Musical and Lyrical Multiplicity of *Hua’er* Flower Songs

D.M.A. Document

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Mo Li, M.M.

School of Music

The Ohio State University

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D.M.A. Committee:

John Robin Rice, Advisor

Mark A. Bender

David Clampitt

Joseph Duchi
ABSTRACT

China is known as a nation with a strong tradition of poetry and folksongs. A style of folksong in Northwestern China, known as hua’er, is found among eight different ethnic groups and has hundreds of distinct melodies. Drawing on major Chinese studies of the genre, this paper examines poetic compositional techniques and musical styles of representative local traditions of hua’er. Aspects of lyrical and musical structure, content, and performance contexts are reviewed and synthesized, resulting in a unique examination of Chinese folksong research since 1949 on a major regional, multi-ethnic song form.
For my family members, especially my parents Mingjiang Li 李明江 and Shuwei Mo 莫淑为, who continue to raise, teach, support, inspire, and love me in the best way they can.
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VITA

Born December 18, 1979………………Jilin City, Jilin Province, China

1996-1999……………………………The Affiliated Middle School of The China Conservatory of Music

1999-2004…………………………...B.A. The China Conservatory of Music

2005-2008…………………………...M.M. Brigham Young University

2008-2010…………………………….The Singing Health Specialization Certificate, The Ohio State University

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Vocal Performance
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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW OF CHINESE FOLKSONGS

According to many Chinese scholars, Chinese folksongs have been created by the common laboring people to illuminate their ways of life, express their feelings of love and affection, as well as to illustrate their deepest longings (Zhou 1993: 1). Developed and polished through generations of oral tradition, these songs have been interpreted as being the product of the collective consciousness of the folk. Chinese folksongs carry a lengthy cultural history with wide-ranging social functions. They are a unique combination of vivid imagery, scrutable lyrics, and an understated musical structure. In addition, they exhibit distinct local ethnic characteristics. By utilizing the art of improvisation in three distinct processes, namely, production, performance, and circulation, they have been developed over many generations (Zhou 1993: 1).

As China has a vast expanse of land, a long cultural history, and a great variety of cultures and geography, the amount of Chinese folksongs is both incredibly large and varied. According to the Chinese folksong collection project—the Grand Compendium of Chinese Folksongs (Zhongguo minjian gequ jicheng 中国民间歌曲集成), initiated in the end of the 1970s, there have been around 400,000 Chinese folksongs collected so far (He 2008: 109). However, because of the loss of folksongs during the social and dynastic
changes over thousands of years of Chinese history, the number of folksongs discovered in the Chinese folksong collection project is only a small portion of the Chinese folksong tradition, which for centuries has been a rich cultural resource for the Chinese people.

OVERVIEW OF FLOWER SONGS

One of the most characteristic and culturally-rich folksong forms in China is known as flower songs (hua'er 花儿), a folk song genre that is popular in the Northwest. One can hear it sung by farmers, porters, shepherds and raft drivers, as well as those inhabiting the mountains, wilderness and fields in Northwest China. Hua'er attracts the attention of people in several provinces with its unique sounds: sonorous while melodious, emotionally-deep and sincere, sometimes bleak while other times delightful, exquisite while unconstrained, etc. The lyrics from a hua'er song quoted repeatedly by hua'er scholars best indicate the local people’s view toward these songs:

花儿本是心里话，
不唱时由不得个家；
刀刀拿来了头割下，
不死时就这个唱法。²

Hua’er songs are the innermost thoughts and feelings,
It would be beyond my control not to sing these songs;

¹ To avoid the loss of meaning in the Chinese-English translating process, the original Chinese name of flower songs, hua'er, is used hereafter (Lowry 2011: 93-99). Other scholars have translated the term hua'er in other ways, such as “courtship songs” (Du 1998: 70).

² Lyrics of a Hezhou type of hua'er song from Xibei hua'er 西北花儿 (Northwest Hua'er), compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民 and published in 1984.
Take a knife and cut off the head,
I will keep singing like this if I do not die.³

As is stated in the lyrics above, the nature of hua’er is to communicate and express the deepest, most heartfelt emotions of the people of Northwest China.

DEFINITION

Since the first official research study of hua’er in contemporary China by Yuan Fuli (袁复礼) in 1925, many Chinese and Western scholars have come up with their own definitions of the term hua’er. In my attempt to make a more comprehensive definition of hua’er, several factors and criteria should be considered: 1) What musical genre do these songs belong to? 2) When did these songs originate? 3) In which geographic regions are these songs sung? 4) What is the general content of these songs? 5) What language(s) are these songs sung in? 6) Who sings these songs? 7) What are the performance contexts of hua’er? 8) In what forms are these songs performed? 9) What musical and lyrical characteristics distinguish these songs from other genres of Chinese folksongs? 10) What performance formula does hua’er have?

With the above considerations in mind, I define hua’er as a popular type of love song in the folksong style of Northwest China that originated in the Ming Dynasty (roughly around 1470 A.D.). Literally meaning “flowers (implying beautiful beloved females),” it is also called yequ 野曲 (wild tune), shanqu 山曲 (mountain tune),

³ Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Chinese texts and song lyrics are my own.
dashange 大山歌 (great mountain song), and shaonian 少年 (youth) and so on. Passed on orally with occasional instrumental accompaniment, hua’er is an effective blend of musical and linguistic artistry, rich in metaphors, other rhetorical devices and traditional Chinese pentatonic scales. Sung primarily in dialects of Mandarin Chinese spoken in Northwest China and in solo or antiphonal forms, hua’er features lyrical and musical improvisations, combined with fixed melodies and textual phrases. It is a folksong genre normally considered a kind of mountain song\(^4\) (shan’ge 山歌). The content of hua’er consists of love themes, historical stories, and comments and descriptions of social events. Hua’er is widely popular in Gansu Province, Qinghai Province, the central Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Western Shaanxi Province, Northeastern Tibet, Northern Sichuan Province, and the Northeastern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The songs are sung in many different ethnic groups, including Han, Hui, Dongxiang (Saerte, Tunghsiang, Santa, Suonapa), Sala (Salar), Baoan (Bonan, Paoan), Tu (Monguor), Yugu (Yogor), and Tibetans (Feng and Stuart 1994: 212).

\(^4\) A mountain song (shan’ge) is a type of Chinese folksong. Mountain songs are generally defined as improvised songs in free rhythm which are sung loudly during work outdoors (Schimmelpenninck 1997: 18). It contains many subcategories of folksongs in different regions of China. This does not necessarily mean that these songs are sung in the mountains, but rather, refers to the fact that these songs are sung outdoors, usually in the wilderness or outside of the city. The main features of mountain songs are improvised lyrics, sonorous vocals, a relatively flexible tempo, and emotional expression. Most mountain songs deal with the theme of love. In general, the song genre names have become synonyms for “love songs” among the local people who live in the region where these songs circulate widely.
ORIGIN

As there were no official studies of hua’er study in ancient China, finding the origin of this Chinese folk art form is extremely difficult. Considering all of the efforts made by Chinese hua’er scholars during the periods of the Republic of China (1912-1949) and the People’s Republic of China (1949-Present), one of the most important findings on hua’er’s origin is that hua’er became known no later than the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912 A.D.). The conclusion was reached by lines in the following poem:

我忆临洮好，
灵纵足胜游。
石船藏水面，
玉井泻峰头。
多雨山皆润，
长丰岁不愁。
花儿饶比兴，
番女亦风流。

I recall the wonderful Lintao County,
It is a tour that delights the soul and the body.
Stone slabs boat anchors on the water,
Fengwo Temple is located at the bottom of Yujing Peak.
Mountains are covered green in the frequent rain,
There is no worry of the harvest.
Hua’er songs are rich in metaphors,
The singing Tibetan women look charming.

Among the most important sources are Zhang (1940), Xi (1989), Wei (2005), and Wu (2008).

A poem by Wu Zhen 吳鎮 (1721-1797) who was a poet in Qing Dynasty. This is the number 9 poem in his poetry, entitled “I Recall the Wonderful Lintao County” (Woyi lintao hao 我忆临洮好), cited in article “Hua’er” suyuan 花儿溯源 (Tracing to the Source of Hua’er) (Ke 1981: 60).
The poet specifically mentioned hua’er in this poem. Two other factors also prove that the hua’er mentioned in the poem is the same folksong genre as the contemporary hua’er. First, yujing 玉井 refers to the fengwosi 蜂窝寺 (Fengwo Temple) on yujingfeng 玉井峰 (Yujing Peak) in yujingxiang 玉井乡 (Yujing Village), lintaoxian 临洮县 (Lintao County), Gansu Province (Wang and Ding 2002: 81). Lintao County is the center where one type of hua’er (the Lianhua Mountain hua’er) is widely popular even today. Second, the rhetorical devices, namely, the metaphors and evocation commonly seen in hua’er, which are used in the poem, perfectly reflect the rhetorical characteristics of contemporary hua’er as well. Therefore, we can infer that hua’er dates back at least to the early Qing Dynasty.

Hua’er scholars have come to numerous conclusions regarding the date of the origin of hua’er, including the Zhou Dynasty Theory, Tang Dynasty Theory, Song Dynasty Theory, Yuan Dynasty Theory, etc. (Wu 2008: 9-60). Although most of these theories provide substantive evidence relating to population, immigration, history, humanity, language and music, there is no definitive evidence which proves the specific time in which hua’er originated. For example:

菜籽花儿黄似金，
飞来了探花的蜜蜂；
你身上得下的相思病，
十三省没请上医生。^7

The flowers of vegetable seeds look golden,
They attract honeybees;

You are lovesick,
There is not a doctor in the nation who could heal it.

松树林里虎丢盹，
看见尕妹担的桶，
人品压了十三省。⁸

The tiger is dozing off in the pine forest,
I saw the beloved little sister⁹ carrying barrels,
Her moral quality is the most excellent in the nation.

According to the hua’er scholar Wu Yulin 武宇林, regionalism started in ten provinces in Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 A.D.), then increased to 11, and, during the era of Emperor Zhizheng 至正 (1341-1367 A.D.), expanded to 13. When Yuan Dynasty ended, regionalism continued during Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.) (Wu Yulin 2008: 58).

Because of the word shisansheng 十三省 (meaning thirteen provinces, i.e., the whole nation) mentioned in the lyrics, some hua’er scholars believed that hua’er songs probably originated in Yuan Dynasty. Similar reasoning also exists in theories related to population, history and humanity. However, in my opinion, the fact that a certain term was used in hua’er songs does not necessarily signify that hua’er originated in the same time period in which that term was created or used widely. There is no definitive correlation between these two elements. During the improvisation of hua’er singing, it is possible for hua’er singers to quote words that were commonly used before, but have

⁸ A hua’er song text from Xibei hua’erxue 西北花儿学 (Study of Northwest Chinese Hua’er Songs). There are three lines in lyrics. It is a typical Taomin type of hua’er song 洮岷花儿 (Xi 1989: 239).

⁹尕妹 is a dialect term from Northwest China. It literally means “little sister.” The extended meaning is “the beloved little sister.”
since become antiquated. The fact that some words in *hua’er* lyrics carry a certain historical significance is only a reflection of the richness of *hua’er* culture. In my opinion, to ensure the accuracy of the date of the origin of *hua’er*, only the printed record should be utilized. According to *A Well-rounded Argument of the Hua’er Songs*, published in 1987 by *hua’er* scholar Zhao Zongfu 赵宗福, so far, the earliest document regarding *hua’er* origin in print is the following poem written by the poet Gao Hong 高洪 during the Reign of Wanli (1573-1619 A.D.) in late Ming Dynasty (Dong 2006: 42):

> 青柳垂丝夹野塘,  
> 农夫村女锄田忙;  
> 轻鞭一挥芳径去,  
> 漫闻花儿断续长。10

Green willow branches line up around the wild pond,  
Male and female farmers are busy hoeing the fields;  
I Whip the horse and pass the fields with flowers,  
Continuing to hear snippets of the *hua’er* songs as I ride off.

After studying *Hezhouzhi* 河州志 (Hezhou Records), Wei Quanming 魏泉鸣 concluded that Gao Hong composed the poem, entitled “Song of Travel in Gushan Town” (*Gushan xingyin* 古鄯行吟) while he was teaching Confucianism in Hezhou (河州) during Emperor Xianzong 宪宗 (1447-1487 A.D.), not during the Reign of Wanli (1573-1619 A.D.). Gao Hong composed the poem in 1470 A.D., which was the sixth year

10 A poem by Gao Hong 高洪, who was a poet during the Ming Dynasty. The above poem, entitled “Song of Travel in Gushan Town” (*Gushan xingyin* 古鄯行吟), is the second poem Gao Hong wrote with this title, cited in article *Hua’er yanjiu zhuiyan* 花儿研究赘言 (Extra Words on *Hua’er* Research) (Dong 2006: 42).
of the Reign of Chenghua\textsuperscript{11} (1465-1487 A.D.) (Wei 2006: 6). As in the poem entitled “I Recall the Wonderful Lintao County” (\textit{Woyi lintao hao} 我忆临洮好), composed by the poet, Wu Zhen 吴镇, in the Qing Dynasty, the word \textit{hua’er} was deliberately used in Gao Hong’s poem as well. The fact that \textit{hua’er} circulated widely in the Hezhou area is reflected in his poem. The scene depicted in the poem matches the tradition of people singing \textit{hua’er} in the fields while working. The location mentioned in the title of the poem, Gushan 古鄯, refers to the Gushan Town in Minhe xian 民和县 (Minhe County) in Qinghai Province, which is a place where \textit{hua’er} is quite popular today (Dong 2006: 42). Based on the above information, we can conclude that \textit{hua’er} originated at least as early as Ming Dynasty and thus, has a history of at least 500 years.

\textbf{HUA’ER AND SHAONIAN}

After extensive research, many \textit{hua’er} scholars have come to the conclusion that, as a type of Northwest Chinese folksong, \textit{hua’er} is also called shaonian 少年 (the youth) (Min 1981, Yang 1994, Li 1983, Li 1963, Qi 2006, Wu 2008). The reason for this is simply that young females are commonly called \textit{hua’er} 花儿 (the flower), while males are sometimes called \textit{shaonian} in \textit{hua’er}. Most \textit{hua’er} songs are love songs, with the two main elements being females (\textit{hua’er}) and males (\textit{shaonian}). As the term \textit{hua’er}, which represents females, is the universally accepted name of this type of folksong, it is only fitting that the term, \textit{shaonian}, would do the same.

\textsuperscript{11}Chenghua 成化 is the title of Emperor Xianzhong’s reign.
Notwithstanding, because of their own unique lyrical and musical content, musical characteristics, syntax, appellation tradition, geographical distinction, ethical discrepancy, and performing and singing context and formula differences, some hua’er scholars concluded that hua’er and shaonian are two completely different concepts and should not be considered as the same. They insisted that mountain songs circulating along the Taohe River and the Minshan Mountains, namely Taomin diqu (Taomin Area) in Gansu Province, are exclusively called hua’er. On the other hand, mountain songs circulating in Hehuang area are only called shaonian (Wang and Ding 2002: 81, Du 1983: 72, Zhu 1982: 67-73). In his article, Zhu Gang explained that mountain songs are traditionally called shaonian in Hehuang area. According to the fieldwork he conducted, local people in Hehuang area have always referred to mountain songs as shaonian and never as hua’er. People call singing mountain songs man shaonian (singing shaonian) but not man hua’er (singing hua’er) (Zhu 1982: 85-88).

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12 Hehuang 河湟 and Hezhou 河州 are two geographical names that are commonly seen in hua’er studies. If not used carefully, it is easy to cause confusion. Hezhou as an area name was used in ancient China. It generally includes areas such as Linxia 临夏, Dongxiang 东乡, Jishishan 积石山, Hezheng 和政, Guanghe 广河, Kangle 康乐, Yongqing 永靖, Lintao 临洮, Weiyan 渭源, Lintan 临潭, Xiahe 夏河 in Gansu Province and Tongren 同仁, Xunhua 循化, Minhe 民和, Hualong 化隆, Ledu 乐都, and many other areas in Qinghai Province. Geographically, Hehuang area only includes the area where Yellow River and Huangshui River join each other. It generally includes Huangyuan 湟源, Huangzhong 湟中, Xining 西宁, Xunhua 循化, Minhe 民和, Hualong 化隆, Ledu 乐都 in Qinghai Province and Lanzhou City 兰州市 and Xidajiachuan 西达家川 area in Gansu Province. It does not include other areas included in Hezhou. Since the same type of hua’er not only circulates in Hehuang area but also in Hezhou area, it is more accurate to call this type of hua’er the Hezhou type of hua’er, instead of the Hehuang type of hua’er.
In my opinion, *hua’er* can also be called *shaonian*. The two terms are interchangeable. Referring to *shaonian* as a different type of mountain song from *hua’er* is questionable for several reasons. First, in the poem entitled “Song of Travel in Gushan Town” (*Gushan xingyin 古鄯行吟*), by the poet Gao Hong in Ming Dynasty, *hua’er*, as a term, was directly mentioned. The poet was working in Hezhou area while he composed the poem and the content of the poem reflects what he experienced in Hezhou area. Hezhou area was the place where *hua’er* was first created and circulated. Geographically speaking, it includes Hehuang area (Guo, 2007: 5). As it is a printed record of the poet’s firsthand experience, we can conclude that there was a tradition of local people in Hezhou area referring to folksongs sung in fields as *hua’er*. Thus, in contrast to Zhu’s conclusion, folksongs circulated in the Hezhou area were not only called *shaonian*, but were also called *hua’er*. Second, the findings of certain *hua’er* scholars from Linxia area (part of Hezhou area) were the opposite of those found in the fieldwork of Zhu Gang. They argued that, from what they were told by the older generation of locals, mountain songs are not only called *shaonian* but also *hua’er* (Xi 1989: 23). It is hard to say which finding is correct because both findings were based on the information directly obtained from the local people. Third, from the content of the lyrics we can infer that *hua’er*, as a term, was often mentioned in Hehuang area mountain songs as well. For example:

甘肃凉州的好棉花，
纺织者要织个手帕；
你漫“花儿”我答话，
寻上个大路走吧。\(^{13}\)

The top-quality cotton in Liangzhou Gansu Province, It is going to be used to make a handkerchief by the knitter; You sing *hua’er* songs and I respond, Let’s find a road and walk together.

This is a Hehuang mountain song collected by Zhang Yaxiong 张亚雄 and published in 1940. As is mentioned in the lyrics, it is obvious that local people call these mountain songs from Hehuang area *hua’er*. Fourth, the geographer Yuan Fuli 袁复礼 published an article about *hua’er* and 30 Gansu *hua’er* songs in *Folksongs Weekly* (*Geyao zhoukan* 歌谣周刊) in 1925.\(^ {14}\) These 30 *hua’er* songs were collected from local people in Gansu Province. Yuan also recorded the origin of each song he collected. Most of these *hua’er* songs were from local porters, students in Hezhou area, students in Didao,\(^ {15}\) a 14 year-old Hui teenager, etc. Yuan titled his article *Gansu Folksongs—*Hua’er* (Gansude geyao-hua’er 甘肃的歌谣-话儿) (a universally acknowledged misspelling of *hua’er* 花儿 or flower songs). In his article, Yuan unequivocally pointed out that the local people who sang these folksongs called them *hua’er* (Xi 1989: 24-25). Thus, *shaonian* is not the exclusive term used to refer to *hua’er* in Hezhou area.

\(^{13}\) A *hua’er* song text from *Hua’erji* 花儿集 (Collection of *Hua’er*) published in 1940. It was collected by Zhang Yaxiong 张亚雄. *Hua’erji* was one of the earliest works regarding *hua’er* study published.

\(^{14}\) Yuan Fuli was one of the first persons who officially introduced *hua’er* to the general public in China. He called the songs he collected *hua’er* 话儿 (talk). The term was changed to *hua’er* 花儿 (flower) by Zhang Yaxiong in 1931. From then on, the term *hua’er* (flower songs), which represents the folksong genre, was accepted and used widely until the present day.

\(^{15}\) Didao 狄道 is part of Hezhou area. It is now called Lintao County in Gansu Province.
While at this point, a question may arise: if the term *hua’er* and *shaonian* are referring to the same type of mountain songs, where does the term *shaonian* come from? Is it simply a counterpart of *hua’er* which represents females with the meaning of “youth”? The *hua’er* scholar Liu You’s 刘佑 explanation is thought-provoking. With regard to the origin of a popular substitutable title of *hua’er*—*shaonian*—there is actually no such word in the Qinghai dialect called *shaonian*, meaning “youth.” Young men are usually referred to as *xiaohuozi* 小伙子 (young fellow) or *gaxiahuo* 小伙 (little young man) in the Qinghai dialect. *Shaonian* is probably an incorrect spelling of the word, *shaolian* 烧脸 (meaning burning face or to blush with shame). In the Qinghai dialect, *shao* 少 (young) and *shao* 烧 (burning) have the same pronunciation, while *lian* 脸 (face) is pronounced as *nian* 年 (age). There are several reasons that *hua’er* collectors misspelled these two terms. First, before modern China was established, *hua’er* was considered vulgar and in bad taste. The intellectuals felt contempt for *hua’er* and thought that *hua’er* was harmful to the society’s morals. Second, as the countryside was ruled by feudal behavior, *hua’er* songs concerned with love and romance were shunned. Third, since *hua’er* could only be sung in the wilderness, if it was sung in the village or between two different generations or relatives, people felt embarrassed. Therefore, they would get a feeling of “burning face.” As a result of these reasons, *shaolian* 烧脸 (burning face) became a vivid and acceptable nickname for *hua’er*. The early *hua’er* collectors mistook the word *shaolian* for *shaonian*, since the pronunciation of these two words in the Qinghai dialect is the same. As a result, the term *shaonian* was gradually accepted as a substitutable name for *hua’er* (Liu 1982).
To reiterate, shaonian and hua’er are two terms used to describe the same type of mountain song in Northwest China. As for the differences discovered in lyrical and musical content, musical characteristics, syntax, performing and singing context, formula differences, and other factors mentioned by some hua’er scholars, they should be considered subtypes of hua’er.

