqiang*. The percussion pattern "*shan po yang tou zi*" (lit., "the head of *shan po yang*") is played beneath line one of a [*shan po yang*] *qupai* song, which is the *qupai*'s *zhuanqiang*. The *qupai* [*shan po bu jin yang*] is a composite *qupai* which opens with the [*shan po yang*] *zhuanqiang*, and so will also feature the "*shan po yang tou zi*" percussion pattern, as well.

Not all passages of helping chorus music within a *qupai* song feature *taoda* percussion accompaniment. The majority, however, feature at least one pattern, while a few have more than one. When a *taoda* pattern is present in a melodic-line, it is contained entirely within the confines of the line. In other words, the *taoda* percussion music must be initiated after the vocalization of the song text has begun and completed before the final note of the melodic-line has concluded. Often non-*taoda* percussion patterns are placed immediately after the *taoda* pattern at the end of the melodic line so that as *taoda* pattern ends, the non-*taoda* begins. The performance of these non-*taoda* patterns, however, does not coincide with the vocalizations of either the helping chorus or actor. By confining a *taoda* pattern within the framework of a single melodic-line, the rhythmic and melodic material of the line form a single, integrated, musical unit. When necessary, this unit can be extracted and used in the musical structures of other *qupai* as seen in composite *qupai*.

Placement in the Melodic-Line

Because *taoda* percussion music is only used to accompany passages of helping chorus music, *taoda* percussion accompaniment is found primarily in the opening and closing sections of *qupai* songs. Two styles of *taoda* percussion accompaniment are used in *gaoqiang* music, full-*taoda* (*quan taoda* 全套打) and "half-*taoda*" (*ban taoda* 半套打). The primary differentiating feature between these two styles is the amount of the melodic-line which is accompanied by percussion music. In the full-*taoda* style, percussion music is placed beneath the entire melodic-line, whereas in half-*taoda* style only a portion of the line is accompanied. Many *qupai* songs features both styles, or use the half-*taoda* style

throughout. Few *qupai* use only full-*taoda* style percussion accompaniment. Most of these *qupai* are entirely sung by the helping chorus.

As described in Chapter VI, the melismatic nature of helping chorus music promotes the use of vocables, which in turn, creates vocable-phrases. The largest vocables-phrases are the inter-*dou* vocable-phrases which lie in the center of the melodic line between individual *dou*, and the cadential vocable-phrases which follow the final word in the lyric line. The relative stability of the lyric form and melodic structure of helping chorus music means that vocable-phrases will be present in the same positions in each new song created. In helping chorus lines featuring half-*taoda* percussion accompaniment, the percussion patterns will be positioned beneath the vocable-phrases of the melodic-line.

Example 7.11

Half-Taoda Percussion Accompaniment in One Line of [Dao Dao Ling] Qupai Song Helping Chorus Music¹⁶

helping chorus (sings):

inter-*dou* vocable-phrase

$\frac{2}{4}$	$\dot{3} \dot{3} \dot{5} \dot{2}$ 我 与 他 (吡)	$\dot{2} \dot{3} \dot{1} \dot{2}$ (呢)	$\dot{3} -$ 	$\dot{3} -$ 	0 	0 	0 	0 	0 	0 	
	Wo yu ta (ye) (e) He and I . . .										
	pattern 1: 课 打 课 课 壮 乃 丑 当 丑 乃 次 丑 乃 壮 次 丑 次 乃 壮 -										

cadential vocable-phrase

$\underline{6} \underline{6} \underline{\dot{1}} \underline{6} \underline{5}$ 神 前 举 (呀)	$\dot{1} \dot{2} \cdot$ 誓 (呢)	$\dot{2} \dot{1} \underline{6}$ 	$\overset{5}{\sqrt{6}} -$ (呵)
shen qian ju (ya) shi. (e)		(a)	
. . . vowed before the god.			

pattern 2: | 壮 乃 钹 | 次 乃 丑 乃 | 壮 乃 壮 |

The Sichuan opera *gushi* Qiu Yonghe describes half-*taoda* percussion accompaniment as "covering the middle . . . and end portions of the melodic-line, but revealing the words in the front . . ." (Qiu unpublished, 14). The choice to position *taoda* patterns beneath vocable-phrases rather than beneath song text is no doubt partially due to the amount of sound produced by the instruments in the percussion orchestra. Unlike melodic instruments which can be played at a low volume when necessary, percussion instruments such as drums, gongs, and cymbals require a considerable amount of force to produce the proper tones. The sound produced when these instruments are played in unison is quite loud. By locating *taoda* percussion patterns beneath vocable-phrases, however, theatre artists can be assured that the sounds of the percussion orchestra

will not hinder the vocalist's attempts to communicate song text meaning to the audience.

As the [*dao dao ling*] passage above reveals, the duration of *taoda* percussion music does not exceed the duration of the melodic-line. When a pattern is placed beneath an inter-*dou* vocable-phrase, however, it is not uncommon to see the performance of the percussion pattern continue beyond the vocalizations of the helping chorus; creating a slight pause where no vocal music can be heard. Although the melodic-line and percussion patterns are both constructed using the same metrical type (i.e., two-flowing meter), the rhythmic structures of the melodic and percussion music are not identical, as can be observed in the [*dao dao ling*] example above. The melodic and the percussion music are independent musical units which support and complement each other.

The opening line of the [*er lang shen*] *qupai* song example below has no percussion accompaniment other than the single percussion articulation

"◇>," which marks the final beat of the melodic line. Such non-*taoda* articulations are common in *gaoqiang* music and are used to heighten dramatic feeling and expression. Usually small in size (i.e., one, two, or three beats in length), the presence and placement of such articulations is not consistent between songs, and therefore cannot be considered part of the *qupai*'s characterizing rhythmic structure. Line two of the [*er lang shen*] song, in contrast, features a full-*taoda* style of percussion accompaniment.

Example 7.12

Percussion Accompaniment in Two Lines of an [Er Lang Shen] Gupai Song¹⁷

helping chorus (sings):

line one

4/4 | 3̣ 3̣ 2̣ 2̣ 2̣ 6̣ | 6̣ 6̣ 6̣ 6̣ 2̣ - | 3̣ 2̣ 3̣ 1̣ 6̣ 5̣ 1̣ |

花枝(呢) 隱隱 | 隔(呀) (呢) | 窗(呵)

Hua zhi (e) yin yin ge (ya) (e) chuang (a)

Flowers and branches show occasionally at the window,

line two

6̣ 3̣ 5̣ 3̣ 3̣ | 3̣ 6̣ 5̣ 3̣ 2̣ | 6̣ 6̣ 1̣ 2̣ 2̣ 2̣ | 2̣ 3̣ 5̣ 5̣ 5̣ |

棧(呢) 几 度 | 教(衣) | 人(哪) (呢) | (呢)

ling, (e) Ji du jiao (yi) ren (na) (e) (yi)

Several times asking others for help

壮 乃 次 次 | 次 乃 次 次 | 才 才 才 尔 乃 太 | 次 乃 才 尔 乃 太 |

pattern 1

3̣ 5̣ 3̣ 5̣ 3̣ 2̣ | 1̣ 2̣ 6̣ 1̣ 2̣ - | 6̣ 1̣ 2̣ 3̣ 1̣ 6̣ 5̣ 1̣ | 6̣ - 6̣ 6̣ 1̣ |

(呵) (呢) | 成 孤 | 另(呵)

(a) (e) cheng gu ling (a)

becoming isolated and alone.

次 乃 次 乃 次 乃 | 才 才 才 尔 乃 太 | 次 乃 次 乃 次 乃 | 壮 丑 乃 次 丑 乃 |

pattern 2

2̣ 2̣ 1̣ | 6̣ 1̣ 5̣ 1̣ | 6̣ 2̣ 1̣ 6̣ | 5̣ 6̣ - |

(呢) (呵) | (呢) (呵) |

(e) (a) (e) (a)

钗 乃 乃 丑 乃 丑 乃 | 次 乃 丑 乃 次 | 壮 乃 壮 - |

The *full-taoda* percussion accompaniment covers the entire length of line two of an [*er lang shen*] *qupai* song. In many *qupai* songs, this complete percussion accompaniment is created through the use of a single percussion pattern. However, because line two of the [*er lang shen*] song is unusually melismatic, two patterns are needed to cover the entire length of the melodic-line. Many non-*taoda* percussion patterns have a particular portion of the pattern which can be repeated for as long as needed. This allows theatre practitioners to adjust the pattern to fit the dramatic context in which it is to be used. *Taoda* patterns, in contrast, are codified in length. Depending on the length of the melodic-line, one or more percussion patterns may therefore be needed to achieve the effect of *full-taoda* percussion accompaniment.

Small, Civil, and Martial *Taoda* Classification

The placement of percussion patterns beneath vocable-phrases in the *half-taoda* style of percussion accompaniment suggests a concern for song text communication. If this is true, then the use of *full-taoda* accompaniment beneath helping chorus passages would appear to contradict this concern. A comparison of the instruments used to perform patterns one and two in the [*er lang shen*] song example above, however, reveals how the communication of song text is still possible despite the presence of *full-taoda* percussion accompaniment.

Pattern 1:	Pattern 2:
small drum	small drum
wooden-clapper	wooden-clapper
small gong	small gong
small cymbals	small cymbals
	large gong
	large cymbals

Figure 7.5

Instrumentation Used in Percussion Patterns One and Two in Line Two of an [Er Lang Shen] Qupai Song

Each *taoda* pattern has a unique rhythmic structure and a prescribed instrumentation. Both *taoda* and non-*taoda* percussion patterns are classified as either martial, civil, or small based on their instrumentation. The difference in instrumentation among martial, civil, and small percussion patterns results in the production of three discrete aural timbres and sound densities. Due to these distinct aural qualities, martial, civil, and small percussion styles are not equally represented among song *taoda* patterns. Civil and small percussion patterns are heard more frequently during passages of helping chorus music than martial patterns.

Patterns one and two in the [er lang shen] example above belong to the small and civil categories, respectively. Pattern one, which is the least dense in terms of sound, is performed beneath the opening portion of line two where the majority of song text lies. Pattern two is performed during the cadential vocable-phrase at the end of the line. The placement of pattern two resembles the placement used in half-*taoda* style percussion accompaniment. Pattern two, called "yi zi qing ban" ("一字清板" lit., "one-[written]-character clear meter"), is the percussion pattern most

commonly heard during the cadential vocable-phrases of one-character meter helping chorus music. Due to its instrumentation, it is never used to accompany those parts of the melodic-line which contain song text. Pattern one, which is referred to by a variety of different names,¹⁸ is a small percussion category pattern which is frequently used as full-*taoda* percussion accompaniment beneath the song text portion of one-character meter helping chorus music. This pattern is never performed solely during vocable-phrases as pattern two is, and therefore can never be used as half-*taoda* percussion accompaniment.

As seen in the [*er lang shen*] example, civil percussion patterns can be used with small percussion patterns to accompany a single melodic-line of music. Civil patterns are played using the small and large gongs, small and large cymbals, and the *gushi*'s small drum and wooden-clapper. As a result, civil patterns are aurally denser than small percussion patterns which do not feature the large gong and large cymbals. Civil percussion patterns make a stronger aural statement than small patterns, and are used to portray a wide variety of emotional states ranging from happiness and tranquility, to anxiety and fear. The relative aural density of civil patterns make them more suitable for use as half-*taoda* percussion accompaniment.

In the *gaoqiang* dramatic repertoire, plays featuring the young *sheng* and young *dan* role categories are the most numerous. Both role categories place primary emphasis on song skills, and feature aural and physical performance styles which are considered refined. For this reason, it is not surprising that small percussion *taoda* patterns are the most frequently used to accompany *gaoqiang qupai* song performance. The relatively limited instrumentation used to perform small percussion style patterns not only complements the gentler performance styles of these

two role categories, but also allows the vocalization of song text to occur without fear of obstructing the communication of its meaning.

The faster performance tempo of martial percussion patterns and the inclusion of the horse gong and *tang* drum in its instrumentation, make martial percussion music the least appropriate for *taoda* use. When used, however, marital *taoda* patterns are predominantly found in passages of music constructed using the faster metrical types such as two-flowing meter, and in dramatic situations where high levels of tension, anxiety, or fear are being conveyed. A common method of using martial percussion music to convey a feeling of intensity and power, but without overwhelming the sounds of the vocalists, is to position a short martial pattern in the cadential vocable-phrase portion of the melodic-line. Martial patterns that may be used in this way include "*dan chui*" ("单捶"):

打打 以丑 以冷 壮

Immediately following this martial *taoda* pattern, a non-*taoda* martial pattern such as "*he pai yan*" ("和牌眼") is played:

$\frac{2}{4}$ | 打把 | 冷壮 丑丑 | 壮丑当丑 当丑冷丑 | 当丑冷丑 当丑当丑 |
| 当丑冷丑 当丑当丑 | 当丑当丑 当丑冷丑 | 当丑当丑 当冷壮 | 冷壮 |

This pattern is considerably longer than "*dan chui*," and is performed at a much faster tempo. When the two patterns are played in succession, the "*dan chui*" pattern initiates the feeling of aural intensity which is characteristic of martial music before the melodic-line has

finished. Due to its short length, however, the majority of martial music will occur after the melodic-line is complete as the "*he pai yan* " pattern is played. Before the vocalization of the next melodic-line begins, the martial music will have ended. The gradual increase in tempo and volume which occurs through the juxtaposition of two martial patterns creates a strong sense of crescendo and climax. Since the performance of the "*he pai yan* " pattern does not occur during the helping chorus vocalizations, it is not considered *taoda* accompaniment. Described as "bridge-patterns" (*qiaoliang paizi* 桥梁牌子), such non-*taoda* percussion patterns function to establish an appropriate performance tempo and dramatic feeling for the subsequent melodic-line, but do not actually interact with its rhythmic structure.

Taoda percussion accompaniment is not used to accompany passages of music which use free metrical types, such as strolling- and shaking-meters. The placement of the patterns beneath the melodic-line would create a metrical conformity and regularity that would destroy their free nature. In free metered music, percussion accompaniment is present, albeit provided through non-*taoda* means. In passages of shaking-meter music, the *gushi* uses his wooden-clapper to create a rhythmic pulse beneath the melodic-line, giving the aural impression of a rapidly beating heart. Above this continuous and steady pulse, the actor sings the melodic-line without regard for the metrical structure being produced by the wooden-clapper. In passages of strolling-meter music, no percussion accompaniment is heard beneath the melodic-line. Instead, percussion patterns are heard after the vocalization of a melodic-line. In the [*xin shui ling*] example below, the percussion pattern "*di pai* " ("地牌") is used in this manner.

Example 7.13

Percussion Accompaniment in Two Lines of [*Xin Shui Ling*] Helping Chorus Strolling-Meter Music¹⁹

helping chorus (sings):

$\underline{5} \underline{5} \overset{\frown}{\underline{6 \cdot 5}} \underline{3} \underline{3} \overset{\frown}{\underline{6 5 3}} \underline{5} \overset{\frown}{\underline{6 \ 5 \ 3 \ 2}} -$ 壮乃 丑乃次 壮
 出了(呢) 云 房 转 廊 角, (呵)
Chu tiao (e) yun fang zhuan lang jiao, (a)
 Leaving the Cloud Room turning down the corridor,

$\overset{6}{\underline{6}} \overset{\frown}{\underline{5}} \underline{5} \underline{3} \underline{5} \underline{2} \overset{\frown}{\underline{3 5 2 3}} \underline{6} \underline{5} \overset{\frown}{\underline{1 \ 1 \ 6}} \overset{3}{\underline{5}}$ 壮乃 丑乃次 壮
 好鸟 枝头 在唱 歌, (呵)
Hao niao zhi tou zai chang ge, (a)
 A fine bird sings from the branch tip,

As one can observe, the pattern "di pai " is not an integral part of the rhythmic structure of the [*xin shui ling*] melodic-line. Therefore, it is not functioning as a *qupai taoda*. A comparison of this [*xin shui ling*] strolling-meter passage with passages from four other [*xin shui ling*] songs revealed that four different percussion patterns were used--one was even martial. The fact that such variety of percussion accompaniment exists further confirms the fact that these patterns are functioning as non-*taoda* patterns in the [*xin shui ling*] songs. *Taoda* percussion patterns, in contrast, are immutable elements of *qupai* musical structure which cannot be exchanged in this manner.

Although most *gaoqiang qupai* have *taoda* percussion patterns, some do not. The majority of those which do not are the declamatory *qupai* which feature little, or no, melodic material. As for free metered music, non-*taoda* percussion patterns are used to initiate or conclude declamatory *qupai* songs, or are performed following individual lyric line

vocalizations. Because declamatory *qupai* songs are very syllabic, they are performed mostly by the actor. Like most actor music, percussion accompaniment is provided by the sounds of the *gushi*'s wooden-clapper, rather than through *taoda* percussion accompaniment.

The various melodic and rhythmic components described in Chapters VI and VII form the musical structure of Sichuan opera *gaoqiang qupai*. To summarize, Sichuan opera helping chorus music is characterized by its melismatic nature. During the helping chorus passages which initiate and close most *qupai* songs, percussion accompaniment provided by the full percussion orchestra can be heard. In between helping chorus vocalizations, the Sichuan opera actor generally sings. The melodic structure of actor music is logogenic and highly influenced by song text speech-tones. The percussion accompaniment which occurs during actor vocalizations is limited to the articulations of the *gushi*'s wooden-clapper.

The contrast in the musical structure of helping chorus and actor music is striking. The density and volume of sound produced by the voices of the helping chorus members and the sounds of the *taoda* percussion patterns accompanying their singing, could not be further away from the solo voice of the actor and the single-instrument percussion music which accompanies it. This opposition of musical styles helps distinguish between the unique dramatic functions which the actor and helping chorus serve in performance. In the following chapter, an investigation into the unique role of the helping chorus in *gaoqiang* performance is undertaken.

Notes to Chapter VII

GAOQIANG QUPAI RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE

1 This song passage is from the one-act play *Longing for Laity* (*Si fan* "思凡") (Wen 1983, 90).

2 See Note 1 (Wen 1993, 91).

3 This style of percussion articulation is also referred to as "guoban" (过板 lit., "[letting] the-clapper-pass").

4 See Note 1.

5 When an actor inadvertently begins to sing the song text word as the wooden-clapper is sounding in a *rangban* situation, it is called "clipping-the-clapper" (*dingban* 顶板). This type of vocalization is considered to be an error on the part of the actor.

6 This song passage is from the scene "Leaving the Cave to View the Scenery" ("Bie dong guan jing" 别洞观景), in the play *The Courtiers' Well* (*Gong ren jing* 宫人井) (Sichuan 1987, 225).

7 See Note 6.

8 This song passage is performed by the *chou* character Paizi (牌子) in the scene "Striking the God" ("Da shen" 打神), from the play *Burning Incense* (*Fen xiang ji* 焚香记) (Wen 1983, 19).

9 *Pengban* two-flowing meter is also referred to as "*jiqiban*" (夹板 lit., "squeezed-meter").

10 This song passage is performed by the *dan* character Wang Zhaojun (王昭君) in the scene "Crossing the Northern Frontier" ("Chu bei sai" 出北塞), from the play *The Chaste Woman of the Han* (*Han zhen lie* 汉贞烈) (Zhang 1964, 185).

11 This song passage is sung by the *dan* character Xi Shi (郗氏) in the scene "Leaving the Palace On a Journey" ("Bie gong chu zheng" 别宫出征), from the play *Celebration Cloud Palace* (*Qing yun gong* 庆云宫) (Sichuan 1987, 159).

12 See Note 1 for background information on this excerpt (Wen 1983, 93).

13 This song passage is sung by the *dan* character Qian Yulian (钱玉莲) in the scene "Carving at the Window" ("Diao chuang" 刁窗), from the play *The Thorn Hairpin* (*Jing chai ji* 荆钗记) (Chengdu 1980, 15).

14 Sometimes written: [拆桂令] (*[chai gui ling]*).

15 Sometimes written: [元柳令].

16 This song passage is from the scene "Striking the God" ("Da shen" 打神), in the play *Burning Incense* (*Fen xiang ji* 焚香记) (Zhang 1964, 59).

17 This passage is performed by the *dan* character Lu Zhaorong (卢昭容) in the scene "Picking Red Plums" ("Zhai hong mei" 摘红梅), from the play *The Red Plum* (*Hong mei ji* 红梅记) (Zhang 1964, 454).

