

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: GOSPEL SINGING IN THE VALLEY: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE HYMNODY AND CHORAL SINGING OF THE LISU ON THE CHINA-BURMA/MYANMAR BORDER

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This dissertation is an ethnomusicological study of contemporary musical practices of the Christian Lisu in Nujiang Prefecture in northwest Yunnan on the China-Myanmar border. Among all the changes that the Nujiang Lisu have experienced since the twentieth century, the spread of Protestant Christianity throughout Nujiang's mountainous villages has existed for the longest time and had one of the greatest effects. Combining historical investigation and ethnographic description, this study uses the lens of music to examine the impact of this social change on the Lisu living in this impoverished frontier region.

The Lisu characteristics have never been vital in the music written by the Christian Lisu in Nujiang. Compared with the practices described in other ethnomusicological writings on Christian music around the world that I have read, this absence of incorporation of indigenous musical elements is unusual. There are probably many other cases similar to that of the Lisu, but few ethnomusicologists have paid attention to them. I

aim to elucidate this particular scenario of Lisu Christian music in relation to three social and cultural forces: the missionary legacy of conventions; the government's identification of the Lisu as a minority nationality and its national policies toward them since the 1950s; and the transnational religious exchange between the Christian Lisu in China and Myanmar since the late 1980s.

My examination focuses on two genres which the Lisu use to express their Christian beliefs today: *ddoqmuq mutgguat*, derived from American northern urban gospel songs, the basis of the Lisu choral singing; and *mutgguat ssat*, influenced by the Christian pop of the Burmese Lisu, with instrumental accompaniment and *daibbit* dance and preferred by the young people. Besides studying these two genres in the religious context, I also juxtapose them with other musical traditions in the overall Nujiang music soundscape and look at their role in local social interactions such as those between sacred and secular, and majority and minority.

This dissertation demonstrates that the collective performances of shared repertoires have not only created a sense of affinity for the Nujiang Christian Lisu but also have reinforced the formation of Lisu transnational religious networks.

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AND CHORAL SINGING OF THE LISU ON THE CHINA-BURMA/MYANMAR  
BORDER

By

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my Christian Lisu friends who generously invited me, a non-Christian Han Chinese stranger, into their physical and spiritual home, and shared their lives and music with me. And now I speak basic Lisu and have a Lisu name of my own, Nimoxddu'nax (daughter of brightness).

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## Notes on Romanization and Terminology

Romanization of Han Chinese names and terms in this dissertation follows Hanyu Pinyin, the generic Chinese phonetic system commonly used in the People’s Republic of China (hereafter referred to as China unless otherwise indicated) since the 1950s. Han Chinese names are given according to the conventional Chinese order: surname comes before given name. The Romanization is based on the standard Hanyu Pinyin (Beijing dialect).

The most widely used Lisu writing system (for more details, see Chapter 2.1, “Language”) since the 1910s has been the “Fraser script,” commonly known as Old Lisu (Lao Lisuwen) in China. It uses upper-case Roman letters—twenty-five upright and fifteen inverted—to represent thirty consonants and ten vowels. Nevertheless, for the convenience of easy reading for non-Lisu speakers who are unfamiliar with this system, Romanization of Lisu terms in this dissertation is according to the phonetic system adopted in *Li-Han Cidian* (Lisu-Chinese Dictionary), the only available comprehensive Lisu-language reference book in China (Xu Lin, Mu Yuzhang, et al. 1985).<sup>1</sup>

This Romanization system is modeled after Hanyu Pinyin and usually called New Lisu (Xin Lisuwen) in contrast to Old Lisu. Hereafter I will use “Lisu Pinyin” instead of “Xin Lisuwen” to refer to this Romanization system (see Figure a.1).

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<sup>1</sup> The dictionary was initially prepared by a group of linguists from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Nationality Research Institute (Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Minzu Yanjiusuo), starting in 1953. It was first compiled in 1966, re-edited in 1974, further revised from 1976 to 1984, and finally published in 1985 (Xu Lin, Mu Yuzhang, et al. 1985: 554). David Bradley’s influential Lisu-English/English-Lisu dictionary, *A Dictionary of the Northern Dialect of Lisu (China and Southeast Asia)* is also based on this dictionary (Bradley 1994: iv).

<b>OL</b>	<b>LP</b>	<b>IPA</b>		<b>OL</b>	<b>LP</b>	<b>IPA</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>bba</b>	<b>ba</b>		<b>R</b>	<b>ra</b>	<b>ʐa</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>ba</b>	<b>pa</b>		<b>ʁ</b>	<b>ssa</b>	<b>za</b>
<b>d</b>	<b>pa</b>	<b>p<sup>h</sup>a</b>		<b>ʌ</b>	<b>nga</b>	<b>ŋa</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>dda</b>	<b>da</b>		<b>V</b>	<b>h</b>	<b>ha</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>da</b>	<b>ta</b>		<b>H</b>	<b>h</b>	<b>xa</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>ta</b>	<b>t<sup>h</sup>a</b>		<b>Ɖ</b>	<b>()</b>	<b>ħa</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>gga</b>	<b>ga</b>		<b>ɾ</b>	<b>fa</b>	<b>fa</b>
<b>K</b>	<b>ga</b>	<b>ka</b>		<b>W</b>	<b>wa</b>	<b>wa</b>
<b>Ɔ</b>	<b>ka</b>	<b>k<sup>h</sup>a</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>xa</b>	<b>ɕa</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>jja</b>	<b>dʒa</b>		<b>Y</b>	<b>ya</b>	<b>ʐa</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>ja</b>	<b>tɕa</b>		<b>A</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>
<b>Ɔ</b>	<b>qa</b>	<b>tɕ<sup>h</sup>a</b>		<b>V</b>	<b>ai</b>	<b>æ/ɛ</b>
<b>Z</b>	<b>zza</b>	<b>dʒa</b>		<b>E</b>	<b>ei</b>	<b>e</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>za</b>	<b>tɕa</b>		<b>Ɔ</b>	<b>ei</b>	<b>ø</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>ca</b>	<b>tɕ<sup>h</sup>a</b>		<b>I</b>	<b>i</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>ma</b>	<b>ma</b>		<b>O</b>	<b>o</b>	<b>o</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>		<b>U</b>	<b>u</b>	<b>u</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>la</b>	<b>la</b>		<b>Ɔ</b>	<b>u</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>sa</b>	<b>sa</b>		<b>ɿ</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>ɯ</b>
				<b>D</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>ɐ</b>
				<b>B</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>ɣa</b>

Figure a.1. Comparison between Old Lisu (OL), Lisu Pinyin (LP), and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) (after Xu Lin, Mu Yuzhang, et al. 1985: 454-56; Jin Jie 2013: 39). The order of syllables from top to bottom, and then left to right, follows the most commonly known ordering of the Lisu alphabet, used in the Lisu Christian primer. Note that in Old Lisu, each of the consonants is pronounced with the vowel sound [a] by default.

Note that every Lisu syllable has a tone and there are six common tones in the Lisu language. In Lisu Pinyin, the high level tone is indicated by adding the letter *l*, the mid level tone by adding *x*, the low-falling tone by adding *t*, the mid-high rising tone by adding *q*, and the low falling and short tone by adding *r*, at the end of each vowel syllable (see Figure a.2). Syllables lacking any of these orthographic markers are pronounced in the mid-high level tone or without tone (Xu Lin, Mu Yuzhang, et al. 1985: 455; Bradley 1994: ix).

<b>IPA</b>	<b>LP</b>	<b>OL</b>
55 high level	<i>l</i>	.
35 mid-high rising	<i>q</i>	,
44 mid-high level	-	..
33 mid level	<i>x</i>	.,
42 low falling and short	<i>r</i>	;
31 low falling	<i>t</i>	:

Figure a.2. Conversion between the tone symbols used in the IPA, LP, and OL (after Xu Lin, Mu Yuzhang, et al. 1985: 455).

To distinguish Lisu Pinyin from Hanyu Pinyin, all Lisu terms written in Lisu Pinyin are italicized, whereas all terms in Hanyu Pinyin remain non-italicized. I will use Lisu Pinyin in the running text and list the equivalent Old Lisu in Glossary A. In the same way, I will solely use Hanyu Pinyin in the main text and provide the corresponding Chinese simplified characters in Glossary B. For some Lisu terms that are better known nationally by their Chinese names, such as geographical names and personal names, I solely provide Hanyu Pinyin.

The Romanization of Lisu names is somewhat complicated. Generally speaking, in this dissertation, I use the customary form: that is, my informants' preferred names and their own Romanizations if applicable.

There are two kinds of nomenclature in the Chinese context: on the one hand, the names of a few Lisu better known by their Chinese names are given in Hanyu Pinyin in the usual Chinese order; on the other hand, a few others largely use the Lisu names acquired from an indigenous nomenclature system based on one's domestic sibling ranking, such as Alkix (the third son) and Alnax (the eldest daughter), rather than their Chinese names as shown on their national identification cards. In Myanmar, most Lisu I met preferred to use their Lisu names, and most of them have their own ways of spelling the names, which are often distinct from those Romanized in Lisu Pinyin.<sup>2</sup> For example, the Alkix I interviewed in Yangon would spell his name as Ahkin. In that case, I use their preferred Romanizations.

Nowadays, most Chinese scholars and a few educated folk artists tend to transliterate the titles and lyrics of Lisu traditional songs phonetically from their Lisu pronunciation into Chinese simplified characters, which is likely to confuse Chinese readers in terms of semantic understanding; in addition, the Chinese syllables are insufficient for representing phonetic nuances of many Lisu words. Therefore, in this dissertation I use Lisu Pinyin to spell titles and song lyrics throughout the main text. Those interested in their original Old Lisu will find these titles in Glossary A.

In terms of the political geography of China (see Figure a.3), the two subdivisions I would like to emphasize here are those most frequently mentioned in this dissertation. If not specifically described in words, the term “prefecture” refers in particular to *zhou*, one type of main subdivision within a province, such as Nujiang Lisuzu Zizhi Zhou (Nujiang Lisu Nationality Autonomous Prefecture). There are two kinds of villages in China's

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<sup>2</sup> Burmese Lisu people's own ways of spelling Lisu names can be found in my e-mail correspondence with them, in the introductory beginning of *mutgguat ssat* DVDs, and in YouTube video descriptions.

administrative divisions: one is the administrative village (xingzheng cun) within a township, and the other is the natural village (ziran cun) within an administrative village, the smallest administrative unit. Several natural villages are grouped together for an administrative purpose. I use the term “village” to refer to both types of villages for two reasons. First, an administrative village might have the same name as one of its natural villages. Second, most villagers I talked to seldom made such distinction orally.

<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	<b>English equivalent and explanations</b>
sheng	province (the largest regional subdivision)
shi	city (main subdivision within a province)
zhou	prefecture (main subdivision within a province)
xian	county (the largest subdivision within a city or a prefecture)
xiang	township (main rural subdivision within a county)
zhen	town (the urban area within a county, in Nujiang mostly serves as the seat of the local government)
xingzheng cun	administrative village (in which several natural villages are grouped together for the convenience of management)
ziran cun	natural village (the smallest unit of administration)
cunmin xiaozu	groups of villagers (several village groups belong to a natural village and then managed by an administrative village)

Figure a.3. Primary Chinese administrative divisions from the largest to the smallest unit.

The final note relates to the appellation of Myanmar/Burma. The military regime, known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council, changed the country’s name from Burma to Myanmar in 1989. The capital city Rangoon was renamed Yangon one year later. This name change was recognized by the United Nations, and by countries such as France and Japan, but not by the United States, the United Kingdom, many political exiles, or activists. The name of the country will remain controversial; however,

since most of the Burmese Christian Lisu I interviewed referred to the country as Myanmar, I will use “Myanmar” throughout the running text while retaining “Myanmar/Burma” in the titles of chapters and sections.

## Notes on Notation

Two major non-staff notational systems referred to in this dissertation are Chinese cipher notation (*jianpu*) and Lisu cipher notation (*ti-ni-sa mutgguat sair*). In both systems Arabic numerals from 1 to 7 represent pitches, with 1 serving as the major tonic.

Originating from a French system of teaching sight-singing, known as the Galin-Paris-Chev  method, in Chinese academia cipher notation is generally considered to have been introduced to China via Japan, and widely was promoted in the teaching of school songs (*xuetang yuege*) in the early twentieth century (Liu Tianlang 1981: 47; Zhang Qian 1999: 363; Wang Yuhe 2014: 46).<sup>3</sup> Known as *jianpu* in Chinese (literally, “simple notation”), it was brought to Nujiang in the 1950s and is widely used at present by both professional and folk musicians there to transcribe and teach previously oral traditions and new folksongs (*min’ge*). For example, local Lisu literary and art workers (*wenyi gongzuozhe*) studying the traditional music of Nujiang’s minority nationalities have been using cipher notation in the published collections of Lisu traditional music repertory. Musically educated folk artists I met also had used it to transcribe their own interpretations of old tunes for their students.