**HUA’ER TYPES**

Hua’er scholars have constructed several ways to classify hua’er (Zhou 1983: 129-132, Wu: 2008: 84-86). According to the geographical layout of hua’er songs, they can be distinguished as Qinghai hua’er 青海花儿, Gansu hua’er 甘肃花儿, Ningxia hua’er 宁夏花儿, Xinjiang hua’er 新疆花儿, etc. In accordance with nationalities, hua’er can be categorized as Han hua’er 汉族花儿, Hui hua’er 回族花儿, Sala (Salar) hua’er 撒拉族花儿, Dongxiang (Saerte, Tungshiange) hua’er 东乡族花儿, Tu (Monguor) hua’er 土族花儿, Tibetan hua’er 藏族花儿, etc. As hua’er scholars come from several parts of China, regional bias is not uncommon. Scholars often refer to hua’er by the name of the locality in which they reside. Some examples of this are Linxia hua’er 临夏花儿 and Ninghe hua’er 宁河花儿, which are both named after parts of Gansu Province, and Liupanshan hua’er 六盘山花儿, named after a region of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Hua’er scholars believe that these hua’er songs are main types of hua’er in general. In my opinion, in accordance with the musical and lyrical features, geographical distinction, performance and singing formulae, and other factors, the most suitable
classification of *hua'er* is that there are two types of *hua'er*, namely, Hezhou type of *hua'er* and Taomin type of *hua'er*.

In considering the classification of *hua'er*, it seems that there is almost no disagreement on Taomin type of *hua'er*. However, Hezhou type of *hua'er* is more problematic. As a result of certain geographical changes, Hezhou does not exist in contemporary China anymore. It was replaced by the Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture in 1928. On the other hand, Qinghai Province is referred to as the “sea” of *hua'er* by the local people. Many *hua'er* scholars believe that, instead of choosing the term Hezhou type of *hua'er*, Qinghai *hua'er* should be listed as one of the main types of *hua'er*. However, as it appears to me, except for the universally accepted Taomin type of *hua'er*, the term Hezhou type of *hua'er* should be the only name chosen with regard to *hua'er* classification. There are several reasons for this. First, in his book—*Huizu minjian wenxue shigang* (An Outline History of Hui Folk Literature), Li Shujiang addresses the fact that, according to the *hua'er* research authority, Zhang Yaxiong 張亚雄, *hua'er* originated in the Hezhou area, the part of China where the greatest number of Hui ethnic people reside (Li 1989: 110). See the *hua'er* lyrics below:

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哎，
漫一首花儿了问一句话，
花儿的家乡是阿达？
哎，
花儿本是个尕俗话，
你记下，
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河州是花儿的老家。16

Hey,
Sing a hua’er song and ask a question,
Is the hometown of hua’er songs Ada?
Hey,
Hua’er songs are common words,
You remember,
Hezhou is the hometown of hua’er songs.

Another common saying in Northwest China is:

西安的“乱弹”，
河州的“少年”。

Shaanxi opera in Xi’an,
Shaonian in Hezhou.

Since ancient times, Hezhou has been the hometown of hua’er. Using the name Hezhou in hua’er classification not only explains the origin of this type of hua’er, but also reflects the development of hua’er history. The Hezhou area has been the place where most Hui ethnic people reside in China. According to the hua’er scholar, Wu Yulin 武宇林, from the Tang Dynasty to the Yuan Dynasty, the Hui ethnic group migrated to Northwest China. This is one of the factors that contributes to the origin of the hua’er. The fact that Hui ethnic people were working in garrison troops, opening up the wasteland, and growing food grain, sheds light on the humanity and cultural background

16 A hua’er song text from Hua’er lunji 2 花儿论集 2 (Second Collection of Commentaries on Hua’er Songs).
of the origin of hua’er (Wu 2008: 17-21). Choosing the name, Hezhou, for the hua’er classification also identifies the Hui ethnic people’s contribution to and influence on the origin and development of hua’er, since Hezhou is the area where, historically, the greatest number of Hui ethnic people have resided. Second, Hezhou is a geographical name which only existed before 1928. From research findings, the Hezhou area includes Gansu Province, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and Qinghai Province (Wu 2008: 91). However, only after 1928 were Gansu, Qinghai, and Ningxia divided as individual administrative regions. Therefore, when they appeared in hua’er classification, these regions were listed as Qinghai hua’er 青海花儿, Gansu hua’er 甘肃花儿, and Ningxia hua’er 宁夏花儿. In general, however, these categories actually carry the same features and should be considered as subtypes of Hezhou type of hua’er. Third, Hezhou type of hua’er, as a general term, represents a type of songs different from other hua’er songs in several aspects, such as musical and lyrical characteristics, performing formulae, singing features, etc. Fourth, both Hezhou and Taomin were names used in ancient China. The names themselves not only indicate their historical significance, but also reflect the history, tradition, culture, and language that has greatly influenced the development of hua’er and the region of Northwest China.

To clearly identify the types and subtypes of hua’er, I have designed the following chart:
**HUA’ER SINGING**

Singing is one of the key elements of hua’er culture. Hua’er is usually sung alternatively by men and women or in solo form and, occasionally, in chorus. Though the singing formula in solo form and chorus is also a common feature of other folksong genres, the antiphonal singing of hua’er remains unique. The antiphonal singing is called duichang 对唱 (musical dialogue). This competitive style of singing is especially prominent in the Taomin type of hua’er. Taking the Taomin type of hua’er as an example, the basic performance formula is composed of two groups of three to six people in each group. Each group has its own leader called chuanbanzhang 串班长 (literally meaning “the leader of the string”), or changbashi 唱把式 (literally meaning “the singing expert”). Typically, the chuanbanzhang is a singer with a good voice, a great ability to respond to questions and propose new questions quickly, is familiar with Chinese
classical literature, has a wide range of knowledge, and has a thorough understanding of hua‘er culture and customs. There are two forms of antiphonal singing. In the first form, singing is organized by the chuanbanzhang. Everyone in the group responds by singing independently, then ending in unison. The chuanbanzhang makes up the answers while listening to the questions proposed by the opposing side, then passes the first answers to the first singer, who sings the first line called touqiang 头腔. The second singer sings the second answer to the second line, known as erqiang 二腔. Depending on how many singers are in each group, the rest is done in the same manner. At the end of each group’s singing response, everyone in the group sings huaya, lianglianye’er 花呀, 两莲叶儿 (the flower, two leaves) together. Second, the chuanbanzhang sings as the lead and other members in the group only echo with some padding words or phrases. Members in the group sing the padding words or phrase after each line sung by the chuanbanzhang and the music and lyrics used by group members are generally the same each time they sing. As in the first singing formula of antiphonal singing in the Taomin type of hua‘er, all group members including the chuanbanzhang sing huaya, lianglianye’er 花呀, 两莲叶儿 (the flower, two leaves) together in the end of their group response.

SINGING TECHNIQUES

As most of the pieces was sung in natural environments, to ensure the effective delivery of the voice from one place to the other distant place in the mountains, the vocal quality of hua‘er singing was developed uniquely, naturally and was commonly described as “piercing and focused,” “loud and resounding,” “powerful and
straightforward,” “resonant and clear,” and “bold and expressive.” Different from the Western classical singing styles and many other Chinese folksong singing styles, male hua’er singers tend to sing in the same vocal range as female singers by employing falsetto in their voices. There are several singing methods commonly used in hua’er singing. First of all, there are those who sing in mankouqiang 满口腔, cangyin 苍音 or pingyin 平音 (real tone). The voice in this singing method sounds thick and solid and is close to the voice used in daily conversation. This singing method is rather uncommon, as many hua’er songs contain a very wide range of pitch, which makes it hard to employ a single tone in the entire song. According to the “king of hua’er singing,” Zhu Zhonglu 朱仲禄, singers can use the cangyin (real tone) to perform most parts of songs in some hua’er ling tunes,\(^{17}\) such as qianglanglangling 呛啷啷令. In addition, certain hua’er songs were developed from xiaodiao 小调 (lyrical songs or little ditties)\(^{18}\), such as the ling tune dayanjinglin 大眼睛令, yanxiqu 宴席曲 (banquet songs), or from entire hua’er songs with a relatively small vocal range, such as the ling tune jingjinhualing 晶金花令 (Zhu 2006: 214-217). Second, there are those who sing in jianyin 尖音 (falsetto). The voice in this singing method sounds pure, sharp, and far-reaching, and features uncultivated and unrestrained characteristics. This singing method is more popularly used by male singers, especially in Taomin type of hua’er, because these male singers tend to match their voices with female singers and sing in the same vocal register as female

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\(^{17}\) The ling tunes refer to the basic tunes of hua’er songs.

\(^{18}\) Xiaodiao are characterized as “lyrical, mellifluous songs in a regular rhythm, often sung indoors in a soft voice and to instrumental accompaniment” (Schimmelpenninck 1997: 17-18).
singers. Third, there are those who sing in jiancangyun 尖苍音 (a combination of real tone and falsetto). This is the most popularly employed singing method in hua’er singing. In hua’er singing experts’ words, it is called xinyin he touyinqiang 心音和头音腔 (from chest voice to head voice) (Zhu 2006: 214). This singing method requires singers to pay more attention to breath control, so that a smoother, more natural and consistent transition between different vocal registers can be achieved. To reach the best effect in utilizing the chest voice and the head voice, hua’er singers should fully use resonant cavities in the body, such as the chest, oral cavity, pharyngeal cavity, and nasal cavity (Zhang 2006: 241).

Breath control serves a very significant role in hua’er singing as well. Functioning as the foundation of singing, breath management is critical in producing beautiful sounds in hua’er singing.

Several breathing methods exist in the contemporary Chinese national folksong singing style.19 Thoracic breathing or chest breathing occurs when air is drawn into the chest area. The expansion is usually felt in both the lower rib cage and the solar plexus. Abdominal breathing or diaphragmatic breathing is supported by simultaneous relaxation in one or more of the pairs of abdominal muscles as the diaphragm lowers during the inhalation process. Balanced breathing extends the expansion through the thorax and the middle to lower abdomen. This is one of the most popular breathing methods currently used in the contemporary Chinese national folksong singing style. The benefits of using

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19 This refers to the singing style that is the combination of Western-influenced classical singing techniques, called meisheng 美声 (bel canto singing or beautiful singing), and the Chinese traditional folk singing techniques.
this type of breathing method are: assisting with the application of the *appoggio* technique\(^{20}\), and coordinating the balance of muscle tension between respiration and glottal closure/resistance to the breath.

In *hua’er* singing, singers refer to an area that is three inches below the navel, or roughly between the navel and pubis, called *dantian* 丹田 (Zhu 2006: 218). The *dantian* breathing method originated from Chinese opera and was widely used in *hua’er* singing (Zhang 2005: 108). The breath should be held in the *dantian* area. The constriction of muscles in the *dantian* area provides the source of breath control. This is quite similar to the method of abdominal breathing or diaphragmatic breathing in the contemporary Chinese national folksong singing style.

The ideal way of phonation in *hua’er* singing is clear articulation. To achieve this goal, singers need to be aware of the features of the language of Mandarin Chinese and Northwest Chinese dialects. The pronunciation of the typical single Chinese character can be divided into three parts, resembling the body of a fish: head, belly and tail. Most of the pronunciation of Chinese characters starts from the initial consonant. Very few of them start from simple or compound vowels, sometimes with a terminal [n]. There are five categories of initial consonants in Chinese linguistics. The first category consists of *g*, *k*, and *h*, which are glottal consonants. Tongue consonants include *d*, *t*, *l*, *n* and *er*. *Z*, *c*, *s*, and *zh*, *ch*, *sh* constitute incisor dental consonants. *J*, *q* and *x* are molar dental consonants. Labial consonants include *b*, *p*, *m* and *f*. Initial consonants have an important

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\(^{20}\) A term used in Western *bel canto* singing technique. *Appoggio* is derived from the Italian word “*Appogiare,*” which means to lean on or lean against. It refers to a type of singing that relies on breath support.
role in hua’er song singing. The accuracy of these consonants is tantamount to expressing the meaning of the lyrics.

Mouth shapes deal with the vowel sound in Chinese. Vowels $a$, $e$ and $o$ constitute an open-mouth shape. The vowel $i$ requires the bottom teeth and the upper teeth to almost meet. A protruding mouth shape includes $ü$ and a round mouth shape includes $u$. The above consonants and vowels introduced in Chinese share the same linguistical features with the letters in Italian and other Western languages, but the pronunciation is sometimes completely different.

The initial consonants and the vowel sound are central to pursuing clear articulation in hua’er singing. These phonetic elements should be articulated with balance. Hua’er singing, especially in the Hezhou type of hua’er, emphasizes the glottal onset, pure vowels, and the final consonants. This is especially important with regards to the conveyance of the meaning of songs and the expression of the innermost emotions of the singers.

**HUA’ER FESTIVAL**

To better understand the hua’er festival, there are several questions which need to be clarified. When did hua’er festivals originate? What types of activities are involved in hua’er festivals? Where do people go during hua’er festivals? According to the local people living where hua’er circulates widely, the answers to the above questions are mostly contained in legends. As most local hua’er festivals have their own legends with regarding the origin and history of hua’er, let us examine two representative legends:
A very long time ago, after the Jade Emperor Pavilion was constructed on Lianhua 蓮花 (lotus flower) Mountain, the gorgeous temple added brilliance to Lianhua Mountain’s present splendor. But people regretted that there were no “lotus leaves” to enhance the beauty of the Lianhua Mountain. To celebrate the completion of the temple, some people chose to perform Chinese operas, while some thought that chanting scriptures was a better way. Because people were from different ethnic groups and their languages were different, both Chinese opera singing and the chanting of scriptures could not adequately express their common sentiments. At the moment when they were arguing, two fairy maidens floated down from heaven with lotus flowers in one hand and a colorful fan in the other hand, and began singing and dancing delightfully on top of Lianhua Mountain. Their beautiful voices amazed the people who were arguing. The wind blew the lotus leaves from the fairy maidens’ hands, and the lotus leaves floated down and landed on Lianhua Mountain. The people stopped arguing and could not control their singing of “hua’er, liang ye’er” (the flower, two leaves), along with the fairy maidens while they were gradually disappearing. From then on, every June in the lunar calendar, people gathered in the Lianhua Mountain and sang hua’er songs to “add leaves” or, in other words, enhance the beauty of the mountain (Wei 1979: 73).

This legend illustrates the origin of the hua’er festival and tells us how people from different ethnic groups in Northwest China found their common language to express their shared feelings. It also addresses the fact that hua’er songs came from heaven, and the location of the hua’er festivals first started in Lianhua Mountain.

A long time ago, a hunter went hunting in the mountains. He saw a beautiful girl near a river and heard her beautiful singing when he passed the gorge near the south of Hezheng County. The hunter was obsessed with her voice and started to imitate her singing. The girl realized that someone was secretly listening to her singing. She felt embarrassed and ran away to the Songmingyan Mountain (a famous location where the hua’er festival took place). The hunter followed her to the bottom of the mountain, where the girl suddenly disappeared. The hunter was quite frustrated. He heard the girl’s singing from the top of the mountain. He ran at full speed to the top of the mountain. When he reached the top, he heard her singing from the bottom of the mountain. When he ran to the foot of the mountain, he again heard her singing at the top of the mountain. This happened again and again until it became dark. The hunter did not see the girl and decided
to leave. After he got home, he shared his experience with the villagers, and sang the song he heard from the girl. Everyone felt that it was a beautiful song and started to learn it. After a while, all people, regardless of age and sex could sing the song. To commemorate this fairy girl who brought such beautiful singing to the world, people built a gorgeous temple on Songmingyan Mountain. On the 20th of every April in the lunar calendar, which was the date the hunter encountered the fairy girl, people gathered on Songmingyan Mountain and sang delightfully and beautifully to imitate the beautiful voice of the fairy girl (Xi 1989: 341).

In contrast to the first legend which explains the origin of the Taomin type of *hua’er* festival, the above legend delineates the origin of the Hezhou type of *hua’er* festival. From both legends, we can tell that first, *hua’er* festivals are frequently associated with mountains, and second, that *hua’er* festivals are spontaneous events that celebrate the beautiful singing originated in Northwest China. Third, *hua’er* songs come from heaven, and are passed down to the earth as a blessing.

Though it is impossible to objectively explain the origin of the *hua’er* festival from these legends, they at least reflect certain aspects of the origin, tradition, and folk customs of *hua’er* festivals. In my opinion, certain factors should also be considered when researching the origin of *hua’er* festivals. First, because of the geographical features of Northwest China, and its relatively poor and undeveloped social condition, *hua’er* festivals, as a natural social phenomenon, were created by the local people to meet their spiritual needs and enrich their lives. Second, the area in which most *hua’er* festivals were held was a place where many ethnic groups resided together. After a long period of ethnic fusion in Northwestern Chinese history, *hua’er* festivals became the result of ethnic recognition between these different ethnic groups. These festivals built the bridge and provided opportunities for these ethnic groups to exchange their ethnic
culture and customs, and allowed them to relate to each other on terms of friendship and marriage. Therefore, *hua’er* festivals are an inevitable result of social function, which strengthens and promotes the relationship of different ethnic groups, while reinforcing national unity and development.

Every year, *hua’er* festivals begin in January and proceed through October. However, most of them occur between April and July of the lunar year, and especially during May and June, when trees are green, flowers are in full bloom, and local people are in slack farming season. In general, the locations in which *hua’er* festivals are held are close to Buddhist and Taoist temples. As these are the largest public gatherings in Northwest China, these festivals are not only singing festivals, but they also serve as social functions related to entertainment, commercial business, education, political propaganda, religion, tourism, cultural exchange, friendship, courtship, etc.

**TAOMIN TYPE OF HUA’ER FESTIVAL**

The main singing formula in the Taomin type of *hua’er* festivals is comprised of song exchange or contest. As the most famous and representative Taomin type of *hua’er* festival, the Lianhua Mountain *hua’er* festival generally follows the following procedure in the song exchange: *lanlu* 拦路 (road blockades), *youshan duige* 游山对歌 (song exchange while making a sightseeing tour), *yege* 夜歌 (night singing), *pihong* 披红 (draping a band of red silk over one’s shoulder), and *jingjiu huabie* 敬酒话别 (proposing a toast and farewell) (Qiao 1987:49). On the roads that lead to Lianhua Mountain, men and women stretch ropes that are made of dried Malian straw, block the visitors going to
the festival, and challenge them to sing improvised *hua’er* songs. This is the first scene of song exchange during the festival. Most festival-goers come prepared and can satisfy the blockers so that they can proceed. Very rarely, those who cannot satisfy the “questioners” during this song exchange, must go under the rope with humiliation or even insults. In general, the road blockade singing contest is a “warm-up event” for these festival-goers, and also a way for the local people to welcome the guests who visit the festival. Here is an excerpt of the road blockade song exchange:

马莲绳绳堵路哩，
堵路有什么缘故哩？
马莲绳绳拦的宽，
叫我们高处过？低处钻？
我见歌手多快活，
要求让你唱山歌。
心里‘花儿’千千万，
越唱心里越舒坦。²¹

Ropes that are made of dried Malian straw are used to block the road,
What is the reason for blocking the road?
Ropes that are made from dried Malian straw block the road,
How can we go through? Over the top or beneath?
I am very happy to see the singers,
I ask you to sing mountain songs.
There are millions of *hua’er* songs in my mind,
The more I sing, the more comfortable I feel.

²¹ An excerpt of song exchange from the Lianhua Mountain *hua’er* festival in the article entitled, “Biekaishengmian de hua’er yanchanghui” 别开生面的花儿演唱会 (“The Refreshing *Hua’er* Festival”), in *Hua’er lunji* 花儿论集 (Collection of Commentaries on *Hua’er*).
while touring the scenic spots and reaching the peak of the Lianhua Mountain. In these conversation-like singing events, singers in two groups (usually there are three to eight people in each group) quiz the opponent regarding various topics, from traditional Chinese classical novels, the gorgeous scenery or the weather, to local history or general greetings. The period of song exchange in this stage lasts about two days. Then people go down from the top of Lianhua Mountain with the symbol, an azalea flower, which shows that they have reached the top of the mountain. Then, they move to the \textit{wanjiagoumen} 王家沟门, a place that is about thirteen kilometers away from Linhua Mountain. After they arrive, they start to exchange songs around the campfire during the night. Therefore, this stage of song exchange is called \textit{yege} 夜歌 (night singing). After the major song exchanges come to a close, on the sixth of June in the lunar calendar, the participants of the festival move to \textit{zisongshan} 紫松山, which is the last place of song exchange, and award the winners of the song exchange by draping a band of red silk over their shoulders. At this point, the festival is approaching its end. People make toasts, congratulate all singers who participated in the event, express the happiness and joy they have experienced, exchange parting words, and agree to meet the following year. This scene of farewell is touching and shows a sense of reluctance to part from each other. The following is an example of farewell singing during the last stage of the \textit{hua'er} song festival:

\begin{verbatim}
说了一声去的话，
眼泪躺着袖子擦，
忙把系腰穗穗拉，
\end{verbatim}
HEZHOU TYPE OF HUA’ER FESTIVAL

The singing form of song exchange in the Hezhou type of hua’er festivals is different from that in the Taomin type of hua’er festivals. The song exchange generally occurs between a man and a woman, two groups of men, or one group of men and one group of women, but not between two groups of women or between the youth and the elders (Guo 2007: 95). Overall, the song exchange is not based on the form of wenda 问答 (question and answer). Instead, it adopts solo singing or chorus singing (Xi 1989: 351). Sometimes, it is accompanied with the double-reed suona 唢呐 (a Han ethnic Chinese oboe), sixianzi 四弦子 (a four-string bowed instrument), dizi 笛子 (mini flute), erhu 二胡 (the two-string bowed instrument), or without accompaniment. First, one person in the group, which ranges from several people to as many as several dozen

22 An excerpt of song exchange from the Lianhua Mountain hua’er festival in the article entitled, “Biekaishengmian de hua’er yanchanghui” 别开生面的花儿演唱会 (“The Refreshing Hua’er Festival”), in Hua’er lunji 花儿论集 (Collection of Commentaries on Hua’er).
people, starts a topic and other group members then take turns singing, according to the
topic-related content. When no one in the group can continue singing on the topic, the
second topic chosen will be used. The content of song exchange depends on the gender of
the people in the two groups. Generally, most songs, during song exchange, are love
songs between a man and a woman, or between a group of men and a group of women.
Historical stories, Chinese classic novels, or topics related to current politics, are popular
between two groups of men. Here is an excerpt of a song exchange between a man and a
woman during the Hezhou type of hua’er festival:

(男) 石崖头上的墩墩儿草，
镰刀儿老了者没割；
这个尕妹哈瞅下的早，
羞脸儿大了着没说。

(女) 上山的鹿羔儿下山来，
下山了吃一趟水来；
胆子儿放大了跟前来，
心上的花儿哈漫来。

(男) 高山的麦子收一石²³，
大麦哈收给了两石；
多人的伙里把你看，
模样儿活像个牡丹。

(女) 八仙的桌子大红门，
手拿个花架子哩；
旁人的妹妹哈甭费劲，
全看个个家的哩。²⁴

²³ Dan 石 is an ancient Chinese unit of weight measurement. One dan is approximately 130 lbs.
²⁴ An excerpt of a Hezhou type of hua’er song exchange from the article, “Qinghai hua’erhui” 青海花儿会
(“Qinghai Hua’er Festival”), published in Qinghai hua’er lunji 青海花儿论集 (Collection of
Commentaries on Qinghai Hua’er) in 2006.
(Man) A cluster of grass on top of the cliff,
   It was not cut because the reaping hook was old;
I saw this beloved little sister earlier,
   I did not say anything because of her shyness.

