

# Literatures in Bamboo Flute Teaching for Children in China

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## Abstracts

Bamboo flute is one of the oldest national instruments in China. In May 1986, 16 vertical flute bones were excavated in the early Neolithic site of East Jiahu Village, Wuyang County, Henan Province. They are completely consistent with the Chinese tone and can still be used to play the folk music "Little Cabbage", which has a history of more than 8,000 years according to the test. Bamboo flute is also called Dizi. It is a widely spread wind instrument in China, because it is mostly made of natural bamboo, so it is called bamboo flute. Bamboo flute is small and portable, but its expressive force is very rich, it can play a long, high melody, but also can express a vast, broad mood, can play a cheerful and gorgeous melody, can also express euphemistic sadness, can play a strong piercing notes, can also play a fine melody, since the 7th century. This article presented the literatures in bamboo flute teaching for children in China.

**Keywords:** Literatures in Bamboo Flute Teaching; Bamboo Flute; Children in China; China

## Introduction

The flute has been greatly improved, the membrane holes have been added, so that its expressive force has been greatly developed, and it also makes its timbre greatly different from similar instruments in other countries, so that it has a recognizable timbre. In the 10th century, with the rise of Song Ci and Yuan opera, bamboo flute became the main accompaniment instrument. Later, with the development of opera in the country, bamboo flute as the main accompaniment instrument of opera also became popular in the country, such as Kunqu Opera, Qin Opera, Huai Opera, duo opera, Sichuan Opera and other operas used bamboo flute as an accompaniment instrument. In the 20th century, especially after the founding of New China, in 1953, Feng Zicun played the two Musical Instruments "Flying a Kite" and "Happy Reunion" in the form of a solo performance. Since then, the bamboo flute has appeared on the stage in the form of a solo, completing the historical transformation of the bamboo flute, which has only been used for accompaniment and ensemble for thousands of years.

In recent years, with the continuous promotion of quality education in China, the state attaches more and more importance to the cultivation of artistic quality of children, and the evaluation of artistic quality has been incorporated into the comprehensive quality evaluation system of students and the education quality evaluation system of education modernization. Instrumental music teaching has gradually become the focus of educational researchers.

As far as children's bamboo flute teaching is concerned, children's bamboo flute teaching has wide popularization, large number of students and great influence. Bamboo flute with its convenient to carry, cheap price, beautiful tone and many other advantages attracted many children and parents to choose this musical instrument.

Bamboo flute, the name of a Han musical instrument, is a traditional Chinese instrument. The bamboo flute is a widely circulated blowing instrument in China. It is called "bamboo flute" or "flute" because it is made of natural bamboo material. The bamboo flute has a wide spread area and a wide variety. The most commonly used ones are Qu Di, Bang Di, and Ding Tune Di. There are also jade screen flutes, seven hole flutes, short flutes, and Shun flutes.

The bamboo flute is different from similar instruments from other countries and ethnic groups in that it has membrane holes, so its timbre has strong Chinese ethnic characteristics, and its pronunciation is emotional and graceful. Bamboo flute is an important melodic instrument in Chinese ethnic bands, often used for solo or ensemble performances

## Historical evolution

Dragon chanting, as the ancients referred to it as "the sound of cleansing", hence the original name of the flute was "di".

In ancient times, Chinese flutes have a long history, which can be traced back to the Neolithic. At that time, the ancestors lit bonfires, set up prey, ate and sang and danced around the captured prey, and used the tibia of birds to drill holes and blow them (using their sounds to lure prey and transmit signals), which gave birth to the oldest musical instrument unearthed in China - the bone flute.

In 1977, bone whistles and bone flutes were unearthed in Hemudu, Yuyao, Zhejiang, about 7000 years ago. In May 1986, 16 vertical bone flutes (made of bird bones) were excavated from the early Neolithic site in the east of Jiahu Village, Wuyang County, Henan Province. According to the measurement, it has a history of more than 8000 years.