18 In the publication *Sichuan opera percussion patterns* (*Chuanju luogu paizi* 川剧锣鼓牌子), Sichuan opera *gushi* Huang Yiliang (黄一良) refers to this pattern only as "the *taoda* of *er lang shen* " ("er lang shen taoda" "二郎神套打") (1980, 360). In his unpublished article on *gaoqiang* music, *gushi* Qiu Yonghe (邱永和) does not even give a name to this pattern, describing it only as "the small *taoda* percussion accompaniment for one-character music" ("*yizi qiang taoda* " "一字腔套打") (unpublished, 10).

19 See Note 11 (Wen 1983, 93).

CHAPTER VIII

THE HELPING CHORUS IN PERFORMANCE

As a physically immobile participant in the performance, the helping chorus communicates with the audience through a single artistic medium: song. The disparate structural features of *gaoqiang* helping chorus and actor music help to highlight the fact that although the two vocalizing entities share a common performance medium, each serve the dramatic presentation in a different way. The manner of performance further distinguishes helping chorus music from actor music. Contrary to what is implied by its name, the helping chorus does not always sing as a unified musical ensemble. Frequently in performance, the sound of a solo voice can be heard during helping chorus vocalizations. The antiphonal vocal style produced by the alternation of a solo singer and a chorus, is similar to the vocal relationship which exists between the stage actor and the helping chorus. This style of vocal performance is a characteristic feature of helping chorus music, and one which serves the various dramatic functions of the helping chorus in *gaoqiang* performance.

The helping chorus provides Sichuan opera practitioners with an avenue of dramatic communication not found in most *xiqu* forms. Through song text meaning, the musical structure of the *qupai* song, and the method of vocalization, practitioners are given a variety of means in which to affect the dramatic presentation. Due to the nature of *qupai* performer-assignment structure, the helping chorus also functions as a method of

musical support for the actor. In most other *xiqu* forms, however, this service is provided by a melodic orchestra.

Vocalization Practices

The alternation of vocalizing bodies within a *qupai* song is an important performance feature of the *gaoqiang* musical system, and one which is controlled by a *qupai*'s performer-assignment structure. As discussed in Chapter V, although there are a small number of *qupai* in the musical repertoire which are either sung entirely by the helping chorus, or entirely by the actor, the performer-assignment structures of most *qupai* call for a mixture of both actor and helping chorus vocalizations within each song. This exchange between the two vocalizing bodies occurs in one of two ways. The first way is in increments of a melodic-line, whereby the actor and the helping chorus alternate the singing of full melodic-lines. The second method occurs when a single lyric line is divided between the helping chorus and the actor, usually with the actor performing the first *dou* of the lyric line and the helping chorus singing all subsequent *dou*. Through the alternations of passages of music sung by a solo singer (the actor), and passages which are sung by a chorus of singers (the helping chorus), a call-and-response style of vocal performance is created.

Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* music has inherited the vocal performance feature of "one person sings, [then] a multitude continues the melodic-phrase" (*yi ren qi kou zhong ren jie qiang* 一人启口众人接腔) from both its heritage in the *yiyangqiang* musical system, and its roots in

indigenous Sichuan folk music culture.¹ This phrase is one which is used most often to describe the alternation between passages of actor and helping chorus music that takes place during a *gaoqiang qupai* song performance--an exchange which is organized by a *qupai*'s performer-assignment structure. The same phrase may also be used, however, to refer to the antiphonal vocal performance style which occurs within individual passages of helping chorus music. This secondary layer of antiphony is the result of a vocal exchange between a specially-designated "chorus leader" (*lingqiang* 领腔 lit., "melodic-phrase leader") and a "general chorus" (*hechang* 合唱 lit., "sing together") within the helping chorus. Guiding the nature of this performance feature are the helping chorus vocal performance conventions, and not *qupai* structural form. In the following [*er lang shen*] song, the different vocal exchanges which take place between a soloist and a chorus--the actor and the helping chorus, and the chorus leader and the general chorus--have been indicated through the placement of patterned bars over the music.

Example 8.1

Performer-Assignment Structure and Helping Chorus Vocalization Pattern in Two Lines of
[Er Lang Shen] Qupai Song Music²

line 1:

actor

dou 1 *dou 2*

$\frac{4}{4}$ | 0 $\overset{3}{5}$ $\overset{3}{2}$ $\overset{1}{6.5}$ $\overset{3}{3}$ | 2. $\overset{3}{5}$ 6 - | $\overset{5}{5}$ $\overset{2}{2}$ $\overset{3}{3}$ $\overset{2}{3}$ $\overset{5}{5}$ | $\overset{1}{1}$ $\overset{6}{6}$ $\overset{1}{1}$ $\overset{2}{2}$ - |

听两两 黄 莺 唤叫 应, (哪) (呵)

Ting liang liang huang ying huan jiao ying, (na) (a)

Hear the pair of yellow orioles calling back and forth,

line 2:

chorus leader general chorus

dou 1 *dou 2*

$\overset{3}{3}$ $\overset{2}{2}$ $\overset{1}{1}$ | $\overset{6}{6}$ $\overset{1}{1}$ $\overset{3}{3}$ $\overset{2}{2}$ | $\overset{6}{6}$ $\overset{1}{1}$ $\overset{2}{2}$ $\overset{3}{3}$ $\overset{1}{1}$ $\overset{6}{6}$ $\overset{5}{5}$ $\overset{1}{1}$ | $\overset{6}{6}$ - $\overset{6}{6}$ $\overset{6}{6}$ $\overset{1}{1}$ |

早 (呃) 被 它 (也) 唤 起 春 情. (呵)

Zao (e) bei ta (ye) huan qi chun qing. (a)

Already aroused by his call of spring sentiments.

cadential vocable-phrase

$\overset{2}{2}$ $\overset{2}{2}$ $\overset{1}{1}$ | $\overset{6}{6}$ $\overset{1}{1}$ $\overset{5}{5}$ $\overset{1}{1}$ | 6 $\overset{2}{2}$ $\overset{1}{1}$ 6 $\overset{5}{5}$ 6 - |

(呃) (呵) (呃) (呵)

(e) (a) (e) (a)

Line one of the *[er lang shen]* passage above contains eight words, divided into two *dou* of 5 + 3 words. The performer-assignment structure of the *qupai* mandates that the actor perform the entire melodic-line. The second line in the passage is assigned to the helping chorus. In

performance, however, the audience will not hear this melodic-line sung in the collective voice of the helping chorus. Instead, the audience will hear the passage divided between the chorus leader and the remaining helping chorus members; the chorus leader sings the first *dou* in the seven-word lyric line, and the general chorus sings the second *dou* and cadential vocable-phrase which follows. The performer-assignation structure and vocalization pattern found in these two lines of [*er lang shen*] *qupai* song music can be expressed in equation form as:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Line 1 vocalization} &= A (dou_1 + dou_2) \\ \text{Line 2 vocalization} &= CL (dou_1) + GC (dou_2 + V_c) \end{aligned}$$

In this expression, the letters "A," "CL," and "GC," stand for the vocalists: the "Actor," "Chorus Leader," and "General Chorus," respectively. Contained within each pair of parentheses is the portion of the lyric line which is sung by the vocalist; the first *dou* in the lyric line is "*dou* 1," the second, "*dou* 2," and the cadential vocable-phrase, "*V_c*." The presence of an inter-*dou* vocable-phrase would be indicated as "*V_i*."

Within every *gaoqiang* helping chorus, one singer holds the position of chorus leader. The job of chorus leader is one which requires intimate knowledge of the *gaoqiang* musical system, including familiarity with the internal structures of the repertoire's hundreds of *qupai*. Once a singer has been chosen to become a chorus leader (usually by her early teens), she must undergo several years of formal training. The position of chorus leader is not rotated among helping chorus members from performance to

performance. Those who have undergone chorus leader training always serve as the chorus leader in all *gaoqiang* performances they participate in.

To the Sichuan opera actor, the impact of the chorus leader on the success of the dramatic presentation, is second only to that of the *gushi*. Just as leading *kunqu* performers have specific *dizi* players with whom they work, a top-ranking Sichuan opera artist works with a particular chorus leader and *gushi*. On the jackets of audio tapes sold of Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* performances, the *gushi* and chorus leader are the only musicians whose identities are regularly recognized in print.

During performance, the helping chorus is seated offstage, just upstage of the percussion orchestra. Like the percussionists, the helping chorus is also seated in a semi-circle configuration. The chorus leader is seated at the end of the semi-circle which is closest to the performance space (See Figure 3.5)

Patterns of Vocalization

Although the performer-assignment structure of *gaoqiang qupai* assigns the actor and the helping chorus to particular parts of the *qupai*, it does not mandate how a helping chorus passage should be divided between the chorus leader and general chorus. An analysis of two songs created using the same *qupai*, but performed by different artists, will reveal disparities in the melodic structure of actor passages. Similarly, an examination of helping chorus passages may also reveal differences in chorus leader and general chorus vocalizations. Perhaps due to such flexibility, the vocalization divisions within helping chorus passages are

generally not reflected in published music scores. Despite the variety of ways in which helping chorus passages can be divided, certain patterns of assignment can be still observed. The three principal factors influencing the method of helping chorus vocalization division appear to be: i) the musical structure of the *qupai* passage, ii) the lyric form of the song text, and iii) the dramatic context in which the song is used.

As its name implies, the chorus leader leads the passages of helping chorus music. The most common method of dividing a helping chorus line between the chorus leader and general chorus is to assign the first *dou* of the line to the chorus leader, and all subsequent *dou* to the general chorus. If a cadential vocable-phrase follows the final *dou* in the melodic-line, the vocable-phrase is also sung by the general chorus. This method of vocal division was present in the [*er lang shen*] song example above.

The length of a melodic-line of helping chorus music varies according to the amount of song text present in the lyric line, and the metrical type used to organize the musical pitches. In a melodic-line of one-character meter helping chorus music containing a moderate amount of song text (i.e., five to seven words), seven to ten measures of music is generally used. Because passages of two-flowing meter music are less melismatic and feature less vocables than one-character meter music, the overall length of a melodic-line of helping chorus music containing the same amount of song text is shorter. In most cases, one measure of music per song text word is all that is necessary. Despite such variations in melodic-line length, the portion of the music which is sung by the chorus leader remains constant--only the portion allocated to the general chorus changes. Invariably, the

chorus leader sings the first melodic-section in the lyric line within the first one, or two measures of music.

Example 8.2

CL (*dou* 1) + GC (*dou* 2 + *V*_c) Vocalization Pattern in a Single Line of [Duan Zheng Hao] *Gupai* Song Helping Chorus Music³

chorus leader	general chorus
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>dou</i> 1</p> <p>$\frac{4}{4}$ 0 <u>3̣</u> <u>5̣</u> <u>2̣</u> <u>5̣</u> <u>3̣</u> .</p> <p>恨 王 魁 (呵)</p> <p><i>Hen Wang Kui (ye)</i></p> <p>Hating Wang Kui</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>dou</i> 2</p> <p><u>3̣</u> <u>2̣</u> <u>1̣</u> <u>2̣</u> <u>7̣</u> <u>6̣</u> <u>5̣</u> <u>6̣</u> 0 <u>3̣</u> <u>2̣</u> <u>1̣</u> <u>2̣</u> <u>3̣</u> <u>2̣</u> <u>1̣</u> <u>2̣</u> <u>3̣</u> <u>2̣</u> <u>1̣</u> <u>2̣</u> </p> <p>辜 恩 (哪) (呵) 负 义! (呵)</p> <p><i>gu en (na) (a) fu yi! (a)</i></p> <p>ungrateful of [my] kindness !</p>
<p>cadential vocable-phrase</p> <p>0 <u>3̣</u> <u>2̣</u> <u>1̣</u> <u>2̣</u> <u>1̣</u> <u>6̣</u> <u>5̣</u> <u>6̣</u> <u>1̣</u> <u>5̣</u> <u>6̣</u> <u>5̣</u> <u>3̣</u> <u>5̣</u> <u>2̣</u> <u>3̣</u> <u>5̣</u> <u>6̣</u> <u>6̣</u> <u>6̣</u> <u>5̣</u> <u>3̣</u> <u>5̣</u> <u>2̣</u> 3 - - 0</p> <p>(呵)</p> <p>(a)</p>	

In lyric lines containing fewer than four words (e.g., flying-lines), the entire lyric line is usually treated as a single semantic unit. In such cases, the chorus leader sings the entire song text, leaving the general chorus to sing only the vocables contained in the cadential vocable-phrase at the end of the melodic-line. This pattern can be expressed as:

CL (*dou* 1) + GC (*V*_c)

Although the amount of song text has decreased, and the overall length of the helping chorus melodic-line has become shorter, the amount of music which is sung by the chorus leader remains the same (i.e., one to two measures of music). In the flying-line passage below from a [*suo suo gang*] *qupai* song, the chorus leader sings one measure of music, leaving the general chorus to sing three.

Example 8.3

CL (*dou* 1) + GC (V_C) Vocalization Pattern in a [*Suo Suo Gang*] *Qupai* Song Flying-Line Helping Chorus Passage⁴

chorus leader	general chorus
<i>dou</i> 1	cadential vocable-phrase
$\frac{2}{4}$	
	喜悠悠(呢) (呢) <i>Xi you you! (e) (e)</i> <i>Happy and carefree!</i>

As indicated above, in lyric lines which contain only one *dou* of song text and which feature a cadential vocable-phrase, it is common to hear the chorus leader vocalizing the song text and the general chorus vocalizing the cadential vocable-phrase.⁵ If the beginning of the vocable-phrase is contained within the same measure as the song text, however, the chorus leader will initiate the singing of the cadential vocable-phrase. The general chorus assumes this vocalization beginning from the first beat of the subsequent measure.

For lyric lines containing seven or more words, it is not uncommon to find that the performer-assignment structure of the line has divided the vocalization between the actor and the helping chorus. In these lyric lines, the first *dou* of song text is usually given to the actor, and all remaining *dou* and the cadential vocable-phrase assigned to the helping chorus. If the lyric line contains only two *dou*, the second *dou* is usually sung by the chorus leader, and the cadential vocable-phrase by the general chorus, resulting in the vocalization pattern:

A (*dou* 1) + CL (*dou* 2) + GC (V_c).

Example 8.4

A (*dou* 1) + CL (*dou* 2) + GC (V_c) Vocalization Pattern in a Single Line of [Qing Na Ao] Qupai Song Music⁶

actor **chorus leader**

dou 1 *dou* 2

$\frac{4}{4}$ | 0 $\overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{2} \overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{2} \overset{\frown}{1}$ | 0 $\overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{2} \overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{1} \overset{\frown}{2} \overset{\frown}{1}$ | $\overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{2} \overset{\frown}{1} \overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{2} \overset{\frown}{1}$ | $\overset{\frown}{6} \overset{\frown}{5}$ |

无端 | 惹下 | 风流债(呀)

Wu duan | *re xia* | *feng liu zhai (ya)*

Carelessly asking for trouble by having an affair,

general chorus

cadential vocable-phrase

| $\overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{6} \overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{2} \overset{\frown}{1} \overset{\frown}{1}$ | $\overset{\frown}{2} - \overset{\frown}{2} \overset{\frown}{1} \overset{\frown}{6} \overset{\frown}{5}$ | $\overset{\frown}{1} \overset{\frown}{2} \overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{1} \overset{\frown}{6} \overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{1}$ | $\overset{\frown}{6} \overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{3} \overset{\frown}{5} \overset{\frown}{2} \overset{\frown}{3}$ | $\overset{\frown}{5} - - 0$ |

(呵)

(a)

When the lyric line contains three *dou*, however, the song text is frequently divided equally between the three entities, with the actor singing the first *dou*, the chorus leader the second *dou*, and the general chorus the third *dou* plus the cadential-vocable phrase:

A (*dou* 1) + CL (*dou* 2) + GC (*dou* 3 + V_c)

The passage below of [jiang tou jin gui] qupai song music reveals a slightly different vocalization pattern for a longer lyric line. This lyric line

is an example of a *fangqiang*; the musical form which calls for the actor to initiate the vocalization of the melodic-line in an uncharacteristically melismatic manner. The song text below contains ten words divided into three *dou* of 3 + 3 + 4 words. In this passage, the actor sings the first two *dou* of the line and the inter-*dou* vocable-phrase in between. The helping chorus portion of the line consists only of the third *dou* and cadential vocable-phrase. The chorus leader sings the song text, and the general chorus sings the vocable-phrase.

sings all subsequent *dou* plus the cadential vocable-phrase:

$$\text{CL } (dou_1 + dou_2) + \text{GC } (dou_3 + V_c).$$

Although in this instance, the amount of song text which is performed by the chorus leader is twice that of the general chorus, the amount of musical material is not. In general, the section of the melodic-line which is sung by the chorus leader is more syllabic than the portion performed by the general chorus. For this reason, the vocalizations of the first two *dou* of song text by the chorus leader can still be contained within the first one, or two measures of music.

The passage of [*yuan lin hao*] (〔园林好〕) *qupai* song helping chorus music below contains ten words divided into three *dou* of 3 + 3 + 4 words. Between the first and second *dou* in the lyric line, an inter-*dou* vocable-phrase is present, and following the third *dou*, a cadential vocable-phrase. In this line, the chorus leader sings the first and second *dou*, while the general chorus performs the inter-*dou* vocable-phrase, the third *dou*, and the cadential vocable-phrase. This vocalization pattern can be expressed as:

$$\text{CL } (dou_1) + \text{GC } (V_i) + \text{CL } (dou_2) + \text{GC } (dou_3 + V_c).$$

This pattern is unusual in that within a single melodic-line, two separate vocalizations by the chorus leader and general chorus can be heard.

Example 8.6

CL (*dou* 1) + GC (*V*₁) + CL (*dou* 2) + GC (*dou* 3 + *V*₂) Vocalization Pattern in a Single Line of [Yuan Lin Hao] *Qupai* Song Helping Chorus Music

chorus leader general chorus

dou 1 inter-*dou* vocable-phrase

$\frac{4}{4}$ | 2̇ 1̇ 6̇ 5̇ 7̇ 1̇ | 2̇ - | 0 3̇ 2̇ 1̇ 7̇ 1̇ | 2̇ 2̇ i | 6̇ 1̇ 6̇ 1̇ 2̇ | 2̇ 1̇ 6̇ 5 |

面 庞 儿 (哪) (呢) (呵) (呵)

Mian pang er (na) (e) (*a*)

The contours of the face

chorus leader general chorus

dou 2 cadential vocable-phrase

0 5 | 2̇ 7̇ i | 5 5 2̇ 1̇ i | i 0 | i 2̇ - | 7̇ i - 6̇ |

却 好 似 从 前 恩 爱 . (呵) (呵)

Que hao si cong qian en ai. (*a*)

Resembles so [my] former conjugal love.

The choice of how the vocalization of a melodic-line is divided between the chorus leader and general chorus, can have considerable impact on the nature of the dramatic scene. The [yuan lin hao] song excerpt above is from the scene "Checking Sentiments" ("Qing tan" 请探), which is the final scene in the play *Burning Incense* (*Fen xiang ji* 焚香记). This play tells the story of the relationship between the young scholar Wang Kui (王魁) and the beautiful and virtuous prostitute Jiao Guiying (焦桂英). After exchanging nuptial vows at the Temple of the Sea God, Wang Kui leaves Jiao Guiying and goes to the capital to take the imperial examinations. After attaining the rank of First Graduate, Wang

feels that his marriage to a woman such as Jiao Guiying is inappropriate for a man of his position, and so writes a letter of divorce to Jiao. Devastated by the news, Jiao Guiying returns to the temple to implore the god to seek justice on her behalf. Feeling that her pleas have gone unheard, Jiao commits suicide, vowing to seek revenge from the other world. At the onset of the scene "Checking Sentiments," the ghost of Jiao Guiying has just entered the private chambers of Wang Kui in the capital. Not recognizing her, and not suspecting that she is an apparition from the spirit world, Wang first demands to know who the young woman has come to see. After Jiao replies "I have come to congratulate the First Graduate," the helping chorus sings the lyric line above. In this passage, they communicate to the audience Wang Kui's surprise upon seeing in his visitor a resemblance to Jiao Guiying.