(Woman) The baby deer that goes up the mountain starts going downhill,
   Going downhill to drink;
   Come close bravely,
   Sing the hua’er song from your heart.

(Man) Wheat harvested from the mountain is about 130 pounds,
   Barley is about 260 pounds;
I see you through the crowd of people,
   You look just like a peony.

(Woman) The Eight Immortals’ table and the big red gate,
   Hold the flower shelf in the hand;
   Other little sisters do not need to take efforts,
   It is all about me.

In general, the singing atmosphere in the Hezhou type of hua’er festivals is not as competitive as the singing contest in the Taomin type of hua’er festivals. It is a form of singing that is mainly for self-amusement. As the winners in the song exchange in the Taomin type of hua’er festivals, the excellent singers in the Hezhou type of hua’er festivals are also awarded.
CHAPTER 1

HUA’ER LYRICS

As a form of oral tradition that is created by the folk, hua’er is the genre of oral literature with the greatest influence on Northwestern Chinese people’s lives. Rich in content, it has extraordinary historical value and can be considered as an “encyclopedia” of the traditional Northwestern Chinese culture. In its over 500 years of history, hua’er has had a very significant role in the inheritance of the Chinese culture and civilization is concerned.

Music and lyrics make up the two most important parts of hua’er. However, the musical factors are considered to be secondary to the linguistic artistry and qualities of articulation (Tuohy 2003: 164). Though the lyrics of hua’er were created by uneducated people, through the refinement over time by the masses, these lyrics have become classical, and now reflect the collective consciousness of the Northwestern Chinese culture.

In this chapter, the investigation of different aspects of hua’er lyrics, such as the content, rules and forms of lyrical composition, rhetoric, padding words and phrases, will be discussed. All the texts under discussion have been drawn from studies by various researchers in the period from 1925 to 2011.
1.1 HEZhou TYPE OF HUA’ER LYRICS

According to the number of lines of lyrics, there are generally two subtypes of the Hezhou type of hua’er: short-form Hezhou hua’er and long-form Hezhou hua’er. The short-form type of Hezhou hua’er is called sanhua 散花 (single hua’er), or caohua 草花 (literally meaning grass and flower; the extended meaning is single hua’er). The long-form type of Hezhou hua’er is frequently called benzihua 本子花 (a set of hua’er songs), or benshihua 本事花 (a set of original-story hua’er songs). Generally, each short-form Hezhou hua’er song contains three to eight lines, and each long-form Hezhou hua’er song contains more than eight lines and is arranged as a set of short-form hua’er songs.

1.1.1.1 SYNTAX OF THE SHORT-FORM HEZhou TYPE OF HUA’ER

90% of the Hezhou type of hua’er songs are in short-form and, among them, most short-form Hezhou hua’er songs are either in four lines or six lines (Wu 2008: 96). For example:

白杨尖上的一架鹰，
柳树尖上的凤凰；
苋干身材儿站起来，
凤凰展翅地走开。(Lyrics from Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 鄆慧民)

There is an eagle on top of a white poplar,
There is a phoenix on top of a willow tree;
A sylph-like girl stands up,
Walks gently and gracefully like a phoenix spreading its wings.
峡里出来的穆桂英，
身背着箭，
要破个天门阵哩；
出门的阿哥回来了，
身背着药，
要看尕妹的病哩。（Lyrics from Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民）

Mu Guiying is from the valley,  
She is carrying the bow and arrows,  
She is going to break through the Tianmenzhen;  
My beloved brother is going to come back from the trip,  
He is carrying the herbal medicine,  
He is going to heal the beloved little sister’s sickness.

The short-form type of Hezhou hua’er songs are normally composed of two sections. Depending on the number of lines in each song, the first section includes the first two lines (four lines of lyrics), or three lines (six lines of lyrics), and the second section ejusdem generis.

1.1.1.1 FOUR-LINE LYRICS

According to the number of characters or syllables in each line, the four-line lyrics of the short-form of the Hezhou type of hua’er can be further divided into two categories. One is called qitouqiweishi 齐头齐尾式 (the uniform form), or AA, AA form, while the other is called danshuangjiaocuoshi 单双交错式 (alternating form between odd-number lines and even-number lines), or AB, AB form (Wu 2008: 101).

25 Mu Guiying 穆桂英 was one of the woman warriors in Chinese literature. She was a general of Yangs and a heroine in Song Dynasty.
Each line contains the same number of Chinese characters in *qitouqiweishi* 齐头齐尾式 (the uniform form) *hua’er* songs. There are two main subcategories: the seven-character-line form and the eight-character-line form. According to the statistics collected by Wu Yulin, based on the *hua’er* lyrics collected in the book, *Xibei hua’er jingxuan* 西北花儿精选 (Well-chosen Northwestern *Hua’er* Songs) by Xue Li 雪梨 and Ke Yang 柯杨, the seven-character-line form takes up to 17% and eight-character-line form takes up to 85% of *qitouqiweishi* hua’er songs (Wu 2008: 102). Listed below is an example of seven-character-line *hua’er* lyrics, followed by an example of eight-character-line *hua’er* lyrics.

远看黄河一条线,
近看黄河是海岸;
远看尕妹黄金莲,
近看尕妹是牡丹。(Lyrics from *Xibei hua’er* 西北花儿 [Northwest *Hua’er*], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

The Yellow River looks like a line from far away,
The Yellow River up close looks like the coast;
The beloved little sister looks like the golden lotus flower from far away,
The beloved little sister up close looks like the peony.

麻醉瓜熟透赛蜜甜,
酸巴梨没熟时苦酸;
有钱汉天天如过年,
庄稼人愁了个吃穿。27

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26 The nine-character-line form also exists in the Hezhou type of *hua’er* songs. However, the percentage is fairly small.

27 Lyrics of a Hezhou type of *hua’er* song from *Linxia hua’erxuan* 临夏花儿选, compiled by Linxia Huizu zizhizhou wenhuaju chuangzuoyanjiushi 临夏回族自治州文化局创作研究室 (Research and Composition Department of Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture Cultural Bureaucracy) and published in 1982.
The fully-ripe, anesthetizing melon is sweeter than the honey,
The unripe Bartlett pear tastes bitter and sour;
The rich live like they are celebrating the Spring Festival every day,
The poor peasants worry about food and clothing.

In *danshuangjiaocuoshi hua'er* songs, the number of characters in odd-number lines is the same as the number in even-number lines. Depending on the need of the lyrics, the number of characters in the odd-number lines can be greater than the number of characters in the even-number lines, and the opposite situation also exists. For instance:

白龙马想喝口乌江的水，
多早把江沿上到哩？
妹妹是六月天不消的冰，
多早把太阳照哩？(Lyrics from *Xibei hua'er* 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua'er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

White horse wants to have a drink of water from Wu River,
How soon can it make it to the bank of the river?
The beloved little sister is the unmelting ice in June,
How soon will she be exposed under the sun?

阴山阳山八宝山，
好不过揽羊的草山；
千人万人数上你，
尕妹是花里的牡丹。28

Yin Mountain, Yang Mountain, and Babao Mountain,
They cannot compare with the grassy hill where I herd sheep;
You stand out from hundreds of thousands of people,

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My beloved little sister is the peony of all the flowers.

Except for these typical-form lyrics which make up the majority of the four-line lyrics of short-form Hezhou type of *hua’er*, there are also some irregular forms of lyrics. For example:

花儿里为王的是牡丹，
人里头英俊的是少年；
尕妹妹连我肩靠肩，
象一对红白的牡丹。(Lyrics from *Xibei hua’er* 西北花儿 [Northwest *Hua’er*], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

The king of all the flowers is the peony,  
The most handsome man among the people is the young man;  
The beloved little sister and I lean against each other, shoulder by shoulder,  
It is like a pair of red and white peony flowers.

In contrast to the most common four-line lyrics formerly observed, in the above example, each line of the first section (the first two lines) includes nine characters, and each line of the second section (the last two lines) includes eight characters. The structure is AA, BB. The following example is also an irregular, four-line lyrical form with an AB, CB scheme:

二月二来龙抬头，
薛平贵要接个绣球；
我有心尕妹引上了走，
天大的祸儿吓闯走。(Lyrics from *Xibei hua’er* 西北花儿 [Northwest *Hua’er*], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)
The dragon raises its head on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, 
Xue Pingui wants to take the embroidered ball; 
I want to take my beloved little sister away, 
Even though this may lead to an extremely big disaster.

1.1.1.1.2 SIX-LINE LYRICS

The six-line lyrics, short-form of the Hezhou type of hua’er songs is derived from the four-line lyrics, short-form of the Hezhou type of hua’er songs. It is also composed of two sections, each section containing three lines in the six-line lyrics. This form of the Hezhou type of hua’er songs is also called liangdanshui 两担水 (literally meaning “two barrels of water on each side of the pole,” the extended meaning is “balanced form”), banningyao 半折腰 (break in the middle), or shuangzheyao 双折腰 (break in the middle twice).

伯牙弹琴钟子期听，
知音人，
活像是同胞的弟兄；
话没有箭头射烂了心，
从前好，
到如今反成了仇人。(Lyrics from Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

Boya plays guqin and Zhong Ziqi listens, 
Bosom friends, 
Like brothers; 
Words do not have arrows, yet they hurt the heart deeply, 
The past was good, 
Now we conversely become foes.
Generally, following the compositional structure of four-line lyrics, this six-line lyrics, Hezhou type of hua'er song adds a part called banjieju 半截句 (half line) in the middle of each section. The half-line mostly contains either three or four characters.

A variant form of the six-line lyrics called shuangzheyao 双折腰 (break in the middle twice), is the five-line lyrics called danzheyao 单折腰 (break in the middle once). According to the place where the half-line appears, the five-line lyrics can be further categorized as qianzheyao 前折腰 (break in the middle of first half) and houzheyao 后折腰 (break in the middle of second half). This is illustrated in the following example:

一对骡子走泾阳，
江南的茶，
洛阳的凉水灌上；
尕妹好比甘草香，
做上个香包儿带上。29

A pair of mules walking to Jingyang,
The tea from the regions south of the Yangtze River, 
Fill up with the unboiled water from Luoyang; 
The beloved little sister smells as good as licorice, 
Making a scented sachet and bringing it with me.

The above hua'er lyrics are an example of qianzheyao 前折腰 (break in the middle of first half). The half-line inserted in the middle of the first section breaks the

29 Lyrics of a Hezhou type of hua'er song from Hua'er zhenglunji 花儿争论集 (Disputes on Hua'er), published by Qinghaisheng wenhua yishi yanjiusuo 青海省文化艺术研究所 (The Qinghai Culture and Art Research Department) in 1984.
symmetry of the lyrics and stresses the meaning of the first section. The following is an example of *houzheyao* 后折腰 (break in the middle of second half).

 três天没吃半碗饭，
空乏的身子们可怜；
心想和马五哥见个面，
鼓硬强，
爬上了牛心山的山尖。(Lyrics from *Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er]*, compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

I did not eat even half of a meal for three days,  
It is pitiful to have a hungry and exhausted body like this;  
I want to meet with the beloved fifth brother in the House of Ma,  
With a full heart and cheer up,  
Climbing to the top of Niuxin Mountain.

The half-line added in the middle of the second section has the same function as the one added in the middle of the first section. In this particular example above, though it only contains three characters, the half-line carries the most sincere meaning which expresses the faithful love, desire and strong emotion which the woman possesses for her lover.

1.1.1.2 SYNTAX OF THE LONG-FORM HEZHOU TYPE OF HUA’ER

As mentioned earlier, the long-form of the Hezhou type of hua’er contains a set of short-form hua’er songs. In accordance with the content of these hua’er songs, it is divided into two categories: *xushi huaer* 叙事花儿 (narrative hua’er) and *gushi huaer* 故事花儿 (story hua’er). The narrative hua’er usually adopts themes such as time, seasons,
historical stories and figures, myths and legends, and classical Chinese novels, to unfold the singer’s personal stories and sensibility. The well-known narrative hua’er includes wugengqu 五更曲 (the five-geng song), kuwugen 哭五更 (the crying for five-geng song), shigengqu 十更曲 (the ten-geng song), zhengyue xinghua eryue xian 正月杏花二月天 (apricot flower of the first month and the sky of the second month), shieryue nianqing 十二月念情 (the sensibilities in twelve months), songzhangfu 送丈夫 (farewell to husband), etc. The notable story hua’er includes Fengshenbang 封神榜 (The Apotheosizing Tales), Sanguo yanyi 三国演义 (The Romance of the Three Kingdoms), and Yangjiajiang 杨家将 (Warriors of Yang Family). Each set of the long-form Hezhou hua’er songs is generally constituted by many short-form hua’er songs. Though the four-line, short-form hua’er song is most commonly seen as a section in the long-form Hezhou type of hua’er song, six-line, three-line, and two-line short-form songs also exist.

For example:

正月杏花二月天,
尕妹妹坐给在地边；
麦苗儿满地者像绿毡，
你锄的头遍吗二遍？

正月杏花二月天，
放羊娃放羊在河边；
过路的阿哥们你甭缠，

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30 In ancient China, the night was divided into five two-hour periods. Starting at 7:00 p.m., the first geng was between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., the second from 9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., and the rest followed suit.

31 Zhengyue 正月 means the first month of the lunar year.
尕妹妹活下的可怜。

正月杏花二月天，
各样的花草长全；
哪怕海干者石头烂，
阿哥不叫你作难。

正月杏花二月天，
燕子儿飞在云端；
你但是实心我喜欢，
配成个美满的姻缘。

正月杏花二月天，
杨柳树长在了门前；
宁把身子油锅里煎，
阿哥们丢你是万难。

正月杏花二月天，
把哥哥拉在面前；
若要我俩的婚姻散，
除非是黄河的水干。

正月杏花二月天，
牵牛花扯上了房檐；
你是肝子妹妹是胆，
肝胆儿离开是万难。

正月杏花二月天，
马身上备的是雕鞍；
尕手抓住了问几遍，
我走时你辛酸吗不酸？

正月杏花二月天，
把阿哥送在了门前；
你去了不要把心变，
你念起我活的艰难。

正月杏花二月天，
叫妹妹把心儿放宽；
骑上马不敢往后看，
心疼者像是个箭穿。(Lyrics from *Xibei hua’er* 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

Apricot Flower of the First Month and the Sky of the Second Month,
The beloved little sister is sitting at the edge of the field;
The whole field of wheat seedlings looks like a green blanket,
Did you hoe the field once or twice?

Apricot Flower of the First Month and the Sky of the Second Month,
The boy is herding sheep near the river;
Elder brothers, please do not bother me,
The life of the beloved little sister is pitiful.

Apricot Flower of the First Month and the Sky of the Second Month,
Various flowers and plants grow;
Even though the seas dry up and the rocks decay,
The beloved elder brother will not let you feel bad.

Apricot Flower of the First Month and the Sky of the Second Month,
The swallows are flying high in the clouds;
If you seriously love me,
Contribute to make a perfectly satisfactory marriage.

Apricot Flower of the First Month and the Sky of the Second Month,
Poplar and willow trees grow in front of the door;
I would rather fry my body in the fryer,
It is extremely difficult to abandon you for the beloved elder brother.

Apricot Flower of the First Month and the Sky of the Second Month,
Pull the beloved elder brother in front of me;
Our marriage will never fall apart,
Unless the Yellow River has dried up.

Apricot Flower of the First Month and the Sky of the Second Month,
Morning glory flowers reach the roof ledge;
You are the liver and the beloved little sister is the gallbladder.
It is extremely difficult to separate the liver from the gallbladder.

Apricot Flower of the First Month and the Sky of the Second Month,
The horse is prepared with the saddle with the carved patterns on its back;
Grab the little hand and ask several times,
Do you feel sad when I leave?
Apricot Flower of the First Month and the Sky of the Second Month,
I say farewell to my beloved elder brother in front of the door;
Do not cease to be faithful after you leave,
You should remember that I live arduously by myself.

Apricot Flower of the First Month and the Sky of the Second Month,
Allow my beloved little sister to rest her heart;
I ride my horse and am afraid to look back,
My heart hurts as the arrow shot right through it.

This is an antiphonal narrative hua’er song sung by a man and a woman. There are ten sections in this long-form Hezhou type of hua’er song. Each section includes a four-line, short-form hua’er song. After each section is sung, the two singers alternate. The first line of the beginning of each section is the same. This feature sets the background of song. Both singers express their deep love for each other based on this context throughout the whole song.

The following is an example of a story hua’er song:

…
杨大郎装下的什么个?
哪啥些赴了个宴了;
阿哥维下的谁一个?
为什么落了个泪了?
杨大郎装了个假皇上,
金沙滩赴了个宴了;
阿哥维下的你一个,
想你者落了个泪了。

杨二郎过了个什么山?

32 Henceforward, in all folksong quotations, an ellipsis will be used to symbolize missing sections.
兵马（们）阿么者过了？
没见的日子（们）有几天？
这几天阿么者过了？

杨二郎领兵过雪山，
兵马单，
走得者半山里散了；
没见的日子刚三天，
想你者吃不下饭了。
什么人马踏入泥浆？
浑身哈什么（啦）染了？
为你的身子我烧香，
各庙里许下个愿了。

杨三郎马踏入泥浆，
浑身哈拿血（啦）染了；
我想尕妹者到命上，
差些些黄河里跳了。（Lyrics from Linxia hua’erxuan 临夏花儿选 [Linxia Hua’er Anthology], published in 1982）

What did the oldest son of the House of Yang pretend?
Where did he attend the banquet?
Who did the beloved elder brother have a romantic relationship with?
Why did he shed tears?

The oldest son of the House of Yang pretended to be a fake emperor,
He attended the banquet at Jinshatan.
The beloved brother had a romantic relationship with you,
He shed tears because he missed you.

Which mountain did the second oldest son of the House of Yang go to?
How were the troops and horses?
How many days since I saw you?
How is your life these days?

The second oldest son of the House of Yang led the troops and went over the mountain,
The troops and horses were weak,
They were dismissed in the middle of the mountains;
It had been only three days since I saw you,
I could not eat because I missed you.

Whose horse walked in the mud?
What stained his body?  
I burned joss sticks to bless your health,  
I prayed for you in different temples.

The horse of the third eldest son of the House of Yang walked in the mud,  
His body was stained with blood.  
I wanted to die because I missed the beloved little sister,  
I almost jumped into the Yellow River to drown myself.

There are 23 short-form *hua’er* songs in this long-form Hezhou type of story  
*hua’er* song. Although almost all sections contain four lines, one section contains five  
lines and is in *qianzheyao* form (break in the middle of first half). This set of antiphonal  
Hezhou type of *hua’er* song adopts the stories from the traditional Chinese novel,  
*Warriors of the Yang*, to unfold the musical dialogue. The vivid images of the figures in  
the stories are used effectively to set up the background for the personal conversations  
between the singers.

### 1.1.2 LYRICAL RHYTHM OF THE HEZhou TYPE OF HUA’ER

Rhythm, an incredibly important element of music, is marked by the repetition of  
stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry. In the Hezhou type of *hua’er* lyrics, the  
rhythm is generally in accordance with the pattern of pause (Xi 1989: 192). The majority  
of Chinese words contain either two syllables (two characters) or three syllables (three  
characters). Depending upon the number of lines each Hezhou type of *hua’er* song  
contains, generally the first and third lines are symmetrical, while the second and the  
fourth are symmetrical lines in a four-line *hua’er* song. The first and fourth, second and  
fifth, and the third and sixth are symmetrical lines in a six-line *hua’er* song. Through
comprehensive research and analysis of the Hezhou type of *hua’er* lyrics, some interesting rules and regular patterns regarding the lyrical rhythm were discovered.

1.1.2.1 SYMMETRICAL FEATURES OF SYMMETRICAL LINES

In either the four-line or six-line Hezhou type of *hua’er* songs, the rhythm of symmetrical lines frequently follows the same rules. See the following two examples:

脊背上 / 背的是 / 梅花枪，
要打个 / 天上的 / 凤凰；
尕妹是 / 牡丹花 / 园里长，
手搭在 / 牡丹的 / 树上。(Lyrics from *Xibei hua’er* 西北花儿 [Northwest *Hua’er*], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

What is carried on the back is a plum blossom gun,
I am going to shoot the phoenix in the sky.
The beloved little sister is the peony which grows in the garden,
She puts her hand on the peony tree.

白牡丹 / 长给者 / 山里了，
隔 / 一架岭，
红牡丹 / 长成棵 / 树了；
我把你 / 吃给在 / 心里了，
搭 / 不上话，
有苦者 / 没人吓 / 诉了。（Lyrics from *Xibei hua’er* 西北花儿 [Northwest *Hua’er*], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

The white peony grows in the mountains,
In a mountain range far away,
The red peony is growing into a tree;
I put you into my heart,
I cannot converse with you,
I cannot find a person to whom I can express my pain and hardship.