The sound hole ranges from five holes to eight holes, most of which are seven hole flutes, and some of which have holes beside them, which are completely consistent with the tone of modern China. In 1987, seven hole Jiahu bone flutes (about 9000 years ago) were unearthed from Jiahu in Wuyang County, Henan Province, which can fully play the Hebei folk song pakchoi, which is the world's earliest musical instrument that can be played. The following picture shows the Jiahu Bone Flute

During the period of the Yellow Emperor, about 4000 years ago, a large amount of bamboo grew in the Yellow River basin. Ancestors began to choose bamboo as the material to make flutes. The Records of the Grand Historian recorded that "the Yellow Emperor sent Ling Lun to chop and chop bamboo in Kunshan to make flutes, and to play the sound of phoenixes." The use of bamboo as the material was a major progress in the production of flutes. Bamboo had better vibration than bone, and its pronunciation was clear and crisp; Both bamboo are easy to process and easy to obtain materials. During the Qin and Han Dynasties, there were seven hole bamboo flutes, and two flutes were invented. Cai Yong, Xun Xu, and Emperor Wu of Liang all made twelve rhythm flutes, that is, one flute is the same(Chu,2012:1).

In 1978, two bamboo flutes were unearthed from the Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng in Suixian County, Hubei Province, while the two flutes unearthed from the Han Tomb No. 3 in Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan Province, intersected with the sound hole plane at an angle of about 90 degrees, which is very similar to the hole blowing position of the flute from Marquis Yi Zeng's Tomb. In terms of time, the two are separated by several hundred years; In terms of space, Changsha in Hunan and Suixian in Hubei are hundreds of miles away, and the position of the blowing hole is almost the same, indicating the common form of playing the flute or chi horizontally from pre Qin to early Han. During the Warring States period, chi was one of the main melodic instruments played during offerings to gods or banquets, and the flute was also very popular. Qu Yuan's student Song Yu's "Di Fu" also mentioned the southern flute at that time, which was very similar to modern flutes (Zheng, 2012:1).

During the Han and Jin dynasties, the flute was called "DI" in ancient times. In the Han Dynasty, Xu Shen's "Shuowen Jiezi" recorded that "flute, seven holes, bamboo flute".

After the Han Dynasty, the horizontal flute played a very important role in the imperial and military drumming music. This fact reminds people that the development of Chinese flute has deviated from its early primitive form, becoming more reasonable and complete in terms of rhythm, form, and other aspects, and increasingly cooperating and coordinating with other instruments in the band. On the bricks of the Northern and Southern dynasties unearthed in Deng County, Henan Province, we can clearly see the historical image of the drum and percussion band playing in harmony. The direction and angle of holding the flute, as well as the posture of playing the flute with both hands, are exactly the same as in modern flute playing.

Before the Han Dynasty, flute often referred to vertical flute. Since the Qin and Han dynasties, flute has become the common name for both vertical and horizontal flutes, and has continued for a long time. The flute, also known as "horizontal flute", was developed during the reign of Emperor Wu of Han. It held a significant position in the Han Dynasty's drum and wind music. The two bamboo flutes unearthed from Han Tomb No. 3 in Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan belong to the horizontal blowing type of flute instruments.

In the Jin Dynasty, there was already a clarinet, which added a piece of wood to the blowing head to allow air to pass through the gaps and sound towards the edges of the two whistle holes.

During the Northern Dynasty, bamboo flutes were not only extremely common but also developed, with significant changes in shape, length, and thickness. In the Northern Zhou and Sui dynasties, the name "horizontal flute" began to emerge. In the late Sui Dynasty, ten hole flutes capable of playing chromatic scales emerged.

Tang and Song dynasties: During the Sui and Tang dynasties, both the "large horizontal blowing part" and the "small horizontal blowing part" of the drum music used horizontal flutes. Among the Sui and Tang "Yan music" genres for appreciation and entertainment, the horizontal flute is widely active in bands. The performance of the horizontal flute can also be seen in Dunhuang Sui Dynasty murals and Tang Jiyue music portraits. In other historical paintings, we can also find flute positions in two directions.

There have been records of famous flute performers in the Tang Dynasty, such as Li Mo, Sun Chuxiu, You Cheng'en, Yun Chaoxia, etc. Among them, Li Mo once studied as a Guizi musician from the Western Regions. Due to his outstanding flute performance, his skills rose to prominence. During the Kaiyuan period, he became known as the "best in the world" in his ability to play the flute.

