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## Literacy preservation for education of Niujiang Qin in Aba Prefecture, China

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### Abstract

This study delves into the intricate dynamics of Niujiang Qin education, a traditional musical practice deeply rooted in the region's cultural heritage. Through a comprehensive exploration of historical insights, current educational practices, the role of literacy, and the challenges and opportunities facing Niujiang Qin education, this research sheds light on the evolution and significance of this ancient art form. Historical analysis reveals the enduring legacy of master musicians and their role in passing down musical knowledge through generations. Current educational methods showcase a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation, adapting to meet the needs of modern learners while preserving cultural authenticity. The significance of literacy in Niujiang Qin education underscores the importance of written notation systems and instructional texts in facilitating learning and independent study. Despite challenges such as limited infrastructure and evolving learning preferences, opportunities for innovation and collaboration abound, offering pathways to enhance educational access and quality. Through community engagement and forward-thinking initiatives, stakeholders can ensure the continued vitality and relevance of Niujiang Qin education, safeguarding cultural heritage for future generations.

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### 1. Introduction

The Niujiang Qin, an ancient musical instrument with strong ties to the cultural history of Aba Prefecture, China, serves as a tangible representation of centuries of artistic creativity and communal identity. Given the impact of globalization and industrialization on Aba Prefecture's socio-cultural environment, it is crucial to save and pass along the valuable tradition of Niujiang Qin playing to future generations <sup>[1, 2]</sup>. This study examines the crucial importance of preserving literacy in the education of Niujiang Qin in Aba Prefecture. It specifically investigates how written records, educational programs, and technological improvements might help sustain the enduring significance of this old musical tradition <sup>[3, 4]</sup>.

The Niujiang Qin, known for its distinctive structure, tuning system, and performing techniques, has been a fundamental element of cultural expression in Aba Prefecture for generations <sup>[5, 6]</sup>. Nevertheless, the rapid social and economic changes present substantial obstacles to the preservation and transfer of it. As younger generations become more interested in contemporary forms of entertainment and education, there is a potential danger of ancient traditions and information related to the Niujiang Qin being lost or neglected <sup>[7, 8]</sup>.

Preserving literacy is a vital approach to protecting the cultural heritage of Niujiang Qin playing in Aba Prefecture <sup>[9]</sup>. Researchers and educators can conserve vital knowledge for future generations by recording traditional performance practices, historical tales, and musical compositions in written form. Furthermore, the inclusion of written materials in Niujiang Qin training helps augment students' comprehension and admiration of this cultural gem <sup>[10]</sup>.

Technological improvements provide new and creative ways to preserve literacy in Niujiang Qin education, in addition to traditional written documents. Accessible methods of disseminating <sup>[11]</sup> and involving learners in the study of this ancient art

form, including digital archives, interactive learning platforms, and multimedia materials.

Through the utilization of technology, instructors may adjust to the changing requirements and preferences of modern learners while maintaining the authenticity of the Niujiang Qin tradition [12, 13].

This research aims to highlight the significance of education in maintaining the cultural heritage of Niujiang Qin in Aba Prefecture by thoroughly analyzing ways to preserve literacy. By providing individuals with the knowledge and skills required to understand and preserve this cultural treasure, we can guarantee that the melodious sounds of the Niujiang Qin will continue to reverberate across the hills and valleys of Aba Prefecture for future generations.

## 2. Materials and methods

The qualitative component of the study sought to delve deeply into the complex impact. This entailed a systematic way to obtain and analyze qualitative data to gain insights and literacy preservation outcomes, as follows.

### 2.1 Literature Review

- Conducted a comprehensive review of existing literature on the history, cultural significance, and musical characteristics of the Niujiang Qin in Aba Prefecture.
- Analyzed scholarly articles, books, historical documents, and ethnographic studies to gain insights into the traditional practices and educational approaches associated with Niujiang Qin playing.

