

# 叮叮当 (Dheng Dheng Dho)

Jiaxuan Zhu, Department of Music and Department of Physical Science (Chemistry)

I was inspired by the Negro Spiritual to make an arrangement of from my hometown, Wenzhou, China. This city's language, Wenzhounese, is being replaced by Mandarin, and as a result, the ancient local culture is disappearing.

The lyrics describe the views and places of my city in our native language, so children are able to learn some simple terms in Wenzhounese.

My two grandmothers used to teach me this little melody differently: one sings it slowly and the other one sings it faster. As a child, I never understood why. As an adult, I realized that the beginning of the melody is imitating the bell sound from the big temple in Wenzhou. My grandma who sings slowly lives far away from the temple, and my grandma who sings it faster lives close to the temple. I arranged this children's folk song in order to reflect both of the views.

## Lyrics

叮叮当 啰嗦  
山脚门外孤老堂  
松台山上仙人井  
妙果寺里猪头钟

## Translation

Dheng Dheng Dho Lho Lhei  
It is the Nursing Hall for lonely and elderly at the foot of the Mount (Songtai).  
It is the Immortal Well at Mount Songtai.  
It is the Pig-head Bell at Miaoguo Temple (next to Mount Songtai).

## Language

Wenzhounese is the dialect of Wenzhou, the southern prefecture of Zhejiang, China. Nicknamed the "Devil's Language" for its complexity and difficulty, it is the most divergent division of Wu Chinese, with little to no mutual intelligibility with other Wu dialects or any other variety of Chinese. This language has been used for almost two thousand years, but is being replaced by Mandarin, which is the official language in China. Since language is the media of culture, the disappearing of language means the disappearing of culture. "Sometimes I feel like a mother-less child" each time talking to the children at my hometown in Wenzhounese, but they replied in Mandarin saying that they didn't understand.

## Science of sound travel

As the sound of the bell emanates from the temple, the sound waves maybe amplified or diffused by the environment through which the sound waves travels.

As sound waves pass through or pass by city buildings, amplification of echo take place and influence the original sound waves. As sound waves pass through plants, the sound waves is dampened. Because the sound would be absorbed by the plants. As the bell sound travels, the wave length is extended, which slows down the sound.

## Listen

Link to video with my arrangement of Dheng Dheng Dho (叮叮当):  
<https://youtu.be/NAfFpSEXox0>

Score

叮叮当  
Dheng Dheng Dho arr. Jiaxuan Zhu

$\text{♩} = 80$

Voice

Piano

bell like

Adagio  $\text{♩} = 80$




妙果寺  
Miaoguo Temple



猪头钟  
Pig-head Bell

## Inspiration

My voice teacher Dr. Valerie Jones-Francis, associate professor of music, introduced the history of the Negro spiritual by teaching how they were sung by African Americans during the dark time of slavery, giving them strength to go through those nightmares. After hundreds of years, these songs are still being sung. Through the inspiration of Negro spirituals, I thought of creating written arrangements of these old melodies so people can remember the language, remember the culture we have (or we used to have) by singing these songs.

Dheng Dheng Dho came into my mind because it is the first children's folk song I was taught by my grandmothers in order to teach me some simple terms in Wenzhounese when I was about 3 years old. Children today are not learning my language. In fact, recently my niece did not understand me when I sent a voice message in Wenzhounese. Maybe she could start learning our language by learning a folk song.

However, my two grandmothers taught me this little melody differently: one sings it slowly and the other one sings it faster, and both claim to be right. As a child, I never understood why. As an adult, I realized that the melody's beginning imitates the bell sound from the Miaoguo Temple, and the tempo of the bell sound sets up the tempo of the song. My grandma who sings slowly lives far away from the temple, and my grandma who sings it faster lives right next to the temple. I arranged this children's folk song in order to reflect both views.

Below, you can see the house locations. The way the sound moved through the environment changed the way my grandmothers sang this folk song