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33 The slash symbol (“/”) is used to indicate the rhythmic units of the lyrics.
The strict symmetry concerning the rhythm is illustrated in both examples above. The symmetrical lines perfectly follow the same rhythmical rules. Each rhythmical unit usually contains three syllables (characters). This phenomenon is commonly seen in the Hezhou type of *hua'er* songs (Wu 2008: 101). The number of rhythmical units and the ending syllables in the symmetrical lines is almost always the same in the Hezhou type of *hua'er* songs. Generally speaking, in four-line lyrics in the Hezhou type of *hua'er*, the number of ending syllables in odd-number lines is almost always an odd number, while the number of ending syllables in even-number lines is almost always an even number.34

### 1.1.2.2 ASYMMETRY OF SYMMETRICAL LINES

In talking about the asymmetry of symmetrical lines in the Hezhou type of *hua'er* songs, I refer to the lyrical structure differences, such as the number of rhythmical units, the number of syllables in symmetrical units, and the missing lines between symmetrical lines. Although many Hezhou type of *hua'er* song lyrics were created to strictly follow the rhythmical rules, the exceptions with small variations are also commonly seen.

尕妹 / 好比 / 白牡丹，
你 / 长在 / 石崖上了；
阿哥 / 好比 / 苦丝蔓，
命根里 / 苦，
缠不到 / 尕妹 / 身上。(Lyrics from *Xibei hua'er* 西北花儿 [Northwest *Hua'er*], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

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34 The six-line lyrics of the Hezhou type of *hua'er* songs are considered the variant form of the four-line lyrics of the Hezhou type of *hua'er* songs. The odd-number lines and even-number lines refer to the basic structure of lines not including *banjieju* 半截句 (half line) in six-line lyrics, Hezhou type of *hua'er*. 
The beloved little sister is just like the white peony,
You grow on the rocky cliff;
The beloved elder brother is just like a bitter tendrilled vine,
The fate is sad,
Cannot be with the beloved little sister.

The rhythmical asymmetry of symmetrical lines in this *hua'er* song is indicated in several ways. First, the structure of the song lyrics is *houzheyao* (break in the middle of second half). Therefore, there is no line echoing with the half-line (the fourth line) in the second section, rhythmically speaking. Second, the rhythmical patterns of even-number lines (the second and fifth lines)\(^{35}\) demonstrate the asymmetry of rhythmical quality. In the second line, the first rhythmical unit only contains one syllable, while the third rhythmical unit includes four syllables. However, the first rhythmical unit contains three syllables and the second and third rhythmical units include two syllables in the fifth line. The rhythmical relationship between the even-number lines in this particular *hua'er* song shows the freedom with rhythmical rules that is typical of the Hezhou type of *hua'er* lyrics.

### 1.1.3 RHyme OF THE HEZHOU TYPE OF HUA’ER

Hezhou type of *hua'er* features characteristic rhymes. As a type of Chinese folksongs, Hezhou type of *hua'er* not only carries the general rhyme traits of Chinese folksongs, but also comprises rhyme properties from its unique vernacular pronunciation.

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\(^{35}\) This five-line lyrics, Hezhou type of *hua'er* song is also considered a variant form of the four-line lyrics, Hezhou type of *hua'er* song. The odd-number lines and even-number lines here refer to the basic structure of lines, not including *banjieju* 半截句 (half-line), namely, the fourth line, in this Hezhou type of *hua'er*. 
features. These characteristics of Hezhou type of *hua’er* have the function to strengthen the rhythm and enhance the beauty of the *hua’er* lyrics and singing. We will discuss the commonly-seen rhyme schemes of Hezhou type of *hua’er* in the following section.

1.1.3.1 MONORHYME

一溜儿山来两溜儿山，
三溜儿山，
脚户哥下了个四川；
今个子牵来明个子牵，
每日牵，
夜夜的晚夕里梦见。(Lyrics from *Xibei hua’er* 西北花儿 [Northwest *Hua’er*], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

Tramping over the first mountain, the second mountain, And the third mountain, The porter leaves for Sichuan; Yearning today, yearning tomorrow, And yearning everyday, Dreaming about you every night.

According to the *hua’er* scholar, Guo Zhengqing, the monorhyme is the most basic and universally-used rhyme scheme in the Hezhou type of *hua’er* (Guo 2007: 53). In the song lyrics above, the end of each line rhymes with the [an] sound.

The modal particles are also widely used in Hezhou type of *hua’er* to serve the rhyme function. The commonly-seen modal particles are: *li* 嘿, *liao*\(^{36}\) 了, *zhe* 者, *shang*

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\(^{36}\) The character 了 is a polyphone in Mandarin Chinese. According to the Northwestern Chinese dialect, 了 is typically pronounced *liao*. 
上, xia 下, lai 来, zi 子, er 儿, ni 呢, ha 哈, and la 拉. Among these modal particles, li 嘿 and liao 了 are most frequently used in Hezhou type of hua’er songs. For example:

兰州的城里兵变了，
四城门上了个锁了;
我维的尕妹心变了，
大眼睛不认个我了。(Lyrics from Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

Mutiny happened in Lanzhou City,  
The city gates on four sides of Lanzhou were locked;  
The beloved little sister whom I have been meeting changed her mind,  
Her big eyes do not want to meet me anymore.

The modal particle liao 了 is used to end each line in the above four-line Hezhou type of hua’er lyrics. The rhyming uniformity achieved by simply ending each line on the same modal particle not only enhances the beauty and harmony of the lyrics themselves and makes a deep impression on the listeners, but also reflects the unique lyrical features of the Hezhou type of hua’er songs.

1.1.3.2 SYMMETRICAL RHYME

The symmetrical rhyming scheme refers to the rhyme scheme in symmetrical lines. For instance:

果树花开开雪一样白，
尕果子咋这么嫩了?
尕妹走路时手甩开，
尕模样咋这样俊了? (Lyrics from Linxia hua’erxuan 临夏花儿选 [Linxia Hua’er Anthology], published in 1982)

The fruit tree blossoms are white like snow,
The little fruits look tender;
The beloved little sister walks with two hands moving back and forth,
Her appearance looks beautiful.

In the above hua’er song, the ending words in the first and the third lines, as well as in the second and fourth lines, respectively, rhyme with each other.

In addition to the one-syllable symmetrical rhyme scheme ending, the two, three, and even four-syllable endings also exist.

老爷曹营里十八年,
艰辛者愁眉吓没展;
好话说了个千千万,
尕妹的铁心儿没软。(Lyrics from Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

Guan Yu stayed in Cao’s camp for 18 years,
The suffering made him furrow his brow;
I said good words to you millions of times,
The beloved little sister did not soften her unchangeable heart.

In the above hua’er song, the last two syllables of the second and fourth lines, respectively, rhyme with each other.

半圆的锅里烙馍馍,
蓝烟儿把庄子罩了;
搓着个面手送哥哥,
清眼泪把腔子泡了。37

Baking the pancake in the semi-circular pan,  
The blue smoke from the pan covered the village;  
Rubbing my face with my hands and seeing my beloved elder brother off,  
The clear tears filled up my body.

In this symmetrical rhyme hua’er song, the ending two syllables of the first and the third lines rhyme, and the ending five syllables of the second and fourth lines rhyme as well.

1.1.3.3 ASYMMETRICAL RHYME

The asymmetrical rhyme of the Hezhou type of hua’er songs generally includes two types of rhyme schemes. First, all of the lines in the four-line lyrics hua’er song rhyme, with the exception of the third line. See the example below:

青草芽儿顶地皮,  
雨下时它个家长哩;  
把我的实心你试去,  
过后时你把我想哩。38

The green grass shoots are coming out of the ground,  
They grow when it rains;  
You can test my heartfelt sincerity,  
You will miss me later.

Lyrics of a Hezhou type of hua’er song from Xibei hua’erxue 西北花儿学 (Study of Northwestern Chinese Hua’er), written by Xi Huimin 郗慧民 and published in 1989.

Lyrics of a Hezhou type of hua’er song from Qinghai hua’er dadian 青海花儿大典, edited by Jidi Majia 吉狄马加 and Zhao Zongfu 赵宗福 and published in 2010.
Second, the second and fourth lines rhyme, while the first and third lines do not rhyme. For example:

东方升起了明月亮，
西方落下了太阳；
千山万水是走不完，
要讨个妹妹的疼肠。(Lyrics from Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郜慧民)

The bright moon is rising in the east,
The sun is setting in the west;
There is no way to walk over numerous mountains and rivers,
I want to be loved by the beloved little sister.

Although it is rarely used, there is another rhyme scheme in the Hezhou type of hua’er songs, known as baoyun 抱韵 (enclosing rhyme) (Liu 1980: 49). In this case, the first and fourth lines, respectively, and the second and the third lines, respectively, rhyme with each other. The rhyme scheme is AB, BA. Liu Kai used the following song lyrics as an example to illustrate this particular rhyme scheme:

假银鞍子梅花镫，
高丽铜包下的臭棍；
尕妹模样长的俊，
亚赛过皇上的正宫。^{39}

The fake silver saddle and the plum blossom stirrup,
The rod behind the horse’s hips is covered with Korean copper;
The beloved little sister looks beautiful,

She is more beautiful than the empress.

On the whole, the rhyme scheme in the Hezhou type of hua’er songs has the following characteristics. First, the most popular rhyme scheme is monorhyme and the symmetrical rhyme scheme takes second place. Second, the majority of the Hezhou type of hua’er songs rhyme on either a one-syllable ending or a two-syllable ending, though endings of three syllables or more also exist. Third, the modal particles are frequently used in many of the Hezhou type of hua’er songs for rhyming purposes. Fourth, the rhyme is generally placed on the characters which carry the most important meaning or information in the line. Therefore, the rhyme also serves the function of emphasizing the meaning of the important characters, while strengthening the balance of the syntax.

1.2 TAOMIN TYPE OF HUA’ER LYRICS

Similar to the Hezhou type of hua’er, according to the number of lines of the lyrics, the Taomin type of hua’er also includes two subtypes: short-form Taomin type of hua’er and long-form Taomin type of hua’er. The short-form Taomin type of hua’er is also called sanhua 散花 (single hua’er song) and the long-form Taomin type of hua’er is called benzihua 本子花 (a set of hua’er songs). Generally, the short-form Taomin type of hua’er contains two to eight lines, while each long-form Taomin type of hua’er contains more than eight lines and is arranged as a set of short-form hua’er songs.
1.2.1.1 SYNTAX OF THE SHORT-FORM TAOMIN TYPE OF HUA’ER

According to the research I conducted, based on the collection of the Taomin type of hua’er compiled by Xi Huimin 鄒慧民 in Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 (Northwestern Hua’er), published in 1984, there are a total of 221 traditional Taomin type of hua’er songs in the book. The number of four-line hua’er songs is 137 (62%), three-line is 75 (34%), six-line is 7 (0.03%), two-line is 1, and five-line is 1. Therefore, four-line and three-line lyrics are the most common lyrical forms seen in the Taomin type of short-form hua’er. Next, we will examine the three-line, four-line, and six-line Taomin type of hua’er lyrics, respectively. Examples are listed below:

同唱花儿同上山，
歌手找上对手了，
越长越有劲头了。(Lyrics from Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 鄒慧民)

While singing hua’er and climbing mountains together,
The singers found their opponents.
The more we sing, the more enthusiastic we become.

The above example represents a three-line Taomin type of hua’er song. Different from the Hezhou type of hua’er, in which three-line lyrics are rarely used, three-line lyrics are fairly popular in the Taomin type of hua’er. Although there is continually dispute regarding this topic, certain hua’er scholars categorize the three-line Taomin type of hua’er songs as dantao 单套 hua’er or danhua’er 单花儿 (a single set of hua’er
In general, the three-line Taomin type of *hua’er* songs is short, pithy and relatively easy to improvise on. Therefore, it is a popular form used in singing at *hua’er* festivals. The following example is a four-line Taomin type of *hua’er* lyrics:

天上云彩往南走，
地下河水向东流；
浪山没个好对手，
孤孤单单没浪头。（*Lyrics from Xibei hua’er* [Northwest *Hua’er*], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民）

The clouds on the sky are moving south,
The water in the river is moving east;
There is no good singing opponent available while I make a sightseeing tour,
I feel lonely and disinterested while I make a sightseeing tour.

天上日月朝西走，
地下江河向东流；
阿哥才是好歌手，
妹妹无能当对手；
心里有话难出口，
亲朋面前把丑丢。（*Lyrics from Linxia hua’erxuan* [Linxia *Hua’er* Anthology], published in 1982）

The sun and moon move toward the West,
The rivers on the ground move toward the East;
The beloved elder brother is a really good singer,
The little sister is too incompetent to become his singing opponent;
It is hard to express what is in my heart,
I feel ashamed in front of my relatives and friends.

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40 The Taomin type of *hua’er* includes the south-route type of *hua’er* and the north-route type of *hua’er*. The south-route type of *hua’er* refers to the Erlang Mountain *hua’er*. The north-route type of *hua’er* refers to the Lianhua Mountain *hua’er*. The three-line Taomin type of *hua’er* is generally called *dantao hua’er* (a single set of *hua’er* song) in Lianhua Mountain *hua’er*, but not in Erlang Mountain *hua’er* (Xi 1989: 205).
In contrast to the six-line lyrics in the Hezhou type of hua’er songs, in which two half-lines are added to the middle of each section, respectively, six-line lyrics in the Taomin type of hua’er songs, with regard to form, show the quality of a unified entity and all lines are blended into one harmonious whole. Each line of six-line lyrics in the Taomin type of hua’er songs almost always contains the same number of characters.

The six-line lyrics in Lianhua Mountain hua’er (a type of Taomin hua’er) is also called shuangtao hua’er 双套, or 双花儿 (two sets of hua’er songs). This is determined by the singing form of the Taomin type of hua’er. If each of the three members of the group sings one line, the whole song contains three lines, so it is called dantao hua’er 单套 (one set of hua’er songs). If each member in the three-person group sings two lines, the six-line lyrics are created, therefore it is called shuangtao hua’er 双套 (two sets of hua’er songs) (Xi 1989: 205).

1.2.1.2 SYNTAX OF THE LONG-FORM TAOMIN TYPE OF HUA’ER

Very similar to the long-form Hezhou type of hua’er, in accordance with the categorization of hua’er, the Taomin type of hua’er can also be divided into two categories: xushi huaer 叙事花儿 (narrative hua’er) and benzi huaer 本子花儿 (story hua’er). Different from the narrative Hezhou type of hua’er, which usually adopts themes such as animal zodiac, time, seasons, historical stories, figures and riddles, etc. to reveal the personal stories and sensibilities, the narrative Taomin type of hua’er songs also uses these themes and generally only focuses on the narration of the themes themselves, rather than referring to the singers’ personal attachments, lives or affections. The well-known
narrative Taomin type of *hua’er* songs include *shi’eryue mudan* 十二月牡丹 (the peony in 12 months), *ershisi jieqi hu’aer* 二十四节气花儿 (the 24 solar-term *hua’er* songs), *huachang shi’er shuxiang* 花唱十二属相 (animal zodiac *hua’er* song), *jiaohuqing* 脚户情 (the porter’s love), etc.

正月里，安茶哩，
牡丹土里生芽哩，
多会结籽开花哩。

二月里到了搬粪哩，
牡丹离土三寸哩，
多会长大开俊哩。

三月里，三月半，
牡丹长在花中间，
叶叶又绿又圆范，
杆杆就像一根线。

四月里，四月八，
人人进庙把香插，
我把牡丹当庄稼。

五月端阳抬轿哩，
牡丹开的如笑哩，
四路少年都瞭哩，
都把花儿来好哩。

六月里，耕田哩，
牡丹开在河滩里，
我手摘花儿做难哩。

… (Lyrics from *Linxia hua’erxuan* 临夏花儿选 [*Linxia Hua’er Anthology*], published in 1982)
In the first month,\(^{41}\) making tea,  
The peony is germinating in the soil.  
When will it seed and bloom?

It is the second month of applying manure,  
The peony is about three inches from the ground,  
When will it bloom?

In the middle of the third month,  
The peony is growing in the middle of other flowers.  
Its leaves are green and beautiful,  
The stem looks like a piece of thread.

On the eighth day of the fourth month,  
Everyone visits the temple, burns incense and worships the Gods,  
I treat the peony the same as I treat the crops.  
Carrying the bridal sedan chair during the Dragon Boat Festival on the fifth day of  
the fifth month,  
The peony blooms like a smiling face.  
The young men from four directions are looking,  
They all like the flower.

In the sixth month, harvesting the crops,  
The peony is blooming in the riverbed,  
I am averse to picking the peony flower.

…

Unlike the short-form *hua'er* songs in the long-form narrative Hezhou type of  
*hua'er* songs, which are made up mostly of either four or six-line lyrics, there are twelve  
short-form *hua'er* songs in the above long-form narrative Taomin type of *hua'er* song. In  
the narrative Taomin type of *hua'er* song listed above, the number of lines contained in  
each short-form *hua'er* song varies from three to six. The first lines of each short-form  
*hua'er* song in this narrative Taomin type of *hua'er* song also demonstrates different

\(^{41}\) The months in this song refer to the months in the Chinese lunar calendar.
features from the line structure in the narrative Hezhou type of hua’er songs. The first line of most of the short-form hua’er songs in the above example, generally contains two three-character phrases called sanzitou 三字头 (three-character phrase). The form of three-character phrases has a certain relationship with a type of verse or song in Yuan Dynasty (Wu 2008: 135). Generally speaking, the three-character phrase in the beginning of each short-form hua’er song provides the background and regulates the rhyme pattern of the following lines.

In contrast to the Hezhou type of story hua’er songs, which use excerpts of Chinese classics as opening words to unfold the singers’ personal stories, the Taomin type of story hua’er songs only focuses on the stories themselves with no personal comments. The well-known Taomin type of story hua’er songs include works of vernacular fiction such as: Shuihu 水浒 (Water Margin), Fengshenbang 封神榜 (The Apotheosizing Tales), Sanguo yanyi 三国演义 (The Romance of the Three Kingdoms), Yangjiajiang 杨家将 (Warriors of Yang Family), and Xiyouji 西游记 (Journey to the West). The following lines are based on episodes from the vernacular novel Journey to the West by Wu Cheng’en 吴承恩 in the 16th century.

…

白虎岭上妖精强，
变化多端人难防；
白骨精她把坏心想，
想把唐僧活吃了。

唐僧取经磨难大，
重重妖雾缠住他；
悟空神通实然大，
他把困难不害怕。

白骨妖精真厉害，
一变村姑送饭来；
八戒把真假分不开，
只叫师傅你过来。

唐僧问短又问长：
“你是谁家小姑娘，
笼笼里提的啥吃粮，
拿来就叫我们尝！”

“家住后山小村庄，
一家人心好又善良，
师傅近日我遇上，
笼里的茶饭你先尝，
胜过佛前烧高香。”

八戒把妖精认不了，
口里只叫饿死了：
“师兄把斋没化到，
你来送饭这就好，
让我肚子吃个饱。”

… (Lyrics from Linxia hua’erxuan 临夏花儿选 [Linxia Hua’er Anthology], published in 1982)

The demon on White-tiger Mountain is cruel,
She can change into many different forms and it is hard for people to protect themselves.
The white-boned demon has a bad idea,
She wants to eat Tang Monk alive.

Tang Monk suffers hardship in seeking the Buddhist scriptures,
There are many demons engulfing him like the fog and tempting him;
Wukong has great, far-reaching supernatural powers,
He does not fear the hardship.

The white-boned demon is fierce,
She changes herself into a village girl and delivers a meal;
Bajie cannot tell if it is true or false,
He only asks his master to come.
Tang Monk asks all sorts of questions:
“Which family are you from?”
“What meal is in your basket?”
“Why do you want us to eat your meal?”

“I am from the house in the village behind the mountain,
My family members are kindhearted,
I come across the Master,
I would like to have you eat the meal in my basket,
It will be more blessed than burning incense and worshiping the Gods.”

Bajie cannot tell if the village girl is the demon,
He only cries out that he is hungry for death:
“The senior fellow apprentice did not receive alms,
It is great that you give us the meal,
Let me enjoy being full.”

…

There are 50 short-form hua’er songs and 225 lines in total in this Taomin type of story hua’er song. Most short-form hua’er songs in the above example contain four-line lyrics. As a long-form Taomin type of story hua’er song, it tells a complete story with great detail. Because of its length and the fact that it is difficult to sing, it requires hua’er singing experts, such as chuanbanzhang, changbashi (singing experts), or other hua’er singing masters to sing the complete version of the long-form Taomin type of story hua’er song.

1.2.2 LYRICAL RHYTHM OF THE TAOMIN TYPE OF HUA’ER

As mentioned earlier, the three-syllable phrase functioning as a rhythmical unit is quite prevalent in the Hezhou type of hua’er songs. This phenomenon has linguistic influences from ethnic groups such as Hui. The Taomin type of hua’er songs are sung
mainly by Han Chinese and the lyrics are influenced by traditional Chinese seven-character poetry (Wu 2008: 128). In general, most lines of the Taomin type of hua’er songs contain seven syllables, with three rhythmical units in each line. For example:

这山 / 看见 / 那山高，
那山 / 一树 / 好樱桃;
樱桃 / 好吃 / 树难摘，
想缠 / 役妹 / 口难开。（Lyrics from Linxia hua’erxuan 临夏花儿选 [Linxia Hua’er Anthology], published in 1982)

It looks like the other mountain is higher than the mountain I am on,
There is a nice cherry tree on the other mountain;
Cherries taste good but the cherry tree is hard to plant,
I want to be with the beloved little sister but it is hard to say it.

