



DR. TONG KIN WOON GIVING A LECTURE ON THE GU QIN, 6 OCTOBER 2014

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

For those who missed out on the first of Dr. Tong's 3-part lecture series, "Spirituality and Musicality in the Chinese Scholar's Gu Qin," here are a few highlights:

- Instruments that are generally viewed as quintessentially Chinese, such as the erhu and pipa, actually have their roots in a foreign influence (e.g. Middle Eastern). The gu qin, on the other hand is, as far as historical research has shown, of a Chinese origin.
- The gu qin embodies the Confucius sentiments on art: simple, but requiring a high level of mastery to properly capture its nuances and possibilities. Calligraphy, an art that requires only brush, ink and paper; Wei Qi, a game with only black and white pieces, but deemed harder than Xiang Qi (Chinese chess) with its many different pieces; and gu qin, an instrument with only 7 strings--all of these art forms have a simplicity which belies the amount of variation found therein in their creative scope, and the years of practice required before reaching a level of mastery.
- The shape and make of the gu qin are all in consideration of Chinese beliefs about the order of nature. To name a few:
  - 天圓地方 (Chinese saying that heavens are round, earth is square)--the surface board is round to represent the sky, and the bottom board flat to represent the earth.
  - 13 *hui* (dots to guide positioning of fingers) represent the 12 months of the year, with the 13th one representing the leap month of the lunar year
  - standard length of a gu qin is 3 *chi* 6 *cun* 5 *fen*, representing the 365 days in the year.
  - the 2 cavities on the bottom board are named dragon pond 龍池 and phoenix pool 鳳沼, after the 2 most powerful creatures in Chinese mythology.
- The connection of the gu qin and nature was such, that the Confucian scholar believed in the gu qin's power to help them form a relationship with heaven and earth, connecting humankind, in the middle, with the above and below. Thus, to the Chinese scholar, the ideal environment to play the gu qin was in nature.

## DEAR FRIENDS,

We hope you had a wonderful October! Once again, it is our opportunity to give you an update of all that has been happening here at CCSC:

- **Henan Archaeological Project**

Preliminary and aerial surveying of the archaeological site took place in mid-October, and the Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology has now begin the process of official site investigation. CCSC will have the opportunity to visit the site again in December, to be updated on the progress.

- **October Lecture**

Dr. Tong Kin Woon, renowned ethnomusicologist and scholar of the gu qin, gave a captivating lecture on October 6. This was the first part of a 3-part talk series, "Spirituality and Musicality in the Chinese Scholar's Gu Qin." He brought several gu qin to accompany his lecture, including one from the Song Dynasty. Dr. Tong also took the time to display his masterful playing of the gu qin. We look forward to the remaining 2 parts of his lecture series! The second part (given in Chinese) will be held on December 18, 2014.

Also, we've received some great support in the past month, and we want to thank you for joining us in our vision to contribute something to the study and promotion of Chinese culture!

## CHINA ARCHAEOLOGY IN SNAPSHOTS



1. 18 October: Aerial photography of the site and its surrounding areas.
2. 14 October: Pottery shards unearthed from a preliminary site investigation at the Henan site that CCSC is helping to sponsor.
3. 18 October: Aerial surveying to create a topographic map of the archaeological site and its surrounding areas. This will aid in the identification of physical features that may reveal archaeological information, such as the location of tomb mounds, or ancient city walls.



### "Spirituality and Musicality in the Chinese Scholar's Gu Qin"

A 3-part talk series (Chinese) by  
Dr. Tong Kin-Woon, PhD.

### Part 2 The Evolution of Technique & Melody of the Gu Qin through the Dynasties

Thursday, December 18, 2014

7:00-8:30pm

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Locus Interactive Ltd.- for donating their time and resources in creating and building our new website . We are particularly grateful to Alice Ng for overseeing the process.

Beau Lefler- for applying his experience in providing feedback and resources.

Paul Hastings LP- with special thanks to Catherine Tsang and May Lun, for their excellent pro bono legal support in the organization and structuring of CCSC.

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