In this melodic-line, the inter-*dou* vocable-phrase which lies between the first and second *dou* of the lyric line divides the song text into two discrete semantic units. In this way, the helping chorus conveys only a portion of the song text meaning to the audience at a time. Having to wait for the general chorus to complete the vocalization of the inter-*dou* vocable-phrase before hearing the remaining song text helps heighten the feelings of suspense and tension in the scene. Since Jiao Guiying's suicide at the end of the previous scene, the audience has been awaiting the moment when Jiao Guiying confronts Wang Kui. Rather than allowing the young *sheng* actor playing Wang Kui to speak directly to Jiao Guiying, the helping chorus is used instead to communicate the inner thoughts of the character to the audience while concealing them from Jiao Guiying. During the

general chorus' vocalization of the cadential vocable-phrase, the actor depicts Wang Kui regaining his composure. In the next line of song text, Wang addresses Jiao directly in a cold, unfeeling manner, demanding to know why she has come to his chambers this night.

As discussed in Chapter IV, a lyric line containing five or more song text words is generally divided into at least two *dou*. In certain dramatic situations, however, the entire line may be heard performed as a single semantic unit. The treatment of even longer lyric lines as a single semantic unit also occurs in dramatic situations where a high level of emotional intensity or excitement must be conveyed. In the following two-line passage of [*dao dao ling*] *qupai* song music, line one is treated as consisting of one *dou*, although it contains seven words. In performance, this line is sung first by the chorus leader and then repeated by the general chorus. The chorus leader sings the entire song text in just over two measures, while the general chorus takes slightly longer. The second line of song text also contains seven words, but is divided into two *dou* of 3 + 4 words with an inter-*dou* vocable phrase placed in between.

Example 8.7

CL (*dou* 1) + GC (*dou* 1) and CL (*dou* 1) + GC (*V*₁ + *dou* 2 + *V*₂) Vocalization Patterns in Two Lines of [Dao Dao Ling] Qupai Song Helping Chorus Music⁸

Line 1:

chorus leader	general chorus
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-bottom: 5px;"> </div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <i>dou</i> 1 <i>dou</i> 1 </div>	

Line 2:

chorus leader	general chorus
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-bottom: 5px;"> </div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <i>dou</i> 1 inter-<i>dou</i> vocable-phrase <i>dou</i> 2 </div>	
<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <i>cadential</i> vocable-phrase </div>	

These two lines of helping chorus music are from the scene "Striking the God" ("Da shen" 打神), which precedes the scene "Checking Sentiments." At the onset of the scene, Jiao Guiying stands before the gates

of the Temple of the Sea God and recapitulates the dramatic action in a one-character meter *qupai* song. By the time she has finished telling of her love for Wang Kui and his letter of divorce to her, Jiao is overwhelmed with feelings of hurt and anger. Upon entering the temple, Jiao Guiying utters a few words to the Sea God before the [*dao dao ling*] passage above is sung by the helping chorus. In this passage, the helping chorus speaks the words which Jiao Guiying herself is too anguished to utter. This is the first passage of two-flowing meter music heard in the scene. The acceleration of performance tempo, coupled with the concentrated and rapid vocalization pattern of the first lyric line of song text, effectively serves to communicate the intensity and desperation of Jiao Guiying's emotional state.

Although in *gaoqiang* performance the general chorus never precedes the chorus leader in a passage of helping chorus music, in certain dramatic contexts the entire chorus can be heard singing in unison. This vocalization pattern is unusual, however, and makes a strong dramatic statement when used. The final line in the scene "Striking the God" is performed in this manner. At this moment, Jiao Guiying has just realized that neither the Sea God, nor society, can force Wang Kui to account for his actions. As the helping chorus sings aloud Jiao Guiying's final expression of anger towards Wang Kui, the actress playing Jiao shows her inadvertently touching the long white scarf which cinches the waistline of her *zhezi* costume. By the time the melodic-line has concluded, the actress has untied the scarf and held it forth to the audience as an indication of the character's decision to hang herself.

Example 8.8

Unison Vocalization Pattern in a Single Line of [*Shang Xiao Lou*] *Qupai* Song Helping Chorus Music⁹

entire helping chorus

$\overbrace{3 \ 5 \ 3}^{\text{dou 1}} \quad \overbrace{2 \ 3 \ 5}^{\text{dou 2}} \quad \overbrace{6 \ 5 \ 2 \ 2 \ 3}^{\text{cadential}} \quad \overbrace{2 \ 3 \ 5 \ 6}^{\text{vocable-phrase}}$
 怕只怕天不容你! (呀) (呵)
Pa zhi pa tian bu rong ni! (ya) (a)
 Fearing only god [and] not tolerating you!

This passage of [*shang xiao lou*] ([上小楼]) *qupai* song music is composed using strolling-meter metrical structure. The choice to sing the entire passage in unison is, however, not due to the metrical type used, but rather to the dramatic context. In the scene "Striking the God," other strolling-meter passages can also be found, but this is the only one which is performed in this fashion. All other passages feature some form of the antiphonal chorus leader/general chorus vocalization pattern.

Rhythmic Structure Variation

The contrast between the sound of a solo voice at the onset of each helping chorus passage and the general chorus who follows soon after is a striking and dramatic feature of *gaoqiang* music. This contrast in sound density and timbre is further accentuated by variations in both the melodic and rhythmic structures of the music in those portions of the helping chorus passage which are sung by each of the respective vocalizing entities.

As indicated above, despite differences in song text length, the amount of music sung by the chorus leader remains relatively constant in all helping chorus passages. The chorus leader generally sings her assigned song text passage within the first two measures of music in a melodic-line. The general chorus, in contrast, frequently takes twice the amount of time to sing less song text. The result of this musical organization is that the degree of melisma in the music increases in the course of the melodic-line. The most syllabic portion is sung by the chorus leader, and the most melismatic by the general chorus.

When the musical pitches constituting the melodic-line of the helping chorus passage are examined, one notices that the highest musical pitches are frequently placed in the first one or two measures of music. By placing many of the high notes at the onset of the passage two things are achieved. First, the sound of the single voice is further contrasted against the collective vocalizations of the general chorus, making the chorus leader's short solo passage sound even more prominent and impressive. Secondly, it is also much easier to control the quality of the vocal production of high notes when only a single vocalist is involved. Ensuring such quality is considerably more difficult when several singers are involved in the vocalization. Perhaps for this reason, the onset of the melodic-line of a helping chorus passage has become a preferred location for high note placement. In the passage of [*qing na ao*] *qupai* song music below, one can see that the highest pitches in the first melodic-line are located within the portion of music sung by the chorus leader.

The other position in the melodic-line where high notes are frequently found is in the cadential vocable-phrase at the end of the melodic-line--the portion of the melodic-line which is usually performed by the general chorus. When high notes are placed within cadential vocable-phrases, they are usually located in the central or final portion of the phrase. The general chorus is then able to easily sing these pitches because they will have been singing together for several beats of music before reaching the high notes.

When the rhythmic structures of the chorus leader passages are compared to those sung by the general chorus, disparities can be found. In passages of helping chorus music constructed using any of the metered metrical types the portion of the melodic-line which is performed by the chorus leader is treated as a passage of free meter music. In other words, although the percussion orchestra may have established a rhythmic structure and performance tempo immediately prior to the chorus leader's vocalization, the singer generally ignores all rhythmic controls and sings the music in a drawn-out and expressive manner. When the general chorus begins to sing, however, the metrical structure returns to its intended metered form and remains strictly within the rhythmic structure of the metrical type until the next passage of actor, or chorus leader music is heard.

Example 8.9

Meter Variation and Vocalization Pattern in Two Lines of [Qing Na Ao] Gupai Song Helping Chorus Music¹⁰

chorus leader **general chorus**

free meter → 4/4 meter →

dou 1 *dou 2* cadential vocable-phrase

0 2̣ 3̣ 3̣ 3̣ 2̣ 1̣ | 3̣ 2̣ 1̣ 6- | 6̣ 1̣ 2̣ 7̣ 1̣ 6̣ 5̣ 1̣ 5̣ | 6 - - 0 |

冷 清 清 潘 郎 | 今 | 何 在? (呀) | 6 - - 0 |

Leng qing qing Pan Lang jin huo zai? (ya)

Cold and cheer less, where has Master Pan gone today?

chorus leader **general chorus**

free meter → 4/4 meter →

dou 1 inter-*dou* *dou 2*

vocable-phrase

5 5 5 6̣ 1̣ | 6̣ 1̣ 5 6̣ 1̣ - | 5 3̣ 2̣ 1̣ 2̣ 1̣ 6 5 | 3̣ 5 5 3̣ 5 1̣ |

离 情 别 绪 系 (呀) | 心 | 怀 (呀) |

Li qing bie xu xi (ya) xin huai. (ya)

The feelings at [our] separation [I] continue to cherish

cadential vocable-phrase

6̣ 5̣ 3̣ 5̣ 2̣ 3̣ | 5 - - 0 |

(呵)

(a)

Through this vocalization technique a pattern of opposition is created. At the onset of the melodic-line the chorus leader's vocalization style gives the listener a feeling that the musical passage is being stretched out, just as

one might stretch a rubber band. The entrance of the general chorus releases this tension through an acceleration of performance tempo, a return to a codified metrical organization of accented- and unaccented-beats, and a noticeable increase in sound volume. In other words, the rubber band is let go, generating a strong sense of forward momentum.

As indicated in Chapter VII, in helping chorus passages containing half-*taoda* style percussion accompaniment, the most common placement of percussion patterns is beneath cadential vocable-phrases. In this way, the sounds of the percussion instruments cannot interfere with song text communication. Because it is the general chorus who usually performs the closing portion of the melodic-line, the majority of half-*taoda* patterns are played during their vocalizations. In the [*luan lin hao*] *qupai* song example below, the relationship between the chorus leader and general chorus vocalizations, and the placement of the half-*taoda* pattern can be observed.

Example 8.10

Vocalization Pattern and Half-Taoda Percussion Accompaniment in a Single Line of [Yuan Lin Hao] Qupai Song Helping Chorus Music¹¹

percussion orchestra


chorus leader  general chorus 

free meter → 4/4 meter →

dou 1 *dou 2* cadential vocable-phrase

$\overset{\frown}{\underset{\frown}{\dot{1}} \underset{\frown}{\dot{6}} \underset{\frown}{\dot{2}} \underset{\frown}{\dot{1}} \underset{\frown}{\dot{6}} \underset{\frown}{5}}$	$\overset{\frown}{\underset{\frown}{\dot{1}} \underset{\frown}{\dot{6}} \underset{\frown}{\dot{3}} \underset{\frown}{\dot{3}} \underset{\frown}{\dot{2}} \underset{\frown}{\cdot} \underset{\frown}{\dot{2}}}$	$\dot{2} \quad - \quad \quad \overset{\frown}{\underset{\frown}{\dot{1}} \underset{\frown}{\dot{2}}} \quad - \quad \quad \overset{\frown}{\underset{\frown}{\dot{7}} \underset{\frown}{\dot{9}}} \quad - \quad \quad \overset{\frown}{\underset{\frown}{\dot{6}}}$
梨 花 落	杏 花 开 (也)	(啊)
<i>Li hua luo</i>	<i>xing hua kai (ye)</i>	<i>(a)</i>
The pear blossom falls the apricot blossom opens.		
<i>taoda:</i> <u>壮丑乃</u> <u>次丑乃</u> <u>丑乃丑</u> <u>次乃丑乃</u> 壮乃 壮		

The appearance of percussion *taoda* at the beginning of the cadential vocable-phrase heightens the sense of metrical regimentation heard in general chorus passages. The sudden addition of five percussion instruments to the collective vocalizations of the general chorus members further emphasizes the difference in aural texture and volume between chorus leader and general chorus passages.

In many ways, passages of helping chorus leader and actor music are similar in performance style and structure. In both types of music, only the sound of a solo voice is heard. When either is juxtaposed with passages of general chorus music, a striking aural contrast can be heard. In both chorus leader and actor music, the metrical structure is relatively free and unaccompanied by any percussion music--save for the *gushi*'s wooden-clapper articulations. During passages of general chorus music, however,

the strident and rhythmically-regular sounds of the entire percussion orchestra are present.

Serving the Actor in Performance

Fundamental differences in the media of dramatic communication and performance styles help distinguish between the roles served by the Sichuan opera actor and helping chorus in Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* performance. The common element uniting these two discrete performing entities is song. For stage actors, song is only one of several performance options available to them. Within the hierarchy of performance elements, however, song ranks first. If looked at in terms of breadth and diversity of performance options, the helping chorus's involvement in *gaoqiang* performance may appear to be extremely limited when compared to that of the actor. When examined in terms of depth and degree of dramatic impact, however, the helping chorus' contributions are significant.

The primary role of the helping chorus in *gaoqiang* performance is to serve the needs of the actor onstage, not to function as an independent performing entity. The helping chorus provides both functional and dramatic services for the actor. Functional services help to facilitate the actors in executing their vocalizations. These services are music-based, and are not meant to be interpreted as dramatic statements. The dramatic services are primarily text-based. Through the helping chorus' communication of song text meaning, the nature of the performance can be affected in a variety of ways.

Functional Services

In such melodically-unaccompanied music drama traditions as *gaoqiang*, the helping chorus serves several important musical functions which in other *xiqu* traditions would be carried out by a melodic orchestra. These functions are integral to the success of the performance, and include establishing, sustaining, and changing the musical key of a song, and altering its rhythmic structure and texture. Since passages of helping chorus music initiate most *qupai* songs, and are the location for the majority of percussion accompaniment, these passages become the logical places to establish the melodic and rhythmic nature of a song, and to initiate changes in it.

Ensuring melodic stability

Gaoqiang is a musical system which is considered difficult to sing because of its broad and high melodic range, and its lack of melodic support. The melodic range covered in many *gaoqiang qupai* songs extends from the lower to the upper limits of the human vocal range. Given this melodic breadth, it is essential that the Sichuan opera actor not alter the musical key during vocal performance as a result of pitch inaccuracies. By modulating either up or down a musical key, actors may find themselves in a position where they are physically unable to sing subsequent pitches in the song. Given the relative flexibility of *gaoqiang* actor music melodic structure, Sichuan opera actors have the ability to control the number and placement of high and low notes within a melodic passage. Often actors

place their highest notes in the final measures of the melodic-line of a song to create both a melodic, as well as a dramatic, climax. If, however, the actor has inadvertently modulated upwards, these high notes may become difficult, if not impossible, to sing. Such pitch inaccuracy not only affects that actor's performance, but also affects the helping chorus whose passages usually follow, and whose melodic-lines are characterized by the numerous musical pitches positioned high at the top of the female vocal range which they contain. The issue of pitch accuracy is a serious one in the tradition, and a common topic of discussion between Sichuan opera actors and helping chorus members--particularly backstage after unsuccessful performances.

No doubt actors in melodically-accompanied *xiqu* forms such as Beijing opera and *kunqu* are also guilty of pitch inaccuracies. An important difference, however, is that in those forms a musical safety net is also present. Beneath the melodic-line sung by the actor, and during the musical interludes which occur throughout vocal songs, the sound of the instrumental orchestra is always present. The problem of modulating to another musical key is therefore, not a factor affecting vocal performance. Sichuan opera actors do not have the benefit of a melodic orchestra to constantly reiterate the correct musical key of a song, nor are they allowed to stop in mid-song to check their pitch accuracy with a pitch pipe. In *gaoqiang* performance, the stage actors must rely on their own musical skills, and the periodic vocalizations of the helping chorus, to monitor key accuracy.

In Sichuan opera performances today, the helping chorus leader establishes the correct musical key for a song through the use of a pitch pipe. In each of the different methods used to initiate *qupai* song vocalization, the correct musical key is set by the helping chorus offstage and then communicated to the actor who is often already onstage. The sole exception is the *kun* -head style of song initiation. In this style, it is the musician playing the *dizi* (bamboo flute) who sets the key. During an even-start style of song initiation, the chorus leader establishes the key during her brief vocal passage at the onset of the helping chorus passage in the first melodic-line of the song. The general chorus then completes the singing of the melodic-line in the same key. If more than one helping chorus line is present in this initial erect-pillars section of the song, this alternation between chorus leader and general chorus vocalizations continues. During each general chorus vocalization, the chorus leader has the opportunity to recheck pitch accuracy if necessary. The actor onstage then takes his/her starting pitch from the final cadence pitch of the helping chorus passage, which in most cases is the principal tone of the *qupai* 's mode. In many instances, however, the actor's starting pitch is not the principal tone, and so the actor must calculate the interval correctly before commencing vocalization. The opening passage of helping chorus music in an [*er lang shen*] *qupai* song, for example, concludes on the principal tone of the mode, 6. However, the actor must begin singing on the 2 pitch, a perfect fourth higher.

A putting-on-a-hat style of initiation calls for the actor to initiate the opera song. In this initiation style, however, it is considerably more

difficult to ensure pitch accuracy than in the *kun* -head style. In a putting-on-a-hat initiation, the actor intones all, or part, of the first lyric line, while the helping chorus sings the remaining portion. Although the intoned portion of the lyric line has distinct melodic and rhythmic qualities which are not found in everyday speech, the passage does not have a set beginning or ending pitch.

Many putting-on-a-hat initiations are performed by the actor from offstage. During the helping chorus portion of the passage, actors often enter the performance space. In most *qupai* songs featuring this style of initiation, the actor is assigned to sing the subsequent melodic-line of music. Frequently, however, actors must perform lengthy passages of speech and stylized movement/acting immediately upon entrance. As a result, it may be several minutes before the actor is able to continue the song vocalization. Although the correct musical key was established by the helping chorus during the vocalization of the first song line, the actor is often forced to retain this key in his/her head for several minutes before beginning to sing. During this interim period, the actor engages in speech and movement acts, and hears the sounds of the accompanying percussion orchestra. Under such conditions, retaining the correct musical pitch can be a formidable challenge.

The scene "Crossing the Northern Frontier" from the multi-scene play *The Chaste Woman of the Han* begins with the actress playing the role of the Han queen, Wang Zhaojun, intoning the putting-on-a-hat song initiation of a [*chu jiang yin*] *qupai* from offstage. A description of the dramatic action taking place during the opening minutes of this scene is

provided below. Through this description one can observe how musically skillful Sichuan opera actors must be in order to successfully execute a *gaoqiang* performance. Despite the amount of aural and physical activity taking place around them, actors are expected to calculate and retain the correct starting pitch for their subsequent song passages.

Example 8.11

Summary of the Dramatic Action During the Opening Minutes of the Scene "Crossing the Northern Frontier"

offstage

Wang Zhaojun (intones): 12

Clouds above the Han mountains,
The north wind blows my purple garb!

Helping Chorus (sings):

[*chu jiang yin*] strolling-meter

... purple garb!

cadence pitch: 2̇

onstage

The actress enters the performance space to the accompaniment of percussion music, holding a horse whip aloft to indicate that she is traveling on horseback. She circles the entire stage once and stops downstage center to speak with an actor who immediately preceded her entrance with a tumbling sequence across the stage.

Wang Zhaojun (speaks):

Younger brother, where have we come?

Brother:

To the border!

Wang Zhaojun:

Oh, the border!

Percussion music is played while the actress performs a short passage of stylized movement/acting in which she manipulates her horse whip through space. She completes the action and strikes a pose facing downstage.

Wang Zhaojun (sings):

initial pitch: 1̇

A person arrives at the border,
A horse arrives at the border . . .

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings):

A horse arrives at the border,
So difficult to continue on.

Although the helping chorus sets the key of the song at the beginning of the scene, the actress playing Wang Zhaojun does not actually begin singing until several minutes later. To make matters worse, the final pitch of the helping chorus passage (2̇), is a full step above the first pitch of the actor's passage (1̇). This means that the actress must make this adjustment in her head while moving about the stage and engaging in dialogue. It is important that this pitch be correct, because the melody in the opening melodic-line rises rapidly from the 1̇ pitch to a 5̇ pitch. This *qupai* is often performed in the key of D major, which makes the 5̇ pitch equivalent to A". If the actress errs in calculating her starting pitch, she can find herself in the embarrassing situation of having to sing a pitch that she cannot physically produce.