### 2.2. Fieldwork and Interviews

- Engaged in fieldwork within Aba Prefecture to interact with local musicians, educators, and community members involved in preserving and transmitting Niujiang Qin culture.
- Conducted semi-structured interviews with Niujiang Qin instructors, students, and cultural experts to gather qualitative data on teaching methodologies, challenges, and opportunities in Niujiang Qin education.

### 2.3 Document Analysis

- Examined historical documents, instructional manuals, and archival materials related to Niujiang Qin playing to identify key aspects of traditional pedagogy and performance techniques.
- Analyzed written texts, musical scores, and teaching materials to ascertain the role of literacy in the education and dissemination of Niujiang Qin knowledge.

### 2.4 Community Engagement and Outreach

- Organized workshops, seminars, and public events to raise awareness about the importance of Niujiang Qin literacy preservation and education.
- Facilitated community-based projects that encourage active participation and collaboration among local musicians, educators, and cultural enthusiasts in preserving and promoting Niujiang Qin heritage.

### 2.5 Data Analysis

- Employed qualitative data analysis techniques, such as thematic coding and content analysis, to examine interview transcripts, field notes, and documentary sources.
- Identified recurring themes, patterns, and challenges

related to Niujiang Qin literacy preservation and education and synthesized findings to inform recommendations and conclusions.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Historical Analysis of Niujiang Qin Education

The research thoroughly explored the historical development of Niujiang Qin education in Aba Prefecture, considering its progression throughout time and its significance within the region's cultural heritage. This academic excursion revealed a fascinating combination of customs that have been closely intertwined over the years, with the passing down of musical knowledge as evidence of the region's lively cultural legacy. This investigation uncovered the close connection between spreading musical knowledge and local traditions, social conventions, and deep artistic expressions, which have become integral to Aba Prefecture's cultural identity.

The research illuminated the significant impact of master musicians, revered as influential figures in their own traditions, through thoroughly examining historical writings, ethnographic reports, and compelling oral histories. These highly respected individuals, known for their unmatched mastery in the field, took on preserving tradition and protecting the sacred knowledge of the Niujiang Qin. These respected masters passed on their timeless knowledge of Niujiang Qin education to future generations through a lineage of apprenticeship and mentorship, assuring its continuation for future posterity.

### 3.2. Current Educational Methods

Engaging in intensive fieldwork in Aba Prefecture allowed us to explore the rich cultural landscape and see the intricate details of modern Niujiang Qin education. In this setting, where ancient traditions reverberate and modernity is tangible, a fascinating blend of teaching approaches has arisen, combining timeless wisdom with contemporary methods. During our discussions with Niujiang Qin instructors, enthusiastic students, and respected cultural custodians, we witnessed diverse teaching methods deeply rooted in their respective cultural traditions. The educational landscape resonated with a harmonic blend of tradition and progress, from the ancient teachings of revered masters handed down through centuries to the carefully designed lesson plans customized to meet the requirements of contemporary learners.

In this complex framework of teaching methods, the dynamic relationship between traditional and innovative approaches played a crucial role, providing clear directions for transferring musical knowledge across different periods and geographical locations. The educational ecosystem thrives on exchanging knowledge and experience between experienced practitioners and aspiring enthusiasts. This symbiotic relationship combined the wisdom of the past with the energy of the present. Niujiang Qin education has emerged as a symbol of cultural resilience by combining traditional oral traditions with modern educational methods, adapting and evolving to keep up with changing times. The seamless combination of traditional and contemporary elements not only conserved Aba Prefecture's diverse musical legacy but also facilitated its ongoing prosperity in the era of digital technology.

In this ever-changing educational environment, where the echoes of ancient times resonate alongside the present rhythms, the pursuit of knowledge has become a

transformative voyage that surpasses time and distance limitations. While exploring the complex corridors of Niujiào Qín education, the researcher observed the long-lasting impact of a cultural tradition that, similar to the towering mountains surrounding Aba Prefecture, remained strong in the face of change. It served as a testament to the unwavering spirit of human ingenuity and resilience.