Known as *ti-ni-sa mutgguat sair* (literally, “1-2-3, sound of song”), Lisu cipher notation is a variant of Han Chinese cipher notation and was devised by James O. Fraser and other missionaries from the China Inland Mission to transcribe existing hymn tunes and teach them to the Christian Lisu (Yang Minkang 2008: 130).<sup>4</sup> It was and has

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<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Stock mentions the role of missionaries in promoting *jianpu* through the production and dissemination of hymnbooks using this form of cipher notation based on Chev ’s system (see the entry “China II: History and Theory” he contributed in Grove Music Online).

<sup>4</sup> It is uncertain exactly when Lisu cipher notation was devised, but it appeared early in the Lisu catechisms in the 1920s and 1930s.

continued to be the most commonly used notation within the Nujiang Christian communities. Only a few Christian songwriters and Bible school students are capable of reading both Chinese and Lisu cipher notations, because of their learning experiences in the Chinese seminaries.

These two notational systems are essentially the same, but each of them adopts different symbols for pitch and rhythm. Both similarities and differences are summarized as follows in Figure b.1:

	<b>Chinese Cipher Notation</b>	<b>Lisu Cipher Notation</b>
<b>Symbols for representing pitch</b>		
Similarity	The key for a given piece is indicated as 1=C, 1=D, and so forth.	
Upper-octave note	a number with one or more dots over it; one dot stands for one octave above; two dots for two octaves above, and so forth.	a number with an apostrophe (') to the upper right
Lower-octave note	a number with one or more dots below it; a dot below stands for one octave below; two dots for two octaves lower, and so forth.	a number with a comma (,)
<b>Symbols for representing rhythm</b>		
Common basic principle	A dash lengthens the previous note. A number followed by a dot indicates that the duration increases by one half.	
Half note	a number with one dash	a number with two dashes
Quarter note	a single number	a number with a dash
Eighth note	a number with a single underline	a single number without any dash
Sixteenth note	a number with two underlines	a number with the symbol “/” next to it
Thirty-second note	a number with three underlines	nonexistent
<b>Solmization syllables for the scale degrees</b>		
	<i>do</i> (1), <i>re</i> (2), <i>mi</i> (3), <i>fa</i> (4), <i>sol</i> (5), <i>la</i> (6), <i>si</i> (7), same as the Western solfège system	<i>tit</i> (1), <i>nit</i> (2), <i>sa</i> (3), <i>lil</i> (4), <i>nguat</i> (5), <i>qor</i> (6), and <i>shit</i> (7), singing using Lisu syllables of the equivalent numbers to denote notes

Figure b.1. Similarities and differences between Chinese and Lisu cipher notations

Below I first reproduce the opening of one popular Christmas song “Joy to the World,” the No. 16 hymn tune in the Lisu hymnal *Sipat dai Ddoqmuq du Mutgguat* (Hymns of Praise), in Lisu cipher notation. I then transcribe the tune using Chinese cipher notation and staff notation for the purpose of reference and comparison.

D 4/4 - - 1

1' - 7 - .6' 5 - .4 | 3 - 2 - 1 - .5 | 6 - .6 7 - .7 | 1' - - - (-) 1' |  
 1' 7 6 5 5-4' 3 1' | 1' 7 6 5 5-4' 3 3 | 3 3 3 3' 4' 5 - .4' 3' |  
 2 2 2 2' 3' 4 - .3' 2' | 1 1' - 6 5-4' 3 4 | 3 - 2 - 1 - - ||

Figure b.2. Opening of “Joy to the World” in Lisu cipher notation, first part, reproduction of the music score in *Sipat dai Ddoqmuq du Mutgguat*, No. 16.

1=D 4/4

i 7 . 6 5 . 4 | 3 2 1 . 5 | 6 . 6 7 . 7 | i - - - . i |  
 i 7 6 5 5 . 4 3 i | i 7 6 5 5 . 4 3 3 | 3 3 3 3 4 5 - . 4 3 |  
 2 2 2 2 3 4 - . 3 2 | 1 i 6 5 . 4 3 4 | 3 2 1 - ||

Figure b.3. Opening of “Joy to the World” in Chinese cipher notation in comparison with the preceding score in Figure b.2



Figure b.4. Opening of “Joy to the World” in staff notation in comparison with the preceding scores in Figure b.2 and Figure b.3.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 First Encounter

Many people have questioned me about how I became interested in Lisu Christian music, which seemed to have very little connection with my previous family or musical background. In fact, the reason was rather simple, or more precisely, quite random. One day in late 2009, I casually watched a YouTube video of a small group of Christian Lisu singing in four-part harmony inside the church. As a majority Han Chinese, I grew up deeply imbued with the idea that China's most minority nationalities are good at singing and dancing (nengge shanwu) to their traditional music while wearing colorful ethnic costumes.

That short video certainly changed my stereotypical impression of what a minority culture should be like. I had never known that Christianity also spread among minority peoples, not mentioning their skill in four-part hymn singing. Just to satisfy my curiosity, I quickly searched online for more information about the relatively little-known Lisu people and I found that Protestant Christianity had been introduced to them as early as the beginning of the twentieth century. Nowadays, the Lisu have a larger Christian population than any other minority nationality in China.

In January 2010, accompanied by my mother, I took a preliminary trip to Nujiang Lisu Nationality Autonomous Prefecture (Nujiang Lisuzu Zizhi Zhou, hereafter referred to as Nujiang Prefecture) in northwest Yunnan, the greatest concentration of Lisu in China. Nujiang Prefecture is renowned for the magnificent scenery of its Nujiang Grand Canyon (Nujiang Daxiagu); however, there were not many tourists there at the time because of less-developed tourism and inconvenient transportation.

### Vignette 1: Music activities at the Xiangyang Bridge (Xiangyang Qiao)

When we finally arrived in the prefecture seat, Liuku Town (Liuku Zhen), on a ten-hour bus trip from the provincial capital Kunming on January 16, it was already 6:50PM. When we checked in at the hotel, I asked the receptionist whether there were any churches nearby. She told me that there were many in Fugong County (Fugong Xian) but few in Liuku. She suggested that we go to the Zhu'en Church (Zhu'en Tang) located in the west bank of the Nu River the next day, where the nearby Lisu Christians would go for worship services on Sundays. She added, "If you want to listen to some other kinds of music, you can go to the Xiangyang Bridge tonight where people often gather together, singing and dancing throughout the evening."

After dinner we got to the east bank of the bridge, when the locals had already converged in the open space early the bridgehead and started to dance in a circle. There were sidewalk vendors selling food, clothing, and trinkets nearby, making the atmosphere quite boisterous. Everyone was welcomed to join in the dancing crowd at any time. A kind of minority music similar to what I had frequently heard in the TV programs was being played through a loudspeaker. A middle-aged man in ordinary attire stood in the middle of the circle, demonstrating the dance steps and keeping the crowd moving smoothly. The melodic pattern of each tune was repetitive, and so were the corresponding dance steps: people were repeatedly doing a series of left-and-right foot alternations with minimal hand gestures while tapping the floor and walking counterclockwise.

The format of this collective dance was very similar to that of a nationally popular square dance (guangchangwu) featuring middle-aged women dancing and exercising in the urban squares. "This is the 'Eight Sets of Standardized Ethnic Dance' (Minzu

Badawu) created and promoted by the local government over a decade ago. I have a teaching VCD at home. Why not joining in the dancing?” an audience member next to me explained in Chinese. I told him that I would prefer to stand at the side and observe it.

The dancing crowd dissipated around 10PM that day. Soon after this, a small group of people arrived at the same place and quickly stood in a circle, hand in hand. They then started singing and swaying while walking counterclockwise. Their singing featured a kind of musical duel between a male and female solo singer, as well as a constant alternation between the solo and chorus response. I was not able to catch the meaning of their singing, but I could tell that I should focus on the interaction between two lead singers, because a few audience members often laughed out in response to this musical conversation. When I left, the singing was still going on.

#### Vignette 2: Hymn singing in the Zhu'en Church (Zhu'en Tang)

After a short walk from the west bank of the Xiangyang Bridge, my mother and I arrived at the bright and spacious ground hall of the Zhu'en Church. It was approximately 8:40 in the morning. I expected to hear Lisu Christians sing four-part hymns as I had in that YouTube video; however, there were only a handful of people present, singing Chinese monophonic hymns from *Xinbian Zanmeishi* (The Chinese new hymnal). After the morning service, I asked the person next to me about Lisu Christians and their hymn singing. “Just stay for a while,” she reassured me, “the Lisu churchgoers living in urban Liuku will come for the noon service around 12 PM. You can hear them singing by then.”

As she said, the hall began filling up near noontime—over two hundred people, with a few women wearing their ethnic costumes—and the service started at 12:15 PM.

In the following one-hour-and-a-half service, three Lisu Christian songs, similar to what I had heard on YouTube before, were sung by the entire congregation at the beginning, in the middle, and towards the end of the service. Meanwhile, I also saw individual Christians walk up to the front, either singing with guitar accompaniment or dancing to the pre-recorded music, which sounded very much like contemporary popular songs. On the whole, music was a central part of the worship service, as singing comprised nearly one half of the worship time.

These two vignettes from my preliminary field trip were only a snapshot of the coexistence of multiple musical traditions in present-day Nujiang (see more details in Chapter 2.2 and 2.3). Later on, I headed north until I could continuously find churches built on the two mountains on either side of the Nu River. The more hymn singing I heard and the more church events I attended, the more self-reflection I had on the two distinct Lisu cultures I had successively learned: one had been largely represented in the mass media as an indigenous culture of the Lisu with highly visible and audible ethnic affiliation, and the other had stayed away from public attention yet become more integrated into many Lisu communities in the vast remote areas of Nujiang.

How did Western hymnody take root among the Nujiang Lisu? Why were the Lisu hymnody tradition and Christian culture, which seemed to occupy a position of more importance in the daily lives of many Lisu, not only still considered as “imported culture” but also shadowed by the other “inherent ethnic culture” showcased in the mass media and chosen to represent Lisu culture? These were the two questions that started to haunt me at the end of my preliminary trip and eventually brought me back to Nujiang two years later trying to understand the competing existence of these two distinct cultures.

## 1.2 Review of Previous Scholarship in Related Fields

### Ethnomusicological study of world Christianities

This section summarizes the primary methodologies and theoretical perspectives prevalent in the current ethnomusicological studies of world Christianities. The main focus of this review will be on three interrelated recurring perspectives, which not only echo some of the key issues in present-day ethnomusicological research but also have influenced my own research. The discussion focuses primarily on the spread of Christian musical traditions outside Europe and North America.

Generally speaking, each of the examples discussed below is a case study of the Christian musical tradition of a particular ethnic/cultural group. In addition, in order to understand the role of music in shaping indigenous peoples' Christian practices, the combination of ethnographic and historical research—using Amy Stillman's alternative terminology, the “ethnoscience” analysis of indigenous vocabulary relating to performance and “ethnohistorical” interpretations of indigenous music practices as preserved in the historical materials—has been of great methodological importance in most studies (Stillman 1991: iii-iv).<sup>5</sup>

First of all, Western ethnomusicologists have shown great interest in how the introduced Christian beliefs and music repertoire have been localized and acquired new meanings in the indigenous context, although there has not been an academia-wide consensus on the use of a universal term to describe such processes.

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<sup>5</sup> A few studies give preference to historical research. Kay Shelemay suggests a potential role of ethnomusicological studies in historical reconstruction of hymnody in the early years of Christian missionary activity (Shelemay 1980). Heinrich Zahn's research highlights the contribution of early missionaries to the study of indigenous traditions (Zahn 1996). David Music introduces the spread of the first known example of world hymnody from India in the West during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Music 2006).

Zoe Sherinian uses the term “indigenization,” which, according to her, occurs “when individuals and communities interact under specific conditions of power to consciously choose and combine cultural characteristics that reflect, embody, and transmit the meaning of a Christian theological message through the cultural identity of the people who use them” (Sherinian 2005: 125). In her research on Christian music in Indonesia, Marzanna Poplawska adopts another term, “inculturation,” a term that emphasizes the dynamic interaction between the foreign Christianity and local tradition; as she writes, “The religious message transforms a culture, and in the process Christianity is also transformed by culture” (Poplawska 2007: 20). She has used this term earlier in the discussion of the creation of *wayang wahyu*, a Catholic form of shadow theatre in central Java, in relation to the church politics of inculturation (Poplawska 2004).

