

HOEDOWNER

Tune of the Month

Thanks to
David Altman of
District 7 for this
month's tune

I learned this version by ear from one of the best accompanist, Marshall Jackson, when OOTFA was formed during the 1960s. Marshall was a superb guitar player but also played fiddle and mandolin. He encouraged me to pick up the mandolin to better play some slides (marked "sl" above the notation) in this tune. While **Chinese Breakdown** is a very old tune which used to have many names (including **Chinese Rag**, **Beaver Valley Breakdown**, **Georgia Bust Down**, and **Tiger Rag**), the first recording was in 1925 by the **Dixie String Band**. Most published transcriptions are in the key of C such as in **The Fiddler's Fakebook** and **Ragtime for Fiddle & Mandolin**. However, among Oregon fiddlers and in other regions the tune is usually played in the key of D. This traditional American tune has even become a tune that has moved to the British Isles and can be found across southern England, Ireland, and elsewhere. Several versions are found at **The Session** website, where lyrics have been posted by the lyricist identified as Mix O'Lydian as follows:

Chinese Breakdown

(transcription by D. Altman, source from Marshall Jackson)

traditional

♩ = 150

D

A

sl

sl

2

2

D

3

D7

sl

G

A

sl

D

sl

sl

A

D

When in a Chinese restaurant,
Dish numbers you must quote;
For waiters and the chefs there,
They learn them all by rote;
If you don't give those numbers,
Your order they'll get wrong;
You'll cause a Chinese breakdown,
And the staff will sing this song:

For: Chop Su-ey say "16",
Or you'll be out of luck;
Please tell the waiter: "45",
If you want Peking Duck;
For Lychees please say: "76",
And you'll get what you want;
All orders are by numbers,
In a Chinese restaurant!

Links to various fiddlers playing Chinese Breakdown:

[Chinese Breakdown by Charlie Walden](#)

[Chinese Breakdown by Steam Machine](#)

[Chinese Breakdown by Jesse McReynolds](#)

[Chinese Breakdown by Esau McNeil](#)