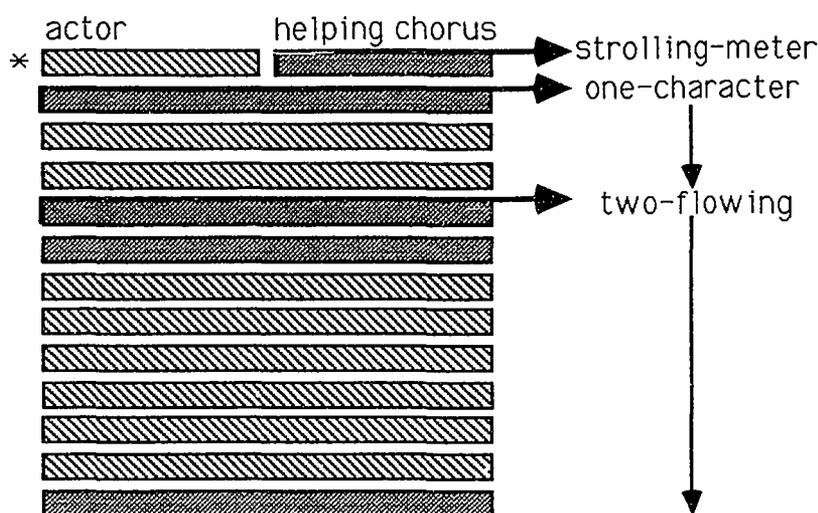
The nature of the performer-assignation structures of *gaoqiang qupai* suggests that the issue of key accuracy may have always been a concern in the tradition. Among such *qupai* as [*er lang shen*] and [*shao ye xiang*], which are dominated, if not entirely sung, by the helping chorus, the issue of pitch accuracy is not a problem. In *qupai* which feature a mixture of helping chorus and actor music, however, the actor's passages are generally positioned in the song so that they follow helping chorus passages. In this way, the actor can maintain the correct key by listening to the final notes sung by the helping chorus.

Qupai which are labelled "composite *qupai* " incorporate the *zhuanqiang* of other *qupai* into their own musical structures. A common feature of many composite *qupai* is the changing of musical keys during the vocalization of the borrowed *zhuanqiang* passages. As mentioned in

Chapter VI, when modulation occurs in a song, it always does so within passages of helping chorus music. In this way, the accuracy of the new key can always be guaranteed by the chorus leader through the use of a pitch pipe.

Initiating rhythmic change

The establishment and monitoring of the musical key is the most important functional service that the helping chorus provides for the actor in *gaoqiang* performance. Within each *qupai* song, however, it is also the helping chorus who enacts the majority of rhythmic alterations as well. Although technically speaking, it is the *gushi* who establishes and regulates the metrical structure and performance tempo of a song, it is either just prior to, or within, passages of helping chorus music that such changes take place.



* putting-on-a-hat aria initiation

Figure 8.1

Changes in Metrical Structure During a [Duan Zheng Hao] Qupai Song

The opening line of a [duan zheng hao] qupai song begins with a putting-on-a-hat style of song initiation performed by the actor, and concludes with the helping chorus singing a short passage of strolling-meter music. During the next helping chorus line, the musical structure of the qupai changes from strolling-meter to one-character meter. The actor sings only two lines in this new metrical type before the helping chorus once again enacts a change of metrical structure. The actor continues to sing in two-flowing meter until the final line, when the helping chorus concludes the song with one melodic-line of music.

The most common metrical types used for gaoqiang actor music are one-character and two-flowing meters. Although both metrical types are transcribed as metered music, they each have certain behavioral qualities

which liken them to free metrical types. The relative regularity of the helping chorus rhythmic structure, in contrast, is further stabilized by the presence of percussion *taoda* accompaniment. Because it is the *gushi* who initiates all metrical changes, it is most convenient to have such changes occur during the *taoda* patterns which lie beneath the cadential vocable-phrases of helping chorus passages. When metrical changes occur during actor passages, they are also initiated by the *gushi*. These changes, however, are carried out through a brief sounding of the wooden-clapper and small drum during pauses between melodic-lines of music.

Dramatic Services

Through the manipulation of helping chorus passage song text meaning, Sichuan opera practitioners can purposely affect the nature of the dramatic performance in a number of different ways. The five dramatic services which the helping chorus regularly provides the stage actor in *gaoqiang* performance include: establishing dramatic environment, revealing dramatic character, heightening dramatic atmosphere, adding dramatic emphasis, and assuming dramatic character.

Establishing dramatic environment

Throughout its history, Sichuan opera been performed on a stage that is void of sets or scenery pieces which contextualize the drama for the audience. If the curtain opens and the stage is bare except for a large carpet placed centerstage, the audience is apt to assume that the upcoming scene takes place out-of-doors. They cannot discern, however, if this

carpeted space has become a general's battle field, or the private gardens of the emperor. If on the carpet two chairs and a table are positioned, an indoor space is suggested. Sichuan opera audiences rely primarily of the words, costuming, makeup, and physical actions of the stage performers to gain information about dramatic location. As in all forms of *xiqu*, actors in a Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* performance communicate this information through the use of their performance skills, and their interactions with other characters in the scene. With the presence of a second vocalizing entity--the helping chorus--an alternative method of relaying this information is available in *gaoqiang* performance which is not available in the majority of *xiqu* forms.

As the above description of the opening moments of the scene "Crossing the Northern Frontier" has shown, Sichuan opera actors frequently enter the performance space at the beginning of a dramatic scene as the opening helping chorus passage of a *qupai* song is sung. Although the actors may themselves reveal their locations to the audience later in the scene, Sichuan opera practitioners often use the helping chorus to achieve the same objective. Referred to as its "ability to describe" (*miaoxiexing* 描写性), the helping chorus can establish the physical location of the dramatic character at the onset of the performance, or at any time during the play, through the song text which it sings.

Example 8.12

Descriptive Function of the Helping Chorus in the One-Act Play *Longing for Laity**offstage*Helping Chorus (sings): *[xin shui ling]* strolling-meter

Leaving [my] chambers turning down the corridor,
 A fine bird sings from the branch tip,
 Pomegranate blossoms light up the eyes red like fire,
 Wanting the worries to leave [my] mind yet they increase,
 No spirit to view the flowers, [I] reascend into the Temple.

one-character meter

Eighteen arhats seated on both sides,

onstage

Young Nun (sings):

Eighteen arhats seated on both sides,
 They each seem to have something to say to me. . . .

The one-act play *Longing for Laity* tells the story of a young Buddhist nun's frustration with monastic life, and her newly-found desire for romance. Using traditional staging techniques, a carpet, a chair and a table are the only items present onstage when the curtain opens. Through her distinctive costuming,¹³ stylized movement/acting, and a short vocalization of a *kunqiang* song that is full of Buddhist references, the actress playing the Young Nun establishes her identity, and her location in a Buddhist monastery. The helping chorus passage above is sung in the middle of the scene when the nun moves from the interior of the temple to an outside garden. Unable to find solace amidst the beauty of the natural environment, the nun returns to the temple and enters a hall lined on each side with statues of Buddhist arhats. As the helping chorus describes through song

the changes in physical location, the actress moves about the stage, periodically miming stepping over thresholds which separate rooms in traditional Chinese architecture. Throughout this time, the table and chair which were earlier used to represent a Buddhist altar and a seat for reciting sutras, have never moved. Through the collective effect of the actress' physical movements and expressions, and the song text sung by the helping chorus, the audience is taken through the various changes in dramatic location without ever witnessing any adjustments being made to the physical stage.

In some scenes, the helping chorus describes the physical action which is taking place onstage before the audience. In the scene "Compelling a Nephew to Attend to Studies" ("Bi zhi fu ke" 逼侄赴科) from the play *The Jade Hairpin* (*Yu zan ji* 玉簪记), the young and impetuous scholar Pan Bizheng (潘必正) goes to visit his aunt, an abbess of a Buddhist monastery. Soon after his arrival, Pan falls in love with a young nun, Chen Miaochang (陈妙常), in his aunt's charge. The Abbess, unaware that a romantic liaison is taking place behind her back, still manages to convince her unwilling nephew to leave for the capital to take the imperial examinations. In this comic scene, Pan attempts to pay his final respects to the Buddha and his aunt, while trying to communicate with his lover who is watching the proceedings from the bell tower above the temple floor.

Example 8.13

Description of the Dramatic Action During the [Pu Sa Man] Gupai Song Vocalization in the Scene "Compelling a Nephew to Attend to Studies"

onstage

Abbess (speaks):

Nuns, Disciples, Light the incense, and strike the bell.

Disciple Bizheng quickly come pay your respects to the Buddha.

Pan Bizheng (speaks):

Oh, Buddha! Oh, Buddha! This disciple, Pan Bizheng, comes to bid you farewell.

I will not say what is in this disciple's heart. . . . Buddha, you should know.

Abbess:

The Buddha knows to bless and protect you.

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings):

[pu sa man] one-character meter

Paying respects to the Buddha,

onstage

The actor playing the young scholar interjects the words "Oh, Buddha!" as the helping chorus sings the cadential vocable-phrase at the end of the melodic-line. As Pan bows in respect to the Buddha, Chen Miaochang strikes him in the head from above with a crumbled piece of paper. He turns, and the two lovers make eye contact.

Pan Bizheng (speaks):

Oh, Buddha!

Pan kneels to kowtow to the Buddha, but mistakenly faces towards Chen instead.

Abbess:

Bizheng, Kowtow!

Pan Bizheng (sings):

Vowing to travel in a high cart drawn by a team of horses,

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings):

two-flowing meter

Decorate the temple with red silk gauze.

Example 8.13 (Continued)

Description of the Dramatic Action During the *[Pu Sa Man] Qupai* Song Vocalization in the Scene "Compelling a Nephew to Attend to Studies"*onstage*

Pan Bizheng (speaks):

Auntie, please rise and accept my respects.

Abdess:

It is not necessary to pay respects to me. . . .

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings):

one-character meter

Paying respects to Auntie,

onstage

Pan Bizheng (sings):

Paying respects to Auntie,

Who is kind and just.

Although no image of the Buddha is present onstage, the audience is clear from the dialogue that the scene is taking place in a temple hall containing his image. Before Pan bows in obeisance to the Buddha and the abbess, the helping chorus announces his actions to the audience. Such description seems unnecessary given the visual and aural information which the audience has already received. In melodically-accompanied *xiqu* forms, Pan's physical actions would be accompanied by instrumental music. The helping chorus' vocalization of the *[pu sa man] qupai* song serves this function. By using a descriptive song text, a sense of ritual is brought to the scene. The juxtaposition of this formality against the humorous movements and expressions of the actor playing Pan serves to heighten the sense of comedy in the scene.

Revealing dramatic character

The descriptive function of the helping chorus is not limited to conveying information about the physical environment or stage action. Frequently, helping chorus song texts are used to reveal the inner thoughts and feelings of the dramatic character to the audience (*jieshi renwu neixin huodong* 揭示人物内心活动). In the scene "Striking the God," the *dan* character Jiao Guiying destroys the statue of the Sea God and the temple interior after receiving no response to her appeals for justice. Physically exhausted and on the brink of madness, Jiao collapses upstage at the foot of the altar. From offstage, two sustained pitches of the *suona* (唢呐), a double-reed wind instrument, are heard. Jiao Guiying, recognizing the sound, slowly pulls herself to a seated position and sings the *kun*-head passage which initiates a [*man ting fang*] (满庭芳) *qupai* song.¹⁴

Example 8.14

Summary of the Dramatic Action During the Opening Two Lines of the [Man Ting Fang] Gupai Song in the Scene "Striking the God"

onstage

Jiao Guiying: *[man ting fang] kun - head*

Alone hearing the sound of a wild goose in the distance,

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings): strolling-meter

Loudly calling choking with emotion and misery!

Two more sustained notes are played by the suona suggesting the wild goose's call

Helping Chorus one-character meter

Tragically separated from the flock and flying alone.

In this passage, the actress playing Jiao Guiying identifies in words the sounds of the *suona* as the cries of a wild goose flying outside the temple walls. The line of helping chorus music which follows this identification serves to interpret for the audience Jiao Guiying's thoughts about the plight of the goose and her own. In traditional Chinese culture, the image of a pair of geese or Mandarin ducks is a common metaphor for marital harmony and bliss. The single goose is therefore a symbol of separation and loss (Eberhard 1991, 132). The helping chorus' description of the goose as "choking with emotion and misery" and "tragically separated . . . and alone," are also the words which Jiao is using to describe herself and her own situation.

Using the helping chorus to communicate the thoughts and feelings of the dramatic character is a frequent technique seen in Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* performance. Through the *[man ting fang]* song helping chorus song text, the audience learns more about the emotional condition of Jiao

Guiying. Since destroying the temple interior in violent rage, the actress playing Jiao does nothing but lie unmoving on the stage floor as if unconscious. Her observations about the goose, revealed through the words of the helping chorus, not only show Jiao to be relating her own condition to that of the lone bird, but also indicate that she has not yet lost her mind. In dramatic situations where characters are so overcome with emotion that they have difficulty expressing themselves orally, or when they are faced with making a difficult decision, the helping chorus frequently speaks aloud the words which the characters cannot. The first line of helping chorus music in the scene "Striking the God" serves to communicate to the audience Jiao Guiying's overwhelming sense of anger and hatred for Wang Kui, the man who so cruelly betrayed her love and kindness.

Example 8.15**Summary of the Dramatic Action at the Opening of the Scene "Striking the God"***onstage*

Jiao Guiying enters upstage right to the sound of martial percussion music. Holding aloft sticks of incense, Jiao staggers towards downstage center. She stops three times to speak the following lines. Between each utterance a percussion pattern is played.

Jiao Guiying (speaks):

Wang Kui!	civil percussion pattern
Scoundrel!	civil percussion pattern
<i>Wei ya!</i>	martial percussion pattern

Jiao Guiying arrives downstage and strikes a pose facing the audience.

Jiao Guiying (recites poetry):

Entrusting one's heart to the bright moon,
 Who would know the moonlight would shine in a ditch!
 civil percussion

(speaks):

Wang Kui, overnight turned ungrateful,
Ai, God will hear about this matter!

Jiao Guiying (sings): *[duan zheng hao] kun* –head

Hate overflowing the heavens without end,

Jiao Guiying performs a forceful passage of stylized movement/acting as the helping chorus sings the following passage.

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings): one-character meter

Hating Wang Kui ungrateful of [my] kindness!

From the moment Jiao Guiying enters the performance space, the audience can clearly discern from her movements and facial expressions that there is something terribly wrong. The percussion music creates a deafening and driving aural substructure for Jiao's movements which

conveys an overwhelming sense of distress in the scene. Through Jiao Guiying's own words, the audience learns that a scholar named Wang Kui is the cause of her condition. The melodic and rhythmic structures of the *[duan zheng hao] kun* -head passage which Jiao sings once she reaches a position downstage, convey a sense of sadness and despondency rather than anger, even though she sings the words, "hatred overflowing" with great passion. It is not until the helping chorus sings these same words in the subsequent passage of one-meter music--a passage which contains *taoda* accompaniment--that the full impact of the song text's meaning, and its relationship to Jiao Guiying's mental state, are truly revealed. As the helping chorus sings, the actress playing Jiao Guiying performs a movement passage which expresses in visual terms the profound feelings of anger and hatred for Wang Kui which have overtaken the character's heart and mind. The combination of the helping chorus song text and music, and the actor's physical vocabulary, creates an explosive effect on stage. This effect sets a tone which continues throughout the scene until the character has destroyed the temple, and taken her own life.

A common place to hear the helping chorus vocalizing aloud the thoughts of the character is in song passages where the *qupai* performer-assignment structure has divided the vocalization of a lyric line between the actor and helping chorus. The final line of the *[jiang tou jin gui] qupai* song in *Longing for Laity* is structured in this way. During the song, the young nun describes the hideous punishments which the Buddhist bodhisattvas could enact upon her--acts such as grinding her up and boiling her in oil--if she tries to leave the religious order. As the various tortures are

enumerated, the tempo of the music increases due to a change in metrical structure from one-character meter to fast two-flowing meter. The nun ends the song with a sudden declaration that she is not afraid of these threats. In the final line, she sings the words "I'm not afraid" twice, each time appearing to grow in conviction. Her words, however, do not seem to convince either herself or the audience of this fact. She starts to utter the words a third time, but manages to get out only the word "I . . ." before the helping chorus in unison declares aloud ". . . am simply not afraid!" The helping chorus passage is constructed using one-character meter and features a half-*taoda* percussion accompaniment. The regular rhythmic structure of the helping chorus passage, coupled with the greater sound density of the helping chorus' vocalization style and percussion accompaniment, serves to convince both the nun and the audience that the young nun is genuinely not afraid.

When the helping chorus is used to reveal aspects of dramatic character, often times background information about the character is also relayed to the audience. As described earlier, *Longing for Laity* opens with a short *kunqiang* song sung by the Young Nun which relates the story of Chang E, a young woman who must endure a life of solitude on the moon as punishment for eating an herb of immortality. Through recounting this story, the nun establishes a parallel between the plight of the beautiful Moon Goddess and her own confinement to monastic life.¹⁵ The passage of *gaoqiang* music which follows this song is performed by the helping chorus. From her costume, makeup, movements, and expressions, the opera audience is able to discern that the actress onstage is enacting the

role of a young Buddhist nun. But it is not until the helping chorus initiates the subsequent [*jiang tou jin gui*] *qupai* song with the line, "The young nun has two eights in age" ("Xiao nigu nian fang erba " "小尼姑年方二八"), that the audience knows for certain the identify of the young girl, and learns that she is only sixteen years old.

Heightening dramatic atmosphere

Through their descriptions of the physical environment, stage action, and inner thoughts of the dramatic character, the helping chorus is also helping to serve another dramatic function: establish dramatic mood or heighten atmosphere (*xuanran qifen* 渲染气氛). This is accomplished partly through song text meaning, and partly through the nature of the musical structure of the helping chorus passage. In other words, the melodic and rhythmic structures of the helping chorus music are meant to support and complement the communication of information which is conveyed to the audience through song text meaning.

In *Longing for Laity*, the passage of [*xin shui ling*] *qupai* strolling-meter music, with its gentle melody and a free and relaxed performance tempo, was used to describe the sights and sounds of the temple garden and the melancholy state of the nun.¹⁶ Its selection for use in this scene was guided by the *qupai* 's suggested dramatic application in performance. In the opening moments of the scene "Checking Sentiments," the helping chorus also serves to establish an atmosphere for the drama, albeit one which is markedly different.

At the beginning of this scene, the scholar Wang Kui enters the performance space and announces to the audience that he has become the First Graduate, and since his divorce from Jiao Guiying has married the Prime Minister's daughter. Following his remarks, the ghost of Jiao Guiying enters the stage to the accompaniment of martial percussion music. Accompanying her is an officer from the underworld who has been sent to claim the soul of Wang Kui. Before Jiao utters a word herself, the helping chorus sets the mood for the upcoming encounter between the former lovers through its vocal descriptions of the physical environment, and its comments regarding Jiao Guiying's emotional state.

Example 8.16

Atmosphere-Setting Function of the Helping Chorus in the Scene "Checking Sentiments"

onstage

Jiao Guiying (intones):
An evil wind sighs!

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings):	<i>[shui hong hua]</i> strolling-meter
A black moon without shine,	
	martial percussion pattern
	two-flowing meter
Heartbreak tears and blood once filled my cheeks,	

onstage

Jiao Guiying (sings):
A black moon without shine,
Heartbreak tears of blood once filled my cheeks,

offstage

Helping Chorus:
Nowadays everything has turned into a sea of misery!

The stage in this scene is set with a table and two chairs to which a pair of bamboos poles and a crossbar supporting a small red satin curtain have been attached. This arrangement suggests a person's private chambers, with the curtain representing the traditional enclosure around a Chinese bed. The song text performed by the helping chorus upon Jiao Guiying's entrance not only communicates the time of day, but also paints a picture of sadness and despair, and a sense of forboding and doom. Just as the musical form of the *qupai* [*xin shui ling*] enabled the song text in the *Longing for Laity* passage to establish an appropriate mood for the one-act, the choice of [*shui hong hong*] was also carefully considered. [*Shui hong hua*] (水红花) is a *qupai* that is considered by opera practitioners to be suitable for "expressing an inauspicious omen" (Sichuan 1987, 168). This *qupai* opens with two melodic-lines of helping chorus music constructed using a two-flowing meter metrical structure, and featuring a melodic structure which includes the unstable musical pitches, 4 and 7. The musical structure of the *qupai* contributes to the song text's ability to convey the physical and psychological darkness of the moment. The unique compositional features of a *qupai*, particularly its musical and performer-assignment structures, are important factors affecting how the helping chorus influences dramatic atmosphere.

