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Echoes of History

NAXI MUSIC IN MODERN CHINA



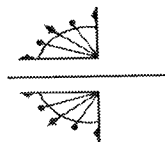
Helen Rees

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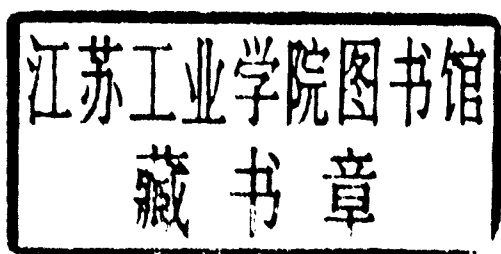
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Naxi Music in Modern China

HELEN REES



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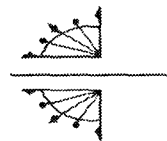
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For the musicians of Lijiang

and all the many people who helped along the way



Acknowledgments

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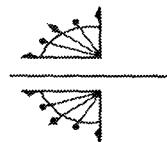
My greatest debt, of course, is to the many musicians of Lijiang County and other parts of Yunnan Province who welcomed me and took my interest in their music seriously. In Lijiang County, the Dongjing music groups of Baihua Village, Baisha Township, Dayan Town, and Jinshan Township all permitted me

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Romanization, Geography, Dynasties

Romanization

Romanization of Naxi terms in this book is according to Naxi Pinyin used in the People's Republic of China. The table here shows the conversion between Naxi Pinyin and the International Phonetic Alphabet. Note that Naxi has four tones. The high-level tone is indicated by placing the letter *l* at the end of the syllable, the low-level tone by placing the letter *q* at the end of the syllable, and the rising tone by placing the letter *f* at the end of the syllable. Syllables lacking any of these markers are pronounced in the mid-level tone.

Conversion table between Naxi Pinyin and the International Phonetic Alphabet
(after McKhann 1992: 410).

PINYIN	IPA	PINYIN	IPA	PINYIN	IPA
b	p	q	tɕ'	iu	y
p	p'	jj	ɕʐ	ai	æ
bb	b	ni	ɲ	a	a
m	m	x	ɕ	o	o
f	f	zh	tʂ	u	u
d	t	ch	tʂ'	v	ʋ
t	t'	rh	ɕʐ	e	ə
dd	d	sh	ʂ	er	ər
n	n	r	ʐ	iai	iai
l	l	z	ts	ie	iə
g	k	c	ts'	ia	ia
k	k'	zz	dz	uai	uæ
gg	g	s	s	ua	ua
ng		ss	z	ue	uə
h	h	i	i	ee	u
j	tɕ				

Romanization of Han Chinese names and terms is according to Hanyu Pinyin. Conversion charts between Hanyu Pinyin and the International Phonetic Alphabet are found in most Chinese-English dictionaries published in the People's Republic of China. The letters and combinations most confusing to non-Chinese speakers are the following:

<i>c</i>	like the <i>t</i> 's in <i>it</i> 's
<i>q</i>	like the <i>ch</i> of <i>cheap</i>
<i>x</i>	like the <i>sh</i> of <i>sheep</i>
<i>z</i>	like the <i>dz</i> of <i>adze</i>
<i>j</i>	like the <i>j</i> of <i>joust</i>
<i>e</i>	like the <i>er</i> in <i>her</i> (British pronunciation), except after <i>y</i> or <i>i</i>
<i>ie, ye</i>	like the <i>ye</i> of <i>yet</i>
<i>i</i> after <i>z, c, or s</i>	like "a weakly buzzing, syllabic <i>z</i> " (Ramsey 1987: 294)
<i>i</i> after <i>ch, r, sh, zh</i>	like "a syllabic American <i>r</i> " (Ramsey 1987: 294)
<i>i</i> after other consonants	like the <i>ea</i> in <i>mean</i>

Thus *Naxi* is pronounced "Na-shee" in Mandarin Chinese.

Yunnan has a rich variety of dialects of Mandarin, but to avoid confusion I have romanized all Chinese terms according to standard Hanyu Pinyin (except in a few places noted in the text). Those interested in Yunnanese Han dialects will find Gui 1990 to be a useful English-language source.