Close examination shows that there have been more case studies focusing on the use of local cultural expression during the process of an indigenous acceptance of an outside religion. In the forthcoming book *The Oxford Handbook of Music and World Christianities* (hereafter referred to as *Handbook*), edited by Jonathan Dueck and Suzel Reily, there are four chapters centering upon the creation of a syncretic Christian musical form drawing from traditional elements.<sup>6</sup>

Harold Anderson explores how the Maori constructed a synthesis of Christianity and music that transcended both the European and native in the Ratana Church (Anderson 2015). Barbara Lange examines the creation of a Christian variant of popular music that was meaningful to the local Roma in Hungary among Pentecostal believers

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<sup>6</sup> Individual articles have already been published online and currently about 20 out of the 31 chapters are available for purchase on Oxford's official website. The printed volume is expected to come out in January 2016 (personal communication with one of the contributors, Monique Ingalls, via e-mail). For each of the cited articles here, I provide its year of online publication in the running text and the individual link for purchase in the second part of the bibliography.

(Lange 2013). Keith Howard studies how Korean Christians have been making efforts to incorporate their traditional music to express their religious faiths (Howard 2013). Julie Taylor probes into the current musical projects among the Sabaoth of Western Kenya that aim to create a “traditional mix” to express Christian faith in a local cultural mode (Taylor 2015).

Other representative studies on this topic include Catherine Gray’s research on the mixed style of modern Kiganda church music in Uganda, which has components of both Western hymnody and traditional Kiganda songs (Gray 1995); Dana Rappoport’s exploration of the interplay of traditional and Christian music of the Toraja of southern Sulawesi (Rappoport 2004); and Minako Waseda’s examination of the ways in which gospel music has been localized in Japan and acquired new meanings (Waseda 2013).

Furthermore, a few studies have shown examples of how the introduced Christian music has been fully adopted by the local people and become an essential part of the indigenous tradition. In an early article, Stillman writes “Protestant hymnody is not only an integral part of contemporary Polynesian musical traditions; it has become accepted by islanders as a part of their heritage” (Stillman 1993: 97). Don Niles introduces *peroveta* in the United Church area of the southern coast of Papua New Guinea, an introduced form that has been fully adopted in the local context (Niles 2000). Fiona Magowan discovers that the Methodist “mission music” of the Yolngu people in Australia is already marked as an indigenous musical mode in spite of its foreign origin (Magowan 2013).

Simon Frith once discussed the performativity of identity in his article “Music and Identity;” as he put it, “Music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time, and sociability, experiences which enable us to

place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives” (Frith 1996: 124). In the ethnomusicological studies of world Christianities, music making in relation to identity construction and interplay of identities has been another frequently explored issue. Through analyzing how Tamil Protestants of South India have chosen to use different musical styles to articulate changes in their social identities and religious needs, Sherinian argues that musical style provides a means to understand the relationship between different social values (Sherinian 1998, 2005, and 2007).

There have been several insightful dissertations devoted to this issue. Yoshiko Okazaki studies how certain elements of instrumental *gondang* have been transformed into a vocal genre and how such selection helps to affirm the ethnic and religious identities of the Toba Batak people of North Sumatra (Okazaki 1994). Michael Webb emphasizes the important role of musical styles as a marker of the ethnic identity of the Tobai people in New Guinea (Webb 1995). Paul Yoon investigates how the Korean Americans in a Presbyterian church in New York have used praise songs and “cry-out-loud” prayers (*tongsongkido*) to construct their Christian and ethnic identities (Yoon 2005). In her study of contemporary Chinese Christian “Praise and Worship” music, Connie Wong explores the nexus of Christian spirituality and Chinese identities and how Stream of Praise Music uses various strategies to distinguish itself from other groups (Wong 2006).

In addition to these dissertations, three recent important monographs also discuss the relationship between musical styles and identity. Suzel Reily discusses identity construction in the first ethnography of the Brazilian Catholic musical ensembles *folias de reis* (Reily 2002). Timothy Rommen’s ethnography of Trinidadian gospel music

explores diverse local styles and how the “ethics of style” is used as a marker for the identity negotiation in the “sonically imagined communities” (Rommen 2009). Jean Kidula describes how the newly developed musical styles became markers of the identity of the Loggoli of Western Kenya in local, national, and global settings (Kidula 2013).<sup>7</sup>

The last important perspective in ethnomusicological study of world Christianities relates to the role that music plays in blurring boundaries.

Firstly, there have been studies showing that music can facilitate and maintain a network of religious affiliation for transnational migrants. Ingalls’s essay in *Handbook* discusses the ways that a transnational musical network can provide for powerful individuals to locate “authentic” religious faith in the process of the “British invasion” of U.K. contemporary evangelical songs into the U.S. market (Ingalls 2013). In addition to his earlier examination of the transnationalization of Christian music within Jamaican and Haitian Pentecostal communities (Butler 2005), in his *Handbook* chapter Melvin Butler also explores transnational networks of Pentecostal practices and power shifts in transnational engagement that shared faith can engender (Butler 2015).

The phenomenon of the ambiguous boundary between sacred and secular domains in contemporary Christian music making has also attracted attention.<sup>8</sup> Early in the 1990s,

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<sup>7</sup> There are also ethnomusicological studies of world Christianities within North America examining the role of music in negotiating religious/denominational identities (Dueck 2011; Ingalls 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Outside the studies of world Christianities, there are also plenty of ethnomusicological studies—not to mention those in the field of tourism or anthropology—concerning the performance of sacred music in secular settings such as tourist shows. For example, in her book *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería*, Katherine Hagedorn explores how the culturally and spiritually powerful Afro-Cuban Santería tradition has been transformed into secular performances, resulting a blurring of boundaries between the sacred and the folkloric (Hagedorn 2001). For another example, the performance of Balinese sacred traditions in the tourist industry has also attracted scholars’ attention. Peter Dunbar-Hall discusses *kecak*, an invented genre drawn from elements of the sacred *sanghyang* rituals, performed particularly as

Kidula's case study of a religious television program "Sing and Shine" in Kenya explores the commercialization of the gospel genre in the secular arena (Kidula 1998). Two chapters from *Handbook* also touch on this issue. Anna Nekola presents a new trend that has characterized "worship" as a "lifestyle" and suggests reconsidering the relationship between "sacred" and "secular" within American evangelism since the 1990s (Nekola 2014). Reily discusses the acceptance of folk-like musics rooted in imagined local traditions by the Roman Catholic Church in Minas Gerais of Brazil, which actually shifts the religious practices from the sacred sphere to a secular folklorized arena (Reily 2013).

Although I have discussed each of the case studies within one specific category, many of them actually draw on more than one of these perspectives. Additionally, many ethnomusicologists contributing to this body of scholarship have adopted cross-disciplinary approaches, including those from sociology, theology, psychology, musicology, religious studies, and cultural studies. In the future, there should be even more perspectives and approaches absorbed into ethnomusicological studies of world Christianities based on continuous case studies drawing from a variety of geographical and cultural backgrounds around the world.

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tourist entertainment today, and suggests that this transition from its original sacred context to a tourist context "acts as an agent in ongoing artistic development" (Dunbar-Hall 2001: 174) Also see Tenzer's comment on how *kecak* has inspired Balinese artists to develop it further (Tenzer 1991: 98-99). Annette Sanger notes how the villagers in Singapadu were aware of the possible conflict between religious and commercial interests and therefore adjusted their ritual *barong* in several ways for the tourist industry (Sanger 1988: 92-96). Helen Rees's research on ritual music and tourist performance in southwest China provides another excellent example, which will be discussed in the next subsection.

General research on Christianity and music of China's minority nationalities

*Studies of Christianity among minority peoples*

In the generic studies of Christianity among ethnic minorities by Chinese scholars, there have been more historical writings than ethnographies. Earlier research centers upon the history of the spread of Christianity among Yunnan's minority groups (Yang Xuezheng 1999; Qin Heping 2003; Xiao Yaohui and Liu Dingyin 2007). In addition to making historical inquiries, Chinese scholars have shown interest in current Christian practices, and some of them aim to provide suggestions for the government to make policies (Yang Xuezheng 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, and 2009; Zhang Jinping 2010).

Another concern is the profound impact of Christianity on the society and culture of minority nationalities (Chen Li 1993; Qin Heping 2008; Wang Zaixing 2008; Gao Zhiying 2009). One of the perspectives that scholars have considered is the interaction between the introduced Christianity and indigenous cultural system. Qian Ning, professor from Yunnan University, discusses both cultural conflict and the acculturation process between Christianity and minority culture (Qian Ning 2000). Shen Xiaohu from the Institute of Religious Studies in Sichuan University discusses various strategies adopted in the process of Christian indigenization (Shen Xiaohu 2011). In their case study of the Miao church, Zhang Qiaogui and Liu Chunfang from Yunnan Nationalities University conclude that indigenization is the essential way to resolve cultural conflict between foreign religion and indigenous social and psychological needs (Zhang Qiaogui and Liu Chunfang 2014).

Another two researchers from the Institute of Religious Studies in Sichuan University have studied this topic from the perspective of language. Chen Jianming

explores the impact of evangelization via literary work on minority peoples (Chen Jianming 2011). Wang Zaixing examines Bible translations in minority languages (Wang Zaixing 2008a, 2008b). Meanwhile, a few studies probe into this issue from the perspective of music (see more details at the end of this section).

Although Western scholars have studied Christianity in China using perspectives from across the disciplines of history, religion, politics, missiology, and hymnology (Barnett and Fairbank 1985; Bays 1999, 2011; Dunch 2001; Uhalley and Wu 2001; Aikman 2006; Hsieh 2010), they have not paid much attention to the Christian faith of China's minority nationalities.<sup>9</sup>

Missiologist Ralph Covell's *The Liberating Gospel in China: The Christian Faith among China's Minority Peoples*, a collection of case studies of minority nationalities' responses to Christianity including those of the Lisu, has been the only volume devoted to the mission history of China's minority peoples until today (Covell 1995). In his report "Christianity in Contemporary China: An Update," Joseph Lee briefly refers to the history of Christianity among the marginalized minorities such as the Lisu, Miao, and Lahu in Yunnan (Lee 2007: 282). In the field of anthropology and ethnology, among groups with large Christian populations the Hmong (Miao) and Lisu have attracted the greatest attention.

Nicholas Tapp, an anthropologist who has been studying the religion and politics of the Hmong (Miao), examines the general impact of Christianity upon marginalized ethnic minorities through a case study of the Hmong. As he writes, "One important effect of the

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<sup>9</sup> There is only one chapter that discusses Christianity and China's minority nationalities by Ralph R. Covell in the edited volume *China and Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future* by Uhalley and Wu (Uhalley and Wu 2001: 271-83). Covell's major research will be reviewed shortly in the next paragraph.

impact of forms of Protestant missionary Christianity upon the members of minority ethnic groups in these and similar regions has been to increase the conceptual distance between themselves and the members of more dominant, powerful majority tradition . . . and contributing to and enhancing their status as ethnic minorities” (Tapp 1989:78).

Ethnologist Norma Diamond illuminates the same topic from the perspective of China’s policies toward minority languages. She argues that the creation of the Christian script (known as “Pollard script”) brought literacy to the Hua Miao along with religion, and the script is part of what the third or fourth generation Christians regard as “tradition,” as intrinsically “Miao” as those state-approved cultural markers of Hua Miao ethnicity (Diamond 1999: 157). Similarly, David Bradley, a linguist specializing in the Tibeto-Burman languages of Southeast Asia including the Lisu language, argues that the re-introduction of Old Lisu in the 1980s has facilitated the rise of transnationalism and Lisu identity (Bradley 1999).

### *Musical studies of minority nationalities*

The Western studies of minority music in China started in the 1980s when China opened the door to foreign researchers, who were also influenced by the continuous anthropological interest in China’s minority nationalities from the same period.<sup>10</sup> One of the most discussed topics has been the impact of the post-1950 civilizing project—ethnic

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<sup>10</sup> Some early anthropological research on China’s minorities includes Colin Mackerras’s study of the change and continuity of the Bai culture (Mackerras 1988), Stevan Harrell’s studies of the Yi people (Harrell 1989, 1990), Harrell’s first student Dru. C. Gladney’s work on Muslim Chinese (Gladney 1991), and Chien Chiao and Nicholas Tapp’s edited volume on ethnic groups in China (Chiao and Tapp 1989). Since the mid-1990s, the University of Washington Press has published nineteen monographs in the series “Studies on Ethnic Groups in China” as of 2015. It is noteworthy that a recent study examining the impact of economic development on the minority people in Nujiang has just been published (Harwood 2014).

identifications (minzu shibie)—on the perception of minority identities and majority-minority relation (Mackerras 1984; Gladney 1994; Harrell 1995).<sup>11</sup>

In *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, the first volume of the book series “Studies on Ethnic Groups in China,” many case studies have embodied two major aspects in the development of an ethnic consciousness under the above-mentioned civilizing project: a sense of “belonging to a group” and a “consciousness of being different from other groups” (Harrell 1995: 29). My dissertation illuminates the fact that Nujian Lisu people’s ethnic consciousness has not only been shaped by the state integration project but also influenced by other social changes that the local people have been undergoing since the beginning of the twentieth century.