Chen Bu's "Book of Music" Volume 148: "In the Tang Dynasty, the seven star flute of ancient times was as long as a chi, and its number was as abundant as the seven orifices. It was played horizontally, and there was a hole next to it that was made of sticky bamboo film, which was used to resonate and assist in the sound. Liu's works also..." Perhaps at least since the Tang Dynasty, the flute with Chinese film flute timbre characteristics has appeared. The membrane on the flute is one of the most unique symbols of Chinese flute.

Since the Tang Dynasty, there has been a difference between a large horizontal flute and a small horizontal flute. At the same time, the chi played vertically is called the xiao, while the chi played horizontally is called the flute. During the Tang Dynasty, Lu Cai made the "foot eight" and blew it vertically, which was introduced to Japan; In the Shōsōin, the ancient capital of Nara, there are four flutes made in the heyday of the Tang Dynasty. Among them, there are one tooth and one carved stone horizontal flute each, and two bamboo ones, each of which have different lengths but have 7 elliptical sound holes. Liu Geng was the first person to add a film to the seven star pipe flute, with a film covering the sound. Since the 7th century, the flute has been improved by adding membrane holes, which greatly improved its expressive power, and the playing technique has also developed to a relatively high level.

The Song Dynasty has a variety of flute systems, including forked hand flutes, dragon necked flutes, small horizontal flutes with eleven holes, large horizontal flutes with nine holes, and jade flutes with seven holes. With the rise of Song Ci and Yuan Qu, traditional Chinese opera flourished, and the flute became a accompaniment instrument for many types of operas. It can be divided into two types according to the different types of accompaniment: Bang flute and Qu flute. In bands of folk opera, the flute is also an indispensable instrument.

In modern times, in the 1960s, Zhao Songting invented the flute, which tied together 2 to 4 flutes of different tones, allowing the range to expand by more than three octaves. The music was rich in variety and easy to play.

From the newly born "Koudi" (also known as Yu's flute) in 1971 to the "Gu Shao" and "Gu Di" unearthed in Hemudu, Zhejiang in 1977, people were surprised to find such similarities between the two. However, this similarity has gone through more than 7000 years. The evolution and development of the flute in these 7000 years of history cannot help but astonish the world: Chinese bamboo flute art is so magnificent and diverse.

## **Literatures in Bamboo flute teaching for children**

In this section, the author reviewed relevant research on children's bamboo flute teaching, including master's, doctoral theses, academic journals, magazines, etc. By searching for the keyword "Children's Bamboo Flute", 10 relevant literatures can be found, including 1 master's thesis and 9 journals. The aim is to provide guidance for this paper through reading, analyzing, and researching relevant literature.

## **The Cultivation of Musical Sense in Children's Bamboo Flute Learning**

This article was published in the 9th issue of "Northern Music" in 2016. It points out that the bamboo flute is a very representative ethnic instrument in China, and it is not only a musical instrument but also a cultural inheritance of the nation. Nowadays, there is a trend in society for young people to learn bamboo flute, which also demonstrates the support of Chinese people for national art. Learning bamboo flute can cultivate children's musical sense and better inherit national culture. To express musical emotions well, it is necessary to

cultivate students' musical sense. The article ponders on how to correctly guide children to learn bamboo flute and cultivate students' musical sense in bamboo flute teaching, and puts forward some teaching suggestions, hoping to better teach children to learn bamboo flute, cultivate musical sense, and inherit ethnic music. The article starts with the current situation of children's bamboo flute education and the cultivation of musical sense, and then explains the methods of cultivating musical sense separately. It starts with five aspects: establishing the concept of musical sense, synchronizing skill practice with musical sense cultivation, cultivating rhythm and listening, blending music and emotions, and paying attention to regulating students' second creation. It concludes that musical sense cultivation cannot be completed in just a few days, It is not natural to go the farthest on the path of bamboo flute with innate talent. Cultivating a sense of music is a long-term and arduous process, which requires students to be able to endure loneliness, endure boredom, carry out various training seriously, and not be eager to achieve success. They should listen, watch, think, and practice more. Teachers should correctly guide students to cultivate their sense of music, comprehend music, apply various skills of bamboo flute performance, cultivate students' listening and playing abilities, and help them lay a solid foundation and go further on the path of music art (Lei, 2016:3).