As one can see from the song examples taken from *Longing for Laity* and "Checking Sentiments," a single passage of helping chorus music can serve several different dramatic functions at once. Through its descriptions of the physical location of the dramatic character, the helping chorus also serves to establish an atmosphere for the scene through both linguistic and

musical means. The helping chorus in *gaoqiang* performance is in many ways assuming the function a narrator or a contextualizing physical environment might serve in other forms of theatre. Thus, in *gaoqiang* performance, the helping chorus can also be used to convey information about the dramatic character which in other theatre forms could have only been revealed through monologue or dialogue.

Adding dramatic emphasis

Periodically *qupai* lyric and performer-assignation structures call for the helping chorus to repeat a lyric line which it has just sung, to repeat all or part of a line which the actor has sung, or for the actor to repeat what the helping chorus has sung. Such lines, referred to as "repeated-lines" (*zhongju* 重句), are usually found in the opening or closing portions of a *qupai* song. Although the song text remains the same during the repetition of the line, the melodic and rhythmic structures of the music often change. When the actor repeats a line of helping chorus music, or vice versa, the disparate natures of the melodic and rhythmic structures of the two styles of music result in aural distinctions. If the helping chorus repeats its own lyric line, it is common practice to treat the song text as one continuous semantic unit, and not allow any time between the vocalization of the original lyric line and its repetition. In such cases, a cadential vocable-phrase would only be located at the end of the line's repetition. Beneath this final vocable-phrase, a half-*taoda* percussion pattern is usually placed. The repetition of helping chorus lines by the helping chorus are frequently seen in the opening passages of songs constructed using the faster

tempoed, less melismatic metrical types such as two-flowing and fast two-flowing meters. When the repeated lines are performed, the audience can perceive a gradual increase in performance tempo between the first vocalization and the second. This performance practice not only adds emphasis to the song text meaning but also contributes to the establishment of a dramatic atmosphere for the subsequent song presentation.

[Dao dao ling] is a *qupai* constructed using a two-flowing meter metrical form. The specifications for this *qupai* require that the first line of song text be sung twice by the helping chorus. In the scene "Striking the God" a *[dao dao ling]* *qupai* song immediately follows Jiao Guiying's first emotional utterances to the Sea God.

Example 8.17

Summary of the Dramatic Action Surrounding the [Dao Dao Ling] Qupai Song Vocalization in the Scene "Striking the God"

onstage

Jiao Guiying (speaks):

Oh, Sea God, Buddha!

martial percussion pattern

Wang Kui and I lit incense and made vows: a man does not commit bigamy, and a woman does not remarry. Today to further his own glory, he has cast me off.

Why don't you avenge? Oh, Why don't you avenge?

martial percussion pattern

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings):

[dao dao ling] two-flowing meter

Father Sea God, you are all knowing,

Father Sea God, you all are knowing,

You witnessed this with your own eyes!

onstage

Jiao Guiying (sings):

Breaking the vow is like being dashed to powder by knives and swords,

Cruelly confused he deceived this younger sister's heart. . . .

Jiao Guiying is hurt and angry at Wang Kui for his selfish desires and cruel actions towards her, but at the same is equally frustrated at the Sea God for having allowed Wang Kui's breaking of the sacred vows to go unpunished. Recognizing that due to Wang's high government position, Jiao has little hope of finding justice through societal means, she has turned all of her attention towards the Sea God. During Jiao Guiying's short speech to the Sea God, she begins to express her frustration. The placement of martial percussion patterns between the lines of the speech initiates a crescendoing effect. When the helping chorus completes the opening lines of the [dao dao ling] song, a dramatic and aural climax is

simultaneously reached. The repetition of the song text, coupled with the rapid performance tempo and the use of martial *taoda* percussion accompaniment beneath the melodic-line, convey with little doubt Jiao Guiying's profound frustration with the Sea God's inaction.

Assuming dramatic character

When analyzing the dramatic function of the helping chorus in *gaoqiang* performance, it is hard to avoid comparisons between Sichuan opera and the Greek theatre. Although certain similarities do exist between the choral traditions in the two theatre forms, one fundamental difference is present which clearly distinguishes the two--the Greek chorus is able to change location during performance. The physical nature of the Greek chorus allows it to regularly assume dramatic roles in a play and to interact with the dramatic characters onstage. Given the physical limitations of the Sichuan opera helping chorus, it is not unusual to find that in *gaoqiang* performance the helping chorus rarely speaks directly to the dramatic characters in the play, or makes critical evaluations of the dramatic action. On those infrequent occasions when the helping chorus is heard addressing a character, it is either as the voice of a general observer, perhaps an audience member, or as the voice of one of the other dramatic characters in the play. The information imparted by the helping chorus when it speaks directly to dramatic characters sometimes reflects the position of positive characters in the play, but can also reflect that of negative ones.

In the scene "Forcing a Marriage" ("Bi jia" 逼嫁) from the play *The Thorn Hairpin* (*Jing chai ji* 荆钗记), the lead female character Qian Yulian (钱玉莲) is being coerced by her stepmother into marrying a wealthy merchant, Sun Yuanwai (孙员外). Qian, however, is in love with an impoverished young scholar. In the excerpt below, the stepmother tells Qian of Sun Yuanwai's financial condition during a putting-on-a-hat style initiation of a [*xiao nan zhi*] *qupai* song. The helping chorus then repeats the song text spoken by the stepmother. After the helping chorus line has sung, the stepmother remarks to Qian Yulian that the neighbors also appear to share her opinion.

Example 8.18

Excerpt from the Scene "Carving at the Window"

onstage

Stepmother (intones):

Sun Yuanwai's family is rich,

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings):

[xiao nan zhi] one-character meter

Sun Yuanwai's family is rich.

onstage

Stepmother (speaks):

Child, do you hear? Even the neighbors are saying good things about him!

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings):

His family has gold and jewels.

If [you] do not marry this rich man . . .

onstage

Stepmother (sings):

If [you] do not marry this rich man . . .

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings):

. . . [You] only want to be poor and hungry.

It is not unusual for the helping chorus to sing aloud the thoughts and words of dramatic characters. The "Forcing a Marriage" example is unique, however, in that one of the dramatic characters appears to hear what the helping chorus is singing and assigns a source--the words sung by the helping chorus are attributed to the neighbors. In traditional *gaoqiang* performance, the dramatic characters do not usually hear the comments of the helping chorus, and therefore do not respond back.

In the scene "The Massacre" from the newly-written historical play *Scholar From Bashan County* (*Bashan xiucai* 巴山秀才), the helping chorus also assumes the role of an outside observer interjecting comments into the drama. The play depicts the story of a middle-aged, pedantic scholar named Meng Dengke (孟登科) who has been preparing to take the imperial examinations to become a government official. In this scene, the scholar and his wife are the lone survivors of a massacre of their village by government forces. Government officials, mistaking the villagers' pleas for food supplies for an uprising, sent troupes to Bashan to eliminate the insurgents. Standing amidst the dead, the couple is shown arguing about whether the scholar should go to Chengdu to take the provincial examinations. The helping chorus offers some advice and helps the couple to reach a decision.

Example 8.19

Excerpt from the Scene "The Massacre"¹⁷*onstage***Madam Meng (speaks):**

You must leave this dangerous place at once, and go to Chengdu to take the provincial examination.

Scholar Meng (speaks):

I am frightened to death. How can I possibly take the provincial examination now?

Madam Meng:

I've taken care of you all my life, just hoping for the day when the Emperor will give you those three cups of wine. Look! I didn't worry about my life, but kept your *Art of Formulating Eight-legged Essays* firmly tucked in my bodice throughout the disaster. Take it quickly and go to Chengdu.

Scholar Meng (speaks):

How can I leave you alone?

Madam Meng (crying):

I really don't want you to leave.

Scholar Meng:

My dear wife . . .

Madam Meng:

My darling husband!

*offstage***Helping Chorus (sings):***[xiao shun ge]*

Don't be sad, do not cry,
Take her with you to Chengdu!

Scholar Meng:

Hey, that chorus really helped!

Madam Meng:

That's right! You don't have to leave without me . . .

Example 8.19

Excerpt from the Scene "The Massacre"

Scholar Meng:

. . . and I don't have to part with you!

Madam Meng:

We can go together!

Having the helping chorus express its opinion not only gives a comic touch to the tragic scene, but also reveals important information about the character, Scholar Meng. This scene falls early in the play when the only information the audience has learned about the character is that he is a scholar attempting to pass the examinations. In traditional Chinese society, the Confucian scholar was someone who possessed both intelligence and moral virtue. *Scholar From Bashan County* is a play which not only focuses on the corruption of the feudalistic rulers of pre-Communist China, but also portrays Scholar Meng as a naïve, ridiculous fool whose moral virtues are slow in coming forth.

The scene "Returning to the Boat to Throw Oneself into the River" ("Gui zhou tou jiang" 归舟投江) from the play *The Chest of a Hundred Jade Pieces* (*Bai yu xiang* 百玉箱), is one of the few scenes in the *gaoqiang* repertoire in which the helping chorus can be heard passing critical comments on the dramatic action. Like the play *Offering Incense*, *The Chest of a Hundred Pieces of Jade* also tells the story of a young prostitute who is both beautiful and virtuous, and whose love and kindness have been betrayed by a young scholar. In this scene, the prostitute Du Shiniang (杜十娘) learns that her lover's family will not accept her as a

daughter-in-law, and that she has been sold to a wealthy businessman by the scholar to pay off his gambling debts. Rather than endure such hurt and humiliation, Du commits suicide by throwing herself into the river.

Example 8.20

Excerpt from the Scene "Returning to the Boat to Throw Oneself into the River"

onstage

Du Shiniang (sings):

[suo nan zhi]

Evil-hearted scoundrel loves money, but cares nothing for the bonds of
friendship,

With jackals and wolves I once slept,

Oh heaven! I so regret my actions!

Rage fills my breast with no place to vent it, I will jump into the river.

offstage

Helping Chorus (sings):

Shiniang has thrown herself into the river, how tragic!

onstage

Li Jia (speaks):

This death is all because of you!

Sun Fu (speaks):

You want to put the blame on me!

(sings):

[fei bangzi]

I'll not let you get away with not returning my two-thousand pieces of silver!

Li Jia (speaks):

Let's go, let's go, let's go!

(sings):

We shall go together to the *yamen*¹⁸ and work this out.

*Li Jia leads Sun Fu by the arm as they exit.**offstage*

Helping Chorus (sings):

The two are both bad creatures! *[suo nan zhi]* strolling-meter

In the first musical passage, the helping chorus confirms the actions taken by the character Du Shiniang, while adding the evaluative statement "How, tragic!" at the end. In its second vocalization, the helping chorus

more directly passes judgement on the course of events by remarking that Li and Fu are "bad creatures." The Chinese word "*dongxi*" (东西), meaning "thing" or "creature," is used rather than the word "people" (*ren* 人) in the song text, making the helping chorus' comments extremely critical. In this scene, the helping chorus is speaking aloud what the audience is feeling as they watch.

There can be no question that the words which the actor and helping chorus sing during *gaoqiang* performance have the greatest effect on shaping the nature of the dramatic presentation. It is primarily through language that the audience learns the identity of the dramatic characters and the specifics of the dramatic narrative. Sichuan opera practitioners compose song texts which relay particular information about the drama to the audience.

In summary, *qupai* are the musical vehicles which are used to communicate the information contained in the song text to the audience. The structural features of each *qupai* in the repertoire provides it with a unique aural nature. For this reason, the choice of *qupai* can have tremendous effect on how the material contained in the song text is received by the audience. How the helping chorus and actor choose to perform a song passage also affects the way in which the information is received. Chapter IX explores the issue of *qupai* dramatic application, and describes the various ways in which *qupai* are organized for performance.

Notes to Chapter VIII

THE HELPING CHORUS IN PERFORMANCE

1 Predating the arrival of the *yiyangqiang* musical system in Sichuan, vocal traditions which featured an antiphonal vocal performance style were already present in Sichuan folk music culture. In many Sichuan work songs (*laodong haozi* 劳动号子), for example, a call-and-response vocal performance format can be found between a soloist and a chorus of singers.

2 This song passage is sung by the *sheng* character Pei Yu (裴禹) in the scene "Picking Red Plums" ("Zhai hong mei" 摘红梅), from the play *The Red Plum* (*Hong mei ji* 红梅记) (Zhang 1964, 457).

3 This song passage is from the scene "Striking the God" ("Da shen" 打神), in the play *Burning Incense* (*Fen xiang ji* 焚香记) (Wen 1983, 10).

4 This song passage is from the scene "Leaving the Cave to View the Scenery" ("Bie dong guan jing" 别洞观景), in the play *The Courtiers' Well* (*Gong ren jing* 宫人井) (Sichuan 1987, 226).

5 If a vocable-phrase precedes the first word in a lyric line, the chorus leader generally vocalizes the vocable-phrase. However, the larger inter-*dou* and cadential vocable-phrases which are found in the central and ending portions of the melodic-line are usually performed by the general chorus.

6 This song passage is sung by the *dan* character Chen Miaochang (陈妙常) in the scene "Autumn River" ("Qiu jiang" 秋江), from the play *The Jade Hairpin* (*Yu zan ji* 玉赞记) (Du 1985, 46).

7 This song passage is performed by the Young Buddhist Nun (Xiao Nigu 小尼姑) *dan* character in the one-act play *Longing for Laity* (*Si fan* 思凡) (Wen 1983, 87).

8 This song passage is from the scene "Striking the God" ("Da shen" 打神), in the play *Burning Incense* (*Fen xiang ji* 焚香记) (Zhang 1964, 59).

9 See Note 8 (Yang 1980, 40).

10 See Note 6.

11 This song passage is from the scene "Checking Sentiments" ("Qing tan" 请探), in the play *Burning Incense* (*Fen xiang ji* 焚香记). The *taoda* percussion pattern played beneath the passage is "yi zi qing ban" ("一字清板") (Wen 1983, 139).

12 Normally a putting-on-a-hat style of song initiation calls for a single lyric line to be divided between the actor and the helping chorus. This example is unusual because the actress intones an entire couplet. The helping chorus only repeats the final *dou* of line two.

13 The costuming worn by Buddhist nun characters is quite distinct. The sleeveless outer-garment, called a "Daoist cape" (*dao pei* 道帔), is constructed of diamond-shaped panels of blue and yellow silk, each decorated with embroidery. This garment, which is worn over a floor-length, pleated white skirt (*zhequn* 褶裙) and a side-opening inner robe (*zhezi* 褶子), is cinched at the waist with a silk cord. A fringed, cloth headdress called a "female Daoist crown" (*nüdaoguan* 女道冠) is also worn by nun characters. A white horse-tail "mosquito broom" (*wenzhou* 蚊帚), and the Buddhist prayer beads (*fozhu* 佛珠 lit., "Buddhist pearls") are frequently carried in hand.

14 The *suona* is frequently used in *gaoqiang*, as well as in the other Sichuan opera musical systems, to create sound effects or to play ceremonial or processional musics. This instrument is not however, used as an accompanying instrument for vocal performance in *gaoqiang*.

15 The song text of the *kunqiang* passage is as follows:

Chang E, once as lovely as a heavenly spirit,
Hurries across the broad, cold green sea and blue heaven.
Rightfully sorry for having stolen the potion,
Ends up alone and in solitude.
Praises to the Buddha,
Praises to Amidha Buddha!

16 See Chapter VII, p. 271 for a musical transcription of this strolling-meter passage.

17 The English translation of this excerpt is from the published translation of *Scholar From Bashan County*, which appeared in the *Asian Theatre Journal*, Vol. 3, no. 2, Spring, 1986.

18 "Yamen " (衙门) is the Chinese term used to refer to local government offices in pre-Communist China.

CHAPTER IX

QUPAI PERFORMANCE APPLICATION AND ORGANIZATION

The features of a *gaoqiang qupai* 's lyric form, performer-assignment structure, and musical structure form an internal structure which is like no other in the musical system repertoire. The nature of this internal form in turn affects the way in which a *qupai* is used in performance. In addition to providing Sichuan opera practitioners with information which dictates the characteristics of its internal form, *qupai* specifications also convey information about a *qupai* 's performance application. *Qupai* specifications cover three distinct aspects of dramatic usage. First, they dictate the types of dramatic characters who should perform a song. A *qupai* 's usage may be limited to dramatic characters within a single role category or subcategory, or even to an individual dramatic character within the repertoire. *Qupai* specifications also indicate the dramatic context in which the song should be used. Finally, specifications provide theatre practitioners with information on how a *qupai* functions within a dramatic scene--can the *qupai* be used as a single, independent musical unit, or must it be used as part of a series of *qupai*.

As indicated in Chapter I, a single, unified approach to *gaoqiang qupai* description is lacking in the tradition. Due to such differences as the regional affiliations of opera practitioners, slight variations in *qupai* appellation and structural form are present, as well as methods of dramatic application description. Although the language used to describe *qupai* dramatic application varies slightly among written sources, there appears to be general agreement with regards to the types of dramatic contexts in which the *qupai* should be used. The purpose of this chapter is not to

expose discrepancies between documentation sources on the subject of *qupai* dramatic application, but rather to illustrate the varying degree of application specificity among *qupai* in the repertoire.

***Qupai* Performance Application**

From the information provided in Chapters IV through VIII, it is clear that considerable variation exists with regards to the rigidity of *qupai* internal form. For some *qupai*, the re-assignment of one melodic-line from the helping chorus to the actor can result in loss of *qupai* identity. Sometimes through such re-assignment a different *qupai* form the musical repertoire is created. For other *qupai*, numerous alterations can be made to the *qupai*'s lyric form without affecting the *qupai*. In the area of performance application, a similar range of specificity and generality can also be found. The suggested performance application of one *qupai* may be extremely specific, whereas another's may be broad enough to allow it to be used in a number of diverse dramatic contexts and by a variety of character types.

Dramatic Character Usage

As already mentioned, *qupai* possess a performer-assignment structure which assigns specific parts of the *qupai* song to either the actor or the helping chorus to sing. *Qupai* performance application specifications add another layer of meaning to the concept of performer assignment by indicating what type of dramatic character may sing those parts of the song which are assigned to the actor. The performance application specifications of *gaoqiang qupai* usually indicate which

dramatic characters may perform the actor portions of a song by listing the names of appropriate role categories. In *qupai* specifications, one or more of the five role categories used in Sichuan opera: *sheng*, *dan*, *jing*, *mo*, and *chou*, may be named. The *qupai* [*hong na ao*] is a *qupai* which is said to be suitable for all role categories in Sichuan opera (Peng II 1959, 216). The *qupai* [*mian da xu*], however, is considered best suited for dramatic characters belonging to the *dan* role category, although male role categories may also perform the *qupai* (Peng I 1959, 217 and 49). The specifications of a few *qupai* in the repertoire are more specific in indicating who should perform them. The specifications for the *qupai* [*ku zhu yun fei*] (〔苦驻云飞〕) and [*lao tian zhu yun fei*] (〔老甜驻云飞〕), for example, not only indicate a particular role category, but also a subcategory within that role category. In this case, the blue-clothing *dan* (*qingyi*) and the rocking *dan* (*yaodan*), respectively (Peng II 1959, 13 and 16).

Even more specific than limiting either the role category or the subcategory is the practice of limiting the use of some *qupai*, such as [*han qiang*] and [*cang long tai*] (〔苍龙台〕), to specific dramatic characters. [*Han qiang*] is a *qupai* whose songs should only be sung by the dramatic character Guan Yu (关羽), the chief military advisor of Liu Bei, ruler of the Kingdom of Shu. Plays depicting Guan Yu and the events of the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280 A.D.) are particularly popular in Sichuan opera because the Kingdom of Shu was located where Sichuan province is today. The [*han qiang*] *qupai* is always sung by Guan Yu when he first enters the performance space. This song is considered appropriate for expressing Guan Yu's "lofty sentiments, ideals, and passion" (Sichuan 1987, 73).

The *qupai* [*cang long tai*] is only sung by the dramatic characters Lian Po (廉颇) and Lin Xiangru (蔺相如), also characters from the same

historical period as Guan Yu and Liu Bei, but from the rival Kingdom of Yue. This *qupai* is sung by the two characters as a duet and only in the scene "Skills of Disputation" ("Zheng gong" 争功) (Zhang 1964, 313). A relatively new *qupai* as compared to most in the tradition, the [*cang long tai*] *qupai* was created by Sichuan opera practitioners because it was felt that other *qupai* in the repertoire did not suit the personalities of these dramatic characters, and could not effectively convey the tremendous rivalry which existed between the them.