Quotations from authors who use different romanization systems are silently converted to Hanyu Pinyin. However, a few names better known by other romanizations (such as Canton, Taipei, and Hong Kong) are left in the customary form. Names of Chinese citizens residing in China are given in the usual Chinese order—surname first, given name last.

When quoting sources that use British English spelling, I convert silently to American spelling.

Political Geography

Chinese administrative divisions are complex and are redrawn and renamed frequently. As far as possible I have used those names and terms applicable to the time periods described. In general, post-1949 Chinese terms for geopolitical administrative divisions are translated according to the usage of the standard reference work *The Pinyin Chinese Dictionary* (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1979). The terms and explanations here are those relevant to this book; they by no means constitute an exhaustive list of administrative divisions:

sheng	province (the largest regional subdivision)
shi	city

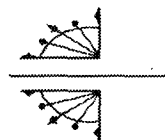
diqu	prefecture (main subdivision within a province)
zhou	prefecture (main subdivision within a province)
xian	county (largest subdivision within a prefecture)
xiang	township (main rural subdivision within a county)
zhen	town (urban area within a county)
xingzheng cun	administrative village (in a township, several villages grouped together for administrative purposes)
ziran cun	natural village (lowest level of unit)

In this book I translate both kinds of *cun* as “village,” since people rarely made the formal distinction in everyday conversation.

Dynasties and Republics

The main dynasties and republics mentioned in this book are:

Yuan	1271–1368
Ming	1368–1644
Qing	1644–1911
Republic of China	1912–1949 (ROC on Taiwan 1949–present)
People’s Republic of China	1949–present



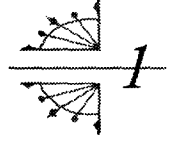
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Echoes of History



Introduction

"Echoes of history . . . ancient and graceful melodies"

(Sun Jiong, Yunnan Province China Overseas

Tourism Company, 1996)

First Encounter

In spring 1989 I took an exploratory field trip to Yunnan Province, an ethnically diverse and spectacularly scenic area of southwest China. In early May I joined several other foreign students and tourists on a bumpy twenty-hour bus trip from Kunming, the provincial capital, to Lijiang, a county in the northwest of the province (see Figure 1.1). Known for its mountainous terrain (see Figure 1.2), the unspoiled traditional architecture of its county seat (see Figure 1.3), and the unusual culture of the local inhabitants, the Naxi ethnic minority (pronounced Na-shee in Mandarin Chinese), Lijiang had been opened to foreigners in 1985. By 1989 it was attracting several dozen foreign tourists a week, and a number of local ventures, especially restaurants, were beginning to cater to them. Also directed at the foreign visitors were bilingual Chinese-English advertisements for concerts of "traditional Naxi music," held a couple of times a week. Having heard in Kunming of a Lijiang "orchestra" of elderly men, I lost no time in finding my way through the maze of alleys to the picturesque old mansion in which the concerts took place. There, in the central stone courtyard, about forty chairs were set out for the audience, while the chairs and tables for the musicians were on the raised stone platform in front of the main hall. As the audience took their seats, sixteen or so mainly elderly men arrived in small groups and began selecting and tuning their instruments, which included bowed and plucked strings, flutes, a small double-reed pipe, and a variety of percussion. Eventually a lithe, middle-aged man stood up and addressed the audience in quite fluent English, introducing the music and musicians, and requesting us to buy the four *yuan*



FIGURE 1.1. Map of China, showing major cities and western provinces.

tickets in the intermission (at this time four yuan were a little less than U.S. \$1). He explained that the music had originally been borrowed by the Naxi from the Han Chinese ethnic majority, and that before 1949 it had been used in religious rituals. It soon became obvious from the music played that evening (see CD Track 13) that the style, structure, and many of the instruments were very similar to those of the “silk and bamboo” (*sizhu*) instrumental ensemble music I was familiar with from Han culture in southeast China; moreover, the tune titles, and even the words of the few sung pieces, were in Han Chinese. Despite this, the English-speaking leader emphasized the Naxi ethnicity of the performers, and the Naxi “spirit” of the music—which he referred to as “Naxi Ancient Music” (*Naxi guyue* in Chinese). I immediately sought out a couple of Chinese-language descriptions of musical life in Lijiang, and discovered that this was in fact a very recent name for the music I had heard, coined only around 1980. It had historically been referred to as “Dongjing music” (*dongjing yinyue*), in recognition of its role as the auditory ingredient in ritual performances by Dongjing associations (*dongjinghui*).¹ These prestigious amateur musico-ritual associations were quintessentially Han Chinese in terms of deities worshiped, scriptures chanted and music played, and were widespread in Yunnan Province before 1949 among