### **The Problems and Countermeasures in Children's Bamboo Flute Learning**

This article was published in "Northern Music" and mentions that with the rapid development of Chinese ethnic music, ethnic instrumental music is increasingly receiving widespread attention from various sectors of society. As an important wind instrument among national instruments, bamboo flute is deeply loved by people, so there is an upsurge of children learning bamboo flute in society. This phenomenon undoubtedly plays a huge role in promoting the Chinese national music culture, revitalizing and disseminating the Chinese national instrumental music art, and promoting the development of Chinese bamboo flute performance art. However, for children, they will encounter many problems during the learning process, which requires guidance and solution from teachers. The paper will list and provide solutions to common problems in children's learning of bamboo flute, such as irregular mouth shape and solutions, irregular body posture and solutions, unstable flute holding and solutions, and loose hole pressing and solutions. Finally, the conclusion is drawn that due to the young age of children, they often feel at a loss when encountering problems or setbacks during the process of learning bamboo flute, and are not able to think of solutions through their own thinking. They often rely on teachers to help themselves solve problems, so as a bamboo flute teacher, it is important to fully recognize this. On the contrary, as students, young children must follow a planned and purposeful learning process under the guidance of their teachers, and avoid being impulsive or hasty.

### **The Teaching of Children's Flute**

This paper mentions that cultivating interest is the key to children's flute teaching, the basic principles of teaching flute learning, common problems and solutions in children's flute teaching, and each part of the content is further elaborated. In addition to the common problems in children's bamboo flute teaching mentioned in the third part, it is also mentioned that in the process of bamboo flute practice, students can experience the "fun" of flute learning and be exposed to some famous music, At the same time, actively participate in social

practice, cultivate the "interest" in learning bamboo flute, create opportunities for exercise, select "seedlings" well, lay a solid foundation, enable students to develop in a balanced manner in learning the "four skills" of bamboo flute, closely combine learning to play flute with learning music theory, learning to play flute with cultivating students' musical beauty, cultivate students' diligent, serious spirit and reflective habits, and teach according to people (Zheng, 2012:1).

### **The Cultivation of Musical Sense in Children's Bamboo Flute Learning**

This paper was published in the 21st issue of the magazine "Northern Music" in 2015. The paper mentions that music is an auditory art, and people need a sense of music as the foundation when expressing and listening to music. When people hear children playing a piece of emotional music, it will stimulate resonance at the spiritual level and meet people's aesthetic needs. It is a type of performance that strictly follows the score, but always feels lacking in the taste of music, feeling like "endorsing", even classic works are portrayed as very plain. Therefore, a good sense of music is an essential factor for performers and plays a decisive role in the entire performance. The paper mentions the importance of musical sense in children's bamboo flute performance, the reasons for the lack of musical sense in children's bamboo flute performance, and the specific methods for cultivating musical sense in children's bamboo flute performance. The specific methods take up a lot of space and can be divided into three points: the cultivation of musical sense should first focus on interest and skill, strengthen basic skill training, and cultivate musical sense by listening, watching, and thinking more. The cultivation of a sense of music is a long-term process. When learning bamboo flute, it is necessary to adhere to the principle of putting people first, strive to overcome the utilitarianism of being eager for success, start from children, respect their individual characteristics, respect the objective laws of their development, and integrate them over time. The cultivation of a sense of music is also a difficult process. To achieve a perfect and ideal music world, children need to study and practice diligently in various aspects, have strong interests, proficient skills, profound knowledge, and rich musical logical thinking (Xu, 2015:11).