As in most of the Taomin type of hua’er songs, each line in this hua’er song has seven syllables and three rhythmical units. The majority of rhythmical units contain two syllables. The rhythmical pattern in every line is uniform. While singing, this feature helps the singer to pronounce each line with ease. The uniform rhythmical pattern in each line of the Taomin type of hua’er lyrics is also a result of the influence of the Taomin type of hua’er music. As there is only one basic musical phrase in each Taomin type of hua’er song, the lyrical rhythm in each line of lyrics is given a uniform quality by this fundamental musical phrase (Xi 1989: 206).
1.2.3 RHYME OF THE TAOMIN TYPE OF HUA’ER

Compared with the Hezhou type of hua’er, the Taomin type of hua’er shares similar rhyme features, while it has its own unique traits which are based on the linguistic characteristics of the local dialect.

1.2.3.1 MONORHYME

马莲绳绳拦得宽，
拦住歌友唱得欢；
你不唱花花不艳，
我不听花心不甜。（Lyrics from Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民）

Ropes that are made from dried Malian straw block the road,
The singers who are blocked by the ropes sing enthusiastically;
The hua’er songs won’t become more beautiful without you singing them,
I won’t feel happy without listening to hua’er songs.

Similar to the Hezhou type of hua’er songs, the monorhyme is also the most basic and widely used rhyme scheme in the Taomin type of hua’er songs. In the example above, the end of each line rhymes with the [an] sound.

Different from the Hezhou type of hua’er songs, in which the number of rhyming syllables ranges from one to four syllables or more, the number of rhyming syllables in the Taomin type of hua’er songs ranges from one to three (more than three syllables have not been discovered so far) (Xi 1989: 208). The multi-syllable rhyming scheme is generally made up of one centered character which carries the meaning and one or two modal particles (Xi 1989: 208). For example:
丝线买成捆者呢，
哥把小妹等者呢，
你拿人情哄者呢。

Buying silk thread that is in bundles,
The elder brother is waiting for the beloved little sister,
Coaxing with gratitude.

In the above example, the last three syllables in each line rhyme. However only the first syllable has meaning and the other two syllables are modal particles.

1.2.3.2 SYMMETRICAL RHYME

太阳下山快落坡，
哥妹分手要过河；
钢打链子铁打锁，
拴住日头留住哥。(Lyrics from Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

The sun is setting and going behind the mountain, The beloved elder brother and little sister separate and are going to go across the river; The chain made from steel and the lock made from iron, Tie down the sun and keep the beloved elder brother from leaving.

In this four-line Taomin type of hua’er song, the ending characters between the first and the third lines, respectively, and the second and fourth lines, respectively, rhyme with each other. The rhyme scheme is shown as AB, AB in four-line lyrics. In general, this kind of rhyme scheme is more popularly applied to the Hezhou type of hua’er songs, while it is rarely seen in the Taomin type of hua’er songs (Liu 1980: 48).

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The other symmetrical rhyme scheme seen in the Taomin type of *hua’er* is called *suiyun* (following rhyme). The rhyme scheme is shown as AA, BB in four-line lyrics, and AA, BB, CC in six-line lyrics (Liu 1980: 49). For example:

园子角里苦根儿菜，
一心奔望我连儿来；
我连儿穿的蓝布衫儿，
左瞭右瞭一朵花儿。(Lyrics from *Xibei hua’er* [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

The balloon-flower root in the corner of the garden,  
Only wants to see my beloved little sister;  
My beloved little sister wears a blue shirt,  
She looks like a flower from every angle.

1.2.3.3 ASYMMETRICAL RHYME

The asymmetrical rhyme of the Taomin type of *hua’er* generally includes two categories. First, all of the lines in the four-line lyric *hua’er* song, with the exception of the third line, rhyme with each other.

小妹长的实在欢，  
好像磨里冲天杆；  
把哥变成磨轮子，  
一天跟妹打转转。(Lyrics from *Xibei hua’er* [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

The little sister looks happy,  
It is just like the up-to-heaven pole in the center of the millstone;  
Changing the beloved elder brother into a millstone,  
Have him go around the little sister every day.
Second, except for the first line, all other lines rhyme. The rhyme scheme is shown as ABB in three-line lyrics. This kind of rhyme scheme rarely exists in the Taomin type of *hua’er*. For example:

十一月，冬至节，
快把牡丹挪一挪，
地冻天寒怎么活！(Lyrics from *Xibei hua’er* 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

In the eleventh month, the winter solstice comes,
Move the peony to a different place soon,
How will it live in the cold!

All in all, the most popular rhyme scheme in the Taomin type of *hua’er* is the monorhyme (constituting greater than 50% of the Taomin type of *hua’er*), with the asymmetrical rhyme scheme placing second. The rhyming characters generally include only one syllable. Two-syllable and three-syllable rhyming characters exist, but are only a small percentage of the Taomin type of *hua’er*. The rhyming characters generally carry the most important information in the lines, and are stressed to emphasize the meaning of the lyrics.

1.3 RHETORIC OF *HUA’ER*

Traditional Chinese culture advocates implication, euphemism and inner beauty, and considers explicitness of expression as superficial and inappropriate. This kind of ideology has had a strong influence on Chinese literature and art. Through the words, images, color, music, and other tools, the goal of expression is not simply to express the
feeling directly or reproduce the appearance of the subject, but to capture the unseen and the soul. American artist, Arthur Wesley Dow, addressed the importance of this oriental ideology through painting:

The painter...put upon the paper the fewest possible lines and tones; just enough to cause form, texture and effect to be felt. Every brush-touch must be full-charged [sic] with meaning, and useless detail eliminated. Put together all the good points in such a method, and you have the qualities of the highest art (Dow 1997: 156).

In Chinese literature, the essence of this ideology is illustrated in *Shijing* 诗经 (The Book of Songs), which is a collection of Chinese poems and songs dating as far back as 1000 B.C. It speaks of various rhetorical methods, namely *fu* 赋 (straightforward description), *bi* 比 (metaphor), and *xing* 兴 (evocation). From the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) to contemporary China, there have been many scholars who have explained the rhetorical methods used in *The Book of Songs*. Among them, the most widely accepted explanation is from Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200 A.D.), who was one of the most famous Confucian school scholars, philosophers, and poets in Song Dynasty.

赋者，敷陈其事而直言之者也；比者，以彼物比此物也；兴者，先言他物以引起所咏之词也。（Quoted in Guo 2007:57）

Straightforward description means narrating the details directly; metaphor means something used to represent something else in order to suggest the resemblance; evocation means alluding to something else in order to convey something.
The rhetorical devices widely used in *The Book of Songs* are also extensively employed in *hua’er*. There are several reasons for this phenomenon. First, it is a tradition that the traditional Chinese culture considers implicit language as an art of expression and intelligence. Therefore, this ideology, in general, provides the background for the rhetorical devices used in many *hua’er*. Second, most *hua’er* songs are love songs. In the feudal history of China, *hua’er* singers used the rhetorical devices to convey their affection obscurely, so as not to be accused of employing licentious and heretical content in their singing. Third, *The Book of Songs* is the earliest collection of traditional Chinese folksongs and the basis for understanding what earlier oral folksong traditions may have been like. As different types of folksongs developed later in Chinese culture, lyrical composition and the musical style of *hua’er* seem to exhibit aspects similar to those in *The Book of Songs*. Many rhetorical devices similar to those used in *The Book of Songs* are not only seen in *hua’er*, but in many other types of Chinese folksongs as well such as Guangxi folksongs, Feng Menglong’s *Shan’ge*, etc.

### 1.3.1 STRAIGHTFORWARD DESCRIPTION

As a device of rhetoric, straightforward description was widely used in poetry in different periods of Chinese history. Roughly one third of *hua’er* songs use it as a mode of expression. *Hua’er* songs that employ straightforward description have the following characteristics. First, utilizing straightforward description helps directly unfold complete stories in *hua’er* songs. This offers vivid images to the *hua’er* listeners. For example:
Snow covers the ground,
Cannot see the roads leading to the beloved elder brother’s home;
The clouds cover the sky,
Cannot see the trees around the beloved elder brother’s home.

The above lyrics express the deep affection of a girl who possesses a great love for her beloved elder brother. The four lines are blended into an integral whole to depict a vivid picture. The girl is waiting for her beloved elder brother in the snow until the snow covers the roads. It becomes dark and she cannot see the trees anymore, but still, she waits for him. Although the Chinese character for love (aiqing 爱情 or ai 爱) and affection (ai 爱) are not used in the lyrics, the hua’er song, through the description of passing time and the change of scenery, evokes these sensibilities profoundly.

Second, straightforward description helps hua’er songs relate more closely to daily life. Hua’er singers apply the vernacular used in daily life to capture the scenes they want to express. This shortens the distance between the singers and the listeners, and elicits a sympathetic response in the listeners.

没有月亮没有星，
哥摸黑路妹担心；
一把抓住哥的手，\[42\]

Lyrics of a Hezhou type of hua’er song from Hua’erji 花儿集 (Collection of Hua’er), compiled by Zhang Yaxiong 张亚雄 and published in 1941.
这么黑的你咋走？

One cannot see the moon or stars in the dark,  
The beloved little sister worries about the beloved elder brother who is going  
home in the dark,  
Grab the hands of the beloved elder brother,  
How can you feel at home on such a dark night?

This song describes a scene where a couple of lovers see each other off in the  
dark. The picture of the scene is directly captured from daily life, in as far as the beloved  
little sister worries about her lover’s safety because of the darkness outside, so she grabs  
his hands and persuades him to stay. The vernacular language used in the lyrics is drawn  
from real life, without any linguistic or literary polish. However, the effect of strong  
affection is not weakened.

1.3.2 METAPHOR

Among these three rhetorical devices which are widely used in hua’er songs,  
metaphor is the most effective way to uphold the implication of the Chinese language. As  
we will see in the following account, metaphors are often used in hua’er to circumvent  
cultural restrictions. It was not until the early 20th century that arranged marriage, which  
had been a part of traditional Chinese culture since time immemorial, stopped being  
practiced. According to this traditional precept, free amativeness and free marriage were  
considered unacceptable and discreditable. However, the area where hua’er songs  
circulate is a region where several different ethnic groups intermix. Because of the

43 Lyrics of a hua’er song from Hua’er lunji 花儿论集 (Collection of Commentaries on Hua’er Songs),  
published by Gansu renmin chubanshe in 1983.
distinctive backgrounds, cultures and religions which these ethnic groups possess, the influence of the Chinese traditional view of marriage and other feudal practices, such as foot-binding, have much less impact on the people who live in Northwest China. Under this context, metaphor naturally gains its popularity in hua'er singing, as it is a special tool which effectively expresses personal sensibilities clearly, without violating certain social mores. In general, metaphors used in the hua'er songs have two characteristics. First, metaphors indirectly indicate people’s thoughts with vivid pictures, making deep impressions on the listeners.

尕妹是冰糖者阿哥是茶，
茶没有冰糖是不喝；
尕妹是河水者阿哥是鱼，
鱼没有河水是不活。  

The beloved little sister is the rock sugar and the beloved elder brother is the tea, The tea without rock sugar does not taste good; The beloved little sister is the river water and the beloved elder brother is the fish, The fish without river water cannot live.

In the above hua'er song, there are no characters used directly which express the sensibilities and affection between the young man and the beloved girl. Nevertheless the pictures that show the affection between the two lovers are clear and expressive. The objects described through metaphors in the song are close to daily life, offer vivid images, and implicatively yet effectively express the relationship between the two lovers. In the first half of the lyrics, the beloved little sister is compared to rock sugar, while the

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44 Lyrics of a hua'er song from Gansu minggeji 甘肅民歌集 (Collection of Folksongs in Gansu Province), published by Gansu renmin chubanshe in 1963.
beloved elder brother is compared to the tea. In the second half, the relationship between the two lovers is illustrated by comparing it with the relationship between the river water and the fish. The metaphors used in the lyrics best illustrate the fact that the lovers are closely bound together and that the deep love between them is sincere and inseparable.

Second, the use of metaphors in hua’er songs simplifies and transforms the complex and abstract feeling into concrete expressions.

把你好比纽门儿系，
缝在我的领豁儿里；
黑了解开亮了系，
早晚都在一搭儿里。(Lyrics from Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

I compare you as the button,
Sewing it in the collar notch;
Untie it in the night and tie it up in the morning,
We are together all the time.

The concept of love between men and women can often be abstract and intangible. However, this abstraction is done away with when it is manifested in a material body. In the above hua’er song, the button is used as a symbol which represents a loving relationship. It illustrates the deep love and attachment that the lovers possess, as well as the courtship with the opposite sex.

1.3.3 EVOCATION

As a rhetorical device most popularly used in hua’er songs, evocation deals with the relationship between the emotional identification and the objects. It is inspired by the
moment the singer first sees an object, and is moved by what he or she sees, eventually expressing a profound depth of emotion. Generally speaking, a short-form hua’er song contains two sections. Depending on the number of lines contained in a hua’er song, the first two or three lines comprise the first section, while the last two or three lines comprise the second. With regard to evocation, the second section is where the theme of the song unfolds, while the first section functions as subordinate paving material, and is used to educe the main theme of the hua’er song. According to the relationship between the first and second sections of short-form hua’er songs, there are typically two types of hua’er songs which used evocation as a rhetorical device. The first is that in which the first section of the hua’er song, with regard to the content, has no relationship with the second section, but simply provides a scheme of rhyming options. For instance:

前面的水沟后面的崖，
水沟里磨轮转了；
叫一声尕妹朝前来，
风刮者听不见了。（Lyrics from Xibei hua’er xue 西北花儿学 [Study of Northwestern Hua’er], written by Xi Huimin 郗慧民）

The rivulet ahead and the cliff behind,
The water mill in the rivulet is running;
Calling the beloved little sister to come forward,
She does not hear it because of the wind.

On the whole, the main theme of this hua’er song is that the elder brother or the singer feels disappointed about not being able to stay with his beloved little sister, even though he can see her from afar. The purpose of the first two lines is not to express the disappointment the elder brother experiences, but rather, to allow for an alternative-line
rhyming scheme. In the above example, the ending syllable rhymes with [ai] between the first and the third lines, and [ə] between the second and fourth lines.

Second, the first section of hua’er songs offers the option of establishing the structural corresponding relationship between the first and second sections. For example:

白麻纸糊下的窗亮子，
风吹是啪啦啦的响哩；
想起个阿哥的模样子，
清眼泪唰啦啦的淌哩。 45

The window sealed with the white cotton hemp paper,
It is blown by the wind and makes pilala sounds;
Recalling the appearance of the beloved elder brother,
The crystal tears fall off and makes shualala sounds.

The corresponding relationship between the first and second sections of this hua’er song not only falls on the rhyming scheme (alternative-line rhyming, namely, between the first and the third lines and the second and the fourth lines, respectively) but also on the structure of the song by using onomatopoetic words, such as 啪啦啦的 in the second line, and 唰啦啦的 in the fourth line, and by placing these words at the corresponding positions of the line. This strengthens the beauty of the song and enhances the harmony and uniformity of the language, as well as the structure of the lyrics.

45 Lyrics of a hua’er song from Gansu mingexuan 甘肃民歌选 (Selected Works of Gansu Folksongs), compiled by Zhou Jian 周健 and Jian Hong 剑虹 and published by Gansusheng wenhuaju and Gansusheng wenlian 甘肃省文化局甘肃省文联 in 1954.
1.4  

**FENGJIAOXUE**

In *hua’er* lyrics, there is a very special phenomenon known as *fengjiaoxue* 风搅雪 (the wind mixed with snow), or 呷各拉伊 (the Han mountain songs) in Tibetan (Liu 1981: 31). As the term suggests, it refers to *hua’er* lyrics made up of both Mandarin Chinese and a Chinese minority language mostly in Tibetan or occasionally in Salar language, Bao’an language (Wang 1986: 110), or other minority languages. The areas in which the *fengjiaoxue* phenomenon exists include the Haibe 海北, Huangnan 黄南, Tibetan Autonomous Region, Huangyuan 湟源, Guide 贵德, and Hualong 化隆 in Qinghai Province, as well as a few regions in Gansu Province where Han, Hui, Tibetan, and other minority ethnic groups reside (Liu 1981: 31).

According to Liu Kai, there are generally four types of *fengjiaoxue* in *hua’er* (Liu 1981: 31). First, one line is in Mandarin Chinese and the other line is in Tibetan that is literally transliterated into Chinese. Two languages make up lines alternatively.

大石头根里的清泉水，
哇里麻曲通果格；
我这里想你者没法儿，
却干内曲依果格。  

Translating the second and fourth lines into Mandarin Chinese, it is:

46 Lyrics of a *hua’er* song from the article, “Hua’er liuchuanzhongde yizhong teyi xianxiang—‘fengjiaoxue,’” written by Liu Kai 刘凯 and published in 1981.
大石头根里的清泉水，
黄乳牛吃水着哩；
我这里想你者没法儿，
你那里做啥着哩。

The crystal spring water underneath the big stone,
The yellow dairy cow is drinking water;
I am missing you so much,
What are you doing there?

Second, although the following lines alternate between Mandarin Chinese and Tibetan, the lines in Tibetan are actually transliterations of the Mandarin lines which precede them.

毛主席太阳照红了，
毛主席尼麻山咋哩；
社员们花儿向阳开，
目蒙迈图改通则。(Lyrics of a hua’er song from the article written by Liu Kai and published in 1981)

Translating the second and the fourth lines into Mandarin Chinese, it is:

毛主席太阳照红了，
毛主席太阳照红了；
社员们花儿向阳开，
人民花儿向阳开。

Chairman Mao is as the sun shines and lights up the world, Chairman Mao is as the sun shines and lights up the world; The people are as the flowers bloom toward the sun, The people are as the flowers bloom toward the sun.
Third, each line contains half Tibetan and half Mandarin Chinese. In general, the Tibetan words are translations of the Mandarin Chinese words used in each line.

沙马尕白豆儿，
让得何尕磨里磨走;
尕若索麻新朋友，
察图者炕上坐走。 (Lyrics of a hua’er song from the article written by Liu Kai 刘凯 and published in 1981)

Translating the Tibetan into Mandarin Chinese, it is:

白豆子白豆儿，
水磨尕磨里磨走；
新朋友新朋友，
炕炕上坐走。

The white beans,
Being ground in the little water mill;
The new friends,
Being invited to sit on the heatable brick bed.

Fourth, the Mandarin Chinese and the Tibetan words are mixed freely in the lyrics.

大石头根里的清泉儿，
白龙马曲通果格；
我这里想你着没哇格，
你那里去依果格？ (Lyrics of a hua’er song from the article written by Liu Kai 刘凯 and published in 1981)
Translating the Tibetan into Mandarin Chinese, it is:

大石头根里的清泉水，
白龙马吃水者哩；
我这里想你者没法儿，
你那里做啥着哩。

The crystal spring water underneath the big stone,
The white dragon horse is drinking water;
I am here, missing you so much,
What are you doing there?

Among different folksong styles in different regions of the world, it is very rare to see a phenomenon as fengjiaoxue in hua’er. There are two prerequisite factors for this phenomenon to occur. First, hua’er is a folksong style which is sung by different ethnic groups in the same region. This provides the foundation and platform for people from different ethnic groups to communicate and understand each other’s culture. Generally speaking, hua’er featuring the fengjiaoxue phenomenon is the result of cultural identity and national amalgamation and solidarity. Second, the ethnic people have to possess at least a little knowledge of the languages from other ethnic groups living in the same region. Hua’er is a cultural tool of musical exchange among different ethnic groups in Northwest China. With the knowledge of ethnic languages, different ethnic groups can understand each other during the song exchange without translation. Hanization also contributes to the mixed use of ethnic languages in hua’er songs. Mandarin Chinese has been promoted and becoming a lingua franca for various ethnic groups in Northwest China for a long time. From the Han immigration to Northwest China, to frontier
garrisons during the Ming Dynasty, the Han population in the region has been increasing and the Han culture has become more and more influential. The mixed ethnic languages used in hua’er reflect this cultural and historical fact.

1.5 PADDDING WORDS AND PHRASES

Although chenci chenju (padding words and phrases) are commonly seen in other traditional Chinese art forms, including quyi (performed narrative arts), in which the padding words and phrases are inserted into the middle or at the end of lines to support the melody when lines are too short (Bender 1995: 79; Liu 1962: 32; Lü 1994: 172), the use of padding words and phrases in hua’er is incredibly rich, sophisticated and complex. In the domain of hua’er scholarship, there is a saying, “无“花”不有衬; 无衬不成“花” (literally meaning, “no hua’er songs do not contain padding words or phrases; the hua’er songs which do not contain padding words or phrases are not hua’er songs) (Zhou 1983: 23).

The number of words in padding words and phrases generally ranges from one Chinese character to many characters, as in a complete sentence. In hua’er, padding words and phrases generally include the following types. First, modal particles are used to indicate and express mood and emotion, such as li 嘿, liao 了, zhe 者, ha 哈, yo 哟, ba 吧, ma 嘛, etc. Second, certain pronouns, such as age 阿哥 (elder brother), ajie 阿姐

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47 Padding words and phrases are the translation used by James J. Y. Liu and Mark Bender in discussion of classical poetry and tanci (弹词) performances.

48 A translation of quyi by Mark Bender (Bender 2003: 3, 10).
(elder sister), dayanjing 大眼睛 (big eyes), galiangshou 尕连手 (literally meaning “little join-hand,” it refers to little beloved), etc., are used to express affinity for a person. Third, phrases such as agede baimudan 阿哥的白牡丹 (the elder brother’s peony), agede youya 阿哥的肉呀 (the elder brother’s flesh), etc. Fourth, sentences such as wode huanghuajie nijianmeiyou 我的黃花姐你见没有 (did you see my gold-flower elder sister), jiuyueli juhua kaiya 九月里菊花开呀 (chrysanthemum blooms in September), etc.

The padding words and phrases usually appear at the beginning, middle, or end of a hua’er song. The following example comprehensively demonstrates the various positions in which the padding words and phrases are placed in a hua’er song.