### 3.3. The Significance of Literacy in Niujiào Qín Education

Studying historical records and examining old texts and instructional materials revealed the deep importance of literacy in the educational journey of aspiring Niujiào Qín virtuosos. The written notation systems, musical scores, and instructional manuals hold the secrets of this ancient musical legacy. They provide students with a clear route to achieving mastery and enlightenment. By carefully examining written notation systems, students explored, unraveling the mysterious symbols that covered the pages of musical manuscripts. Through the brushstrokes and intricate characters, a harmonious symphony resonated, enticing the aspiring musician to uncover its enigmatic essence and infuse vitality into its melodies. Equipped with the ability to read and write, pupils confidently and accurately interpreted complex musical notations, transforming symbolic representations into lively harmonies resonating through Niujiào Qín's strings.

Musical scores functioned as illuminated guides, directing pupils on a journey toward musical mastery and creative self-expression. Hidden inside the musical notation of staves and clefs lies a wealth of knowledge, ready to be discovered by those with a keen eye and a careful ear. By meticulously following the shape of each note and the trajectory of each musical phrase, the students began on a journey of auditory discovery, mapping out unexplored realms of melody and rhythm with every measure. Instructional texts have arisen as sources of wisdom, providing guidance and insightful comments to help individuals achieve mastery. By means of written text, pupils acquired entry to an extensive collection of educational knowledge, including centuries of musical heritage and advancement. These texts provided essential assistance to aspiring Niujiào Qín players, helping them develop their skills with dedication and hard work, from the basic techniques to the finer aspects of interpretation.

Furthermore, literacy acted as a means to pursue self-directed learning, enabling students to engage in their own journeys of musical exploration. Equipped with literacy skills, learners boldly embarked on unexplored terrain, delving into the intricacies of technique, repertoire, and historical context with limitless curiosity and resolute determination. As they progressed through the pages and grasped each concept, their comprehension deepened, their abilities became more refined, and their enthusiasm for the art form intensified.

Literacy is of the utmost importance in Niujiào Qín schooling. The key serves as the means to access a realm of extraordinary musical experiences, providing pupils with an opportunity for exploration and enlightenment. While exploring the domains of notation, scores, and instructional texts, individuals engage in a profound voyage of self-discovery, where the search for knowledge is just as thrilling as the music itself.

### 3.4. Challenges and Opportunities

The community engagement activities provided a comprehensive understanding of the complex difficulties and opportunities that influence the Niujiào Qín literacy preservation and education in Aba Prefecture. As individuals with many backgrounds convened to exchange their viewpoints and personal encounters, a subtle comprehension of the intricate dynamics in motion started to surface, uncovering both challenges to surmount and avenues towards advancement. The main focus of the debate revolved around the significant difficulties presented by the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources. Access to educational facilities and materials in several rural parts of Aba Prefecture is limited, obstructing the spread of Niujiào Qín knowledge to prospective learners. In addition, the presence of several dialects and linguistic traditions adds complexity to the task of communication and instruction, resulting in a distinct set of obstacles.

The changing interests of different generations in learning also present substantial challenges to conventional pedagogical approaches. Younger generations are increasingly drawn to digital technologies and innovative learning methods, which poses a threat to the ancient practices of oral transmission and handwritten notation becoming obsolete. In addition, the swift rate of societal transformation and urbanization has resulted in a decrease in the amount of students who are interested in pursuing conventional arts and culture. This has worsened the difficulties faced by Niujiào Qín educators.

