



Edited by Sam Mitchell

A joint project of  
The School for International Training  
and Yunnan Normal University  
Institute of Chinese and International Studies

Project Director: Yu Yanjing  
Assistant Editor: Lu Yuan  
Project Coordinator: Chen Jinhui

Yunnan Fine Arts Publishing House

**Yunnan Through Foreign Students' Eyes**  
**Volume 3**

# **Arts in Yunnan**

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# The School for International Training

The School for International Training (SIT) was established in 1964 to answer a growing demand in the US for expertise in language and intercultural training. The School's parent organization, World Learning, founded as the Experiment in International Living, has enjoyed a world-wide reputation for its programs in international education, exchange, and sustainable development for over 70 years.



**Sam Mitchell** holds a doctorate in Asian History from the University of Hawaii, where he was a graduate fellow at the East-West Center. He has lived in India for four years, Pakistan for one, and served as Academic Director of the SIT Nepal program from 1990-93. Most recently he spent a year teaching History of East Asia and courses in China's minorities at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington.

**Lu Yuan** was born in Beijing. She graduated from Beijing People's University with a degree in journalism. She was a journalist and deputy editor of the Magazine Chinese Journalist for the Xinhua News Agency before coming to the US to study as a Parvin fellow of journalism at the East-West Center and the University of Hawaii. Lu Yuan taught Chinese in Nepal and in India at Banaras Hindu University and holds a Master's degree in Teaching from the School for International Training.

Sam Mitchell and Lu Yuan have been the directors of the SIT China/Yunnan Study Abroad Program since its inception in the fall of 1994. They have recently initiated a new summer program in Traditional Chinese Medicine, which Lu Yuan directs along with the China/Yunnan semester abroad program. Sam Mitchell writes and conducts research on China and Yunnan's minority peoples.

# Yunnan Normal University

Yunnan Normal University is one of the most important institutions of higher learning for training teachers in Yunnan Province. It was founded as the Teacher's College of Southwest United University, and played a key role in China's history as the campus at which Beijing University, Qinghua University, and Nankai Universities were located during the second world war.



**Yu Yanjing**, Vice-President of Yunnan Normal University, was born in Beijing. He graduated from the Foreign Language Department of Kunming Teacher's College in 1982 and received a diploma from Griffith University in Australia in 1990. He holds a Ph.D in Education Management from the Education College of the University of Science and Technology of Sydney, Australia. As a visiting scholar, he has visited many universities throughout the world. He has been in charge of tens of international cultural exchange programs and has published several books on Chinese culture and the teaching of Chinese to foreigners.

**Chen Jinhui** was born in Kunming. She graduated from the Chinese Language and Literature Department of Yunnan Normal University and is currently enrolled in an MA program in Education Management at the University of Science and Technology of Sydney in Australia. Chen Jinhui is working at the International Language and Culture Institute of Yunnan Normal University and has been engaged in international cultural exchange and management work for many years. She has served as the deputy editor of many publications for Yunnan Normal University.





# Preface

*Yunnan Through Foreign Students' Eyes* is a collaborative project between the China/Yunnan Study Abroad Program of the School for International Training (SIT), based in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA and the Institute of Chinese and International Studies of Yunnan Normal University, based in Kunming, Yunnan, China.

This initial project consists of three volumes of works written by students on the China/Yunnan program of the School for International Training, grouped according to three broad themes and areas of study. The first volume, *Tourism and Development in Yunnan*, includes papers concerning development and reforms in Yunnan reflective of recent changes in China as a whole, with a particular emphasis on the rapidly developing tourism industry in Yunnan, including issues surrounding the conservation of Yunnan's uniquely diverse environment and related ecotourism enterprises. The second, *Ethnic Minority Issues in Yunnan*, includes papers which focus on Yunnan's many minority ethnic groups and their often complex relationships with the Han majority and each other. The third, *Arts in Yunnan*, includes papers on the fine arts of painting, literature and poetry and the traditional medical and martial arts of Yunnan and China.

The remarkable fact about these collected papers, composed over the course of a brief month-long Independent Study Project for the School for International Training, is that all of them have been written by college and university students, often in their third or fourth year. These papers are not extracts from Masters or Doctoral level theses or dissertations. Neither are they fully developed articles for publication in academic journals or popular magazines. Yet, we feel that they have much to tell.