（哎哟哟嗨哟哟哟欧）49（我们）太子山高了者（哎哟么就）雪压（的个）了（么），
（哎哟）雪压了（是），
（叫几个）灵芝草（呀）搭不起架了（呀是）；
（哎哟哟嗨哟哟哟欧）（我们）妹妹们大了者（哎哟么就）白大（的个）了（么），
（哎哟）白大了（是），
（在几个）人前头（呀）说不上话了（呀是）。50

(aiyoyoheyoyoyoou) (our) The snow covers the high Taizi Mountain,
(aiyo) the snow covers (is),
(that) the glossy ganoderma cannot unfold the leaves (yashi);
(aiyoyoheyoyoyoou) (our) the sisters grow up and look white,
(aiyo) look white (is),
(that) cannot talk to them in front of people (yashi).

49 For easy identification, the padding words and phrases are put in parentheses.

50 Lyrics of a Hezhou type of hua’er song from Zhongguo hua’er quling quanji 中国花儿曲令全集 (Collected Works of Hua’er Songs and Ling Tunes), edited by Wang Pei 王沛 and published by Gansu renmin chubanshe in 2007.
In the above *hua’er* song, there are 92 Chinese characters in total. Among them, 52 characters appear as padding words and phrases which make up more than half of the total number of characters in the song. Since most padding words and phrases do not have specific semantic meaning and generally serve an auxiliary function to the main theme of the song, this phenomenon may leave people with a sense that the secondary supercedes the primary. However, these padding words and phrases are non-substitutive. To best understand this special feature of *hua’er*, one has to comprehend the function of these padding words and phrases.

First, the padding words and phrases that are placed in the beginning of a *hua’er* song have the function to draw attention to other people. *Hua’er* is a type of mountain song. Since they are naturally sung in the wilderness or the mountains, singers use the beginning padding words and phrases as a way to greet other people in the area, to show their personalities, and to draw attention to themselves. In the antiphonal singing context, singing the beginning padding words and phrases also incites the opposing side to sing. Second, the padding words and phrases are used as the introduction of a *hua’er* song. Singers can sing these words freely to set up the correct emotions they want to express in their singing. Third, the padding words and phrases are used to bring out and emphasize the theme of the song. Most of the *hua’er* songs are love songs. The padding words and phrases, such as age 阿哥 (elder brother), gamei 尕妹 (beloved little sister), dayanjing 大眼睛 (big eyes), galianshou 尕连手 (little beloved), agede baimudan 阿哥的白牡丹 (the elder brother’s peony), agede youya 阿哥的肉呀 (the elder brother’s flesh), etc., indicate the relationship between the singer and either the listener or the person who the singer is
longing for, while at the same time, pointing out the affection and strong feelings for the special person. Fourth, the padding words and phrases function as a connecting link in the middle of a line or lines. They also facilitate the melodic development, balance the musical structure, and assist to achieve the musical climax of the song. Fifth, *hua’er* singers use the padding words and phrases as a unique tool to paint more vivid pictures of the lyrics. For example:

尕妹是天上的（噢耶你是）白鸽子（来嘛噢呀）,  
阿哥是鸦鹘者（噗噜噜啪啦拉拉噜楞楞楞呛啷啷）。

(Lyrics from *Zhongguo hua’er quling quanji* 中国花儿曲令全集 edited by Wang Pei 王沛 and published in 2007)

The beloved little sister is the white pigeon in the sky,  
The beloved elder brother is the falcon.

A series of modal particles are used here to depict the sound made by the bird. Other modal particles are also used to describe the sounds from the natural environment, such as the tree, the rain, the wind, and so on. Sixth, the padding words and phrases are used to signal the end of the song and maximally enhance the singers’ emotion. Seventh, the padding words and phrases complement the content of the lyrics and expand the musical structure. For instance:

（哎哟）怀抱的三弦（哈）没心肠弹（哟哎哟），
没心肠弹（是是哟耶），
心扯在你身（了）上了（呀），（水红花呀你的大老哥去哩呀妹子坐哟，苦呀苦呀阿哥们是出门人哟）

(Lyrics from *Zhongguo hua’er quling quanji* 中国花儿曲令全集 edited by Wang Pei 王沛 and published in 2007)
(aiyo) holding the sanxian\textsuperscript{51} but do not feel like playing it,  
Do not feeling like playing it (shishiyoye)  
My heart is occupied by thinking of you (ya), (shuihonghuaya, your elder brother leaves, yali the beloved little sister sits, the sufferings, the elder brothers are porters yo)

At the end of this song excerpt, the padding phrase contains 28 characters. This extremely long padding phrase expands both the lyrical and musical content, and emphasizes the bitter feeling of the song. Eighth, the padding words and phrases are used for rhyming purposes. Because of the improvisational characteristic of hua’er songs and the conflict between content and rhyming scheme, padding words can repair this imperfection and thus, help the song achieve a better rhyming effect. For example:

高墙园子里种白菜,  
要浇个清泉的水哩;  
二流子懒汉我不爱,  
要嫁个劳动的汉哩。(Lyrics from Xibei hua’er 西北花儿 [Northwest Hua’er], compiled by Xi Huimin 郗慧民)

Planting cabbages in the garden surrounded by the tall wall,  
Watering them with the crystal spring water;  
I do not love the loafers and sluggards,  
I want to marry someone who loves working.

In the above example, without the ending padding character li 哩, the second to last characters in both the second and the fourth lines, respectively, do not rhyme. With the addition of the padding character li 哩, it successfully arranges the lyrics into a typical

\textsuperscript{51} A Chinese three-stringed, plucked musical instrument.
symmetrical rhyming scheme. Ninth, the padding words and phrases underline the oral
tradition of *hua'er*. Northwestern Chinese dialects are widely used in *hua'er*. The words
and phrases, such as *xia* 吓, *zhe* 者, *jìu* 就, *xiawojìu* 吓我就, and many others that have
unique linguistic characteristics of the Northwestern dialects, frequently appear as
padding words and phrases in *hua'er*. These words and phrases not only give prominence
to artistic influences, but also exhibit the richness of local characteristic linguistics
styles.
CHAPTER 2

HUA’ER MUSIC

In general, among most folksong genres in China, the musical elements such as melody, rhythm, meter, scales, harmony, etc., serve a crucial role, in that they are the central expression of emotion, the primary ways in which listeners recognize songs, and the most significant elements in evaluating the beauty of the folksong. In this respect, distinct from most other Chinese folksong genres, musical factors of hua’er are generally considered to be secondary to the lyrics (Tuohy 2002: 164). However, as a typical type of folksong genre, the hua’er lyrics, to a certain degree, are restricted by the musical factors which still play a significant role in hua’er. Therefore, to systematically understand the hua’er as a folksong genre, the thorough study of hua’er music is necessary.

2.1 ORIGIN OF LING

The tunes or melodies of the hua’er are generally called the ling 令, quling 曲令, or ling’er 令儿. The term, ling, has been accepted by hua’er scholars, hua’er singers, and by residents of the areas in which hua’er is widely circulated. Why are the tunes or melodies of hua’er called the ling? When did the term originate? Although it is difficult to find sufficient evidence which pinpoints the origin of the ling, the purpose of the
following discussion is to pave the way for future research regarding this topic.

Originating from Xizhou 西周 (the Western Zhou Dynasty, 1046-771 B.C.), the term, \textit{jiuling} 酒令 (drinkers’ wager games), is the general name which refers to merry-making drinking games during a banquet. The rules and forms of the \textit{jiuling} reached their maturity in the Sui Dynasty (隋朝) and the Tang Dynasty (唐朝). One of the various ways in which these drinking games are played is the singing game. During a banquet, the drinkers either improvise lyrics with the existing folk tunes or melodies, or use tunes and lyrics from \textit{yanyue} 燕乐 (Yan Music).\footnote{Yan Music is a musical style which was used in the imperial court during the period from the Sui Dynasty to the Song Dynasty. It furthered the musical development of the Yue Fu 乐府, which was a music bureau in Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). As a new musical style, Yan Music is a combination of Han folk music, other Chinese ethnic musics, and foreign folk music.} In addition, because the term, \textit{ling}, shares the same meaning with the \textit{ling} used in the term, \textit{jiuling}, according to the research I conducted, we can conclude that the earliest possible use of the term, \textit{ling}, was in the \textit{jiuling}, which is associated with singing and the tunes or melodies from folk music.

The development of the \textit{jiuling} became the source of another form of poetry called the \textit{ci} 词 or the \textit{quzici} 曲子词 (Liu 1993). This new form of poetry was initially composed for singing and reached its maturity in the Song Dynasty. As poetry serves as the lyrics of songs, each poem at least has a corresponding tune.\footnote{Many of the original tunes that accompany the \textit{ci} are hardly sung nowadays because they were either lost over time or were not transcribed in the first place. Instead, the poetry is studied as a pure form of poetry in Chinese literature.} Similar to the \textit{jiuling}, the tunes and melodies of the \textit{ci} are frequently from \textit{yanyue} as well. The \textit{ci} inherited the meaning of the term, \textit{ling}, used in \textit{jiuling}, and used it to mean the tunes or melodies in the
Different musical elements of the *quzici*, such as the melodies, rhythms, modes, etc., are called the *cidiao* 词调. Each type of the *cidiao* has a name called the *cipai* 词牌.

Many *cipai* contain the term *ling*. For example, there are *liangzhou ling* 梁州令 (the Liangzhou tune), *mulanhua ling* 木兰花令 (the lily magnolia flower tune), *shiliuzi ling* 十六字令 (the sixteen-character tune), *rumeng ling* 如梦令 (the dreamlike tune), etc.

In Yuan Dynasty, based on the influences of the *jiuling* and the *ci*, a new form of song and poetry art reached its maturity, the *sanqu* 散曲 (dispersed songs). As a type of song verse in Chinese literature, the *sanqu* also use the term *ling* to indicate the title of the songs. Compared with the *ci*, the *sanqu* developed its own distinctive characteristics. First, padding words were added to the tune to increase the colloquial quality. Second, rhyme schemes were developed further to improve the quality of vocal flow, as well as to make the listening experience more pleasurable. To a certain degree, from taking into account these features, we can also see the relationship and similarity between the *sanqu* and the *hua’er* songs. See the following examples for a comparision of *xiaoling* 小令 (short lyric song-poem), which is a type of *sanqu*, and a Taomin type of *hua’er* song.

干荷花，脆柳枝，
老西风满襟秋思。
盼来书玉人憔悴死，
界青天雁飞一字。⁵⁴

Dried lotus flower, brittle willow branches,
Full of dreary thoughts in autumn with the fierce westerly wind.

⁵⁴ *A xiaoling* from *Quanyuan sanqu* 全元散曲 (The Whole Collection of Sanqu in Yuan Dynasty), published by Zhonghua shuju 中华书局 in 1964.
What I received from longing was the death of my lover,
The wild geese lined up fly over the sky’s horizon.

莲花山，九眼泉，
九眼泉里水不干；
花儿千朵歌成串，
口浮花儿透心甜。（Lyrics from *Linxia hua’erxuan* 临夏花儿选 [Linxia Hua’er Anthology], published in 1982）

Lianhua Mountain, Jiuyan Spring,
The spring water in Jiuyan Spring never dries up;
Thousands of flowers and innumerable songs,
Feeling completely sweet and happy when singing hua’er songs.

From observing the above examples, we can see the association between the *sanqu* and the *hua’er* songs. First, both songs contain four-line lyrics. Second, the first lines of both songs all use the three-character phrases. Third, both songs choose monorhyme as the rhyming scheme to enhance the expression of the lyrics. Fourth, the lyrics of both songs are clear, easy to understand, and contain the influence of folk culture. By comparing the *sanqu* and the *hua’er*, I conclude that both song forms not only share the common meaning of the term, *ling*, but also support the hypothesis that *hua’er* originated in the Yuan Dynasty.

In summary, starting from the Western Zhou Dynasty, the term *ling* in the *jiuling*, the *ci*, and the *sanqu* all refer to the tunes or melodies. It is very likely that the term, *ling*, used to indicate the *hua’er* tunes and melodies, was adopted from previous musical art forms in Chinese history.

Another theory regarding the origin of the term, *ling*, is that it comes from the term, *le* 勒, which means “the song” or “the tune” in Tibetan (Guo 2007: 86). The *le* in
Tibetan folksongs, as in *hua’er*, refers to the type of Tibetan songs sung in the wilderness (e.g., mountains, grasslands, etc.) (Tian 2001: 615). In Guo’s book, *Hezhou hua’er* 河州花儿 (*Hezhou Hua’er*), he mentions that the term, *le*, specifically refers to the beginning and connective padding musical phrases in *hua’er*, in which the padding musical phrases are not only long, but also contain a wide pitch range. The *hua’er* songs adopted these musical features from Tibetan *le* and later developed these features as part of their own musical characteristics (Guo 2007: 86). These descriptions sound contradictory. Does the term, *le*, actually mean “the song” or “the padding musical phrase”? In my opinion, there are two ways to understand the meaning of the term, *le*. In the narrow sense, it refers to the padding musical phrases. In the broad sense, it refers to the tune. Because of the similarity between the pronunciation of the two terms, the term, *le*, was later universally accepted and called the *ling*. Though establishing the relationship between the *ling* and the *le* seems logical, since there has been no definitive conclusion regarding the time of the origin of *hua’er*, it is difficult to confirm if the features of the *ling* tunes were derived directly from the Tibetan folksong genre, *le*. Further research needs to be conducted in this area.

In his book, *Xibei hua’erxue* 西北花儿学 (*Northwestern Hua’er*), Xi Huimin mentions that, according to the famous *hua’er* singer, Zhu Zhonglu 朱仲禄, his father asked him to sing a *hua’er* song titled with the *lei* 类 (type or kind) when he was young (approximately the 1930s). Therefore, Xi believes that the term, *lei*, refers to the tunes of *hua’er* songs and was a name replaced by the *ling* after the fact (Xi 1989: 287). In my opinion, it is questionable to draw this conclusion from the above evidence to indicate the
relationship between the *lei* and the *ling*. First, in Chinese language, the character, *lei* 类, generally means the type or being similar. The *ling* 令 generally means the tune or the song. These two characters do not share a common meaning or have any relationship whatsoever. Second, in accordance with Zhou’s fieldwork experiences, a porter living in the place where *hua’er* popularly circulates, told him that the *lei* refers to all the *hua’er* song tunes sung in that area (Zhou 1983: 133). It is obvious that the *lei* is a general name used for indicating the types of *hua’er*, but not the specific tunes of the *hua’er*. Although it is just an explanation from one local person, it at least provides a different viewpoint regarding the relationship between the *ling* and the *lei*. Third, in telling him to sing a *lei* *hua’er* song, Zhu’s father could ask him to sing any song from a specific type or subtype of *hua’er*, but not a specific *hua’er* tune or melody. For example, in comparing the Tuzu *ling* 土族令 with the Tuzu *lei* 土族类, the former refers to the specific tune of Tuzu *hua’er*, while the latter refers to the type of Tuzu *hua’er* songs, including the Tuzu *ling*, meimei *ling* 妹妹令 (younger-sister tune), yangliujie *ling* 杨柳姐令 (poplar and willow elder sister tune), etc. In this case, Zhu’s father could have meant to ask his son to sing the specific Tuzu *ling*, or any *hua’er* song from the Tuzu *lei*. Fourth, as a tradition, the *lei* was used and considered as the term referring to the type of tunes rather than the specific tunes in the Linxia area long ago (Zhou 1983: 133). Fifth, the *lei* indicates the category which is in a higher level of classification than the *ling*, which refers to specific tunes. The origin of the term, *lei*, has a relationship with the ethnic groups and regions. In the same ethnic group, because of the common language, musical features, national character and other elements, different tunes that share the common musical characteristics in the
same style are created. Therefore, after years of development, different lei’s of hua’er songs have emerged and been named after the specific name of the ethnic group, specifically Tuzu lei 土族类, Bao’an lei 保安类, Sala lei 撒拉类, and Yugu lei 裕固类.

In the specific region of Northwest China, because of the long-standing national amalgamation and communication among different ethnic groups, using Mandarin Chinese as the common language for hua’er singing, and the influence of hua’er festivals, etc., the hua’er songs in the specific region gradually developed into a type of hua’er that carries a distinctive regional feature. Therefore, different leis of hua’er songs named after the region arose, namely, Maying lei 马营类, Ledu lei 乐都类, Nanxiang lei 南乡类, and Guyuan lei 固原类 (Zhou 1983: 134-135). In conclusion, the lei refers to a type of hua’er and the ling refers to a specific hua’er song tune or melody.

While, nowadays, the name, ling, is widely accepted by hua’er scholars, hua’er singers, and local people, it did not start being used until the 1940s. In one of the earliest hua’er collections, “The Collection of Hua’er Songs,” published in 1940 by Zhang Yaxiong 张亚雄, there was no evidence that the name of the ling was used to identify the tunes or melodies of hua’er. The term was gradually accepted and popularized among intellectuals after modern China was established in 1949 (Zhou 1983: 136). In Zhang Yaxiong’s book, “The Collection of Hua’er Songs,” he points out that the ling is one of the three essential factors, namely, the ju 句, the ling 令, and the diao 调, of a hua’er song. The diao refers to the tunes or melodies of a hua’er song, while the so-called ling is actually an idiomatic expression of bangqiang 帮腔 (vocal accompaniment) or guomen’er 过门儿 (a short interlude between verses), such as agede rou 阿哥的肉 (the
elder brother’s flesh) in a *hua’er* song (Zhang 1940: 102-114). The *bangqiang* and *guomen’er*, which Zhang mentions in his book are nowadays called padding musical phrases. Thus, according to one of the representative *hua’er* research scholars, the *ling* refers to the padding musical phrases in the early stages of *hua’er* research. This, as mentioned earlier, represents the meaning of the term, *ling*, in a narrow sense.

According to Xi Huimin’s research findings, Men Zhu 萌竹, in his article “*A New Study of Qinghai Hua’er*” (from “Qinghai hua’er xinlun 青海花儿新论” [New Discussion on Qinghai *Hua’er*]), mentioned that the *ling* refers to the tunes and melodies of a *hua’er* song. This article was published in 1947 and was the first time it was officially announced that the *ling*’s definition matches the, what is now, commonly accepted interpretation of the term (Xi 1989: 288). After modern China was established in 1949, the term, *ling*, was gradually and universally accepted and used to indicate the tunes and melodies of a *hua’er* song, by both the academic world and the masses.

### 2.2 CLASSIFICATION OF LING

According to Wang Pei 王沛, there are over 140 recognized *ling* names and, each *ling* name may contain several tunes, over 340 different *ling* tunes in the Hezhou type of *hua’er*, and 7 different *ling* names and around 20 *ling* tunes in the Taomin type of *hua’er* (Wang 2007: 18). The methods used to name the *ling* tunes are multifarious. In general, there are ten ways to classify the *ling* tunes in *hua’er*. First, many *ling* tunes are named after the padding words or phrases, such as *gama’er ling* 小马儿令 (little horse tune), *canglanglang ling* 嘹啷啷令 (canglanglang tune), *aiyoyo ling* 哎哟哟令 (aiyoyo tune),
etc. This method of classifying the ling tunes is most widely used in hua’er. The number of the ling tunes that are named after the padding words or phrases is the largest among all the ling tunes in hua’er. Second, the ling tunes are named after the name of the region. For example, xining ling 西宁令 (Xining tune), maying ling 马营令 (Maying tune), lianhuashan ling 莲花山令 (Lianhua Mountain tune), etc. The fact that the ling tunes are named after the region names does not necessarily imply that these tunes only circulate in the regions they are named after. Depending upon the popularity and acceptance by the local people, the ling tunes named after specific regions can also be sung in other regions. Third, the ling tunes are named after the names of ethnic groups from which these tunes originated. For example, there are sala ling 撒拉令 (Sala tune), bao’an ling 保安令 (Bao’an tune), and Dongxiang ling 东乡令 (Dongxiang tune), etc. According to Xi Huimin, the ling tunes with names of ethnic groups first appeared during the 1960s. These ling names are the result of the study of hua’er from an ethnic view under the stress of national problems (Xi 1989: 294). Fourth, the ling tunes are named after the characteristics of the images of singing objects, such as dayanjing ling 大眼睛令 (big-eye tune), dashencai ling 大身材令 (big-stature tune), guaizui’er ling 乖嘴儿令 (smooth talking mouth tune), etc. Fifth, the ling tunes are named after the pronouns. For instance, there are gameimei ling 子妹妹令 (beloved little sister tune), ga’ajie ling 小阿姐令 (little beloved elder sister tune), and huanghuajie ling 黄花姐令 (gold flower elder sister tune), etc. Sixth, the ling tunes are named after the flowers, such as baimudan ling 白牡丹令 (white peony tune), lanmudan ling 蓝牡丹令 (blue peony tune), and shandanhua ling 山
Danhua Ling (Lilium Concolor tune), etc. Seventh, the ling tunes are named after the animals, such as gama’er ling 尕马儿令 (little horse tune), and xique’er ling 喜鹊儿令 (magpie tune), etc. Eighth, the ling tunes are named after specific types of work, such as banchuan ling 扳船令 (rowing tune), and maqingke ling 码青稞令 (stacking highland barley tune), etc. Ninth, the ling tunes are named after the features of the melodies of hua’er songs, such as dazhuanwan ling 大转弯令 (big-turn tune), sanqisanluo ling 三起三落令 (three-up-and-down tune), zhadao ling 扎刀令 (stabbing knife tune), zhiling 直令 (straight tune), and so on. Tenth, traditional hua’er songs generally do not have titles and the people who composed these hua’er songs are unknown. The xinbian hua’er 新编花儿 (newly composed hua’er) are composed by known individuals. As a new type of hua’er style, these songs are composed for the purpose of either creating the enhanced version of hua’er, which is developed for stage productions for urban audiences (sometimes national, or even international), or for catering to the new taste of modern society. The xinbian hua’er songs may contain titles. Many of them may also include instrumental accompaniment for stage performance purposes.

With regard to the classification of hua’er ling tunes, there is another interesting phenomenon that is worth mentioning. In traditional hua’er songs, as an oral tradition, singers improvise the ling tunes. The same ling tune sung by different people from different regions or ethnic groups is varied to meet their regional or ethnic tastes. There is a saying which describes the phenomenon of hua’er variation. It goes shiqu jiubutong 十曲九不同 (singing ten times and nine times are different) (Zhou 1983: 134). This
phenomenon is an important factor for the development of hua’er and helps the hua’er tradition become more vigorous and exuberant.