### **Analysis of Children's Bamboo Flute Teaching -- Taking the Second Experimental Primary School in Xinzhou City as an Example**

This paper takes a school as an example to investigate and study the current situation of bamboo flute teaching in primary schools, focusing on analyzing the existing problems and proposing solutions, in order to improve the efficiency and quality of bamboo flute music teaching in primary schools, stimulate students' learning interest, and promote the widespread application of bamboo flute in teaching. It also aims to map the bamboo flute teaching in one school to other schools through analysis, To solve the same problem as other schools in bamboo flute teaching. The paper mentioned that there are many researches on children's bamboo flute teaching at the present stage, but there is still no research on children's bamboo flute teaching in Xinzhou. This paper takes the Second Experimental Primary School in Xinzhou City as an example to study the current teaching situation, problems in teaching, teaching methods and other aspects, so as to reduce the pressure on children to learn musical instruments, improve their enthusiasm, and make some modest contributions to the bamboo flute education in Xinzhou Primary School, And I hope to promote the teaching of bamboo

flute. The final conclusion is that bamboo flute can be seen everywhere in Chinese traditional music, and its long history of development also determines the unique position of bamboo flute in Chinese traditional national musical instruments. In recent years, there has been an increasing number of people who love bamboo flutes, and the level of social recognition has also increased. Although there are still some problems in the inheritance process, with the continuous summary and improvement of people, the music course of bamboo flutes can definitely be improved to be more sound. Contemporary bamboo flute teachers should spare no effort to promote the development of bamboo flute education. For the problems that exist in bamboo flute teaching, they should learn and explore with experienced predecessors, and think of truly practical methods in order to better promote the development of bamboo flute education (Shi & Wang, 2021:3).

### **The Teaching of Bamboo Flute for Children by Chu Qinglin**

This paper discusses the methods of teaching children's bamboo flute from three aspects: firstly, combining education with entertainment to cultivate learning interest; 2. Step by step, lay a solid foundation for learning; 3. Deep and easy to understand, flexible teaching methods. In the first part, the paper mentions that games are a natural instinct of children, so it is particularly important for children to learn from "joy" and practice in "fun". In the process of children's play, gradually cultivate children's sense of music. Interest is the best teacher, and children should experience the charm of music through various interesting forms to cultivate their interest. Moreover, it also gives several methods that can be used for reference to cultivate children's interests, such as Suzuki method. In the second part, the paper mentions that games are a natural instinct of children, so it is particularly important for children to learn from "joy" and practice in "fun". In the process of children's play, gradually cultivate children's sense of music. Interest is the best teacher, and children should experience the charm of music through various interesting forms to cultivate their interest. In this section, the author also emphasizes the importance of students, teachers, and parents in various aspects of children's bamboo flute teaching. In the process of children's bamboo flute teaching, children are the main body of learning, while teachers and parents play a leading role. Especially for parents, they are the best at understanding children's thoughts, activities, and emotions during learning activities. Parents should communicate frequently and promptly with teachers to solve any problems that arise. In the third part, the paper mentions that when children are learning bamboo flutes, teachers should explain in simple and profound terms and adopt flexible teaching methods. In the teaching process, children should be made aware that no matter which piece of music we play, we should not blindly ask them to imitate, but rather require them to carefully experience the emotional changes contained in the music, feel the vivid music image created by the composer, and then integrate their own inner feelings to reveal their true feelings, which can be called "performance". From the above three points, it can be concluded that developing children's intelligence and improving children's artistic quality are the common responsibility and goal of our teachers and parents. Learning bamboo flute and approaching music and art is a beneficial choice. Of course, in addition to professional learning, cultural accumulation and ideological and moral cultivation cannot be ignored. Teachers should not only guide children to learn the professional skills of bamboo flute, but also pay attention to their growth process, cultivate good qualities and artistic potential, and strive to become outstanding artistic talents in the future (Chu,2012:1).

### **The Teaching of Bamboo Flute for Children by Geng Tao**

This paper analyzes several common problems in children's bamboo flute teaching and provides corresponding solutions. Especially emphasized the importance of breath in bamboo flute performance. The paper mentions that as is well known, the core issue of playing bamboo flute is how to correctly grasp the use of breath, and the key to using breath well is whether the performer can proficiently grasp and use the control power of the lumbar and abdominal muscles. To learn to play bamboo flute, one should be able to correctly and effectively use the control power of the lumbar and abdominal muscles, so that the emitted breath can be large or small, slow or urgent. Children over 6 years old, after a certain period of learning, although they have a certain foundation, still do not have strong ability to control their lumbar and abdominal muscles, which is a common phenomenon in the process of children learning bamboo flute. The author gives two practical solutions to this problem, that is, Sit-up training and air blowing training. This effectively solves the problem of breathing in children's bamboo flute learning (Geng, 1998:23).