In terms of the focus and concern, Western-trained scholars have shown interest in the state portrayal of minority music in the Han-dominated culture. They point out that the common phrases/descriptions that the government and mass media have associated with minorities related to their fondness for singing and dancing (Mackerras 1984: 202; Tuohy 1991: 211-12; Harrell 1995: 27). Helen Rees terms such state representation as “the motif of the music-making minority” (Rees 2000: 23-27, 177). Meanwhile, she also looks into the changing representations of the Naxi Dongjing music at different periods of time (Rees 2000: 171-192).

As for the representation of minority music on the international stage, Rees reflects on Naxi musicians’ first foreign concert tour and how the refinement of Dongjing music performance aimed to ensure a musical success internationally that would improve the reputation of Naxi culture and their homeland, Lijiang (Rees 2002). Li Jing investigates

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<sup>11</sup> Later on, Nicholas Tapp suggested that the ethnic classification project might be necessary to understand the complexity of the changes in local identities (Tapp 2002).

the ways in which the music of Yunnan's minority nationalities were presented by the provincial government at the 2007 Smithsonian Folklife Festival in relation to the politicization of art and the aestheticization of politics (Li Jing 2013).

Western-trained scholars also have examined the ways in which minority music has been transformed by the Han majority culture and state policies (Mackerras 1984; Yang Mu 1995/1996; Bernoviz/Baranovitch 1997: 208-19; Harris 1998, 2008; Rees 2000, 2001; Koo 2008, 2010; Wong Chuen-Fung 2009, 2012). Meanwhile, some of them also have noticed the role of minority people in representing themselves. Nimrod Baranovitch looks into an alternative representation of Mongolian identity by minority pop musicians (Baranovitch 1997, 2001, 2003). Sara Davis studies how the Dai people (Tai Lüe) in Xishuangbanna (Sipsongpanna) have been reinventing their epic storytelling and traditional songs in ways that go against the state version (Davis 2005). Rachel Harris examines the Sibe people's efforts in representing themselves through music in response to the state's integration policies (Harris 2008).

There are two kinds of topics that are of particular relevance to my research: one is the representation of minority music in tourism and the other the cross-border trade in commercial recordings of minority pop music in China's border regions.

For the first relevant topic, Yang Mu analyzes how the original function of minority "Erotic Musical Activity" has been replaced with less-traditional ones such as political propaganda and ethnic cultural shows (Yang Mu 1998: 207). Rees's examination of the Naxi Dongjing music performed at tourist concerts shows that cultural performance has become a new arena to display minority music (Rees 2000, 2002). Fredrick Lau believes that the use of minority cultural elements in urban tourist concerts reflects "the Chinese

state's view of the nation as a multi-ethnic community" (Lau 1998:120). In her dissertation on the ethnic tourism performances in Guangxi Province, Jessica Turner argues that the performance repertoire and dominant tourism discourse prevalent in Guangxi are shared across spatial and ethnic boundaries (Turner 2010).

For the other topic, the representative studies include Davis's book on the cross-border trade in cassettes of Dai pop songs in Xishuangbanna in the 1990s (Davis 2005); Harris's research on the global flows of Uyghur pop since the 1990s between the Uyghurs in Xinjiang and those in Turkey, the Central Asian states, and the exile community in the United States (Harris 2005, 2012); and Baranovitch's study of the Mongolian pop music market in Inner Mongolia (Neimenggu), in which he discusses the influence of the local singer Teng Ge'er on Mongols outside China (Baranovitch 2001). It is also worth mentioning Anna Morcom's article about the minority music recording industry in Tibet, although she does not really touch on cross-border issues (Morcom 2008).

The flourishing cross-border trade in the VCDs and DVDs of Lisu Christian pop since the early 2000s (for more details see Chapter 6) and four case studies mentioned above share many similar characteristics, including the short history of such business—no more than three decades—emergence of private studio production, facilitation of technological advancement,<sup>12</sup> and role of individual musicians' great appeal in the cross-border success.<sup>13</sup> The lack of state control of piracy and its lack of appeal to anyone apart

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<sup>12</sup> In her recent article in *Ethnomusicology*, Harris particularly focuses on the ways in which the transnational circulation of Uyghur songs on the Uyghur Internet help to construct memory and history between Uyghurs living in Xinjiang and those in the diaspora communities (Harris 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Some of those influential figures include Teng Ge'er in both Inner and Outer Mongolia (Baranovitch 2001: 372); Sai Mao, a Tai icon in the Mekong Delta, and eventually in Xishuangbanna (Davis 2005: 74-75); and the band Dervishes formed by four mainly Russian-

from the local minority people are other easily observable aspects of these emerging minority pop music businesses.<sup>14</sup> Regardless of all these similarities, the commercial recording industries of minority pop also present different scenarios in varied frontier regions, which will be analyzed in depth in Chapter 6.3.

Overall, the Western studies of minority music have been a marginalized field in the overall studies of musics in China. The music of the less-known minority groups has been understudied in the field of minority music research. Particularly, in the field of religious ritual music of the minority peoples, Christian musical traditions, especially those practices in the rural areas, have been largely ignored.

However, there have been hundred of books and articles in the Chinese scholarship of minority music. Here, I just provide a general introduction, with a particular interest in the different intellectual focuses between scholars in China and those trained in the West.

First, Western-trained researchers are more concerned with the social effect of the official ethnic classification and majority-minority relations; however, scholars in China have tended to take such categories for granted. Many of them often study the musical tradition of one or more of the groups.

Second, scholars in China have studied the music of each recognized ethnic group since the 1950s. There has been a considerable number of publications since the 1990s, each of them comprising the musical traditions of many minority nationalities, often presented as timeless and invariable (Du Yaxiong 1993; Tian Liantao 2001; Yuan

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speaking Uyghur musicians (Harris 2005: 631). The influence of individual singers and bands on the Lisu Christian pop scene is also visible; however, in most cases, it is those Burmese-produced pop songs that have been popular across the border in Nujiang, not the other way around—until the end of my fieldwork in July 2014, I have not observed any individual musicians or bands based in Nujiang who have become influential in the transnational Lisu Christian networks.

<sup>14</sup> According to Morcom, the pirate business run by Chinese Muslims has also spanned most if not all Tibetan areas (Morcom 2008: 270).

Bingchang and Feng Guangyu 2007; Fan Zuyin 2010; Zhang Xingrong 2010). The monumental series of data-collection-oriented books, *Zhongguo Minjian Yinyue Jicheng* (Anthology of folk music of the Chinese peoples), also have included studies of minority music (see Jones's 2003 review; also in Tsao Penyeh and Xue Yibing 2000: 150-52).

Conducting this kind of multi-ethnic study especially those for the purpose of preservation can be a very difficult task for Western scholars, who, instead, have focused their studies on a few more renowned minority nationalities, centering on a certain musical tradition, a period of time, or a particular perspective. Some of the English-language scholarship on the music of an individual ethnic group includes studies of the Dai (Davis 2005), Naxi (Rees 2000, 2002), Yi (Thrasher 1990), Uyghur (Mackerras 1985; Dautcher 2000; Trebinjac 2000, 2001; Harris 1998, 2002, 2005), Tibetans (for a relatively complete list of scholarship in Tibetan music, see Wu 1998), and Mongolians (Mackerras 1983; Pegg 2001; D'Evelyn 2013).

It is noteworthy that in the studies of the religious ritual music of minority peoples, Christian music have been an ignored field. The existing scholarship includes a general introduction to the Christian music of seven ethnic groups included in the anthology of the religious music of Yunnan's ethnic minorities by Zhang Xingrong, a professor from the Yunnan Arts Institute (Zhang Xingrong 2007), and the monograph on the Christian ritual music of Yunnan's minority nationalities by Yang Minkang, a professor from the Central Conservatory (Yang Minkang 2008). There are also three Masters theses devoted to the Miao hymnody tradition (Hua Huijuan 2007; Li Lei 2009; Luo Yuan 2009).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Hua Huijuan discusses the spread and transformation of the Miao hymnody in relation to the interaction between the indigenous culture and Christianity. Li Lei analyzes the bel canto feature of a Miao choir in Xiaoshuijing Village near Kunming from a musicological perspective. Luo Yuan studies the same choir but demonstrates more interest in the acculturation.

## Scholarship on the Christianity and music of the Lisu people

### *Studies of Lisu Christianity*

The in-depth anthropological studies of the Lisu people by Chinese researchers can be traced back to Tao Yunkui's ethnographic research in Nujiang in 1935, based upon which he finished a comprehensive report on many aspects of the local Lisu society; nevertheless, this fundamental work does not refer to any of their Christian practices (Tao Yunkui 2012). Rui Yifu, another renowned Chinese anthropologist, conducted research on the Lisu language in the frontier area in the 1940s, especially on the Christian alphabets invented by Western missionaries (Rui Yifu 1948). There were a series of official investigations into various aspects of minority societies, especially original social formations, economic patterns, and class hierarchy, in the 1950s and 1960s immediately after the founding of the People's Republic of China. The research reports include some records of the situation of Christianity among the Lisu at the time, providing precious historical materials for subsequent academic research (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 1984, 2008; Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009a, 2009b).

Generally speaking, most contemporary research since the 1980s on the Christian belief and religious practices of the Lisu has been in accordance with the tendency in the study of minority Christianity—the preference for historical research over ethnographic study—yet it has its own features. Based on my fieldwork and the summary of related previous studies, I divide today's research on Lisu Christianity into the following categories.

The first kind of research, sponsored by the government, mainly aims to provide reference opinions for the government to make decisions on relevant religious policies.

For example, in June 2014 the State Ethnic Affairs Commission delegated a group of students from the Minzu University of China to conduct short-term fieldwork research on the current situation of Christian belief in Nujiang (personal communication from Mi Zhenghua, vice deputy director general of the Bureau of Religious Affairs, on June 15 of 2014). Several articles included in a series of official biennial reports on the current situation of religions in Yunnan as mentioned in the beginning of this section specifically refer to some topical issues related to Christian belief among the Nujiang Lisu.

Another kind of research primarily conducted by scholars from Yunnan University and Yunnan Minzu University are special research projects that are usually supported by national funds and span a long period of time.

The Naxi scholar Gao Zhiying, director for the Institute of China's Borderland Studies at the National Institute of Yunnan University, has been conducting research centering upon the ethnic relationship, inter-ethnic cultural interaction, and transformation in the west edge of the Zang-Yi Corridor (Zang Yi Zoulang) area, with a particular interest in the Lisu and Dulong people (Gao Zhiying 2009).<sup>16</sup> Gao studies Lisu Christianity from the perspective of comparison. For example, she compares the different situations of the spread of Christianity between the Chinese Lisu and Burmese Lisu and

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<sup>16</sup> As an officially recognized minority nationality in China that has a close relationship with the Lisu and Naxi peoples in terms of ethnic origin, the Yi primarily live in three southwestern provinces: Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan. A large number of them can also be found in several Southeastern countries. The "Tibetan-Yi Corridor" is a historical-ethnic-regional concept proposed by the Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong around 1980. Geographically, it mainly refers to a vast region within Tibet, Sichuan, and Yunnan Provinces, in which all mountains and rivers are distribute in a north-south direction, in contrast to most others in China, that are spread in the east-west direction. Since ancient times, the "Tibetan-Yi Corridor" has been not only an important route of ethnic migration in the area, but also a significant venue for cultural communication and business trade.

compares different strategies adopted by missionaries of different denominations in the first half of the twentieth century on the frontier.

Lisuxue Research Center of Yunnan Minzu University is the only university-based research institution that is exclusively devoted to Lisu studies, and it is funded by the local autonomous government, Lisu entrepreneurs, and national social science project funds. Currently there are more than forty affiliated research associates doing research on diverse aspects of the Lisu. The center's official yearbook, *Lisuxue Yanjiu* (Lisu studies) has published a very small portion of research articles on Christian-related topics (Lu Jianbiao 2010, 2011, 2012).

The third type is the individual research primarily conducted by emerging young scholars whose study was often initiated as their dissertation project. In most situations, such a research project centers upon a specific research perspective or locality, and the outcome is a meticulous thesis or dissertation rather than a survey report. There have been a few well-written Ph.D. dissertations that can represent this kind of research.