[*Cang long tai*] . . . is a Sichuan opera creation. It was the former generation of Sichuan opera [practitioners] who created this kind of new *qupai*, not to be a sign of [something] new, but to fit the needs of a particular dramatic character [and] context. . . . [*Duan zheng hao*] would not have been suitable. To use [*yi zhi hua*] would also appear to have been insufficient. Because this dramatic scene is one [which depicts] mutual dispute, from the perspective of the *qupai*'s personality, it would not have been completely identical. To use [*dou an chun*], would also appear not to have matched the status of the dramatic characters. The former generation [of Sichuan opera practitioners] started off using the melody of [*duan zheng hao*] and [*yi zhi hua*] as a base, [and] in the middle changed melodies to . . . the opening line of the *qupai* [*shan tao hong*], causing [the [*cang long tai*] song] to possess a definite feeling of struggle which enables the image of the dramatic characters to be highlighted (Zhang 1964, 313).

The number of *qupai* like [*han qiang*] which are limited in their use to a specific dramatic character, is extremely small. Even smaller in number, however, are *qupai* such as [*cang long tai*] which were created in recent years for use by a single dramatic character. The dramatic application specifications of the vast majority of *qupai* in the repertoire name only the appropriate role categories of characters who should perform the songs.

Dramatic Context

The dramatic applications of most *qupai* in the repertoire also set parameters on the types of emotional states which can be expressed through a *qupai* song. [*Hong na ao*] 's specifications state that it is a *qupai* which is appropriate for depicting such diverse emotions as "happiness, anger, sadness, and amusement" (*xi, nu, ai, le* 喜, 怒, 哀, 乐) (Zuo 1979, 25). Not all *qupai*, however, are as broad in their application as [*hong na ao*]. Most, in fact, are limited in their use to a specific aspect of the emotional range. The *qupai* [*diaozi*] (调子), for example, is limited to the depiction of such dark emotions as "sorrow [and] suffering," while [*shua hai er*] (耍孩儿) is deemed appropriate for use in "scenes expressing happiness" (Sichuan 1987, 199 and 51).

Frequently, *qupai* performance application specifications not only suggest the types of emotional states which can be communicated through a song, but also indicate possible dramatic situations in which these states may be experienced by characters. The *qupai* [*dong ting chun*] (洞庭春), for example, is described as being "a happy [*qupai*] . . . used only by *dan* characters [and] ordinarily for situations [depicting a character] enjoying the beauty of something, being away on summer holiday, diverting one's attention away from boredom, [or] lovesickness" (Peng I 1959,10).

The majority of plays in the traditional *gaoqiang* repertoire feature similar plot structure and content. Subsequently, one can find the same types of dramatic characters in numerous plays, facing similar dramatic situations and expressing similar emotions. Plays depicting young Confucian scholars attempting to pass the imperial examinations who fall in love with virtuous young women before attaining academic success, for

example, are numerous. In these plays, many scenes depicting one or both of the romantic leads in such dramatic situations as "enjoying scenery" (*huan jing* 欢景), "relating hardship" (*su ku* 诉苦), "seeing [someone] off" (*song bie* 送别), "playing the zither" (*fu qin* 抚琴), and "announcing good news" (*bao xi* 报喜) can be found. Such scenes represent the types of stock dramatic situations found in the majority of traditional romance dramas in China.

In that the same types of dramatic situations appear repeatedly, with the same types of dramatic characters and frequently in the same order, it is not surprising to find such a systematic approach to music performance construction to be present in the *gaoqiang* musical system. In many ways, the dramatic content of most plays is almost as formulaic as: If situation A occurs with characters B and C, then characters B and C should feel emotions X and Y, and therefore *qupai* S and T would be best to express these emotions. The practice of associating certain emotional states with particular dramatic situations in *gaoqiang qupai* dramatic application specifications seems understandable given the nature of the *gaoqiang* dramatic repertoire.

Impact of Musical Structure

Certain *qupai* within the repertoire of the *gaoqiang* musical system possess musical elements which make them better suited for portraying certain emotional states than others. As described in Chapter VI, all of the over three hundred *gaoqiang qupai* fall into one of five melodic categories based on common features present in the melodic structures of their actor music. When *qupai* within the same melodic category are compared,

commonalities in the area of suggested performance applications can be found.

It is suggested that most *qupai* found within the [*duan zheng hao*] and [*jiang tou gui*] melodic categories should be used to depict such emotions as anger, grief, and heartache, or used in dramatic scenes where characters are depicted saying goodbye to each other, expressing moral outrage, or recounting a painful memory (Sichuan 1987, 56 and 139). The musical structures of *qupai* found in these two melodic categories help to convey musically what is being expressed both linguistically and physically by the actor onstage. All the *qupai* which are used to create the music for the tragic scene "Striking the God," for example, are from the [*duan zheng hao*] melodic category. The *yu* mode used to construct all the songs in this scene is considered to possess a "relatively thick minor [key] shading" which, like a minor key in Western art music, is perceived as possessing a somewhat sad or tragic sound (56). *Qupai* in the [*jiang tou gui*] melodic category regularly feature the unstable musical pitches 4 and 7 in their songs. This type of scale configuration results in a feeling of modal instability, and also conveys a sense of darkness and sadness. The *qupai* [*yue er gao*] ([月 儿 高]) is part of the [*jiang tou gui*] melodic category. A song constructed from this *qupai* is sung by the character Wang Kui at the beginning of the scene "Checking Sentiments." The melodic structure of this *qupai* song is an important element in establishing the tragic and ominous atmosphere which so characterizes this scene.

Qupai found in the [*xin shui ling*] melodic category are for the most part used to depict happy emotional states. The melodic structures of a few *qupai zhuanqiang* passages, however, are different enough to make the *qupai* stand out among other's in the category. This aural distinction in

turn affects the performance applications of the *qupai*. In the [*xin shui ling*] melodic category, the *zhuanqiang* of the *qupai* [*xiang luo dai*] and [*qing na ao*], for example, not only make them appropriate for depicting positive emotional states, but also allow them to convey feelings of sadness or worry (Sichuan 1987, 100 and 106). Therefore, any *qupai* in the melodic category which contains a *zhuanqiang* that is either melodically related to, or directly borrowed from, these two *qupai* will also share the ability to express such darker emotional states. Because of the difference in their musical structures and suggested performance applications, a number of *qupai* classification systems place [*xiang luo dai*], [*qing na ao*], and other melodically related *qupai*, in a separate melodic category from [*xin shui ling*] *qupai*.

The [*suo suo gang*] melodic category *qupai* are appropriate for "showing the inner thoughts of the dramatic characters and for scenes [which] express emotion and describe the scenery" (Sichuan 1987, 224). Lacking either positive or negative emotional associations, most [*suo suo gang*] category *qupai* are broad in their dramatic application. Similar to what is seen in the [*xin shui ling*] melodic category, however, a few *qupai* in the [*suo suo gang*] category possess melodic features which give them a distinct aural nature. The *zhuanqiang* of the *qupai* [*ju hua xin*] (〔菊花新〕), for example, is said to give its songs a more tragic sound. The result is that the suggested performance application of this *qupai* departs from the general non-emotion-specific dramatic application of most [*suo suo gang*] melodic category *qupai* (Sichuan 1987, 183).¹

The *qupai* [*hong na ao*] is regarded by Sichuan opera practitioners as the "King of *Qupai*" (*qupai zhi wang* 曲牌之王) because of its ability to portray a wide variety of emotional states and for its use by all dramatic

role categories (Zhang 1964, 93). Due to its broad applicability in performance, *[hong na ao]* is the most often heard *qupai* in *gaoqiang* performance. The melodic category headed by *[hong na ao]* contains only two slightly modified versions of the *qupai*. When the suggested performance applications of these *qupai* are examined, no significant difference in their suggested usages can be found.

***Qupai* Organization**

***Qupai* Set Organization Style**

The performance application specifications of *gaoqiang qupai* also indicate whether a *qupai* is to be used in performance as part of a series of *qupai*, as an independent *qupai*, or both. The *gaoqiang* musical system, like most other *qupai*-based musical systems, features a number of "qupai sets" (*qupai tang* 曲牌堂).² Each *qupai* set consists of a predetermined number of *qupai* arranged in a prescribed sequential order. Not all *qupai* in the *gaoqiang* repertoire, however, are part of a set. *[Hong na ao]*, for example, is classified as an "independent *qupai*" (*danyong qupai* 单用曲牌 lit., "independent-usage *qupai*"), meaning that it can be used wherever it is dramatically appropriate, and need not be either preceded or followed by any particular *qupai*. A number of *qupai*, such as *[duan zheng hao]* and *[xin shui ling]*, have dual identities. In other words, these *qupai* serve both as members of identified *qupai* sets, and function as independent musical units in performance.

Just as the number of *qupai* in the *gaoqiang* repertoire varies according to the source consulted, there is no consensus on the number of *qupai* sets. The 1987 publication *A general account of Sichuan opera*

music , for example, lists only four *qupai* sets, whereas Peng Wenyuan's 1959 publication *Sichuan opera gaoqiang qupai* lists over thirty. Regional variation as well as changes in performance repertoire and practices during the past the thirty years may be factors in these discrepancies.

Qupai sets range in size from as few as four *qupai* to as many as ten. Each set is referred to by the name of the first *qupai* in the set. The [*yuan lin hao*] set (*yuan lin hao yi tang* 园林好一堂 lit., "yuan lin hao one-set"), for example, consists of the five *qupai*: [*yuan lin hao*] (〔园林好〕), [*jiang er shui*] (〔江儿水〕), [*wu gong yang*] (〔五供养〕), [*yu jiao zhi*] (〔玉姣枝〕), and [*chuan bo diao*] (〔川拨掉〕). When sung in performance, the songs created from these five *qupai* will also be sung in this order.

In *gaoqiang* performance, passages of speech, stylized movement/acting, and stage combat/acrobatics are often interspersed between the singing of individual *qupai* songs in a set. In this way, the dramatic action can be moved forward through acts of speech and movement. During the subsequent song vocalization, the characters are then given the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about the dramatic situation. The core of the dramatic presentation is felt to lie within these song vocalizations.

Dramatic interest does not arise from the plot, for there is little question as to eventual outcome. . . . Dramatic interest arises from the interpretation given these familiar characters, and especially from the expression of their reactions to the circumstances in which they find themselves (Wichmann 1991, 13).

Qupai set are characterized by the fact that they consist of melodically-related *qupai*. The various *qupai* within each set may contain melodic material in their helping chorus passages which serves to

establish their unique musical identities, but their actor passages must share common characterizing melodic figures which aurally confirm their membership in the same melodic category. Each of the five melodic categories discussed in Chapter VI, with the exception of [*hong na ao*], contains one or more *qupai* sets. In a few rare instances, a *qupai* may be part of two different *qupai* sets within the same melodic category. Not all *qupai* within a melodic category, however, belong to a set; some function solely as independent *qupai*.

Within *qupai* sets a variety of metrical structures can be found. An examination of the metrical structures of the five *qupai* contained in the [*yuan lin hao*] set illustrates the diversity of metrical types.

	<u>strolling-meter</u>	<u>one-character</u>	<u>two-flowing</u>
1. [<i>yuan lin hao</i>]	X	X	
2. [<i>jiang er shui</i>]			X
3. [<i>wu gong yang</i>]			X
4. [<i>yu jiao zhi</i>]			X
5. [<i>chuan bo diao</i>]			X
<i>weisheng</i>	X	X	

Figure 9.1

Metrical Types Present in [*Yuan Lin Hao*] Set *Qupai*

The metrical structures of the five [*yuan lin hao*] set *qupai* reveal a rhythmic feature present in the majority of *gaoqiang qupai* sets. This feature is a metrical progression from unmetered, to metered, to unmetered music. Occurring alongside this rhythmic progression is an undulating performance tempo which moves from slow, to fast, to slow once again.

The [*yuan lin hao*] *qupai* song which initiates the set, opens with a putting-on-a-hat style of song initiation that is intoned by the actor. The helping chorus concludes the singing of the first lyric line with a passage of strolling-meter music. In the following line, the helping chorus changes the metrical structure to a one-character meter structure. With this metrical change, a slight increase in the performance tempo can be also felt, due in part to the presence of percussion *taoda* accompaniment beneath the one-character meter helping chorus line. The even-start style song initiation which begins the second *qupai* in the set, [*jiang er shui*], changes the metrical structure of the set to two-flowing meter. This metrical change marks another increase in performance tempo. The set remains in this metrical type until the singing of the fifth *qupai* song, [*chuan bo diao*], has been completed.

Gaoqiang qupai sets are regularly terminated through the use of short passages of music called "*weisheng*" (尾声 lit., "tail-sound") and "*weisha*" (尾煞 lit., "rounding-off tail").³ Usually constructed using a lyric form containing seven words per line, *weisha* and *weisheng* contain melodic material which is related to material found in the other *qupai* in the set. However, they are not classified as either independent *qupai* or as parts of other *qupai*. The primary features differentiating *weisha* and *weisheng* appear to be their overall length and performer-assignment structures. Sichuan opera actor and music scholar Zhang Decheng writes that *weisheng* are two- or three- melodic lines in length, and are performed entirely by the helping chorus, whereas *weisha* are usually four melodic-lines long and are performed jointly by the helping chorus and the actor. In a *weisha* passage, the helping chorus sings lines one, two, and four, leaving line three to be sung by the actor (1964, 36). In some

instances, however, the actor may speak, rather than sing the third line. From analysis of numerous playscripts and musical scores, however, it appears that such clear distinctions between *weisheng* and *weisha* do not exist, and that usage may be more a matter of personal preference rather than structural form. Irrespective of its exact appellation, all *qupai* sets in the repertoire can be found to conclude with one of these short, helping-chorus dominated, musical passages.

A characterizing feature of *weisheng* and *weisha* passages is that they are composed in free meter, in one-character meter, or in a combination of the two metrical types. The [*duan zheng hao*] set *weisha* as seen in the scene "Striking the God" consists of two lines of helping chorus strolling-meter music, a single line of song text which is spoken by the character Jiao Guiying, followed by a final line of helping chorus strolling-meter music. The [*luan lin hao*] set *weisheng*, as seen in the scene "Wenlin Temple," ("Wenlin miao" 文林庙), from the play *The Chaste Woman of the Han* (*Han zhen lie* 汉贞烈), consists of two lines of helping chorus strolling-meter music followed by a single line of helping chorus one-character music. By placing the shorter *weisha* or *weisheng* passage at the end of a *qupai* set, the rhythmic structure of the set is returned to the metrical type which initiated it. This rhythmic progression--from a somewhat relaxed metrical structure to a more intense one, to a relaxed one again--occurs in most *qupai* sets and parallels the dramatic structure found in most *gaoqiang* scenes.

During the slower-tempoed section of music which initiates most *qupai* sets, dramatic characters are commonly heard introducing themselves to the audience and recapitulating the dramatic action. In the second section of the *qupai* set, the metrical structure changes to one

which has fewer notes per measure and which is sung at a faster performance tempo. At this point in the scene, the dramatic action usually begins to ascend towards a climax and the character's emotional state reaches its most intense point. The final section of the *qupai* set, which is the shortest in length, begins with the singing of the *weisheng* or *weisha* passage. In this section, the music returns to the metrical structure and performance tempo which initiated the *qupai* set. By this point in the drama, the characters have either decided upon a new course of action, or resolved the conflict which had faced them. The return to the original rhythmic structure of the *qupai* set creates a metrical cycle within the *qupai* set. This return helps convey a sense of completion and resolution through the music. Without the presence of *weisha* and *weisheng* passages at the ends of *qupai* sets, a musical and dramatic crescendo could be reached, but no possibility of decrescendo or closure would be present. In that an important aesthetic principle of the *xiqu* stage is the concept of roundness, such a monodirectional property would be unacceptable.

The [*yuan lin hao*] set shows the simplest form of metrical progression found within a *gaoqiang qupai* set--the single metrical cycle. The arrangement of metrical types in this set moves from strolling-meter/one-character, to two-flowing meter, to strolling-meter/one-character, and results in the creation of a slow, fast, slow performance tempo progression.

	<u>strolling-meter</u>	<u>one-character</u>	<u>two-flowing</u>
1. [<i>xin shui ling</i>]	X		
2. [<i>bu bu jiao</i>]		X	
3. [<i>zhe gu ling</i>]		X	
4. [<i>jiang er shui</i>]			X
5. [<i>yan er luo</i>]		X	
6. [<i>jiao jiao ling</i>]			X
7. [<i>shou jiang nan</i>]		X	X
8. [<i>yuan liu qing</i>]			X
9. [<i>gu mei jiu</i>]			X
10. [<i>qing jiang yin</i>] "weisheng"	X	X	X

Figure 9.3

Metrical Types Present in [*Xin Shui Ling*] Set *Qupai*

The number of *qupai* found in the [*duan zheng hao*] set is equal to that of the [*xin shui ling*] set. A comparison of the metrical structures of the *qupai* contained in each of the two sets, however, shows the [*duan zheng hao*] set to contain a more metrically complex structure.

	<u>strolling-meter</u>	<u>one-character</u>	<u>two-flowing</u>
1. [<i>duan zheng hao</i>]	X	X	
2. [<i>gun xiu qiu</i>]		X	
3. [<i>dao dao ling</i>]			X
4. [<i>tuo bu shan</i>]			X
5. [<i>xiao liang zhou</i>]			X
6. [<i>yao pian</i>]			X
7. [<i>pian wei</i>]			X
8. [<i>man ting fang</i>]	X	X	
9. [<i>shang xiao lou</i>]			X
10. [<i>chao tian zi</i>] "weisha"	X		X

Figure 9.4

Metrical Types Present in [*Duan Zheng Hao*] Set *Qupai*

The [*duan zheng hao*] set can be divided into two discrete metrical cycles based on the collective metrical structures of its *qupai*. The first

cycle begins with the *qupai* [*duan zheng hao*] and continues through to the end of the eighth *qupai*, [*man ting fang*]. As in both the [*yuan lin hao*] and [*xin shui ling*] sets, the overall metrical structure progresses from slower-metrical types, to faster metrical types, and returns to slower metrical types once again. In the [*duan zheng hao*] set, the *qupai* [*man ting fang*] not only serves as the closing *qupai* of the first metrical cycle, but also serves as the initiating *qupai* of the second. This second metrical cycle is shorter in length than the first, consisting of only three *qupai* and a *weisha* passage.

performance tempo:

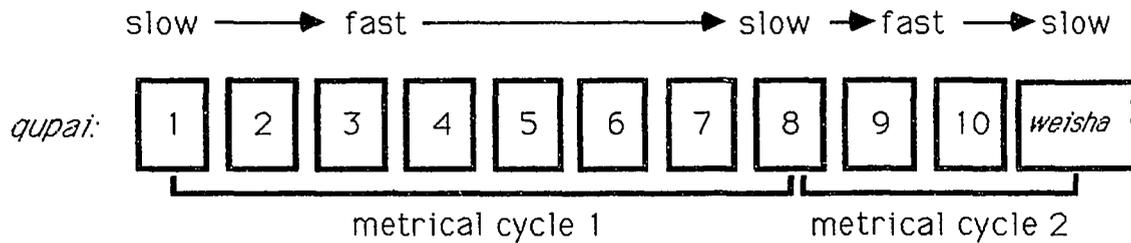


Figure 9.5

Double Metrical Cycle of the [*Duan Zheng Hao*] Set

The double metrical cycle present in the [*duan zheng hao*] set creates two crescendo/decrescendo effects, and is the only *qupai* set with this feature in the repertoire. When the metrical structure of the set is compared to the dramatic structure of the scene "Striking the God" in which it is used, a parallel dramatic double-cycle can be found. During the singing of *qupai* songs one-through-eight in the set, Jiao Guiying recounts the story of her relationship with Wang Kui and beseeches the Sea God to take action on her behalf. By the time the singing of the seventh *qupai* in

the set (*[pian wei]*) is complete, Jiao is on the brink of madness. Her pain and frustration finally become physically manifested when she suddenly destroys the statue of the Sea God. Following this act, Jiao lies exhausted on the temple floor. Hearing the calls of a goose flying overhead, Jiao begins to sing the eighth *qupai* in the set, *[man ting fang]*. This is an extremely mournful song in which Jiao compares the cold temple interior to the comfortable chambers occupied by Wang in the capital. This signals the end of the first metrical cycle in the set and the beginning of the second. By the end of the *[man ting fang]* song, Jiao's anger has once again arisen. During the final *qupai* song vocalization (*[chao tian zi]*), Jiao expresses her frustration at having no earthly means to make Wang account for his actions. As the helping chorus concludes the singing of the song, Jiao mimes her intention to commit suicide, implying that she will try seeking justice from the other world. The beginning of the final *weisha* vocalization symbolizes an end to the course of action which began when Jiao came to the temple. From the moment of her death, however, a new course of action for the Jiao begins.