In Yunnan there are limited western language traditional library resources. Therefore, these papers, in accordance with the experiential philosophy of our institution, are overwhelmingly

based on fieldwork, emphasizing interviews and participant observation methodologies, although available literature and Internet sources are frequently cited. Bear in mind that these are but initial versions of papers that have frequently later been augmented by the inclusion of standard textual and library resources available upon their authors' return to their respective colleges and universities. Many later become senior or Masters theses (a few of which are included in these volumes, but these are the exceptions). Therefore, we urge the reader to consider these brief studies to be but examples of what can be accomplished in one month of field-based study and writing. It is our hope that you, the readers of these collected papers, will be impressed by the substantial and valuable work that can be conducted in such a limited period of time by undergraduate students in China. They relate not only to China's traditional arts and culture, but also to current topics of vital significance to China's future and development. Some of these papers, particularly those that discuss rapidly changing cultural environments such as Lijiang, Zhongdian, and Xishuangbanna, the emergence of non-governmental organizations (NGO's) in China, or the status of rural elections in Yunnan's minority autonomous counties, may serve as historical snapshots of a brief moment in time. Others, on Chinese traditional medicine, martial arts, or literature, may document the continued influence of ancient traditions on China in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The underlying philosophy of the School for International Training uniquely echoes the famous Chinese revolutionary slogan of *san tong*, the "three together". The best way to understand people is to *tong chi*, *tong zhu*, and *tong laodong* (eat together, live together and work together). It is through direct cultural immersion that our students have been able to gain a greater understanding of the many and varied peoples of Yunnan and China. It is our hope that, through this process, at least a few initial steps have been made on the long journey of cross-cultural understanding and, equally significantly, self discovery.



# Editorial Notes

Producing these volumes of *Yunnan Through Foreign Students' Eyes* has been a learning experience for us all. Rather than apologize for the many inconsistencies and editorial errors the reader will readily find within, we choose to comfort ourselves with the truism of experiential education that, in the end, we learn from our mistakes, not our successes. This, the second volume of the series, is a perfect example of this principle, and we have learned much in the process ever since the publication of the first volume.

Normally, our publisher in China, The Yunnan Fine Arts Publishing House, employs three separate proofreaders before even the galley proof is printed. We have not enjoyed that luxury, largely due to language difficulties. Therefore, many editing and typographical errors and inconsistencies have inevitably failed to be eliminated. Considering that no one at the publishing house, including those who typed in the material, had a working knowledge of English, the results, as flawed as they are, are amazing to us.

Compounding these language problems is the fact that these papers were written by students from different schools who employ drastically different styles of citation, bibliographies, and writing styles in general. To even locate many of these former students, much less to agree on a common style, was an almost insurmountable challenge. So, each entry has its own peculiarities and eccentricities, even the occasional egregious error.

The same inconsistencies exist in the transliteration of Chinese words into English. While we have attempted to consistently use the pinyin system, some students choose, for example, to write Mao Zedong (which we prefer), while others choose Mao ZeDong. Some Wade-Giles system transliterations, usually commonly known names in the west such as Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, occasionally creep in or appear in quotes from

earlier sources. Again, each student writes in his or her own way, and in the interests of time we have allowed each writer a perhaps excessive degree of latitude in terms of style. That being said, some editorial changes have been made, and we hope the papers included within are improved over their original form. After all, these papers were written under tight time constraints, and the raw and new experience of fieldwork in Yunnan is often more enjoyable and more challenging to students than the sterile and familiar routine of punching out their final papers in a computer facility in Kunming.

Despite these unfortunate imperfections, we hope that the end result of sharing our students' work and experiences in Yunnan will outweigh the technical flaws we have encountered in our forays into the world of Chinese publishing in English.

Sam Mitchell and Lu Yuan  
Kunming, January, 2005

# Acknowledgments

As our Yunnan program nears its ten year anniversary, we, on behalf of the School for International Training, would like thank the *waiban* (Foreign Affairs Office) of Yunnan Normal University for their unfailing support for aspects of our program that, in 1993, were virtually unheard of in China. Back then, Foreign Exchange Currency (FEC) had just been abandoned, while many areas of Yunnan were still closed to foreign visitors and students. Through the efforts of the *waiban*, our students have been able to learn about Chinese culture and develop their Chinese language skills while living with Chinese families in homestay settings. The same is true for the revolutionary idea of the Independent Study Projects themselves, during which our students must disperse across the province in order to conduct their research in the field. Without the energy, determination, and hard work of the *waiban*, as well as the approval of the Provincial Foreign Affairs Office of Yunnan, this study abroad program would never have been possible. Special thanks are due to Mr. Yu Yanjing, Vice-president of *Shifan Daxue* (Yunnan Normal University), and Chen Jinhui, of the Foreign Affairs Office of *Shifan Daxue*, who have worked with us since the beginning of our program and who have become valued friends.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the **Freeman Foundation**, whose generous support has enabled our China/ Yunnan program to enroll students from all types of colleges, universities, economic strata, and varied ethnic and national backgrounds, including heritage students of Chinese and Miao (Hmong) descent. In the past ten years we have also been blessed with students with Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Malaysian, Laotian, Cambodian, Pakistani, Ghanaian, French, Mexican, Norwegian and Nicaraguan backgrounds. We also have had many students of mixed or hyphenated backgrounds (African-American, Chinese-American, Asian-American) that

stretch so far back that the hyphens have been dropped. We believe that it is through a heartfelt appreciation of the world's diverse ethnic, national and religious traditions that a greater unity may one day emerge among an increasingly interconnected global community.