Based on his multi-site fieldwork in both China and Thailand, Jin Jie, recent Ph.D. graduate in linguistics from Yunnan University, wrote a high-quality dissertation concerning the impact of Christianity on the Lisu language. His interviews with members of the Morse missionary family and other significant figures of the Lisu church in Chiang Mai are precious first-hand data contributing to the oral history of Lisu Christianity (Jin Jie 2013). Cao Yue'ru from the Minzu University of China investigated both the continuity and variation of Christianity in a small village, Liwudi, in Nujiang (Cao Yue'ru 2009). Lu Chengren, Ph.D. in anthropology from Zhejiang University, developed his dissertation project into a monograph that aims to illuminate the significance of the

Christian belief of the Nujiang Lisu through “thick description” of the daily life of the Lisu in the small village Wadi (Lu Chengren 2014). Lu successively conducted fieldwork just in Wadi Village for more than ten months, which is a challenging and rewarding academic attempt in present-day Chinese academia.

There are two groups of investigators outside of academia writing about Lisu Christianity. One group consists of indigenous Lisu church pastoral staff and intellectuals who have an interest in collecting materials regarding the church history (Hu Xuecai 1995; Shi Fuxiang 2006, 2011; Zhu Fade 2008). Although their works lack thorough theoretical analysis, they have provided other scholars with precious first-hand historical data.

Members of the other group are mostly journalists, photographers, and travellers, who often give an account of their observations and reflections on their journey in the forms of blogs, photo collections, travelogues, and serious books. A representative example is Lin Ci’s influential book *Fuyin Gu* (Gospel valley). Based on his five field trips to Nujiang between 1996 and 2001, this book contains one hundred photos of a few Lisu Christians’ daily life, along with their stories and descriptions of their spiritual world. Lin’s book provides precious evidence on the oral history of the Nujiang Lisu church in the late 1990s, which will be quite useful for those who did not have an opportunity to experience those years in person.

### *Studies of Lisu music*

There have been just a handful of studies of Lisu musical traditions in northern Thailand and Myanmar. Hans Larsen examines the general features of Lisu vocal and

instrumental music in various social contexts where it is performed (Larsen 1984). Paul Durrenberger, an anthropologist with expertise in Lisu religion, describes the music used in a Lisu soul-calling ceremony (Durrenberger 1975) The Southeast Asia volume of the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* includes an ethnomusicological survey of the musical life, musical instruments, and musical structure of the Lisu in Thailand and Myanmar (Uchida 1998: 542-43).<sup>17</sup>

English writings on the traditional music of the Lisu in China are also very few. In addition to Western missionaries' fragmentary descriptions of the pre-Christian Lisu music (see more details on Chapter 2-3), an early ethnological investigation into the Lisu on the China-Myanmar border includes a brief introduction to Lisu traditional music. According to them, Lisu dances were accompanied by "a guitar and bamboo Jew's harp" and songs could be considered as a kind of minstrel song producing "beautiful simile" (Rose and Brown 1901: 254-55). In the East Asia volume of the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, the Chinese scholar Shen Qia introduces Lisu music under the Di-Qiang musical system, with a particular emphasis on the aspect of its fourth degree of the five-pitch scale and multipart songs (Shen Qia 2001: 485-91).

Relatively, there have been more Chinese writings on the traditional music of the Lisu in China, even though they still have a marginalized status within the overall Chinese scholarship on minority music.

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<sup>17</sup> In terms of the indigenous scholarship in Thailand, the Tribal Research Institute, known to foreign researchers studying the "hill tribes" of Northern Thailand before the Thai government dissolved it in 2002, has conducted research on many aspects of the ethnic groups, including the Lisu, over the last four decade. In particular, early in the 1970s the Language and Culture for Rural Development Research Institute of Mahidol University in Bangkok conducted research on the ethnic culture, especially language and music of the hill tribes including those of the Lisu (Buadaeng 2006: 379).

Tao Yunkui's pioneering ethnographic work on the Nujiang Lisu in the 1930s includes illustrations of Lisu instruments and brief musical analysis. After the founding of the PRC, Mao Jizeng, a renowned Chinese music scholars who has been engaging in gathering, studying, and promoting the musics of minority nationalities since the 1950s, interviewed Huang Zhenfang of Yunnan Song and Dance Troup (Yunnansheng Gewutuan) in 1962 and learned about the three categories of Lisu folk songs and Lisu instruments such as the pipa-like lute, dizi (flute), kouxian (mouth bow), and ye'shao (leaf whistle, *maiqpiat* in Lisu) (Jian Qihua and Mao Jizeng 1962: 32-33).<sup>18</sup>

It is worth mentioning that the local cultural workers have made great efforts in collecting Lisu folk music, and their collected materials were compiled for publication or used as internal archival material.<sup>19</sup> Yang Yuanji, first director of the Nujiangzhou Gewutuan (Nujiang Prefecture song and dance troupe) who held that position until 1996, is a typical example of those cultural workers.

Yang's first writing about Lisu music was published in 1974 (Yang Yuanji 2014). His survey on Lisu religious music was included in Zhang Xingrong's edited book about the religious music of Yunnan's minority nationalities (Yang Yuanji 2007a, 2007b).<sup>20</sup> Yang also contributed the Lisu chapters to a general work on minority music (Yang 2001) and to a book on the music history of minority nationalities in China (Yang Yuanji 2007c).

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<sup>18</sup> Such categories are quite in accordance with the current popular term "sandadiao" (three major forms).

<sup>19</sup> For example, the prefecture cultural bureau sponsored the compilation of the anthology *Lisuzu Min'ge* (Lisu folk songs). The collection includes approximate 170 songs, 30 video and audio recordings, 1600 photographs, and 51 folk artist biographies (Yang Yuanji 2014: 9).

<sup>20</sup> The Christian music part was included in *Dianxi Jidujiao Shi* (History of Christianity in western Yunnan) as the internal material of the Lisu church in 2008.

In addition to local cultural workers' fieldwork, according to Yang there have been three research projects on Nujiang's ethnic musical traditions, and two of them focused on Lisu folk music: one was conducted by Zhang Xingrong and his research team from the Yunnan Art Institute, and the previously mentioned *Musical Cultures* is the project outcome; the other research was "Nujiang ge minzu minjian yinyue shixiang de caiji he luzhi" (The collection and recording of the folk musical activities of Nujiang's minority nationalities) by the research team from the Yunnan National Art Institute.

Relatively speaking, there have been more Chinese studies of Lisu multipart folk songs and ritual music since the 1990s (Du Yaxiong 1993; Fan Zuyin 1986, 2008; Zhang Xingrong 2006, 2007, and 2010). Although there has been great attention given to the religious ritual music (zongjiao yishi yinyue), especially the musical traditions of Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhism, and minority peoples' Daoist music (see Zhao Shufeng's review 2014), Christian music still has been an under-researched domain. Correspondingly, little research has been exclusively devoted to Lisu Christian music.

The above-mentioned Zhang Xingrong's edited volume includes a general introduction to Lisu Christian music (Yang Yuanji 2007b). Yang Minkang has written a series of articles and a book on minority Christian hymnody, with a particular interest in Lisu Christian music in the 1990s (Yang Minkang 1990, 1991, 2005, 2006, and 2008). His follow-up research explores new music trends among minority Christians (Yang Minkang 2012).

The latest and only Western scholarship on the hymnody of the Nujiang Lisu was Aminta Arrington's Ph.D. dissertation (Arrington 2014).<sup>21</sup> I happened to have met her once in a local bus on my way to Fugong on December 27, 2013. We had a meaningful conversation during that short trip and several follow-up communications via mobile phone afterwards, from which I learned that her research focus was not on the musical aspect of Lisu hymn singing but on the ways in which music facilitated the translation of the biblical written words into the sung words of the Lisu; as she writes in the dissertation abstract, "The Lisu hymns serve as a theological mediator for Lisu Christians, bridging the gap between the text-intensive religion that is Christianity, and the oral world of Lisu culture" (Arrington 2014: Abstract page, also on page 276).

### 1.3 Fieldwork Methods and Data collected

Following the ten-day preliminary fieldtrip in January 2010 (see Chapter 1.1), I spent the summer of 2010 in Nujiang, learning Lisu from students of the Bible schools and making more personal contacts for further research. My intensive fieldwork in Nujiang started in October 2012, and it can be divided into two significant parts: one was conducted from October 2012 to May 2013, and the other between December 2013 and July 2014. The primary sites of my fieldwork were at Nujiang's three frontier counties, Lushui, Fugong, and Gongshan (see more details in Chapter 2.1). I made brief visits to Lisu churches in Longling County (Longling Xian) and Tengchong County (Tengchong Xian) of Baoshan City (Baoshan Shi) between October and November of 2012, where the

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<sup>21</sup> In her research on the Dongjing music of the Naxi people, Rees briefly mentions a small surviving Christian community near Lijiang's Shigu Town where the mainly Lisu believers still sing Western hymns in European-style harmony (Rees 2000: 94).

missionaries from the China Inland Mission (hereafter referred as CIM) built two major mission stations among the Lisu before they reached the Nujiang Lisu.<sup>22</sup>

For a foreign ethnomusicologist doing research in China, being affiliated with or establishing a cooperative relationship with a major domestic institution often ensures generous help from the local host/colleagues that can facilitate many aspects of one's fieldwork, such as an easier acquisition of local people's trust and of more opportunities to meet local minority musicians.<sup>23</sup> For example, Helen Rees was affiliated with the Yunnan Arts Institute and assigned a field advisor, Zhang Xingrong, when she was doing fieldwork for her dissertation in the early 1990s. They have maintained a longstanding relationship of cooperation until now.<sup>24</sup> My experience in this respect was very special.

As an American-trained Chinese student, I was not affiliated with any universities or research institutions in China when I first started my fieldwork in Yunnan. In order to acquire a "legal status" for doing research there, I contacted Professor Lu Jianbiao, current director of Lisuxue Research Center in Yunnan Minzu University, and was issued a letter of appointment as one of the center's research associates, which not only gave me a legal research status in Nujiang but also provided me with great convenience when dealing with the government. Compared with my Western colleagues, I have fewer problems in obtaining locals' trust thanks to my innocent Chinese face.

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<sup>22</sup> The State Ministry of Civil Affairs (Guojia Minzhengbu) authorized Yunnan Province's request to repeal Tengchong's county system and establish its city system on August 4, 2015. Now Tengchong City (Tengchong Shi) is under the direct governing of the Yunnan provincial government rather than that of Baoshan City (Huang Xueyun and Xian Minzhengju 2015).

<sup>23</sup> However, Sara Davis talks about differences between her way of doing fieldwork and that of her local colleagues in Sipsongpanna; to some extent, these hindered instead of facilitated her ethnographic work there (Davis 2005: 23).

<sup>24</sup> One of their most recent collaborative research is *Sanjiang Bingliu Quyu Yinyue Wenhua Dagan* (Musical cultures of the Three Parallel Rivers Region of Yunnan, hereafter referred to as Musical Cultures), in which Rees participated not only as one of the fieldworkers but also as a member of the editing committee (Zhang Xingrong 2012).

My general strategy of data collecting was to document as many of the church activities as possible throughout Nujiang in order to examine a variety of Lisu Christian music genres and modes of musical expression of Christian faith in different contexts, including weekly worship services, Bible schools, short-term theological training classes (peixunban), major religious festivals (Easter, Festival of Thanks, and Christmas), and other important celebrations such as the New Year and dedication of a new church.<sup>25</sup>

The primary means that I used to collect data in the Christian domain included live audio- and video-recording, photographing of church activities, participatory observation, and in-depth interviews and informal chats with the Christian Lisu of different backgrounds and social status. I tried not to fast grab information or copy/take photos of everything in sight, in order to avoid any distrust or a feeling of invasion that I might have caused.

A large amount of data were drawn from extensive interviews. Most interviewees were those who could tell the early history of the Lisu church or have been engaging in the Christian music making or/and the administration of church affairs, such as Lisu composers, senior Christians, Lisu pastors, and other pastoral staff members. I have incorporated a considerable number of informative quotes generated from my interview transcriptions.