There are two methods commonly used in the discussion of hua’er music. One is based on the classification of hua’er, namely the Hezhou and Taomin types of hua’er, and the other one is based on the hua’er in different ethnic groups. Based on these two methods, I will examine hua’er music in the following paragraphs.

### 2.3 HEZhou TYPE OF HUA’ER MUSIC

Distinct from the Taomin type of hua’er, the Hezhou type of hua’er has its unique features as far as the musical structures, scales, melodic movement, rhythms, and other musical elements are concerned. The factors contributing to these musical distinctions are complex. First, the ancient Hezhou\(^5\) dialect has its own unique phonetic features and linguistical structures. These features are directly reflected in the Hezhou type of hua’er music. Second, the natural environment, cultural traditions and customs in the ancient Hezhou area establish the regional characteristic singing style, which affects the musical construction in return.

#### 2.3.1 MUSICAL FORM

In a Hezhou type of hua’er song, the lyrics generally contain either four or six lines and are in two sections. This lyrical feature, namely, the symmetrical feature between the two sections, generally requires singers to sing hua’er music twice to finish

\(^5\)The ancient Hezhou (古河州) is one of the birthplaces of the Yellow River Culture, which came into being between the year 4000 B.C. and 2000 B.C., and played a very important role in Chinese civilization.
singing all of the lyrics. In other words, the tune or melody only covers half of the lyrics in a *hua’er* song.

Generally speaking, the musical form of a *hua’er* song is relatively simple and small. The melody of a Hezhou type of *hua’er* song generally contains one period in which there are commonly two phrases. For example:

![Musical notation]

In the above example, the whole song only contains 11 measures and four lines of lyrics. There are only two musical phrases (from measures 1 to 5 and 6 to 11) and each musical phrase covers one line of lyrics.

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A *hua’er* song called *agede rong ling* 阿哥的肉令 (The beloved elder brother’s flesh tune) from *Hua’er xuan* 花儿选 (Selected *Hua’er*), compiled by Zhu Zhonglu 朱仲禄 and published by Xi’an renmin chubanshe in 1954.

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In a more detailed scale, a Hezhou type of *hua’er* song is typically constituted of five parts: *qiyin* 起音 (padding musical phrase at the beginning), *shangju* 上句 (first musical phrase), *lianjiexing chenju* 连接性衬句 (connective padding musical phrase), *xiaju* 下句 (second musical phrase), and *luoyin* 落音 (ending musical phrase).

The *qiyin* or the musical padding phrases at the beginning of a *hua’er* song, serve the function of drawing attention from other people. The vigorous musical shouting at the beginning sets up the singers’ emotion and mood, and prepares them to expand and express their feelings through the following words musically. The melodic progression of the padding musical phrases at the beginning generally goes from lower pitches to higher pitches, or has a higher, sustained pitch. See the example below:

![Example musical notation](image)

In the above *hua’er* song, the musical padding phrase at the beginning contains four measures, and the vocal range covers one octave. To cover an octave within three measures not only requires incredible voice control, but also offers singers a great opportunity to attract people’s attention quickly.

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57 An excerpt of a *hua’er* song called *zhiling* 直令 (straight tune) or *hezhousanlingba* 河州三令八 (the eighth of Hezhou third tune) from *Zhongguo hua’er quling quanji* 中国花儿曲令全集 (Collected Works of Chinese *Hua’er* Songs and *Ling* Tunes) edited by Wang Pei.
As both contain the most characteristic melodies and are rich in variations, the first and second musical phrases are the most important parts of a hua’er song. The one period that contains two musical phrases is the most commonly seen musical form in hua’er. Typically, the first musical phrase either ends on the subdominant or the dominant, though sometimes also on the tonic, of a scale to form a half-cadence. The second musical phrase generally ends on the tonic to form an authentic cadence. In general, the first musical phrase rises up the scale and lingers at the top vocal register after reaching the climax of the melody. The second musical phrase goes slowly down the scale, ending at the middle or bottom vocal register. See the example below:

白麻纸糊下的窗亮子，风吹来

当啷啷(地)响来；我记起你的个

模样儿，眼泪就唰啦啦(地)淌来。
In the above example, the first musical phrase starts with a three-note pattern (D-F-D) in the top vocal register. This three-note pattern is repeated in every single measure in the first four measures and, with the repetition of the minor third interval, effectively creates a musical image of sorrow and sadness. The second musical phrase starts from measure 7. It follows the first musical phrase, continues at a relatively high register in the beginning two measures, and gradually declines to the lowest note of the whole folksong, which is the tonic of the scale. This decline of scale in the second phrase perfectly reflects the meaning of the lyrics and creates a feeling of helplessness, inability to cope with reality, and an endless yearning for the lover.

As the name indicates, the connective padding musical phrase functions as a linkage between the first and second musical phrases in a Hezhou type of hua’er song. In many situations, the padding musical phrase also plays an important role in emphasizing the connective padding words or phrases in a hua’er song. In contrast to most of the padding words or phrases used in either the beginning or the end of the hua’er song, instead of using functional words or empty words, the connective padding words or phrases generally contain specific meanings, and express yearning for the beloved, or are even explicitly straightforward about sex. For example, one of the most characteristic and widely used connective padding phrases, known as agede hanya rourou 阿哥的憨呀肉肉 (the beloved elder brother’s flesh) or agede rouya 阿哥的肉呀 (the beloved elder

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58 A hua’er song called ganling 直令 (Gangu tune) from Zhongguo hua’er quling quanji 中国花儿曲令全集 (Collected Works of Chinese Hua’er Songs and Ling Tunes) edited by Wang Pei.
brother’s flesh) is commonly seen in Hezhou ling, which contains at least 25 different ling tunes. These connective padding words or phrases directly connect the feeling of love to physical intimacy. Let’s observe the following two examples:

Appearing as the most explicit lyrical content in hua’er, though they function as connective padding words or phrases, these words most prominently express the general feeling of love and yearning for sex. The connective padding musical phrases used in the above examples typically carry the characteristics of Northwestern Chinese folk music. First, the pitch range in the connective padding musical phrases, which contain typical padding lyrical phrases, is generally an octave or even greater (the padding musical phrase in the second example contains a pitch range of the perfect eleventh interval). Second, the connective padding musical phrases that contain typical connective padding lyrical phrases generally reach the top pitch register in a hua’er song. This feature shows
the prominence and importance of these connective musical and lyrical padding words and phrases for the singers. Because of the physical position where these musical padding phrases are placed, typically in the middle of a song or between the first and second musical phrases, it is emotionally appropriate that the climax is reached in the middle of the song. Third, the upward perfect fourth interval almost always exists as the signature musical interval in the connective padding musical phrases, especially in Hezhou ling tunes. The upward perfect fourth interval carries tremendous power to deliver the deepest feeling in one’s heart. It is an inevitable consequence of the Chinese Northwestern geographic environment, which is a spacious plateau, and the minds and sentiments of the people who live in and adapt to this geographical condition. The popularity of the use of this signature musical interval also reflects the personalities of the people living in Northwest China, which are unconstrained, outgoing, bright, clear, and vigorous.

The ending musical phrases are an important part of creating the unique musical features of a hua’er song. Different types of hua’er ling tunes contain different types of ending musical phrases and padding words and phrases to illustrate the different emotions. According to the functions, there are two types of ending musical phrases, namely, ending musical phrases with the padding words and phrases, and ending musical phrases with the repetition of the last line of lyrics of a hua’er song. The ending musical phrases with the padding words and phrases function solely to emphasize the emotions and feelings in general, and typically have no relationship with the lyrical content which contains meaning. The ending musical phrase, with the repetition of the last line of lyrics, stresses the meaning of the most important line of the lyrics, which is typically the last line of each section of a Hezhou type of hua’er song. According to the length of the
ending musical phrases, the ending musical phrases of a hua’er song can also be further divided into two types, specifically, the short-form ending musical phrases and the long-form ending musical phrases. I will examine these two methods of classification of the ending musical phrases in hua’er:

杨柳的树儿（哈）一河滩（耶），
这么（价）稀奇的咋生了（耶）?
一河滩（哟），
攀根着阿们（价）咋生了（哟），
娘老子阿们（价）早长了（呀），
（我的红花儿姐早）养了（呀），（我的）红花儿姐

白汗褐儿青夹夹儿瓜子模样
白汗褐儿青夹夹儿瓜子模样
In the above excerpt, the ending padding musical phrase occupies 11 measures, which comprises half of the length of the entire *hua’er* song. It contains 25 characters, which is more than the number of characters in the first section of the lyrics. From this point, it is easy to tell the importance of the ending padding phrases both musically and lyrically. The meaning of the long-form ending padding phrase used in *honghuajieling* is not directly related to the theme of the lyrical content of the song, but it effectively encapsulates the general emotion of the whole folksong. The long-form ending padding musical phrase also expands the musical content, providing opportunities for singers to maximally and effectively express their feelings.

An excerpt of a *hua’er* song called *honghuajieling* 红花姐令 (the red flower elder sister tune) from *Zhongguo hua’er quling quanji* 中国花儿曲令全集 (Collected Works of Chinese *Hua’er* Songs and Ling Tunes), edited by Wang Pei.
The two examples above represent the short-form ending padding musical phrases of *hua’er*. These ending padding musical phrases generally only contain one or two measures and one or two padding characters, such as *ye* 耶, *ya* 呀, *oye* 噢耶, etc. When *hua’er* uses the short-form ending padding musical phrases, the quality of the music is generally vivacious, in a relatively fast tempo, and is typically seen in duple meters. The pitch range in the short-form ending padding musical phrases is relatively small, and frequently the last note is accompanied by a short and quick portamento. The portamento of *hua’er* generally ends the song with agile, lively, and vivid images. The way of performing the portamento in the very end of a song varies. Depending on the placement of stress, length, and the wideness of the interval, the portamento sometimes expresses a feeling of the sadness, sometimes of a complaint, sometimes a sort of helplessness, and sometimes a feeling of yearning.

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60 The first example is an excerpt of a *hua’er* song called *huanghuajielingsan* 黄花姐令三 (the third of yellow flower elder sister tunes). The second example is an excerpt of a *hua’er* song called *haohua’erlingliu* 好花儿令六 (the sixth of nice flower tunes). Both examples are from *Zhongguo hua’er quling quanji* 中国花儿曲令全集 (Collected Works of Chinese Hua’er Songs and Ling Tunes), edited by Wang Pei.
2.3.2 SCALES AND MODES

The scales and modes used in the Hezhou type of hua’er songs are mostly Chinese pentatonic scales. According to the Chinese musicologist, Li Yinghai 黎英海, the five notes in the Chinese pentatonic scale are respectively called gong 宫, shang 商, jue 角, zhi 徵, and yu 羽. Named after the first note in the series of the scale, there are five fundamental Chinese pentatonic scales or modes, namely, gongdiaoshi 宫调式 (gong mode), shangdiaoshi 商调式 (shang mode), juediaoshi 角调式 (jue mode), zhidiaoshi 徵调式 (zhi mode), and yudiaoshi 羽调式 (yu mode) (Li 1981: 11). The five notes and five Chinese pentatonic scales are demonstrated in the C major scale below:
2.3.2.1 PENTATONIC ZHI MODE

The pentatonic zhi mode is the most widely used and prominent mode in hua’er. Approximately 54% of hua’er ling tunes adopt this mode (Wang 1992: 239). In the pentatonic zhi mode, the zhi tone is the tonic of the scale and the yu and shang tones are the secondary main tones in the mode. As one of the most characteristic features, the melodic lines in a pentatonic zhi mode hua’er song, are unfolded and based on the development of the perfect fourth interval, namely, from shang tone to zhi tone. This powerful leap from the dominant to the tonic of the scale creates the characteristic musical language and reflects the bright, clear and straightforward personalities of Northwest Chinese people. See the following hua’er song in the pentatonic zhi mode:

```
(我 上(啊)去了 高 山 者 (哈 哟
看去 是(我就) 容 易 者 (哈 哟
```
噢呀）望（耶哎嗨）平（呀）
噢呀）摘（耶哎嗨）去（啊）是

川（呀），（哎哟）望平（啊）呀
难（呀），（哎哟）摘去（呀）是

川（呀），平（啊）川里（哎嗨）有（呀）一
难（呀），摘（呀）不到（哎嗨）手（呀）里

朵（呀）牡（啊）呀）丹（耶）；（哎哟我）
是（啊）呀）枉（呀）然（耶）

（耶）（阿哥的）些憨哟肉
The example above is a typical Hezhou type of hua’er ling tune. Including the ending padding musical phrase the perfect fourth interval from shang tone to zhi tone appears 13 times in total. Because of this prominent relationship between the shang tone (dominant) and the zhi tone (tonic) in the Chinese pentatonic zhi mode hua’er, hua’er scholars call these songs shang-zhi type of hua’er songs (Zhang 1981: 19).

A variation form of the pentatonic zhi mode in the Hezhou type of hua’er is the four-tone zhi mode. Because of the lack of the jue tone, the four-tone zhi mode is generally considered an earlier form of the pentatonic zhi mode. For example:

An excerpt of a hua’er song called hezhoodalinger 河州大令二 (the second of grand Hezhou tunes) from Zhongguo hua’er quling quanjí 中国花儿曲令全集 (Collected Works of Chinese Hua’er Songs and Ling Tunes), edited by Wang Pei.
From the observation of the above example, the beginning padding musical phrase immediately presents the four tones of the four-tone zhi mode of the ling tune, namely, zhi tone, yu tone, gong tone, and shang tone. The zhi tone functions as the tonic and stabilizes the mode. The shang tone appears the most in the ling tune and, as the dominant, strongly supports and reinforces the tonic zhi tone. The other frequently seen feature is the minor third interval created by the alternation of the yu tone and gong tone. It appears 7 times in total in this short ling tune. The commonly seen minor third intervals in the above example effectively weaken the brightness that is generally created by the

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62 An excerpt of a hua’er song called hezhouanling 河州三令八 (the third Hezhou tune) from Hezhou hua’er yanjiu 河州花儿研究 (Study of Hezhou Hua’er) by Wang Pei.
characteristic perfect fourth intervals in the Hezhou type of hua’er ling tunes. Therefore, the whole tune appears on a more balanced and harmonious level, and the beauty of the tune is enhanced as well.

2.3.2.2 PENTATONIC SHANG MODE

The melodic style of the Hezhou type of hua’er songs built on the pentatonic shang mode is similar to the Hezhou type of hua’er songs built on the pentatonic zhi mode. The tonic shang tone is strongly supported by the dominant yu tone and the subdominant zhi tone in the pentatonic shang mode. The ending tonic shang tone is generally led by either the subtonic gong tone or the supertonic jue tone. For example:

\begin{align*}
\text{老(啊) 爷(哈就) 山上 的 老(啊) 爷 (哎哈) 庙 (哎),} \\
\text{衣裳 儿(哈就) 披上 着 送(啊) 哥 (哎哈) 哥 (哎),} \\
\text{甭 (啊) 修 (哎哈) 了 (哎), 越(啊) 修者 (个) 越 玄 (哪 呀)} \\
\text{甭 (啊) 送 (哎哈) 了 (呀), 越(啊) 送者 (个) 越 难 (哪 耶)}
\end{align*}
In the above example, both the first and second musical phrases end on the dominant \( yu \) tone and form a half-cadence. The ending padding musical phrase eventually leads the tune to the tonic and ends on the \( shang \) tone. Except for the ending padding music phrase, the tonic only appears twice in both the first and second musical phrases. By purposely reducing the appearance of the tonic and thereby weakening the tonal color of the \( shang \) mode, the whole tune leaves listeners with a sense of uncertainty. Therefore, it effectively reflects the sorrow and pain expressed in the lyrics.

### 2.3.2.3 PENTATONIC YU MODE

The pentatonic \( yu \) mode is built on the tonic \( yu \) tone. The subdominant \( shang \) tone and the dominant \( jue \) tone are prominent in the mode. The upper minor third tone \( gong \) is also the secondary important tone in the \( yu \) mode. It is because of the popular use of this minor third interval that the \( yu \) mode sounds dark and mild (Huang 2000: 11). Because of the geographic factors that affect the pentatonic \( yu \) mode of \textit{hua’er}’s circulation, these

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63 An excerpt of a \textit{hua’er} song called \textit{laoyeshanling} 老爷山令 (the Laoye Mountain tune) from Zhongguo \textit{hua’er} quling quanji 中国花儿曲令全集 (Collected Works of Chinese \textit{Hua’er} Songs and \textit{Ling} Tunes), edited by Wang Pei.
"hua'er ling" tunes are similar to the Tibetan *layi* 拉伊, which is a type of Tibetan folksong which focuses on love topics. See the example below:

![Music notation](image)

(哎哟), 月 亮 哈
gua 的 者  (啊呀我的)  窗 子 上 (呀),
蹲 的 者  (啊呀我的)  枕 头 (了) 上 (呀),
三 靠 老 麦 丽 艳), 月 光
三 靠 老 麦 丽 艳), 金 风
哈 (呀)  铺 给 者 炕 上;
风 (呀)  落 给 者 被 上。
In the above *hua’er* song,\(^6^4\) the beginning padding musical phrase starts from the dominant *jue* tone and immediately establishes the dominant-to-tonic relationship. This relationship is reinforced by the frequently seen tonic-to-dominant and dominant-to-tonic intervals throughout the *hua’er* song. The direct use of the ethnic language (Sala language) in the middle padding musical phrase also adds a taste of ethnic influence.

Except for the five regular notes in Chinese pentatonic scales mentioned above, the passing tones in *hua’er*, namely, *qingjueyin* 清角音 (F if in the C major key), *bianzhiyin* 变徵音 (F-sharp if in the C major key), and *runyin* 闰音 (B-flat if in the C major key), are often seen, and *biangongyin* 变宫音 (B if in the C major key) also appears occasionally. These passing tones are called *biansheng* 变声 (changed tones) or *pianyin* 偏音 (leaning tones) in Chinese music (Wang 2007: 20). The use of these passing tones in the Hezhou type of *hua’er* tremendously enriches the musical expression and melodic color, and occasionally surprises listeners by giving them a taste of a new and exotic sound.

### 2.4 TAOMIN TYPE OF *HUA’ER* MUSIC

Because of the restriction that the Taomin type of *hua’er* is mainly performed in the seasonal *hua’er* festivals, combined with the geographical limitation of the regions where this type of *hua’er* circulates, the number of Taomin type of *hua’er ling* tunes is significantly less than the number of *ling* tunes in the Hezhou type of *hua’er*. There are

\(^6^4\) A Hezhou type of *hua’er* song called *salaling* 撒拉令 (Sala tune) from Hezhou hua’er yanjiu 河州花儿研究 (Study of Hezhou Hua’er) by Wang Pei.
generally two types of *ling* tunes in the Taomin type of *hua'er* songs, namely, 

*lianhuashan quling* 莲花山曲令 (Lianhua Mountain type of *ling* tune) and *erlangshan quling* 二郎山曲令 (Erlang Mountain type of *ling* tune). In accordance with geographical factors, because the region where *ling* tunes circulate is north of the Taohe river valley 洮河流域, the *lianhuashan* type of *ling* tunes are called *beilupai* 北路派 (the north style). The *erlangshan* type of *ling* tunes generally circulate in the region south of the Taohe river valley. Thus, it is called *nanlupai* 南路派 (the south style). According to Wang Pei 王沛, there are over ten different *ling* tunes in the *lianhuashan* type of *hua'er*, including *lianhuashan ling* 莲花山令 (Lianhuashan *ling* tune), *sanshan ling* 三闪令 (sanshang *ling* tune), and *galian'er ling* (little lotus *ling* tune). In addition, there are several *ling* tunes in the *erlangshan* type of *hua'er* songs, including *a'ou ling* 啊欧令 (*a'ou ling* tune), *gayuanhua ling* 尕缘花令 (little lucky flower *ling* tune), *zhemagan ling* 折麻秆令 (breaking hemp stalk *ling* tune), and so on.

### 2.4.1 SCALES AND MODES USED IN LIANHUA MOUNTAIN *LING* TUNES

After conducting a musical analysis of all 11 Lianhua Mountain *ling* tunes in Wang Pei's book, *Collected Works of Chinese Hua'er Songs and Tunes*, I came to the conclusion that there are eight *ling* tunes in the four-tone *shang* mode, two *ling* tunes in the pentatonic *shang* mode, and one *ling* tune in the pentatonic *yu* mode. In contrast to the Hezhou type of *hua'er*, in which the pentatonic *zhi* mode is most popularly used to compose the songs, based on the musical analysis above, the four-tone *shang* mode is the
most popular type of mode used in the Lianhua Mountain type of hua’er songs. Let’s observe one example of the four-tone shang mode Lianhua Mountain type of hua’er below:

(唵)，缸二两的缸对缸，朝山遇上

（唵），拿的戥子称钉钢，朝山朝到

好臂膀，（唵）三朋四友浪会场，

九顶上，（唵）上山把你拉手上，

好像百鸟朝凤凰，你看美当不美当（呀）。

下山我把你背上，活像一对尕鸳鸯（呀）。

（合）（花哟莲叶儿啊）。
The above *hua’er* song is one of the Lianhua Mountain *ling* tunes, which is an exemplary *ling* tune of the Lianhua Mountain type of *hua’er*. The entire song is built on the four-tone *shang* mode. The tonic *shang* tone is prominent throughout the entire song. As a typical feature in the Lianhua Mountain type of *hua’er* songs, the tonic *shang* tone almost always appears as the first tone in the beginning padding musical phrase. This feature strengthens the stability of the *shang* mode and allows the song to unfold with an emphasis on the tonic of the mode. The other typical feature in the Lianhua Mountain type of *hua’er* is that the ending padding musical phrase almost always uses the same tone-row, namely the declining four-tone row in the order of *gong* tone, *yu* tone, *zhi* tone, and *shang* tone. This feature serves several important functions in the Lianhua Mountain type of *hua’er*. First, it balances the whole *hua’er* song musically. The performance formula of the Lianhua Mountain type of *hua’er* is such that each person in the group sings one line, and after everyone finishes, they sing the concluding padding musical phrase together. With regards to both musical and lyrical aspects, the lines sung by each member of the group are similar and often do not resolve themselves harmonically. The ending note-row fixes this musical imperfection and responds as an echo to the beginning padding musical phrase. Second, the unique ending padding musical phrase emphasizes the distinction between the Lianhua Mountain type of *hua’er* and all other types of *hua’er*. Third, it provides the opportunity for all members of the group to respond

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65 A *hua’er* song called *lianhuashanling’er* 莲花山令二 (the second of the Lianhua Mountain tunes) from *Zhongguo hua’er quling quanji* 中国花儿曲令全集 (Collected Works of Chinese *Hua’er* Songs and Ling Tunes), edited by Wang Pei.
uniformly, so that they effectively reinforce the expression and opinion shared by all
members of the group. Fourth, it adds variety to the singing and performance. As a
unique performance formula, the ending musical padding phrase allows singers to
perform in both solo and choral singing formulae. Fifth, it expands and embellishes the
musical form and significantly enriches the monotonous melodies of the Lianhua
Mountain type of hua’er.