Qupai sets have suggested performance applications which are based on the collective aural natures of the individual *qupai* present in the set. The *[xin shui ling]* and *[yuan lin hao]* sets, for example, have performance applications which allow them to be used in a variety of different dramatic situations. The *[duan zheng hao]* set, in contrast, is considered better at expressing emotions which are sadder, and more tragic. It is unclear, however, whether this *qupai*'s more complex metrical structure is related to its darker dramatic application.

Among *qupai* which belong to a *qupai* set, certain commonalities can be found in their performer-assignment structures and lyric forms.

The majority of the set *qupai* feature performer-assignation structures which contain a mixture of helping chorus and actor music. In most cases, the helping chorus passages are focused at the beginning and end of the *qupai* song. In terms of lyric form, the semi-regulated style is the most common. In *qupai* featuring this lyric form, the majority of controlled-length lyric lines are located in the helping chorus passages and hence, mostly found at the beginning and end of the song. The actor passages in contrast, are usually constructed using a couplet-based lyric form and located in the central portion of the song. The overall number of actor lines can be increased or decreased to accommodate the amount of song text.

Due to the expandable nature of the semi-regulated lyric form, a single *qupai* set is often all that is necessary to create the vocal music for an entire scene. The music for "Striking the God," for example, consists only of the ten *qupai* from the [*duan zheng hao*] set. Both the actress playing Jiao Guiying, as well as the two actors playing the roles of two temple guardian statues which come to life, sing [*duan zheng hao*] set music. Of the ten *qupai* songs, however, Jiao Guiying sings all but one.

Smaller *qupai* sets, such as the [*yuan lin hao*] set, often do not contain enough musical material to fill an entire scene. This is particularly true when characters from the young *sheng* and young *dan* role categories--those role categories which place primary emphasis on vocal performance skills--are cast in the leading roles. In such cases, it is common to find that a number of independent *qupai* have also been included in the scene. These independent *qupai* may, or may not be melodically related to the *qupai* in the set. In performance, the singing of the songs in the *qupai* set are generally assigned to a single dramatic

character--usually the main character in the scene.⁴ The remaining dramatic characters sing the independent *qupai*. These independent *qupai* songs are always sung before or after the *qupai* set, but never during.

Independent *Qupai* Organization Style

Qupai such as [*er lang shen*] and [*suo suo gang*], although melodically related to [*duan zheng hao*] and [*yuan lin hao*], do not belong to one of the designated *gaoqiang qupai* sets found in the repertoire. These *qupai* are classified as independent *qupai*. This designation, however, is not limited only to those *qupai* which are not part of a *qupai* set. In fact, a large number of *qupai* which are part of sets, can also be extracted and used as independent *qupai* in performance. Using a series of independent *qupai* to construct the music for a single dramatic scene is referred to as the "independent *qupai* organization style" (*duo qu lian zhui* 多曲联缀 lit., "several songs stitched together"). This style is the most common in the *gaoqiang* musical system.

As seen among *qupai* which are part of sets, certain shared features can be found in the lyric forms and performer-assignment structures of independent *qupai*. While *qupai* with semi-regulated lyric forms are common among *qupai* which function both as independent and set *qupai*, the majority of *qupai* which have regulated lyric structures only serve as independent *qupai*. In terms of performer-assignment structure, those *qupai* which are dominated by helping chorus music, such as [*shao ye xiang*] in which all but half of one lyric line is sung by the helping chorus, are usually designated as independent *qupai*.

Those *qupai* which are part of a *qupai* set, and serve as independent *qupai*, may change slightly in form depending on how they are used. Specifications for the *qupai* [*xin shui ling*] and [*duan zheng hao*], for example, indicate that both of these *qupai* feature three metrical types: strolling-meter, one-character meter, and two-flowing meter. When used as part of a set, however, only the strolling-meter form of [*xin shui ling*] and the strolling-meter and one-character metrical forms of the [*duan zheng hao*] *qupai* are used. The rhythmic void which is created by truncating the metrical structures of these *qupai* is made up by the metrical structures of those *qupai* which follow [*xin shui ling*] and [*duan zheng hao*] in their respective sets.

The omission of one or more metrical types is common among *qupai* which initiate a *qupai* set. The deletion of metrical types will not result in a noticeable void in melodic material because the primary differentiating features between *qupai* in a set are their lyric forms, performer-assignment structures, and rhythmic structures--not their melodic structures. In both the [*xin shui ling*] and [*duan zheng hao*] sets, the second *qupai* in the set is melodically close to the first and features the same metrical structure as the omitted portion of the lead *qupai*. In this way, the deletion of a metrical type will not produce any detectable aural effect.

A possible reason why certain metrical forms of the lead *qupai* in a set are often deleted, may have to do with the issue of performance time. If the unmodified form of the *qupai* was sung in its entirety, the overall performance time of the *qupai* set would greatly increase. A second reason might have to do with the fact that the three metrical types present in [*xin shui ling*] and [*duan zheng hao*] *qupai* songs constitute an entire

metrical cycle. If the unmodified forms of these *qupai* were used in their respective sets, a full metrical cycle would be achieved during the singing of the first song. Such a rapid change in rhythmic structure and performance tempo may be incongruous with the dramatic structure of the scene.

Among *qupai* which are not part of designated *qupai* sets, the omission of one of the *qupai*'s metrical types will often result in the loss of *qupai* identity. Why the metrical structures of some *qupai* may be altered, while those of others cannot, may be related to the nature of their lyric forms. [*Xin shui ling*] and [*duan zheng hao*], for example, are both *qupai* which feature a semi-regulated lyric form. This lyric form makes [*xin shui ling*] and [*duan zheng hao*] songs expandable in terms of their overall length. Like many *qupai* which function only as independent *qupai*, [*er lang shen*] features a regulated lyric form which cannot be altered. In general, regulated lyric form *qupai* are shorter in length than semi-regulated or unregulated *qupai*. The deletion of a metrical type from an unregulated *qupai* could therefore make it aurally unrecognizable, as well as too short for use in performance.

Independent *qupai* in the repertoire give the *gaoqiang* musical system a degree of flexibility which would not be present if only *qupai* sets existed. Although by selecting a single *qupai* set the theatre practitioner is provided with a relatively complete musical arrangement for an entire scene, the use of sets is somewhat musically restrictive because of the shared melodic natures of the *qupai* in the set. Because set *qupai* share a close melodic relationship, they tend to all have similar dramatic applications. In scenes featuring a number of different dramatic characters who are expressing contrasting motivations and emotions, the songs

created from a single *qupai* set may not accurately reflect the diversity of perspective present among the various characters.

When shorter *qupai* sets such as the [*luan lin hao*] set are used in performance, the problem of matching *qupai* dramatic applications with the perspectives of the dramatic characters in the scene is greatly reduced. Shorter *qupai* sets are usually sung by a single dramatic character. Due to the reduced length of such sets, a number of melodically-unrelated, independent *qupai* may also be included in the scene. These *qupai* songs are performed before or after the singing of the *qupai* set songs, but not during. Through a mixture of independent and set *qupai*, a more diversified musical program can be constructed for a scene.

In the play *The Chaste Woman of the Han*, the Han emperor is forced to give over his wife, Wang Zhaojun, to the leader of a neighboring nation in order to save his kingdom from annihilation. At the onset of the scene "Wenlin Temple," Wang Zhaojun and her younger brother Wang Long are shown arriving by boat at the rendezvous point where the foreign general A Hei Da (阿黑达) awaits to escort Zhaojun to her new home. The point of exchange is Wenlin Temple, where according to legend, a beautiful princess once committed suicide. Rather than submit to a new marriage after the death of her first husband, the princess became a martyr by drowning herself in the river. For her virtuous act, a temple was built in her honor. Below a summary of the dramatic action and a list of the *qupai* found in the scene are provided.

<u>Character</u>	<u>Qupai</u>	<u>Melodic Category/ Metrical Type</u>
Princess Wenlin	<i>[dian jiang chun]</i>	<i>Princess Wenlin enters</i> <i>[duan zheng hao]</i> strolling-meter + one-character
		<i>Wang Zhaojun enters</i>
Wang Zhaojun	<i>[yuan lin hao]</i> set <i>[yuan lin hao]</i> <i>[jiang er shui]</i> <i>[wu gong yang]</i> <i>[yu jiao zhi]</i> <i>[chuan bo diao]</i> <i>weisha</i>	<i>[suo suo gang]</i> strolling-meter + one-character two-flowing meter " " " strolling-meter + one-character
		<i>Princess Wenlin exits</i> <i>Wang Zhaojun exits</i>
Wang Long	<i>kunqiang qupai:</i> <i>[liang zhou xu]</i> <i>[jie jie gao]</i>	n/a n/a
		<i>Wang Long exits</i> <i>Wang Zhaojun enters and boards the boat</i>
Wan Zhaojun	<i>gaoqiang qupai:</i> <i>[qui po yang]</i> <i>[shan po bu jin yang]</i>	<i>[xiang luo dai]</i> one-character meter <i>[xiang luo dai]</i> one-character + two-flowing meters
		<i>Wang Zhaojun commits suicide</i> <i>Wang Long enters and boards the boat</i>
Wang Long	<i>[jin jiao ye]</i> <i>[zhu yun fei]</i>	<i>[suo suo gang]</i> two-flowing meter <i>[suo suo gang]</i> two-flowing meter
		<i>Wang Long commits suicide</i> <i>A Hei Da enters and boards the boat</i>

Figure 9.6

Melodic Categories and Metrical Types of the *Qupai* Found in the Scene "Wenlin Temple"

<u>Character</u>	<u>Qupai</u>	<u>Melodic Category/ Metrical Type</u>
A Hei Da	<i>[zhu yun fei]</i>	<i>[suo suo gang]</i> two-flowing meter <i>weisha</i> strolling-meter + one-character
<i>A Hei Da exits</i>		

Figure 9.6 (Continued)

Melodic Categories and Metrical Types of the *Qupai* Found in the Scene "Wenlin Temple"

Before the character Wang Zhaojun enters the stage, the spirit of Princess Wenlin (文林公主) sings a *[dian jiang chun]* ([点绛唇]) *qupai* song. *[Dian jiang chun]* is a *qupai* from the *[duan zheng hao]* melodic category and is only used as an independent *qupai* in performance. Like other *[duan zheng hao]* melodic category *qupai*, the *[dian jiang chun]* song serves to establish a tone of sadness and a sense of forboding for the scene. Upon her entrance, Wang Zhaojun begins to sing the *[yuan lin hao]* *qupai* set. Between each of the five *qupai* songs, exchanges of dialogue take place between Wang Zhaojun and her brother. The two have found a note left by Princess Wenlin which makes reference to the Princess' actions of long ago. The parallel between her own situation and that of the Princess is obvious to Zhaojun and inspires her to follow the same path. She exits the stage, leaving Wang Long alone with the boatman. In her absence, Wang Long sings two short passages of *kunqiang* music in which he describes the physical environment of the river at daybreak and his own feelings of sadness at his sister's plight.

When Wang Zhaojun reenters the performance space she is ready to embark on a new course of action. After reboarding the boat, Wang sings *[gui po yang]* ([桂坡羊]) and *[shan po bu jin yang]* ([山坡不尽羊])

qupai songs. Although both are part of the [*xin shui ling*] melodic category, these *qupai* have identifying melodic forms which relate them to the *qupai* [*xiang luo dai*]. As indicated earlier, [*xiang luo dai*] heads a unique subcategory of *qupai* within the [*xin shui ling*] melodic category. The melodic structure of [*xiang luo dai*] helping chorus music makes it among the most popular *qupai* for conveying feelings of sadness and tragedy. The choice of these two *qupai* for use here is appropriate--this is the moment when Wang Zhaojun's announces to the audience her plans to commit suicide. Singing a *qupai* song from the [*yuan lin hao*] set would not have been as effective at this moment in the play because of the more neutral emotional associations which [*yuan lin hao*] set *qupai* have.

Before discovering his sister's suicide, Wang Long sings a [*jīn jiāo yè*] ([金蕉叶]) *qupai* song in which he continues to describe the conditions of the river and other aspects of the physical environment. Once realizing that his sister has jumped into the river, Wang Long sings a short [*zhū yún fēi*] ([驻云飞]) *qupai* song before following his sister to a watery death. [*Jīn jiāo yè*] and [*zhū yún fēi*] are both *qupai* from the [*suo suo gang*] melodic category. Like [*suo suo gang*], [*jīn jiāo yè*] is a *qupai* which is general in its dramatic application. [*Zhū yún fēi*], in contrast, resembles [*xiang luo dai*] 's position within the [*xin shui ling*] melodic category, representing a more tragic-sounding subcategory of *qupai*. [*Zhū yún fēi*], whose songs are considered appropriate for "expressing a character's bitter experiences [and] misfortunes, thoughts [and] feelings," is well-suited to convey Wang Long's emotional state at discovering his sister's action (Sichuan 1987, 202). The final song vocalizations in the scene are performed by the foreign general A Hei Da. Upon his entrance, A learns of Wang Zhaojun's and Wang Long's double suicide. He sings a second [*zhu*

yun fei song praising their virtue and mourning their passing. A Hei Da and the helping chorus close the scene by singing a short three-line *weisha* which is constructed using melodic material from the [*suo suo gang*] melodic category.

Excluding the *kunqiang qupai*, a total of eleven *gaoqiang qupai* songs are performed in the scene "Wenlin Temple." With the addition of the [*yuan lin hao*] set's *weisheng* and the final *weisha* passage performed by A Hei Da, the total number of individual *gaoqiang* song vocalizations comes to thirteen. When the metrical types used to construct the various songs are compared, a double metrical cycle such as found in the [*duan zheng hao*] set, can be seen.

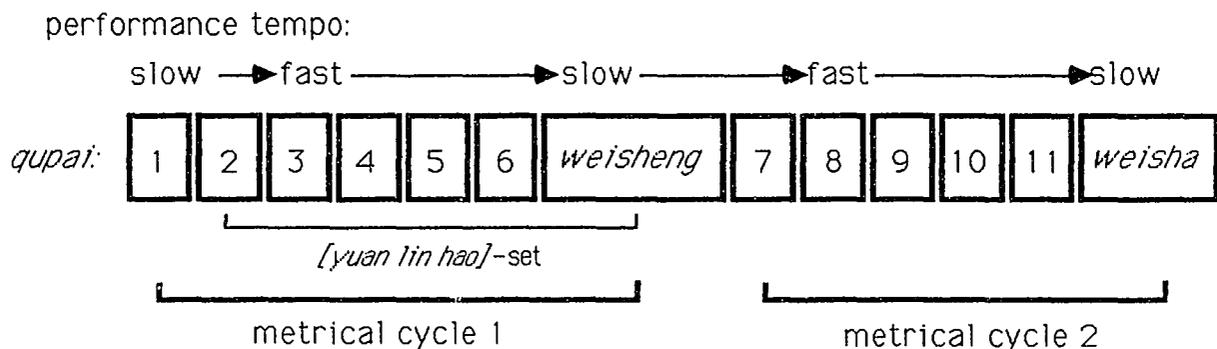


Figure 9.7

Double Metrical Cycle Present in the *Qupai* Songs Performed in the Scene, "Wenlin Temple"

The first metrical cycle begins with Princess Wenlin's song vocalization and ends with the [*yuan lin hao*] set *weisheng* passage that announces to the audience Wang Zhaojun's plans for suicide. The climax of the metrical cycle, where the two-flowing meter music lies, is used to depict the internal struggle which leads up to Wang's decision. The second cycle begins with Wang Zhaojun's singing of the [*gui po yang*] song

aboard the boat and concludes with A Hei Da's final *weisha* vocalization in which he praises her chastity. The dramatic and metrical climax of this cycle occurs during Wang Long's songs aboard the boat when he discovers his sister's suicide and follows in her path.

When longer *qupai* sets such as [*duan zheng hao*] and [*xin shui ling*] are used in a dramatic scene, the amount of time needed to sing all ten *qupai* songs in the set is considerably more than what is needed to sing the [*yuan lin hao*] set. For this reason, the addition of independent *qupai* is common in scenes which feature shorter *qupai* sets, and uncommon in scenes constructed using the larger *qupai* sets. Although analysis of a number of published playscripts and musical scores reveals that sometimes one or two of the *qupai* in a longer *qupai* set are omitted in performance, no evidence exists which indicates that independent *qupai* are ever added to fill these gaps.⁵ Because of the melodic cohesion of *qupai* sets, the dramatic applications of the various *qupai* in the set are quite similar. For this reason, it is common to find longer *qupai* sets in scenes such as "Striking the God" where the dramatic action focuses primarily on the thoughts and actions of a single dramatic character. The shorter *qupai* sets, in contrast, are often used to reflect the emotions of one of several different characters in a scene. Around the *qupai* set, a number of independent *qupai* are used to sing the positions of the remaining characters.

Like "Striking the God," *Longing for Laity* also focuses on a single dramatic character. Rather than using a single *qupai* set, however, the music for *Longing for Laity* is constructed solely through the selection and arrangement of independent *qupai*.

<u>Musical system</u>	<u>Qupai</u>	<u>Metrical Type</u>
<i>kunqiang</i>	<i>[song zi]</i>	three-eyes meter ⁶
<i>gaoqiang</i>	<i>[jiang tou jin gui]</i>	one-character two-flowing
<i>gaoqiang</i>	<i>[xiang luo dai]</i>	one-character two-flowing meter one-character two-flowing
<i>gaoqiang</i>	<i>[xin shui ling]</i>	strolling-meter one-character two-flowing
<i>kunqiang</i>	<i>[feng chui he ye sha]</i>	two-flowing
<i>gaoqiang</i>	<i>[shua hai er]</i>	two-flowing
<i>gaoqiang</i>	<i>weisha</i>	strolling-meter

Figure 9.8

Qupai* and Metrical Types Found in the One-Act Play *Longing for Laity

Although centering around the actions of a single female character, the one-act *Longing for Laity* differs markedly from "Striking the God" in that it is a play which depicts a variety of different emotional states and shows the gradual evolution of the dramatic character towards a plan of action. At the onset of the play "Striking the God," Jiao Guiying has already undertaken a specific course of action, and her emotional state is near a critical climax. The [*duan zheng hao*] set used in "Striking the God" is appropriate for communicating the darker emotions of anger, despair, and profound sadness which are expressed by Jiao Guiying from the very first moments of the play until the end when her decision to commit suicide is revealed. The sadness and loneliness expressed by the Young Nun at the beginning of *Longing for Laity*, in contrast, is diametrically opposite of the

feelings of joy and elation which she expresses at the end of the play. The play takes the audience through a transformation of several different emotional states, to where the character finally finds the confidence and conviction needed to leave the temple in search of a secular life. In order to best display the nun's internal transformation, several independent *qupai* are used rather than a single *qupai* set.

Kunqiang qupai are commonly used in *gaoqiang* plays as the entrance songs for characters; particularly Buddhists, Daoists, Confucian scholars, and high ranking government figures. During the [*jiang tou jin gui*] *qupai* song which follows the *kunqiang* song, the nun describes meeting a young man at the temple gate, and her inability to remove him from her thoughts. The song ends, however, as the nun remembers the physical tortures which await those who desert monastic life. The [*jiang tou jin gui*] *qupai* is part of the [*jiang tou gui*] melodic category, and also features a musical scale which incorporates the coloration pitches 4 and 7. This scale helps to give the *qupai* a slightly darker tone and feeling of modal instability. This modal feature, combined with the *qupai*'s broad melodic range and undulating melodic line, are well-suited for depicting the conflicting feelings of romantic passion, guilt, and fear which are simultaneously experienced by the sixteen-year-old nun, in love for the first time.

In the [*xiang luo dai*] song which follows, the nun tells the audience of her parents' reasons for placing her in the monastery as a child, and of the severity and monotony of monastic life. The melodic structure of the [*xiang luo dai*] song starkly contrasts with the somewhat turbulent nature of the earlier [*jiang tou jin gui*] song, and changes the mood of the scene to one of melancholy and loneliness.