Admittedly, my Lisu language deficiencies in in-depth communication greatly influenced my choice of interviewees. I tended to interview educated Lisu with a certain knowledge of Han Chinese, for example. The translators' potential misinterpretations

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<sup>25</sup> There are five worship services per week, among which the Sunday noon service is the most lively and lengthy. Initially, I tried to attend all of the five services, aiming to verify the universal use of the standardized liturgy. I changed the strategy later and only observed Sunday noon services for the purpose of documenting Christian musical repertoire.

also cannot be ignored.<sup>26</sup> In order to remedy those weaknesses, on the one hand I would mutually verify the similar material as far as possible; on the other hand, I also acquired oral information through the countless personal communications with many ordinary Christian Lisu about their life experience, their musical preferences, and the role of music in their religious life. It is notable that most of my informants preferred an informal conversation to a formal interview.<sup>27</sup>

I did not prepare a questionnaire for churchgoers, mainly for two reasons. First, it would be very difficult to get enough validated Chinese-language questionnaires from most middle-aged and older Christians who were deficient in reading or/and writing Chinese. Even if I could design a Lisu version—many of them did read and write Lisu—I did not have enough time for translating the content, considering that I would have a large amount of other more important Lisu materials to look through. Second, I noticed that the Lisu were very hospitable and many of them would often take the initiative to talk to me if they could speak basic Chinese—a few would even keep talking in Lisu while gesticulating. Therefore, personal communication was a more effective way to obtain information and minimize the misunderstanding instead of asking them to write answers on paper.

In addition to the oral historical material, I also collected a large number of pirated video recordings, either given to me by the Christian Lisu as gifts or purchased on the local farmers' market, and these include both music albums and documentation of specific church events I did not get to observe in person. The close examination of these

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<sup>26</sup> Sometimes, the translator would just talk about his or her own opinions instead of literally translating my interviewee's answers.

<sup>27</sup> For those who agreed to be interviewed, they gave their consent to the audio recording and note taking via laptop.

visual materials not only has given me a more comprehensive impression of the musical soundscape in the Lisu church but also facilitated my analysis of the Christian repertoire.

The ethnographic investigation was inextricably combined with historical inquiry, as I wanted to reconstruct the fragments of early religious life and musical practices in the Lisu church, as well as the efforts that missionaries had made to accommodate Western Christianity to reconcile the Lisu indigenous cultural system.

In late March of 2011, I searched through relevant collections in the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, with the focus on Collection 215, “Overseas Missionary Fellowship (China Inland Mission) US Home Council,” and examined manuscripts of correspondence, newsletters, and articles written by four CIM missionaries working among the Nujiang Lisu before 1950, including Allyn Cooke and Leila Cooke (the Cookes) and John Kuhn and Isobel Kuhn (the Kuhns), and other materials related to their mission work. I also searched articles published in the CIM’s official journal, *China’s Millions* (between 1916 and 1951), for information regarding the Lisu church.

During my intensive fieldwork, I continued to search for historical documents in the Nujiang Prefecture Library, Lushui County Library, Fugong County Library, Yunnan Province Library, and private collections of books, as well as looking for sheet music and compiled hymnbooks. Besides examining primary sources, I also consulted existing scholarship—mostly Chinese—relevant to the history of Christianity in western Yunnan, Lisu music, and Lisu culture. Such work was supplemented by searching out media representations and public discourses of both ethnic and Christian cultures of the Lisu people.

During my second period of extensive fieldwork, I spent more time in interacting with non-Christian Lisu, especially with those who had expertise in Lisu traditional performing arts, and attending and observing non-Christian (musical) activities in order to have a better understanding of the overall musical world of the Nujiang Lisu. My prior knowledge of Lisu traditional music was supplemented by my conversation with a handful of Lisu folk artists and local cultural workers.

I made brief visits to Chiang Mai in Thailand and Myanmar's Yangon and Lashio in February of 2014. In Chiang Mai, I was fortunate to interview the oldest surviving missionary, Eugene Morse, who was working among the Lisu. I had meaningful talks with his son David Morse and his daughter Marilyn Khopang Morse, who had great interest in composing and compiling Lisu hymns.<sup>28</sup> In Myanmar, I met four members of the famous Lisu Christian pop band, Omega, and interviewed three of them regarding their experiences of singing and making Christian pop songs. This investigation into the contemporary Lisu Christian popular music *mutgguat ssat* was supplemented by the interviews I conducted later in June 2015 with Nujiang's renowned Lisu singers and songwriters, studio producers/owners, and pirated disc sellers.

#### 1.4 Aims, Theoretical Issues, and Outline of the Chapters

##### Aims and theoretical issues

This dissertation stemmed from my initial curiosity about the remarkable phenomenon of Christian conversion within a less well-known minority group in the remote frontier area of China. Using Erving Goffman's original front-back dichotomy in

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<sup>28</sup> Three missionaries that I had interviewed before I started my extensive fieldwork were Joni Morse, Nangsar Sarip Morse, and Eileen Kuhn. The Morse and Kuhn families played a significant role in the pre-1950s growth of the Lisu church in China.

terms of “regions,” theorized to describe the division between team performance and audience, as well as the different presentation constructed between the front-stage and backstage (Goffman 1959: 107, 112, 137), one goal I seek to achieve in this dissertation is to examine this backstage Christian culture that has been less publicized but represented one of the most profound changes that the Nujiang Lisu underwent in the twentieth century, in contrast with their front-stage cultural images displayed in the tourism industry and other secular public contexts.

This theoretical frame was initially inspired by Sara Davis’s research on Tai Lües’ cultural resurgence movement in Sipsongpanna mostly due to the growing cross-border religious communication among Tai Lües in China and other neighboring countries, a parallel phenomenon I also have observed in my own research project (Davis 2005).

This dissertation is also an ethnomusicological case study of non-Western Christian music in response to one of the common concerns in studies of this kind: how a group of people not only accommodates Christian music introduced from outside their culture, but also writes new compositions with indigenous musical features. Applying Steve Kaplan’s typology of the process of indigenization developed from his work on Christianity in Africa—namely toleration, translation, assimilation, Christianization, acculturation, and incorporation—I aim to find out how some of the categories can be applied to the indigenized Lisu Christianity in general and to the Lisu Christian music in particular (Kaplan 1995b: 10-23). I also anticipate the possibility of extending his typology through my case study.

Kaplan argues that Christianity “displayed a remarkable openness toward indigenization . . . it repeatedly absorbed elements from the cultures it entered, and thus

numerous local or national Christianities emerged” (Kaplan 1995a: 2-3). However, in the case of Lisu Christianity, I have not seen the noteworthy effects of creating a truly indigenous form of spiritual expression in the music domain—there have been just a handful of Lisu Christian compositions drawing from traditional elements. Therefore, another aim of this dissertation is to illuminate the social and cultural factors that have produced such deviation of trajectory.

Overall, this study centers upon the interplay between traditional music, American-derived four-part hymns, and Burmese-derived Christian popular songs, each of which were largely studied separately in the previous research. More specifically, I focus on the development of two genres and their variants to look into the indigenization of Christianity in the Lisu church and the major forces shaping the religious practices of the Christian Lisu in present-day Nujiang. These two genres, I would argue, are the outcome of transculturation; as Margaret Kartomi defines it, “Transculturation occurs only when a group of people select for adoption whole new organizing and conceptual or ideological principles . . . the final stages of a complete process of transculturation are reached after the tensions between two or more musical cultures have interacted and been resolved into a new unity, through successive generations” (Kartomi 1981: 244-45).

The first genre is *ddoqmuq mutgguat* (songs of praise), a term the Christian Lisu use to refer to their unaccompanied four-part Christian hymns. Deriving from American northern urban gospel songs, it developed in the initial stage of Christian evangelization in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>29</sup> In the late 1990s, with government

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<sup>29</sup> The term “northern urban gospel” refers to new songs and hymns written between 1870 and 1920 from the predominantly European American poets and composers living primarily in the major urban centers of the American Northeast and upper Midwest in an evangelical revival

encouragement and promotion, a newly created ethnic and regional tradition was developed outside the church: the farmer Lisu chorus. The chorus sings varied types of multi-part choral works in Lisu that are either selected from or modeled after *ddoqmuq mutgguat*, yet introduced as a tradition derived from Lisu folk multi-part singing.

The other genre—or, more precisely, a category of music—is *mutgguat ssat* (short songs). Originally developed in the Burmese Lisu Christian communities, this music has been introduced to the Nujiang Lisu since the late 1980s along with more frequent and open interaction between the Chinese Lisu and Burmese Lisu on the frontier. It features the combination of vocals, instruments, and optional dance, in contrast to unaccompanied *ddoqmuq mutgguat*. Although it did not become locally popular until the 1990s, *mutgguat ssat* has already played an essential part in the Nujiang Lisu church. Furthermore, the Nujiang Lisu Christians learned and created a popular Christian culture of their own.

I explore not only the characteristics of these two genres but also the performance practices of the Christian Lisu both within and outside the church on three levels. First, I study them in the religious context: how Lisu Christians write and perform different types of Christian music according to the occasion. Second, I explore them within Nujiang's local music scene, with a particular interest in their transformation in relation to the interaction between the Christian Lisu and local cultural and political agents. Third, I also consider them as a transnational phenomenon and look into the ways that the Christian popular culture has been shared between the Nujiang Lisu and Burmese Lisu.

My aim of analysis pertaining to ethnicity is twofold: 1) to understand the contemporary Lisu Christian music and performance practices from the perspective of

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movement that spanned the English-speaking world (see “Gospel Music” by Stephen Shearon et al. in *Grove Music Online/Oxford Music Online*).

ethnicity; and 2) to discuss how the musical practices of the Christian Lisu transformed their conceptualization of ethnicity. The understanding of ethnicity is based on two aspects: the majority-minority dichotomy and transnational interaction, as analyzed below.

First of all, the influx of Western missionaries into China's southwestern Yunnan Province to engage in missionary work in the early twentieth century introduced Protestant Christianity to the Nujiang Lisu and directly resulted in the marginalization of their traditional belief system. Since then, Christianity has provided one important perspective to think about the socio-cultural world of the Nujiang Lisu.

The Lisu people's Christian identity was supplemented by the acquisition of minority status accredited by the Han-dominated government in the 1950s. The majority-minority interaction has been playing a significant role in the subsequent religious practices of the Christian Lisu and their perception of the difference from the Han dominant culture, somewhat similar to the phenomenon that has already been observed by Nicholas Tapp in his case study of the impact of missionary Christianity upon marginalized Hmong people; as Tapp writes, "The adoption of Christianity by an ethnic minority in effect enhances their status as an ethnic minority ... contributes to a far more serious contradiction between themselves and the members of majority or dominant populations" (Tapp 1989:94).

Second, the frontier area has been the place where people living on both sides of the border congregate and exchange. There has been steady transnational migration of Lisu Christians in the twentieth century. David Bradley emphasizes the role of standard Bible dialect as one strong unifying factor for the Christian Lisu (Bradley 1999: 79). My

research supplements the topic by exploring the role that music has fulfilled in helping the transnational Lisu migrants to sustain a network of the same religious affiliation and provides another dimension to think about the concept of Lisu ethnicity in addition to majority-minority interaction.

#### Outline of the chapters (excluding Chapter 7 “Conclusion”)

In Chapter 1, I first recount the reason why I developed an interest in Lisu Christian music, my initial encounters with Lisu music and culture during my preliminary trip to Nujiang, and the main questions generated from that trip which have shaped this dissertation. Next, I review existing ethnomusicological studies of world Christianities, introduce previous scholarship on the Christianity and music of Chinese minorities, and the Christianity and music of the Lisu people in particular. Following the literature review, I describe my (fieldwork) research methodology and the data collected through fieldwork. I then summarize the aims and theoretical concerns of this dissertation. I conclude this chapter with a suggestion of the potential significance of this dissertation.

In Chapter 2, I first introduce a variety of musical traditions and practices that are prominent in present-day Nujiang Prefecture, which include musical genres considered as indigenously Lisu, and co-existence of many other musics in the region such as Western-influenced musics and genres imported from the Han Chinese. Then I place Lisu traditional performing arts in both synchronic and diachronic contexts and analyze how they were transformed in the processes of Christianization, sinicization, and urbanization.

Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the significant aspects of Lisu Christianity that have provided the solid foundation for the contemporary musical practices of the Nujiang Christian Lisu from historical, social, and musical perspectives.

In Chapter 3, I first outline the history of the spread of Christianity in Nujiang, centering upon the issue of church-state interaction. Then I analyze church networks throughout Nujiang, and summarize features of Lisu Christianity. I conclude the chapter by examining the history of the Lisu Bible translation and hymnbook compilations.

In Chapter 4, I first give an overview of the main categories and general features of Lisu hymnody based on the indigenous perceptions. Then I continue to discuss major Lisu hymnals from a musical standpoint. Next, I analyze a few examples of indigenized hymns composed by the Christian Lisu. Lastly, I examine the ways in which different categories of music have been jointly used in various contexts inside the church.