2.4.2 SCALES AND MODES USED IN ERLANG MOUNTAIN LING TUNES

According to my analysis of nine Erlang Mountain ling tunes in Wang Pei’s book,
Collected Works of Chinese Hua’er Songs and Tunes, there are four ling tunes in the
pentatonic shang mode, two ling tunes in the hexatonic shang mode, and one ling tune in
the pentatonic yu mode, pentatonic jue mode, and hexatonic yu mode, respectively.
Therefore, it is obvious that, as in Lianhua Mountain hua’er song ling tunes, the shang
mode is the most popular type of mode used in the Erlang Mountain type of hua’er.
Instead of using the four-tone shang mode, the Erlang Mountain type of hua’er tends to
use the pentatonic and hexatonic shang modes, which are the more complex and
developed mode forms. Let’s look at one example of the pentatonic shang mode used in
the Erlang Mountain type of hua’er below:

![Image of musical notation]

（啊 欧 乡亲们），麻木头(就)像 (哎) 一根 的 (啊 耶)
In the above example, though the hua’er song is considered to be built on the pentatonic shang mode, it is actually a variant of the pentatonic shang mode, since instead of using juyin 角音 (third tone; E if in a C major scale), it uses qingjueyin 清角音 (fourth tone; F if in a C major scale) to add a distinct color and flavor to the music. The

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66 A type of Erlang Mountain hua’er ling tune called a’ou ling 啊欧令 (a’ou ling tune). It is sometimes called awu ling 啊呜令. In the second edition of Zhang Yaxiong’s hua’erji 花儿集 (Collection of Hua’er songs), Xie Runfu 谢润甫 mentions that a’ou ling is also called zhadao ling 扎刀令 (stabbing knife tune) or zhadao ling 齸刀令 (straw chopper tune). This is because, in the beginning of the ling tune, there is a piercing sound of shouting. The stridency of the sound is similar to the sound made by people who are stabbed by a sharp knife. Therefore, the ling tune is called “stabbing knife tune” (Xie 1948). This explanation, however, was not accepted by the local people. Jing Shengkui believes that a’ou ling is also called “straw chopper tune.” This is because a straw chopper is the tool local people frequently use to chop wood in the mountains. The straw chopper tunes are the songs sung by people who chop wood in the mountains (Jing 1985).
qingjueyin used here is similar to its use in qinqiang 秦腔 (Li 1983: 196). Because of the prominent use of the qingtai, the intervals made up with the qingtai stand out in the a’ou ling tunes. Among these intervals, the frequently seen qingtai to shangyin interval (interval from F to D if in a C major scale) is considered to be the featured interval in a'ou ling tunes. In general, using qingtai instead of jueyin creates a brighter color and adds a more straightforward feeling to the melody. It thoroughly reflects the local people’s optimistic, tenacious, and indomitable personalities.

As the above example is one of the archetypal a'ou ling tunes, by examining its musical and lyrical aspects, many distinct features can be discovered. First, the beginning padding musical phrase starts with the modal particles a’ou 啊鸥. Since this type of hua’er song almost always starts with these modal particles, this type of Erlang Mountain hua’er was named after these characters, namely, a’ou ling 啊鸥令 (a’ou ling tunes). Second, the beginning padding musical phrase in a'ou ling tunes also almost always either starts with or gives prominence to the interval progression from the yu tone to shang tone, which are the dominant and tonic of the mode. This interval progression in the beginning of the hua’er song helps to stabilize the mode and establishes the prominence of the tonic. Third, the other musical feature frequently seen in a'ou ling is that the ending musical phrase usually ends the song with the same note pattern, namely,

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Qinqiang is also called luantan 乱弹. It is an archetypal local Chinese folk opera which thrives in Northwest China, including Shaanxi Province, Gansu Province, Qinghai Province, Nixia Hui Autonomous Region, and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Because it uses clappers that are made from jujube tree wood as the accompaniment instrument, the Qinqiang is also called bangziqiang 梆子腔 (clapper opera). The Qinqiang opera has the largest and most complex musical system and is generally acknowledged as the most ancient form of Chinese opera.
from *zhi* tone to *qingjue* tone, then to *shang* tone. This note pattern, which typically appears at the end of the *hua’er* song, successfully establishes contrast with the beginning padding musical phrase, in turn, creating a sense of abruptness (Li 1995: 192), as well as a feeling of mildness and gentleness. Fourth, there are typically three musical phrases in an *a’ou ling* tune, with each member of the group singing one line. The second and third musical phrases generally use the same melodic progression, with variations to a certain degree. By using a fixed melodic structure as a foundation, the second and third singers are able to devote their attention to the lyrics improvised by the *changbashi* (the leader of the group). This, in turn, allows the singers to reinforce the uniformity of their opinions expressed in the song.

2.5 **hua’er MUSIC IN DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS**

Chinese folksong styles are the product of the social experience of different ethnic groups. Therefore, different Chinese folksong styles, such as *Dongzu dage* 侗族大歌 (“grand songs” of the Dong ethnic group), *Hanzu xintianyou* 汉族信天游 (“songs that fly freely in the sky” of the Han ethnic group), *Miaozu feige* 苗族飞歌 (“flying songs” of some subgroups of the Miao ethnic group), etc., are distinguishable though also varied and have their own identifiable national characteristics. Nevertheless, the national characteristics of *hua’er* are more complex than most other Chinese folksong genres. First, *hua’er* is the collective product of eight ethnic groups that live in similar geographical conditions and share similar lifestyles and customs. Although most ethnic groups in China have their own languages, all eight of these groups use Mandarin
Chinese when singing *hua’er*. Second, because of the differences of ethnic history, culture, character, and other factors among these eight ethnic groups, each group also has its own unique musical characteristics of *hua’er*. Although most *hua’er ling* tunes that have unique ethnic musical characteristics circulate outside of the ethnic groups and regions in which they originated, the national qualities of these *ling* tunes, which are possessed by each of these ethnic groups, do not change in general.

*Hua’er* belongs to eight Chinese ethnic groups, including Han, Hui, Dongxiang, Sala, Bao’an, Tu, Yugu, and Tibetan and many subgroups of these officially recognized groups. In classifying *hua’er* music based on these ethnic groups, there are typically four types recognized by Chinese scholars, namely, Hui *ling* tunes, Han *ling* tunes, Sala *ling* tunes, and Tu *ling* tunes. There are several reasons for this classification of *hua’er ling* tunes. First, except for the Han, which is the ethnic majority in this region, even though the Tibetans have the biggest population among all other seven ethnic minority groups, they have their own characteristic folksong styles such as *lalu* 拉鲁, *layi* 拉伊, etc. The Tibetan *hua’er*, however, is not a mainstream folksong genre in Tibetan folk music. It is formed as a product of the long-term influence of both the Tibetans who live at the border of the Tibet Autonomous Region, and the neighboring ethnic groups by whom *hua’er* is commonly performed. Therefore, Tibetan *hua’er* music only reflects the musical styles from other ethnic groups and cannot be classified and considered as an independent *hua’er* style. Second, the populations of the Hui and Han ethnic groups in Northwest China are large. Both of these ethnic groups have a long tradition of singing *hua’er* and attending *hua’er* festivals. These factors provide the conditions for both ethnic groups to
have their own styles of *hua’er ling* tunes (Qiao 1986: 60). Third, the Sala and Tu ethnic groups live at the border of the region where *hua’er* circulates widely. As the *hua’er* songs from these two ethnic groups are influenced less by the musical styles of the Hui and Han *hua’er*, they have established their own styles of *hua’er ling* tunes (Qiao 1986: 60). Fourth, because of their small populations and traditions of singing their own ethnic folksongs, the *hua’er ling* tunes of the Dongxiang, Bao’an, and Yugu ethnic groups, are not innovative. They more or less adopted the musical features of other ethnic groups’ *hua’er* songs. Thus, they are not considered to have independent musical styles of *hua’er*.

### 2.5.1 HUI *HUA’ER* MUSIC

Hui people generally live in small groups, and in a scattered fashion, geographically speaking. As a result of this factor and the fact that Hui people do not have their own ethnic language, the *hua’er ling* tunes of the Hui ethnic group are quite similar to the ones from the Han ethnic group (Zhu 1987: 49). However, Hui *hua’er* songs do contain certain unique characteristics. See the example below:

```plaintext
月 亮 偏 (呀) 西 着 (哟)
睡 着 的 阿 (呀) 哥 (哈) (哟)
```
天（呀）快亮了（呀），（哎哟）
摇（呀）摇醒了（呀），（哎哟）

天（呀）快亮了（么），架上的（个）金（呀）
摇（呀）摇醒了（么），下地的（个）时（呀）

鸡儿叫（呀）了（呀哟呀）；（唉哟我
候儿到（呀）了（哟）

的尕呀阿呀哥哟，下（呀）地的个

时（呀）候儿到（呀）了（呀）（哟）。
The above example is a typical Hui hua’er song that originated in the Hezhou area. As in many Hui hua’er songs, the zhi mode is popularly used, and the relationship between the shang tone and the zhi tone is prominent. The leaping progression of the perfect fourth interval from the shang tone to the zhi tone is characteristic of Hui hua’er (Zhang 1981: 26). In the above example, this particular interval first appears in the very beginning of the song and is given more prominence later by appearing an octave higher. In general, the perfect fourth leaping gesture leads the development of the song and is frequently accompanied by a gentle decline in small intervals. This contributes to Hui hua’er having a bright and resounding quality and a mild sensibility.

2.5.2 HAN HUA’ER MUSIC

According to Qiao Jianzhong, the typical Han hua’er ling tunes only include two types of ling tunes in the Taomin type of hua’er, namely, lianhuashan quling (Lianhua Mountain type of ling tune) and erlangshan quling (Erlang Mountain type of ling tune) (Qiao 1986: 60). I agree that, in general, the Taomin type of hua’er belongs to the Han ethnic group in Northwest China and reflects their musical style. However, many hua’er ling tunes from the Hezhou type of hua’er also belong to the Han ethnic group. For example, there are ga’ajie ling (little elder sister ling tune), garourou’er ling (little flesh ling tune), gama’er ling (little horse ling tune), etc.

An excerpt of a hua’er song called hezhouerlingqi (the seventh of the Hezhou second ling tune) from Zhongguo hua’er quling quanji (Collected Works of Chinese Hua’er Songs and Ling Tunes), edited by Wang Pei.
Since I have already analyzed the typical ling tunes of the Taomin type of hua’er songs in the former section, I will now focus on the musical characteristics of the Hezhou type of hua’er, which belongs to the Han ethnic group.

In contrast to the Han hua’er songs in the Taomin type of hua’er, in which the shang mode is employed more commonly, many of the Han hua’er songs in the Hezhou type of hua’er use the pentatonic zhi mode. For example:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{灞陵桥饯行(个) 是(呀) 曹(了) 操(啊 耶),} \\
\text{虽然(哈) 待阿哥这么(哈) 好(啊 耶),} \\
\text{(哎) 配下的个药酒(们) 没喝(哎),} \\
\text{(哎)心(呀) 里的实 话(哈) 没说(哎),} \\
\text{(哎 哟 浩呀 哥的姐 哟 啊), 配(呀) } \\
\text{(哎 哟 浩呀 哥的姐 哟 啊), 心里} \\
\text{下的药酒(们) 没 喝(呀);} \\
\text{的个实 话(哈) 没 说(呀).}
\end{align*}\]
As in many Hezhou type of hua’er songs, the zhi tone and shang tone are prominent in the above zhi mode hua’er song. The pitch range of the song is very wide and typically greater than one octave (11\textsuperscript{th} interval in the above example). The melodic progression of the leaping perfect fourth intervals, as well as the sudden decline of larger intervals, such as 7\textsuperscript{th}, as seen twice in measures 4 and 13 in the above example, epitomizes the upright, candid, and straightforward personalities of the Han people of Northwest China.

2.5.3 SALA HUA’ER MUSIC

The hua’er of the Sala ethnic group generally shares certain common musical features with the hua’er from the Hui and Han ethnic groups. However, the Sala hua’er also carries its own unique musical features. First, because the Sala people and the Tibetan people live close to each other in the same regions, and have intimate contact with one another, Sala hua’er assimilates musical elements of Tibetan music. See the following two examples:

\[\text{Example 1}\]

\[\text{Example 2}\]

\[\text{(啊 来)}\]

\[\text{An excerpt of a hua’er song called gaajielingliu 尕阿姐令六 (the sixth of the little beloved elder sister tunes) from Zhongguo hua’er quangling quanji 中国花儿曲令全集 (Collected Works of Chinese Hua’er Songs and Ling Tunes), edited by Wang Pei.}\]
The first example\(^{70}\) is the beginning padding musical phrase from a Tibetan \textit{layi}, which is a type of Tibetan love song. The second example\(^{71}\) is the beginning padding musical phrase from a Sala \textit{hua’er} song. By comparing these two examples, from the free rhythm to the application of grace notes, from the simple application of padding characters to the long, expanded beats, as well as other similarities, we can conclude that the beginning padding musical phrase in the Sala \textit{hua’er} shares typical musical characteristics with the beginning padding musical phrase in the Tibetan folksong genre \textit{layi}.

Second, the pentatonic \textit{yu} mode is the most commonly used mode in most Sala \textit{hua’er} songs. Because of the musical features which the \textit{yu} mode itself contains, it also creates a similar feeling and tonal color as seen in a minor key.

Third, there are also many Sala \textit{hua’er} songs which use the \textit{zhi} mode. See the example below:

\(^{70}\) An excerpt of a Tibetan \textit{layi} from \textit{Zhongguo shaoshu minzu chuantong yinyue} 中国少数民族传统音乐 (Chinese Ethnic Minority Traditional Music).

\(^{71}\) An excerpt of a \textit{hua’er} song called \textit{mengdaling} 孟达令 (Mengda tune) from \textit{Qinghai hua’er dadian} 青海花儿大典 (Grand Collection of Qinghai \textit{Hua’er}), edited by Zhao Zongfu and Jidi Majia.
As seen in the above example, the zhi mode used in Sala hua’er is different from the zhi mode used in Hui and Han hua’er. Hui and Han hua’er tend to use the four-tone zhi mode, while Sala hua’er frequently uses the pentatonic zhi mode. The jue tone which hardly appears in Hui and Han hua’er is frequently used and performs an important role in the zhi mode in Sala hua’er.

An excerpt of a hua’er song called salalingyi (the first Sala tune) from Zhongguo hua’er quuling quanji (Collected Works of Chinese Hua’er Songs and Ling Tunes), edited by Wang Pei.
Fourth, a special tone called *qingzhiyin* 清徵音 (fifth and a half tone; G-sharp if in a C major scale) occasionally appears in Sala *hua’er*. For example:\(^73\):

With the application of the *qingzhiyin*, people may feel that the song leaves an impression of the harmonic minor scale, as in Western music. However the *qingzhiyin* serves more as a passing tone or embellishing note in the above *hua’er* song. It does not function as the leading tone as the same note does in a minor key.

### 2.5.4 TU HUA’ER MUSIC

Tu *hua’er* is rich in ling tunes. Generally speaking, many Tu *hua’er* ling tunes are named after the special padding words or phrases. Some of the Tu *hua’er* ling tunes are also named after the names of the regions from which they came.

On the whole, most Tu *hua’er* ling tunes are built on either pentatonic *shang* or *zhi* modes. While the use of the pentatonic *shang* and *zhi* modes in Hui *hua’er* ling tunes typically expresses a feeling of unconstraint and boundlessness, the use of these modes in Tu *hua’er* ling tunes achieves the same effect, while additionally expressing a feeling of delicacy and mildness. See the example below:

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\(^73\) An excerpt of a *hua’er* song called *labulengling* 拉卜愣令 (Labuleng tune) from Qinghai *hua’er* dadian 青海花儿大典 (Grand Collection of Qinghai *Hua’er*), edited by Zhao Zongfu and Jidi Majia.
The above example illustrates many typical musical characteristics of Tu hua’er. First of all, in the two musical phrases, the stepwise melodic progression is employed in the ascending musical lines. This musical feature is significantly different from the melodic progression in Hui and Han hua’er, in which the leaping intervals are popularly used in the ascending musical lines. Therefore, instead of leaving an impression of openness, wideness, and unrestraint, the step-wise or small-interval

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74 An excerpt of a hua’er song called haohua’erlingsan 好花儿令三 (the third nice flower tune) from Zhongguo hua’er quling quanji 中国花儿曲令全集 (Collected Works of Chinese Hua’er Songs and Ling Tunes), edited by Wang Pei.
ascending musical lines in Tu hua’er give people a sense of introversion and implication. With regard to the descending musical lines, the large interval-jumping gesture is used frequently to create contrast with the ascending melodic progression. In measures 4 and 8 of the above example, the downward 1-octave interval-jumping creates a sense of surprise and curiosity. Undoubtedly, the contrast achieved by using different melodic development methods sets Tu hua’er apart from hua’er belonging to other ethnic groups. Second, there is almost always a portamento applied to the last note of each musical phrase in Tu hua’er. This phenomenon is also a unique musical feature in Tu yequ 野曲 (wild tunes)\textsuperscript{75}, and is also commonly seen in Tu love songs. When singing, the degree of the decline of the portamento used in the first musical phrase is generally not as significant as the one used in the end of the second musical phrase of a Tu hua’er song. The portamento used at the end of both musical phrases usually contains a downward movement of a 4\textsuperscript{th} or 5\textsuperscript{th} interval, or occasionally with a 6\textsuperscript{th} interval. The ending note of a Tu hua’er song is generally held extendedly. Therefore, the downward movement of the portamento on the ending note is slow. This unique feature in Tu hua’er is distinct from the hua’er songs of other ethnic groups. There are two factors that contribute to the formation of this phenomenon. From the Tu ethnic language aspect, the intonation of the Tu ethnic language is generally smooth and soft. Tu people tend to hold the last syllable of a sentence with a relatively long and declining tone. This Tu linguistic feature is not only employed in interrogative sentences but also, more or less, seen in other types of

\textsuperscript{75} The folksong is the main genre of Tu folk music. Tu people generally divide their folksongs into two genres, namely, jiaqu 家曲 (household songs) and yequ 野曲 (wild tunes). In general, all folksongs that contain content related to love and cannot be performed in front of relatives and elder members of a family are considered yequ, such as Tu hua’er, love songs, and long-form narrative poems (Tian 2001: 336).
sentences (Tian 2001: 347). According to the social aspect, arranged marriage is a tradition in Tu ethnic culture. The Tu young men and women usually cannot have their marital wishes fulfilled. Therefore, the wild tunes become an instrumental tool to express their sadness and disappointment with their arranged marriage and the yearning for marital freedom and happiness. Most of Tu *hua’er ling* tunes are relatively dark, sorrowful, and downcast. The portamento used on the ending musical phrases reflects this general musical emotion in Tu *hua’er*, and effectively expresses the deep feeling of Tu people through musical avenues (Tian 2001: 346). Third, although the time signature of the example *ling* tune is labeled “6/8,” there is no feeling of a lively dance style in this music. The syllables are generally placed at the beginning of each beat. This enhances the feeling of narration with a sense of chopping and choking to establish the distressing mood. Fourth, as frequently seen in Hui *hua’er*, the pitch range of the song is wide. In the above example, the pitch range of the song spans the perfect 11th interval. This wide pitch range is achieved within three measures. It is said that these musical features illustrate the “straightforward” personalities of the Tu people. Likewise, the step-wise manner used to reach the wide interval is associated with the exquisite quality of Tu music.
CONCLUSION

This study has examined both lyrical and musical aspects of hua’er. As an art form, hua’er, refined over time and space by generations of folksingers, both lyrically and musically, can be considered as the quintessential distillation of the life of people in the Northwest.

In addition to the distinctive lyrical and musical characteristics, this study has also investigated certain pre-existing disputes regarding hua’er, in educational and scholarly circles, and concluded with findings based on the more updated research. Nevertheless, because of the broad scope of this study, continuous research is needed in examining interdisciplinary topics, such as the relationship between the development of local dialect and the development of hua’er music, the historical background and influences of the aesthetics of hua’er singing, the erotic nature of many hua’er lyrics, Northwestern folk customs, the relationship between hua’er lyrics and classical Chinese poetry, etc.

Although some scholars predict that hua’er will continue to exist in the foreseeable future, due in part to local interest and with the help of protective measures instituted by government preservation policies, it is inevitable that urbanization, globalization and modernization will challenge its development, even its very existence. Hua’er is currently facing a situation in which the mechanisms of transmission to future generations are in peril. However, as with other musical genres that have a long and rich
history, *hua’er* will not become extinct. That said, the genre may evolve into more enhanced or developed forms to fit the developing aesthetic tastes of society. Methods for promoting *hua’er* in both scholarly and popular circles already include: promoting *hua’er* in the education system, organizing *hua’er* study symposiums, publishing treatises and books about *hua’er* research and study, holding *hua’er* singing regional and national competitions, integrating *hua’er* culture with the Northwestern tourism and merchandise opportunities, sending professional *hua’er* performance troupes to foreign countries, and enhancing the musical communication between *hua’er* and other foreign musical genres in the world. Such methods provide new contexts for the continued existence of this age-old folksong tradition.
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