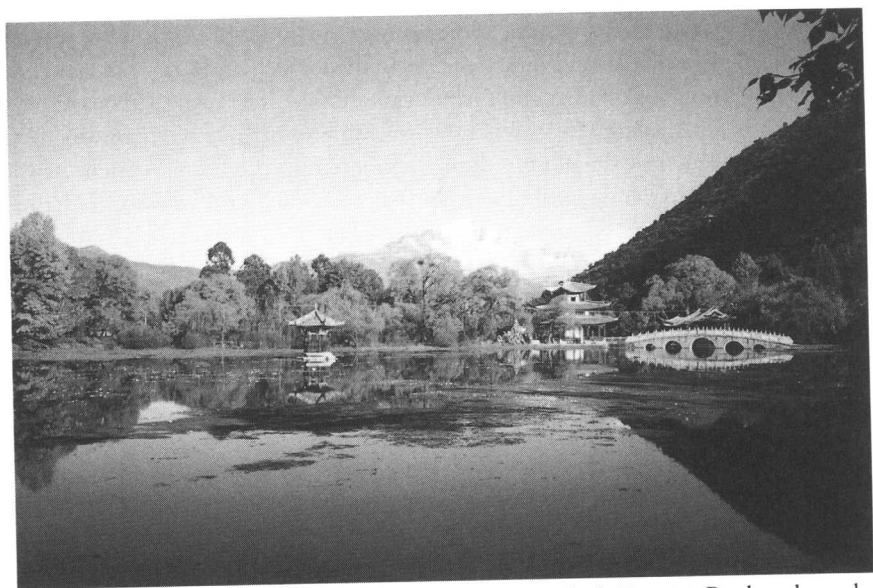


FIGURE 1.2. The classic Lijiang view: across the Black Dragon Pool park to the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, fall 1991.

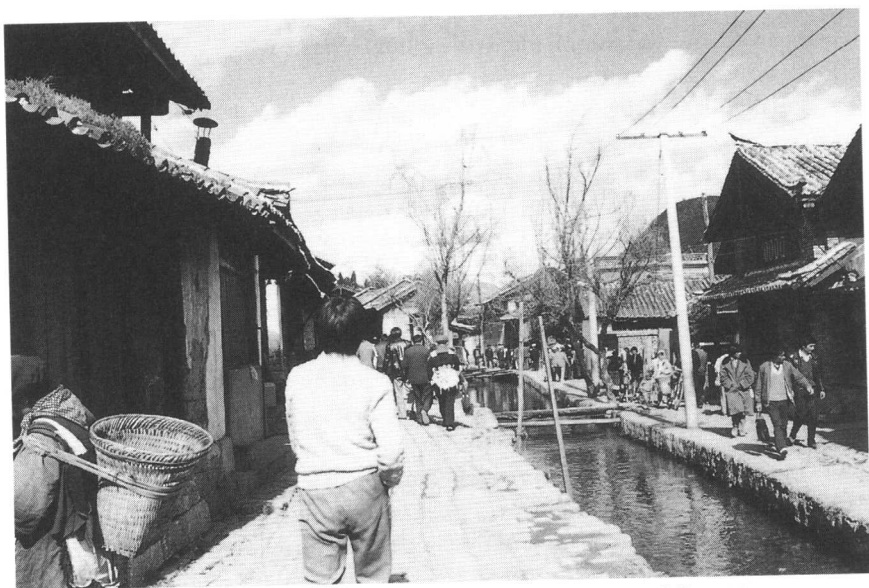


FIGURE 1.3. Traditional houses and canal in Dayan Town, fall 1991.