Chapters 5 and 6 deal with the significant changes that the Christian music of the Nujiang Lisu has gone through especially since the late 1990s, such as a secularizing tendency within certain limits and a lack of young people interested in singing traditional four-part hymns due to their preference for Christian pop songs.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the Lisu farmer chorus, a newly-created Christian-based tradition in Nujiang that features a group of musically untrained “farmers” singing four-part choral music derived from Lisu hymns and secular songs. This chapter is divided into three major sections. In the first section, I review the early history of the chorus, as well as its impact on the founding of the subsequent groups. I then compare and contrast two renowned farmer choruses and their strategies for staging tourist concerts to make compromises between their religious needs and those of the local government. In the

second section, I discuss the problem of naming the tradition and summarize the representations of the chorus by people from different backgrounds. In the final section, I examine recent changes in this chorus tradition influenced by government involvement.

Chapter 6 sheds light on another way in which the cultural values and religious practices of the Nujiang Lisu were profoundly influenced. I explore the impact of cross-border migration and musical exchange on the religious practices of the Nujiang Lisu, while attending to the role of a shared *mutgguat ssat* repertory in constructing a transnational religious-social network. I firstly give an overview on the history of Lisu migration from China to the present-day territory of Myanmar. Next, I trace the origin of *mutgguat ssat* and compare distinct musical characteristic between the songs written by the Burmese Lisu and those by the Nujiang Lisu. Then I focus on the writing, production, and transmission of *mutgguat ssat* in Nujiang in relation to the influences from the Burmese Lisu and the circulation of pirated recordings due to the technological progress.

### 1.5 Significance of the Research

First of all, this research is significant because it contributes another valuable ethnography to the existing ethnomusicological scholarship on religious music cross-cultural contexts, especially world Christianities. The transnationalization of Christianity, and the mobility of Christian music and its indigenization in local contexts are universal phenomena far from being new in the twentieth century; however, my research is worthwhile, as it intensively reveals multiple ways that the indigenization of Western hymnody can be understood in a remote multi-ethnic frontier region. One prominent feature in the indigenization of Christianity in the Nujiang Lisu church in terms of music

is that the Christian Lisu never made great efforts to use traditional musical genres or styles in their own Christian music compositions to make them sound more “Lisu,” a strategy that can be commonly seen in many other ethnomusicological studies of indigenous Christian music making.

Second, this research provides a particularly useful perspective for the cross-border study of religion in relation to music. The Lisu are an important transnational ethnic group distributed across China, Myanmar, Thailand, and India. Their long-term migration history both within China and across borders makes it an excellent example for exploring that issue. Meanwhile, although several studies have shed light on the ways in which Protestant Christianity transcended borders among the Lisu people, including from the perspectives of language, sociology of religion, and missionary activities, the role of music in this process has received little attention. My investigation shows that the musical role is indispensable in the religious transnationalization of Lisu Christianity. On the one hand, music exchange is an essential part of this religious trans-border interaction; on the other hand, it facilitates the acceleration of that interaction.

Next, this research makes a contribution to the study of China’s minority nationalities in northwestern Yunnan Province for two reasons. Firstly, geographically, compared with the tendency to focus more on the studies of the Naxi and Tibetans within the region, less attention has been paid to other ethnic groups in this area such as the Nujiang Lisu, the Nu, and Dulong. Secondly, this research is a necessary supplement to the discussion about the relationship between minority nationalities, the Han Chinese, and the state. My research finds that the nationalizing forces of homogenization are challenged by the strong presence of Lisu Christianity and the resulting Christian culture.

I will reveal some of the societal factors that have resulted in such distinctions between Lisu “front-stage” ethnic culture and “back-stage” Christian culture.

Fourth, investigation into the Christian music of a particular ethnic minority will help to fill in the gaps between two fields of studies: 1) Previous research on the musics of Chinese minority nationalities focuses more on their traditional music and its modern transformation. In my research, I propose that the Christian music should be considered an integral—not marginal—part of their whole musical culture; 2) In the study of the spread of Christianity in China, previous research has largely centered upon the Han Chinese Christians in different regions. Accordingly, the existing discussions of the indigenization of Western hymnody in the Chinese context concentrate mostly on Chinese-language hymnals and hymn compositions. Ethnographic research on the impact of Christianity on a minority society from the perspective of music is rare.

Last, but not the least, the method of this research is of great significance. Being able to conduct multi-site fieldwork in Yunnan, Myanmar, Thailand, and the U.S. is an opportunity not easy to be obtained for Western scholars, and is also a project that not many Chinese scholars have attempted.

## **Chapter 2: The Musical World of the Nujiang Lisu**

### 2.1 The Lisu of Nujiang Prefecture

The Lisu are a transnational ethnic group of over one million people, who reside primarily in China's southwestern Yunnan and Sichuan Provinces, in Myanmar's Kachin State in the northeast and Shan State in the east, in northern Thailand, and in India's northeastern Arunachal Pradesh (see Figure 2.1). The word "Nujiang" literally means "the Nu River." In this dissertation, the word "Nujiang" is used as a synonym for Nujiang Prefecture, and "the Nu River" refers specifically to the river that runs through Nujiang. The Lisu who reside in Nujiang Prefecture are referred to as the Nujiang Lisu.

This dissertation investigates the contemporary Christian music of the Nujiang Lisu; however, it proposes that the musical practices of the Christian Lisu should be examined within the context of the total Nujiang musical world. Thus I will first conduct a survey of musical traditions and practices prominent in present-day Nujiang Prefecture, such as musical genres considered to be indigenously Lisu, Lisu Christian music performed both inside and outside the church, Chinese and foreign-language popular songs favored by the younger generation, and musics of other ethnic groups in the region. At the end of this chapter, I place Lisu traditional performing arts in both synchronic and diachronic contexts, and analyze how they have been affected by the changing political and social factors, with a particular interest in the impact of Christianization, sinicization, and urbanization.

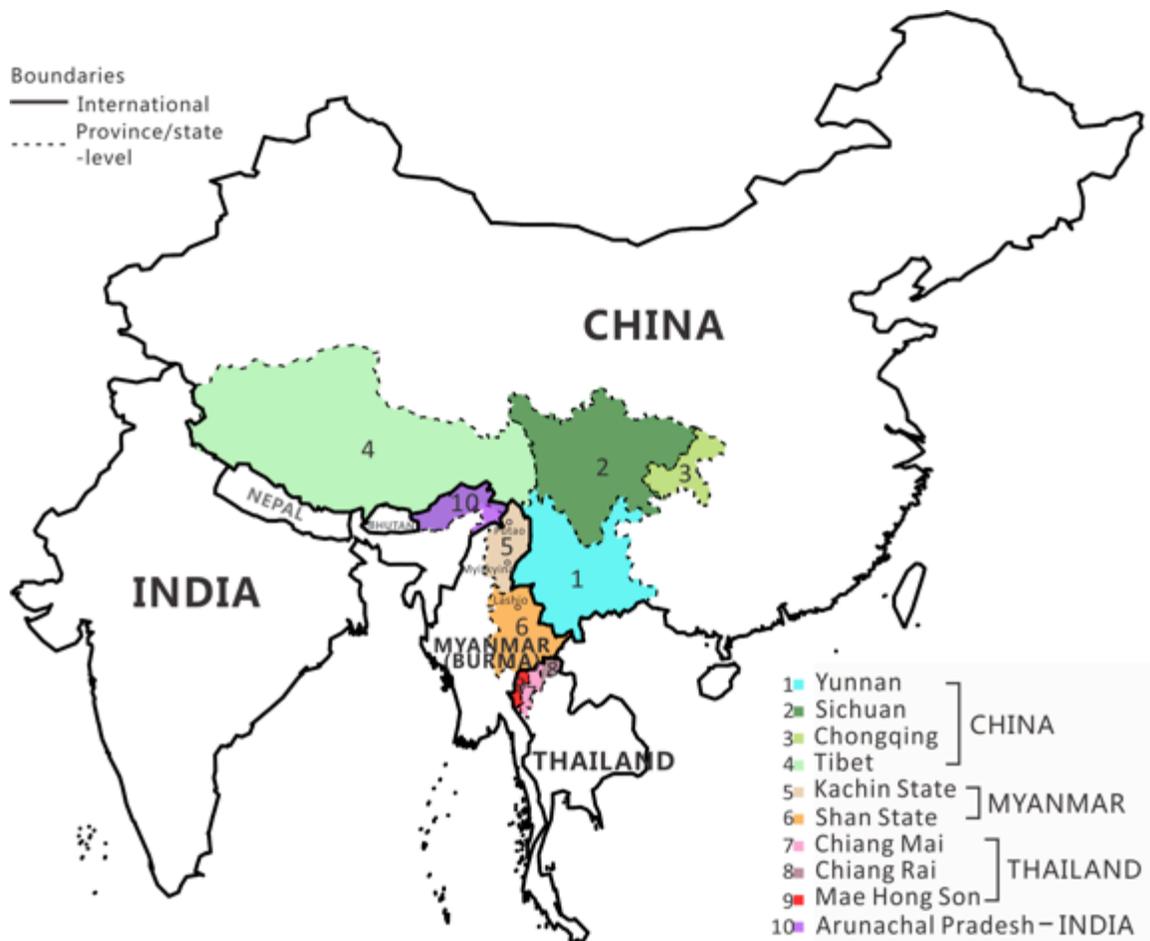


Figure 2.1. Map of China and its neighboring countries, showing major provinces/states and regions where the Lisu reside (cartographer: Sun Ruping).

### The Lisu people

In China, the Lisu are generally regarded as a branch of a western people known as “Di-Qiang” originating in Eastern Tibet and thought to have a close relationship with the Yi and Naxi peoples in terms of ethnic origin (Rose and Brown 1910: 269; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 1-5; Tao Yunkui 2012: 189; Lu Jianbiao 2013: 3). The name of the group is considered to have first appeared in *Man Shu* (Book of the Man People) by Fan Chuo, a historical account of the local ethnic peoples in Yunnan Province in the Tang

dynasty (Gao Zhiying and Huang Ronghua 2010: 95; Hou Xinghua 2010: 8; Tao Yunkui 2012: 190; Jin Jie 2013: 20;).

The Lisu have been long-distance migrators over time. They are thought to have been mainly distributed in the border area of Sichuan and Yunnan around the Jinsha River (Jinsha Jiang) prior to their migration to the Lancang River (Lancang Jiang) and further to the Nujiang Great Valley during the Yuan and Ming dynasties (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 1; Gao Zhiying 2009: 92; Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009b: 2; Gao Zhiying and Huang Ronghua 2010: 103). Starting from the late nineteenth century, frontier trading, social turbulence, and especially the transmission of Christianity resulted in constant cross-border migration. Both non-Christian and Christian Lisu steadily left Yunnan for Myanmar; from there, they further migrated to Thailand and India, resulting in the current distribution of the Lisu people as a transnational ethnic group (for more details, see Chapter 6.1). A few Lisu have moved from Myanmar to Malaysia and the United States since the 1990s as refugees (Bradley 2012: 1; Jin Jie 2013: 20).

Today, the Chinese government officially recognizes fifty-six nationalities (minzu).<sup>30</sup> The Han Chinese are the largest nationality, by 2010 occupying about 91.6 percent of the overall population (Guowuyuan Renkou Pucha Bangongshi 2012). The other fifty-five nationalities were recognized as non-Han ethnic groups—known as shaoshu minzu (“shaoshu” means “small in number”)—in the post-1950s Communist government’s ethnic classification project. The Lisu became the twentieth identified minority nationality in the 1950s. In this dissertation, I use minority nationalities (the official term) to represent those non-Han shaoshu minzu.

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<sup>30</sup> The word “minzu” has ambiguous meanings among several English concepts such as nation, people, nationality, and ethnicity.

According to the 2010 sixth national population census, there were a total of 702,839 Chinese Lisu (Guowuyuan Renkou Pucha Bangongshi 2012), of whom 668,000 lived in Yunnan Province and over 20,000 in Sichuan Province (Yunnansheng Tongjiju 2011), with small numbers elsewhere. Nujiang Prefecture in northwestern Yunnan is now the home to the largest concentration of Lisu in China, and the 2010 census announced that there were 257,620 Lisu living in the area (Nujiangzhou Tongjiju and Nujiangzhou Diliuci Quanguo Renkou Pucha Bangongshi 2011). Weixi Lisu Nationality Autonomous County (Weixi Lisuzu Zizhi Xian, hereafter referred to as Weixi County) is another main Lisu settlement in northwestern Yunnan, and the number of the Weixi Lisu totaled 87,713 in 2012 (Weixixian Tongjiju 2013).

The Lisu in Myanmar did not receive their legitimate status until 1989 (Hu Xuecai 1995: 156; Hou Xinghua and Zhang Guoru 2009: 128), but they are now officially recognized as one of the 135 ethnic minorities. In 2014, the United Nations provided technical assistance for Myanmar's first census in over thirty years in accordance with international standards, and the principal findings were announced in May 2015 (Administration Office 2015). However, the report excluded the ethnic and religious data, as the government decided to revise Myanmar's official ethnic categorization before releasing them (Yen Snaing and The Irrawaddy 2015).