### **Reflections on Teaching Bamboo Flute for Children**

This paper reflects and analyzes the teaching of bamboo flute for children from three aspects: firstly, teaching with the goal of "interest-oriented cultivation" should emphasize vividness; secondly, teaching with a systematic approach should emphasize gradual progress; and thirdly, parents need to cooperate with teaching. The paper provides detailed research and discussion on the selection of teaching materials and repertoire for children's bamboo flute teaching, diversification of classroom demonstrations, scheduling, skill training, and parental cooperation. It is worth learning and learning from (Liu, 2011:11).

### **Teaching Practice of Bamboo Flute in the Second Classroom of Primary School**

A case study in a primary school in Zhangjiakou City by using the methods of literature review, investigation and participation observation, mainly discussing the specific teaching strategies of opening the second class of bamboo flute in primary schools, improving the existing problems in instrumental classroom teaching, and digging the significance of the second class of bamboo flute. Strive to provide a modest contribution to the development of the second class of bamboo flute in primary schools. This article is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is a survey of the current situation of the second class of bamboo flute. On the one hand, it explores the development and teaching of the second class of instrumental music in the main urban area of Zhangjiakou City, on the other hand, it uses the form of questionnaire to understand the learning situation of students in practical primary schools, and finally analyzes the survey to provide reference for subsequent practice; Chapter 2 is the key part of this article. Based on the issues identified in Chapter 1, the theoretical basis is the music curriculum standards for compulsory education and the basic methods of bamboo flute teaching. Based on the characteristics of students' cognitive development and existing performance levels, teaching objectives and content are established. Through continuous adjustment and improvement of teaching methods and methods, bamboo flute teaching practice with the goal of "good learning, music learning, and humanistic accumulation" is carried out, and the practical process is elaborated in detail; Chapter 3, Teaching Summary



Reflection and Suggestions. Through practical exploration in three stages: pre class preview, in class teaching, and post class review, the teaching is summarized and explored layer by layer; Collect and organize interviews, feedback, and evaluations between students and parents; Reflect on the practice, and finally propose teaching suggestions for setting up the second classroom of bamboo flute in primary schools (Cheng, 2021:1).

The paper concludes that the implementation of the second classroom of bamboo flute has expanded the school-based curriculum of music for practical schools. The application of various teaching methods mentioned above has effectively improved the lack of innovation in instrumental music teaching, providing students with a "good learning and music learning" bamboo flute second classroom. Students are more willing to participate in the classroom and have increased their understanding of traditional Chinese musical instruments in the process of learning bamboo flute, gradually cultivated the ability to actively learn and think, and through the subtle influence of traditional culture, enhanced students' humanistic accumulation.

## Conclusion

In the actual teaching process, there are many problems, such as: ignoring students' playing habits, ignoring basic skills training, blindly pursuing grade examination, ignoring comprehensive ability training, monotonous and outdated textbooks, single teaching mode, monotonous teaching methods, poor classroom environment, curriculum schedule, etc., which hinder the healthy development of children's bamboo flute teaching. Among them, the most common and serious problems are ignoring students' playing habits, neglecting basic skills training, not paying attention to the cultivation of comprehensive ability and too fast course schedule, which seriously restricts the healthy development of bamboo flute teaching for young people. This paper draws on the teaching experience and theoretical achievements of the vast number of bamboo flute teaching practitioners and researchers, and combines the experience summed up by my years of bamboo flute learning, playing and teaching practice. From the perspective of children's bamboo flute teachers, this paper analyzes the current situation of children's bamboo flute teaching. In view of these problems, it innovates a new teaching model, aiming at improving children's bamboo flute learning ability and invigorating the vitality of bamboo flute classroom. So as to promote the healthy development of children's bamboo flute teaching.

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