We are also indebted to many people throughout the years who have helped us in the activities of the China/Yunnan Program of the School for International Training. Many are credited in the individual papers included in this volume. Many others have helped the directors and students over the years with administration, lectures, permissions and visas, and are valuable friends and resources in the areas we regularly visit.

At the **School for International Training** we would like to thank, first of all, our former Regional Director, Chris Deegan, for his support of the China/Yunnan program since its inception and who encouraged us in the production of this work, and our former Program Coordinator, Viet Ha, who has visited us on several occasions. We would like to also thank our former Dean, John Sommer, at whose home we initially showed slides of our envisioned program sites. Thanks also go to the former President of SIT, Jim Cramer; our Provost, Paula Harbecke; our present Dean, Rebecca Hovey; the Admissions Office; Assistant Dean for external relations, Laurie Black; Director of Area Studies for Asia and the Pacific, Linda Lewis; Director of European and Middle Eastern Studies, David Shallenberger; Alumni and Constituent Relations Manager, Holly Peterson; Study Abroad Coordinators for Asia and the Pacific, Paul Paparella and Kathryn Gonnerman; Web/Publications producer, Bob Lawson; Sarah Martin and Wanda Dutton of University Relations; and Vice-President for Institutional Advancement, Ellen Holmes.

We must thank our institutional partner, **Yunnan Normal University**, particularly former Vice-President Yu Yanjing, and the Foreign Affairs Office leaders and staff; Wu Yinghui, Tang Zengqiang, Yuan Yan, Wu Yanjiang, Weihong, Chen Jinhui, Gong Ling, Yu Qinwei, Yang Yehua, Xu Jianzhong, Renhua, Zhang Xiling, Deng Xiaokun, Zhu Mingxia, Yuan Honghong,



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We would also like to thank our friends and lecturers at **Yunnan University**, including Yang Hui, Yao Jide, and Zhang Xiaohui; at **Kunming Medical College**, Li Xiaoliang and Liu Wei; and at the **Yunnan Minorities University**, Yu La, Ma Yisheng, Li Danhe, Li Shiqiang, Ma Yu, Ma Li and Sun Jing.

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Directors and staff of several Non-Governmental Organizations have become friends and provided help as they began their work in Yunnan. They have been a consistent and unflagging resource for our students and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for the time they've taken from their busy schedules to help us. At **Save the Children (UK)**, Kate Wedgwood, Yang Haiyu, He Ye, Quazi Ghiasuddin, Gao Cuiling, Xiao Yin, Zhao Zhonghua, and Tan Leshan; at **The Nature Conservancy**, Ed and Ann Norton, Rose Niu, Stefan Kratz, Zhuang Hao, Cole Roskam, Long Yongcheng, Graham Bullock, Stewart Shephard, Liu Dachang, Yu Xiaogang, and Mu Jinhua; at **Project Grace**, Douglas Briggs, Tan Laiyong, Ingrid Simmons, and Lu Hua; at

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At the ever-expanding **Mandarin Book Stores**, thanks go to Wang Hui and Liu Xiaofeng.

In **Tonghai**, where we now conduct student orientations each semester, special thanks go to the **Tonghai Culture and Tourism Bureau**, especially Ao Yagang and He Xueju; the **Tonghai Cultural Institute**, especially Li Jingtai and Xu Jun; at the Tonghai County government, Li Zhuren; and at **Liuyi village**, especially Ma Qiaofen and Luo Chaoan.

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Most of all, we would like to thank the never-ending generosity and kindness of the people of Yunnan, who have made all of this possible in ways far too many to mention.

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# Arts in Yunnan: the Martial, the Medical and the Fine

Sam Mitchell

In compiling the papers for this third volume of student projects from the School for International Training's China/Yunnan: Language and Cultures study abroad program it became evident that art indeed has many meanings and multi-tiered strata of those meanings. In the English language, we use the word *art* for perfection in virtually every sphere of human endeavor. It is through a merging of the self with the activity being performed that transforms the practice of medicine, exercise, sport or fighting techniques, as well as the commonly perceived "fine" arts of painting, calligraphy, dance and music into the broader category of "art". Through art the human attempts to pay homage to, reflect upon, and ultimately merge with and celebrate the divine. The essays included herein reflect upon the virtually indefinable and unlimited concept we commonly refer to as art.

Taking a broad view of the subject at hand, these papers, the result of month-long study projects by our students, can be grouped into three more specific, yet still general categories included in the title to this introduction: the medical, the martial, and the fine arts. Although students on our program have studied many aspects of these three groupings by subject, I have tried to select a representative sample of dozens of papers on these arts that have been produced over ten years of the China/Yunnan Language and Cultures Program, based in Kunming at Yunnan Normal University and now with the Institute for Chinese and International Studies, whose generosity has made possible the publication of this diverse collection of projects. It is in order to recognize and celebrate the fine work that our students have accomplished in a very limited amount of time, usually consisting of but one month of field study, including use of textual and web-based sources of information, as well as the writing process itself, that this series has been presented to the public.

In terms of theoretical and historical issues within the Chinese context, the arts, and particularly literature, have perpetually been seen as dangerous