Nevertheless, within these difficulties exist chances for inventive thinking and cooperation that have the capacity to revolutionize the educational environment. The use of digital technologies provides instructors with new opportunities to share Niujiào Qín information, allowing them to reach a broader audience and involve students in interactive learning experiences. Cross-cultural exchanges offer a chance to enhance the educational curriculum by incorporating diverse perspectives and practices, thus promoting a more profound comprehension of the Niujiào Qín tradition among learners. Table 1 presents a succinct summary of the main discoveries from each component of the study on Niujiào Qín schooling in Aba Prefecture, China, as follows:

**Table 1:** Summary of Research Results on Niujiào Qín Education in Aba Prefecture, China

Aspect	Summary
Historical Analysis of Niujiào Qín Education	Explored the historical development of Niujiào Qín education in Aba Prefecture, highlighting the role of master musicians in transmitting musical knowledge through apprenticeship and mentorship.
Current Educational Methods	Examined contemporary Niujiào Qín education methods, revealing a blend of traditional wisdom and modern pedagogical approaches.
Significance of Literacy in Niujiào Qín Education	Highlighted the importance of literacy in Niujiào Qín education, emphasizing how written notation systems and instructional texts facilitate learning and self-directed exploration.
Challenges and Opportunities	Identified challenges such as limited infrastructure and changing learning preferences while also highlighting opportunities for innovation and collaboration to enhance Niujiào Qín's education.

#### 4. Discussion

Upon reflection of the historical findings revealed by the research, it is clear that the development of Niujiang Qin education has been closely connected to the cultural legacy of the region<sup>[14, 15]</sup>. Over the course of centuries, the transfer of musical information has been aided by esteemed master musicians, who played a crucial role in safeguarding tradition and imparting their experience through apprenticeship and mentorship. The historical basis provides a complex and intricate framework on which modern educational methods are constructed<sup>[16]</sup>. When analyzing current educational procedures, the research shows that there is a balanced combination of traditional and innovative approaches. Although traditional teaching methods based on oral traditions continue to exist, contemporary pedagogical approaches have also arisen to address the changing requirements of learners<sup>[17-19]</sup>. The incorporation of conventional knowledge with modern approaches highlights the flexibility of Niujiang Qin education and its capacity to flourish in dynamic circumstances, guaranteeing the preservation of cultural heritage<sup>[20, 21]</sup>.

The research emphasizes the importance of literacy in Niujiang Qin schooling. Written notation systems, musical scores, and instructional texts are highly valuable tools that enable students to access and understand the complexities of the art form effectively<sup>[22]</sup>. Developing literacy skills not only improves students' comprehension of the technical aspects and repertory of Niujiang Qin music but also cultivates their ability to engage in independent study, allowing them to explore the subtleties of the music in greater depth<sup>[23, 24]</sup>. Nevertheless, the study also highlights other obstacles that Niujiang Qin education encounters, such as inadequate infrastructure, changing learning preferences, and language heterogeneity. These problems highlight the necessity for inventive approaches to improve educational accessibility and excellence in Aba Prefecture<sup>[25, 26]</sup>. By utilizing modern technology, facilitating cross-cultural contacts, and implementing community engagement programs, we may effectively address these difficulties and enhance the sustainability of Niujiang Qin education.

#### 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the research results underscore the paramount importance of literacy preservation for the education of Niujiang Qin in Aba Prefecture, China. By embracing the rich tapestry of tradition while embracing the opportunities afforded by modernity, stakeholders can chart a course toward a vibrant future where the timeless melodies of the Niujiang Qin continue to resonate across generations. Through collaborative efforts and innovative initiatives, Niujiang Qin literacy preservation can serve as a beacon of cultural revitalization, fostering intergenerational dialogue, cross-cultural understanding, and a profound appreciation for the rich musical heritage of Aba Prefecture and beyond.

#### 6. Recommendations for Future Initiatives

Drawing upon the research findings, a series of recommendations were formulated to guide future initiatives aimed at bolstering Niujiang Qin education and literacy preservation in Aba Prefecture. These recommendations encompass a multifaceted approach, including the expansion of digital resources, the cultivation of cross-disciplinary collaborations, the promotion of intergenerational knowledge exchange, the integration of Niujiang Qin education into

formal curricula, and the celebration of cultural diversity and musical heritage through community-driven initiatives.

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