The [*xin shui ling*] strolling-meter passage sung by the helping chorus accompanies the young nun as she enters the temple garden. Despite its beauty, the physical environment of the garden cannot alter the nun's mood, and so she reenters the temple once again. Singing passages of one-character and two-flowing meter music, the nun has a humorous encounter with the arhats who line the walls of the temple hall. In her song, the nun reveals to them her reservations about monastic life and asks their aid in contacting the young man. The passage ends with the character expressing her complete disdain for religious life.

In contrast to the solemnity of the opening passage of *kunqiang* music which was constructed in 4/4 meter metrical structure, the second *kunqiang* song, [*feng chui he ye shai*] (《风吹荷叶煞》) is composed in 2/4 meter. This song serves to continue the nun's expressions of anger and frustration which began during the [*xin shui ling*] song passage. A new sense of determination and conviction, however, is displayed by the character. At the end of the *kunqiang* song, the nun announces her decision to leave the temple in pursuit of the young man.

The play concludes with a short [*shua hai er*] song composed in two-flowing meter. This *qupai*, which is part of the [*xin shui ling*] melodic family, is considered appropriate for "scenes expressing happiness" (Sichuan 1987, 51). This song aptly conveys the feelings of the Young Nun as she begins her descent from the mountain on which the monastery is located. Completing the metrical cycle is the *weisha* passage at the end of the scene. Constructed using melodic material from the [*xin shui ling*] melodic category, this *weisha* passage consists of four lines of strolling-meter music; lines one, two, and four are sung by the helping chorus,

while line three is spoken by the actor. This short *weisha* passage conveys a sense of aural and dramatic resolution to the audience

Single *Qupai* Organization Style

The third method of constructing theatre music in the *gaoqiang* musical system is the single *qupai* organization style (*dan zhi zhong yong* 单支重用 lit., "repeating-individual [*qupai*] "). In this style, a single, independent *qupai* is used to create all of the vocal music for an entire scene or one-act play.⁷ Common features can be found in the internal structures of *qupai* used in this organization style. In order to accommodate the varying amounts of song text material present in different dramatic scenes, single organization style *qupai* must possess lyric forms which do not place limits on the number of lyric lines in a song. *Qupai* which have regulated lyric forms therefore cannot be used. Since the majority of unregulated lyric form *qupai* are declamatory *qupai* which feature little melodic material, they also are excluded from use as single organization style *qupai*. All *qupai* which are used in this organization style feature a semi-regulated lyric form which can be adjusted to fit any amount of song text.

In addition to having a semi-regulated lyric form, all single organization style *qupai* possess a metrical structure which contains a number of different metrical types. Dramatic scenes in which the music is constructed using a single *qupai* set, a series of independent *qupai*, or a combination of the two, always feature a varied metrical structure. Similarly, scenes in which a single *qupai* is used throughout will also display such rhythmic diversity. Without such metrical variation, it may be difficult to reflect the various dramatic changes which occur in a scene.

Because changes in metrical structure also affect the nature of the melodic line of a song, a *qupai* which has several different metrical forms will also display more melodic variation than a *qupai* which has only one. Such melodic and rhythmic variation prevents the music of the scene from becoming monotonous for the listener.

An important characterizing feature of *gaoqiang* performance is the dual song vocalizations of the actor and helping chorus. For this reason, *qupai* having performer-assignment structures that either exclude the helping chorus, or contain little or no actor music, are not used as single *qupai* for a scene. The majority of such *qupai* would already be excluded from consideration, however, because they feature either a regulated lyric form, or are classified as a declamatory *qupai*.

Unlike *qupai* that have regulated lyric forms, *qupai* which are used in the single *qupai* organization style are not usually performed from beginning to end without interruption. Passages of dialogue or movement are frequently interspersed within the song structure which serve to divide the *qupai* into smaller vocal units.. In this way, several repetitions of the same metrical form may heard in performance.

Single organization style *qupai* are often referred to as "large *qupai* " (*da qupai* 大曲牌). This appellation is not only reflective of their expandable lyric forms, but also of the number and diversity of metrical types which they possess. The number of *qupai* which serve as the sole musical source for an entire scene or one-act is small, numbering less than fifteen in the entire repertoire. Among such *qupai* are [*duan zheng hao*], [*xin shui ling*], [*jiang tou gui*], and [*hong na ao*]. Coincidentally, these *qupai* are also the *qupai* which are usually regarded as being the representative *qupai* of the different melodic categories. Also used in the single *qupai*

organization style are [*xiang luo dai*], [*qing na ao*], and [*yi zhi hua*]. These *qupai* all contain melodic material in their helping chorus passages that places them as heads of individual subcategories within the larger melodic categories. Another feature which is common among single organization style *qupai* is that a number of them serve as the initial *qupai* of a set. *Qupai* located in other positions in the sets, however, never function in this manner.

The most popular single organization style *qupai* in the repertoire is [*hong na ao*]. As indicated earlier, the melodic category which is headed by [*hong na ao*] is the only melodic category in the musical system which does not contain any *qupai* sets. The few *qupai* which are in the [*hong na ao*] category are used either as i) independent *qupai* alongside other melodically related and unrelated independent *qupai*, ii) alongside melodically unrelated *qupai* sets, or iii) alone in the single *qupai* organization style.

When used to create the music for an entire scene, single organization style *qupai* are frequently performed by a single dramatic character as a solo piece, or as a duet between two characters. In the scene "Autumn River" ("Qiu jiang" 秋江), from the play *The Jade Hairpin*, the Buddhist nun Chen Miaochang has left the monastery in pursuit of the scholar Pan Bizheng who is on his way to the capital to take the imperial examinations. The *qupai* [*qing na ao*] is used throughout the scene to express Chen's feelings of worry and anticipation as she hurries up river on a boat after him. Although a second character, a boatman, is present in the scene, he does share in the singing of the [*qing na ao*] *qupai* song.

The single *qupai* organization style is also used to create the music for the scene "Seeing Off a Friend" ("Song xing" 送行), from the play *In*

the Shade of the Willows (*Liu yin ji* 柳荫记). Aside from the short *kunqiang* song passage sung by the young *sheng* character Liang Shanbo (梁山伯) upon his entrance, all of the vocal music in the scene is created using the [*jiang tou gui*] *qupai*. In this scene, a young woman named Zhu Yingtai (祝英台) disguises herself as a young man and attends classes in Hangzhou. While at school, Zhu falls in love with her classmate, Liang, who is unaware that his sworn-brother is a woman. As Liang escorts his classmate home to attend to her sick father, Zhu drop several hints to Liang about her true identity. Through shared [*jiang tou gui*] *qupai* song vocalizations, the audience witnesses Zhu's humorous, but futile, attempts at alerting her friend.

***Qupai* Organization in Multi-Scene Plays**

It has been shown that in the *gaoqiang* tradition theatre practitioners use a number of different methods to organize individual *qupai* songs for use in performance. When practitioners undertake this task, the construction of vocal music is carried out by scenes for multi-scene plays, or by individual one-act plays. Because musical organization is carried out in this manner, an analysis of the musical score of multi-scene play reveals that a number of different *qupai* organizational styles may be used. In the play *Burning Incense*, for example, the music for the scene "Striking the God" is constructed through the use of a single *qupai* set. The music for the subsequent scene "Checking Sentiments," in contrast, is created through the use of several independent *qupai*. In other words, Sichuan opera practitioners are not bound by convention to use a single organizational style throughout. They are instead free to choose the one which best expresses the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of the

dramatic characters present in each scene. No information can be found which indicates that one style of *qupai* organization is historically more correct or authentic than another. In plays taken from the traditional repertoire, as well as those from the contemporary, a mixture of *qupai* organizational styles can be seen.

Notes to Chapter IX

QUPAI PERFORMANCE APPLICATION AND ORGANIZATION

¹ The *qupai* [*ju hua xin*] is one of the few in the *gaoqiang* musical system whose *zhuanqiang* is referred to by a particular name. Called a "flowing-water melodic-phrase (*liushuiqiang* 流水腔), this identifying melodic feature takes its name from the fact that "like water, [there is] no opening [into which it] does not enter; permeating throughout [the song]" (Sichuan 1987, 182). This flowing-water *zhuanqiang* is not only found in [*ju hua xin*], but also in other [*suo suo gang*] melodic category *qupai* such as [*chu jiang yin*] and [*bu shi lu*]. As a result, these *qupai* are more tragic-sounding than other [*suo suo gang*] melodic category *qupai*.

² In the Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* and *kunqiang* musical systems, *qupai* sets are referred to as "*qupai tang*." (曲牌堂). In the opera form known as *kunqu*, however, *qupai* sets are referred to as "*qupai tao*" (曲牌套). This term is frequently translated into English as "song suite."

³ *Weisha* are sometimes referred to as "*shawei*" (煞尾), which is simply a reversal of the word order.

⁴ This practice is reminiscent of Yuan *zaju* where the leading character in each act sang all of the *qupai* in a set. For more information on Yuan *zaju* performance structure and practice, see William Dolby's *A History of Chinese Drama*, pp. 40-59.

5 The deletion of one or two *qupai* from such longer *qupai* sets as [*duan zheng hao*] appears to be a common practice in contemporary *gaoqiang* performance. A comparison of different versions of the same scene, however, reveals that different *qupai* can be omitted from the same *qupai* set. For this reason, it appears that the choice to delete a *qupai* is based on the personal preferences of the actor or stage director, rather than on any particular performance convention.

6 "Three-eyes meter" is the *kunqiang* equivalent to *gaoqiang* one-character meter. Unlike *gaoqiang* one-character meter, however, the *kunqiang* three-eyes meter metrical type is regular throughout in terms of its rhythmic structure.

7 In some scenes, particularly when a dramatic character enters the scene for the first time, a *kunqiang* song may also be heard.

CHAPTER X
CONCLUSION

China's *xiqu* tradition consists of hundreds of individual music drama forms. Uniting these forms into a single theatrical tradition is the general approach to theatre production which they share. A survey of forms reveals common dramatic material and play structure, the use of similar physical and aural performance techniques and physical staging practices, and a shared aesthetic value placed on beauty in performance. Primarily responsible for differentiating the forms from one another is the Chinese dialect used in performance, and the nature of a form's musical tradition. The visual spectacle of the *xiqu* stage created through the use of fantastic costuming and makeup and a stylized movement vocabulary, is dynamic and expressive. Despite this fact, it is in the aural nature of the dramatic presentation where native practitioners believe the essence of the tradition lies, and the individuality of its forms, manifested.

Not only does the nature of a *xiqu* form's aural performance structure serve to distinguish it from other members of the *xiqu* family, but it also functions as the stage performer's most important means of dramatic communication. It is primarily through passages of speech and song that the dramatic narrative is revealed to the audience, and insight into the minds of the stage characters, provided. The plays which are presented on the *xiqu* stage emphasize the communication of the characters' inner psyches, over the narrative exposition of a complex storyline. Due to this approach to play structure and content, the musical aspect of aural performance takes a dominant position over speech acts in the hierarchy of aural elements. In most plays in the civil repertoire, the majority of performance time is devoted to the revelation of the

characters' thoughts and emotions about their dramatic conditions through song vocalizations. Passages of monologue and dialogue serve primarily to establish dramatic situations which allow characters to express themselves through song. Given these conditions, an understanding of the nature of *xiqu* performance first requires knowledge of its musical systems, and the way in which they are manipulated by China's theatre practitioners to create opera performance.

Sichuan opera, like all *xiqu* forms, possesses a "standardized performance methodology" (*guifanhua de biaoyan fashi* 规范化的表演法式). Within each performance medium, specific techniques, practices, and conventions exist which must be followed by performers when building their dramatic presentations. Without utilization of this methodology, the aural and visual elements which characterize the theatre form will not be realized. Without the presence of these elements, Chinese theatregoers may not perceive the dramatic material presented onstage in the manner that the stage performers intend.

The techniques, practices, and conventions constituting the standardized performance methodology of Sichuan opera function as a dramatic language between the actor and the audience. Just as a common understanding of the syntax and vocabulary of French allows two non-native speakers to communicate with one another in that language, a shared knowledge of the elements constituting Sichuan opera performance practice allows stage performers to speak through physical and aural means to their audiences. Knowledge of this language, in turn, allows audiences to not only comprehend what is being communicated to them, but also to evaluate the skills of the communicator.

In performances of Sichuan opera which use the *gaoqiang* musical system, the melodic and rhythmic material contained within the musical system, the rules regarding the organization and application of this material, and the content of the song lyrics, form the musical language of *gaoqiang* performance. The opera songs created by theatre practitioners from this musical system are the Sichuan opera actor's most powerful means of communication in performance. The primary element responsible for structuring the *gaoqiang* dramatic language is the *qupai*, or "labelled-song."

On a very basic level, *gaoqiang qupai* can be thought of as templates for the creation of opera songs. Each *qupai* possesses a unique internal structure which governs the melodic and rhythmic elements of the song, its textual organization, and the arrangement of its vocalizing entities. The collective effect of these structural features results in each *qupai* possessing a uniquely different aural signature. The individuality of a *qupai*'s aural signature makes it then appropriate for use in a distinct dramatic context. When used in this context, the *qupai* song is thought to have the ability to affect the audience's perception of the dramatic presentation by ensuring that the dramatic material is received in its intended manner. *Qupai* songs relay information to the audience through both textual and musical means. By combining meaningful song texts with appropriate musical forms, Sichuan opera practitioners are provided with their most effective means of dramatic communication in *gaoqiang* performance.

Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* musical performance is unusual among *xiqu* forms for it lacks melodic accompaniment and use of secondary vocalizing body--the helping chorus. In each *gaoqiang* presentation, the actor, percussion orchestra, and helping chorus, collectively contribute to the

creation of the dramatic presentation from disparate physical locations on the stage, and through different creative media.

Sichuan opera, like all *xiqu* forms, is a theatre tradition which views the human actor as the primary communicator of the dramatic text. Despite the presence of the helping chorus in *gaoqiang* performance, the dominant position of the actor is left undisturbed. The helping chorus and percussion orchestra carry out functions which support and complement the work of the actor onstage, not replace it. The percussion orchestra provides a rhythmic framework for passages of speech, song, and movement, as well as dramatic articulations and emphasis when needed. The helping chorus provides services for the actor which in most other *xiqu* forms are carried out by either a melodic orchestra, or by the actors themselves. For example, the helping chorus establishes and maintains the appropriate musical key for each song. In other *xiqu* forms, the melodic orchestra's introductions to opera songs, and the internal musical connectives within them, serve this important function. Further, the helping chorus' singing of the song text also aids the Sichuan opera actor in a number of non-musical ways. The text vocalized by the helping chorus can provide information about the physical location of the dramatic scene, the emotional state of the characters, or even a critical evaluation of the dramatic action. In non-*gaoqiang* forms, the audience receives such information primarily through the song, speech, and movement acts carried out by the actors themselves.

The musical structure and performance style of *gaoqiang* songs helps to contrast the unique roles which the helping chorus and actor serve in performance. Helping chorus music is considerably more melismatic than actor music, and is subject to stricter melodic and

rhythmic controls. Actor music is more syllabic, and hence, considerably more influenced by the linguistic features of the song text than helping chorus music.

Counterbalancing this linguistic influence, however, is the melodic and rhythmic freedom present in actor music. This freedom allows stage performers to display their creative insights and interpretations during song acts. The melodic structure of *gaoqiang* actor music must always reflect the pitch and directional properties of the song text speech-tones in order for text-based communication to occur between the stage and audience. Despite this fact, Sichuan opera actors are free to manipulate the melodic line so that the ideas and motivations of their dramatic characters are effectively expressed, and their own vocal talents and artistry properly displayed. This manipulation, however, must always be in keeping with the nature of the particular *qupai*'s melodic structure.

During passages of actor music, percussion accompaniment is limited primarily to the *gushi*'s periodic articulations of the wooden-clapper. In opera songs constructed using the one-character meter metrical type, these clapper soundings do not occur at regular intervals. They occur only at the beginning of each measure of music. Because Sichuan opera actors have the power to alter the tempo of the song as they sing, the time elapsing between percussion articulations varies.

The percussion *taoda* patterns played during helping chorus passages produce a uniquely different style of percussion accompaniment than what is heard in actor music. Each *taoda* pattern has a prescribed rhythmic structure and performance tempo, as well as unique instrumentation. Because a variety of different percussion instruments--including gongs and cymbals--are required to perform most

taoda patterns, the sound density, timbre, and volume of helping chorus percussion accompaniment is quite distinct from the percussion music heard accompanying the actor. This feature, coupled with the more codified rhythmic structure and performance tempo of *taoda* patterns, further distinguishes *gaoqiang* helping chorus and actor music, and helps highlight the disparate roles which each entity serves in performance.

Whereas a solo voice is heard throughout passages of actor music, a call-and-response performance structure is present in helping chorus music. This structure is created through the alternating song vocalizations of a chorus leader and a general chorus during helping chorus passages. In most instances, the chorus leader sings the first portion of a lyric line (usually the first *dou* of the line) as a solo. The other chorus members join the chorus leader in singing the remaining part of the line (usually the remaining *dou* plus a cadential vocable-phrase). Most helping chorus lines within each *gaoqiang* song are performed in this way. The antiphonal performance structure of *gaoqiang* music can therefore be seen on two levels: between the actor and helping chorus, and within the helping chorus itself. This unique performance feature distinguishes *gaoqiang* vocal music, giving it an aural complexity and sophistication which aids the Sichuan opera artist in dramatic expression.

Each *gaoqiang qupai* has an internal structure which is unlike any other in the repertoire of the musical system. This individual nature is reflected in the fact that each *qupai* is referred to by a unique name, called a *paiming*. Despite the fact that a *qupai* contains certain immutable elements which distinguish it from other *qupai* and which must be present in all opera songs created from it, the *gaoqiang* musical system should not be perceived as being rigid and unreceptive to change.

Analysis of numerous opera songs reveals that alterations can be made to *qupai* structural elements which allow the song forms to adapt to fit different dramatic contexts. The degree and type of structural change allowed, however, varies among individual *qupai*. The amount of structural flexibility of a *qupai* is directly tied to the nature of its performer-assignment structure--the more lines of the *qupai* that are assigned to the helping chorus to sing, the more rigid the structural form of the *qupai* is.

The ability of *qupai* to be adapted to fit the needs of opera practitioners is not only present at the level of *qupai* structural form, but also in the area of *qupai* selection and organization for performance. Music for *gaoqiang* performance is organized either by units of a single one-act, or by individual scenes in a multi-scene play. In addition to having an associated dramatic application, all *qupai* in the repertoire can be classified as either a "set" *qupai*, an "independent" *qupai*, or both. Set *qupai* are those which belong to one of the identified *qupai* sets within the musical system. These sets range in size from four-to-ten *qupai* with each *qupai* occupying a predetermined position within the set. The majority of these *qupai* are never heard in performance outside the set structure. There are two types of independent *qupai* : those which are used alongside other independent *qupai* and/or a *qupai* set, and those which can function as the sole source of musical material for an entire scene or one-act. The latter type of independent *qupai* always feature a semi-regulated lyric form and a rhythmic structure containing a number of different metrical types.

Because *qupai* can be organized for performance in several different ways, opera practitioners have the ability to adapt *gaoqiang* vocal music to meet the demands of the dramatic work. From analysis of a number of

multi-scene and one-act plays, it appears that Sichuan opera practitioners take full advantage of this feature by employing a variety of different *qupai* organization styles within a single play. The vocal music in some scenes in the play may be constructed using only a single independent *qupai* throughout, in other scenes a single *qupai* set is found, while yet in others a combination of both independent *qupai* and a *qupai* set are present.

The use of musical systems in *xiqu* performance places strict limitations on the type and style of music which can be used in dramatic presentations. Through the presence of musical systems, however, a unique avenue of dramatic communication is created between *xiqu* actors and their audiences. The challenge facing *xiqu* practitioners is how to manipulate the elements of the musical system so that the creative insights and talents of stage artists are manifested through aural performance, while preserving those features which distinguish the form and the tradition as a whole. Through this study of the Sichuan opera *gaoqiang* musical system, this researcher has learned that within what appears to be a highly codified and structured performance tradition, a considerable amount of flexibility is present. Preserving and reproducing the salient features of the musical system through the observance of *qupai* structural form guarantees the presence of "Sichuan flavor" in each dramatic presentation. Great artists in the Sichuan opera tradition are those who can manifest this "flavor" in performance, while at the same time displaying their own individuality and skills as a stage performer.

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