Therefore, there has been no official figure for the Lisu population in Myanmar until now. Based on evidence from diverse sources, the number of the Burmese Lisu should add up to no less than 500,000, with the largest concentration in the northeastern areas of Myanmar: around Putao in the far north and along the eastern borders of the

Kachin state.<sup>31</sup> My short field research trip in Myanmar was in Lashio of northern Shan State and Yangon.

The Lisu in Thailand are recognized as a hill tribe. According to a survey conducted in 1997 by the Hill Tribe Research Institute of northern Thailand, there were 30,940 Lisu living across 151 villages, mainly residing in Chiang Mai (47 percent), Chiang Rai (23 percent), and Mae Hong Son (19 percent) (Virtual Hilltribe Museum. n.d.). The current numbers should add up to 40,000 (Bradley 2008: 3, 2012: 1; Gao Zhiying and Huang Ronghua 2010: 95; interview with Eugene Morse on February 15, 2014).

The Lisu are recognized as a "scheduled tribe" with much smaller numbers in India. Most of the Indian Lisu live in Vijaynagar Circle of Arunachal Pradesh State, an isolated area bordering northern Myanmar. David Bradley thinks that a group of about 3,500 Lisu lives in India (Bradley 2012: 1). Joshua Project, a research initiative seeking to uncover the ethnic groups with the fewest Christians, announces a total of 2,800 Lisu living there (Joshua Project, n.d.). Several Chinese scholars estimate the number of Indian Lisu as between 4,000 and 5,000 (Gao Zhiying and Huang Ronghua 2010: 95; Jin Jie 2013: 24).

#### Location and population of Nujiang Prefecture

Nujiang Prefecture is located in the northwest of China's southwestern Yunnan Province on the border with Myanmar. The prefecture seat, Liuku Town, is about 614

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<sup>31</sup> The number of the Burmese Lisu is estimated according to the following sources: 1) Interview with Robert Fish (Aleibbo), a church leader from the Lisu Christian Church in Lashio on February 24, 2014. He said that there were 200,000 Lisu registered in the Shan State and 400,000 in the Kachin State; 2) Interview with the oldest surviving Western missionary formerly missionizing among the Lisu, Eugene Morse, on February 15, 2014 (he passed away on May 29, 2014). He estimated the Lisu population of Myanmar to be up to 500,000; 3) Prof. Gao Zhiying believes that the number of Lisu in Myanmar is almost equal to that of the Chinese Lisu, based on her long-term fieldwork in northern Myanmar (Gao 2012; personal communication). However, Joachin Schliesinger, an evangelist working among the Lisu in Thailand and Myanmar, only estimated an approximate number of 350,000 Burmese Lisu by 1995 (Schliesinger 2000: 171).

kilometers away from the provincial capital, Kunming. Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Diqing Zangzu Zizhi Zhou, hereafter referred to as Qiqing Prefecture) and Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture (Dali Baizu Zizhi Zhou, hereafter referred to as Dali Prefecture) lie to the east, Myanmar to the west, Baoshan City to the south, and Chayu County (Chayu Xian) of Xizang Autonomous Region (Xizang Zizhiqu, better known as Tibet, a term will be used throughout this dissertation) to the north (see Figure 2.2).

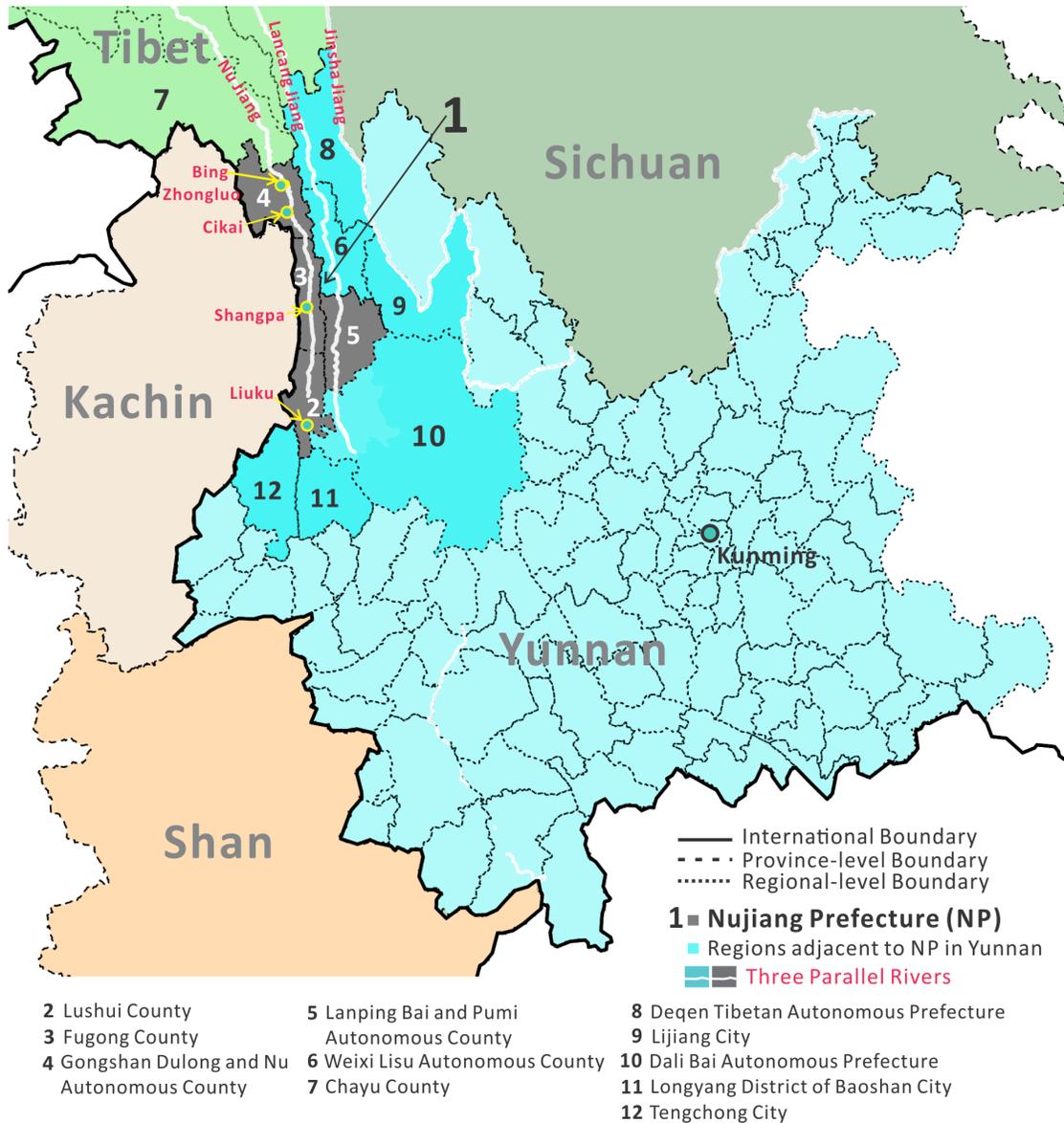


Figure 2.2. Map of Yunnan, showing location of Nujiang Prefecture, as well as other major administrative divisions mentioned (cartographer: Sun Ruping).

The region in which Nujiang Prefecture is situated is a significant section of the Three Parallel Rivers (known as “Sanjiang Bingliu” in China)—the Jinsha, Mekong, and Salween; the latter two are known as the Lancang River and Nu River, respectively, within China—of Yunnan Protected Areas, a regions that was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003. The Nu River is the upper branch of the Salween. It runs north to south through the deep Nujiang Great Valley, with Gaoligong Mountain (Gaoligong Shan) located on the west bank and Biluo Snow Mountain (Biluo Xue Shan) on the east bank (see Figure 2.3).



Figure 2.3. The scenic view of the Nujiang Great Valley, December 2012.<sup>32</sup>

Nujiang Prefecture is an administrative division that did not appear until the 1950s, after the foundation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Initially, Nujiang Lisu Nationality Autonomous District (Nujiang Lisuzu Zizhi Qu) was founded on August 23<sup>rd</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> All photos were taken by the author unless otherwise specified.

of 1954; it became Nujiang Prefecture in 1957. According to the 2010 national census, Nujiang Prefecture has an ethnically diverse population of 534,337, among whom approximately 87.65 percent are ethnic minorities and over one-tenth are Han Chinese (12.35 percent): nearly half of the population (48.21 percent) are Lisu; a quarter of the inhabitants are Bai (26.04 percent); and the rest are made up of other ethnic minorities, including the Nu and Dulong peoples, two groups exclusive to the region (Nujiangzhou Tongjiju and Nujiangzhou Diliuci Quanguo Renkou Pucha Bangongshi 2011).

Administratively, Nujiang Prefecture is currently divided into four counties, namely Lushui County (Lushui Xian), Fugong County (Fugong Xian), Gongshan Dulong and Nu Autonomous County (Gongshan Dulong Nu Zizhi Xian, hereafter referred to as Gongshan County), and Lanping Bai and Pumi Autonomous County (Lanping Bai Pumi Zizhi Xian, hereafter referred to as Lanping County).<sup>33</sup> The first three are the frontier counties bordering Myanmar, and also the primary sites that my dissertation focuses on. In my dissertation, the term “Nujiang Prefecture” refers in particular to the area of these three frontier counties unless otherwise specified.

Nujiang is a very special ethnic autonomous region, partly due to its important strategic position in the country’s frontier area; partly due to its higher percentage of ethnic minorities in the overall population when compared to the country’s thirty other ethnic autonomous prefectures; and partly due to the isolated environment and the lack of enough farmland, a factor that has made Nujiang one of the most impoverished areas in China. The paved roads did not extend to the county towns until the late 1960s. The local peasant’s annual average income was 2,773 yuan (as of September 2015, one dollar is

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<sup>33</sup> Bijiang was one of the county-level administrative units in Nujiang Prefecture. The county was annulled in 1986 and its administrative area now belongs to Fugong and Lushui counties.

approximately equal to 6.38 yuan) by the year of 2012, which was only one-third of the national average.<sup>34</sup> There were still 137 administrative villages recognized as the key villages, in which the poverty alleviation and development policies would be implemented in the “Twelfth Five-Year Planning” (Shi’erwu Guihua) of China. Nearly 240,000 poor people occupied more than half of the overall agricultural population (Yang Yueping and Xinhuashe 2013).

## Language

The Lisu language is generally assigned to the Yi branch of Tibeto-Burman, under the umbrella of the larger Sino-Tibetan language family (Xu Lin, Mu Yuzhang, and Gai Xingzhi 1986: 1; Bradley 1987; Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009a: 9; Jin Jie 2013: 9). Lisu is a tonal language; that is, it uses different speech tones to distinguish semantic meaning.

Traditionally, Chinese linguists divides the Lisu dialect in China into three groups: Nujiang, Yongsheng, and Luquan (Xu Lin, Mu Yuzhang, and Gai Xingzhi 1986: 108).<sup>35</sup> David Bradley believes there are four main dialects of Lisu: Northern Lisu *Loxwul*, Central Lisu *Xaixai*, Southern Lisu *Luqshi*, and the fourth most divergent Sichuan dialect of Dechang, Yanbian, and nearby counties (Bradley 2008: 3; 2012: 1). The Nujiang Lisu speak the *Loxwul* dialect, which is similar to the dialect primarily spoken in Weixi County, Myanmar’s Putao area, and India.

Bradley points out that many Lisu are multilingual partly because of their long-term migration and constant contacts with other peoples such as the Han Chinese, Burmese, Thai, and neighboring ethnic groups, and partly because of their willingness to learn and

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<sup>34</sup> I have been calculating based on the exchange rate of 6.2, the most common rate at the time of writing this dissertation.

<sup>35</sup> Alternatively, Nujiang, Luquan, and Jinjiang (Jin Jie 2013: 25).

absorb external influences (Bradley 2010: “Introduction,” 2008: 4, 2010: 136). My own fieldwork in Myanmar and Thailand can strongly support this view. For example, among the Omega band members I interviewed, the female singer Jenevy can speak fluent English, Chinese, Burmese, and some Thai, and the guitarist Marteeyet and keyboard player Ahkin can speak Lisu, Burmese, and English.<sup>36</sup> Robert Fish has the same language competency as his sister, Jenevy.

Both Bradley and Chinese scholars recognize three major Lisu writing systems: a set of Christian scripts, an indigenous syllabic system, and a pinyin system (Bradley 2012: 1; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 157-61; Xu Lin, Mu Yuzhang, and Gai Xingzhi 1986: 114).<sup>37</sup>

The most commonly used system is the Christian system created between 1914 and 1915 based on the Central Lisu dialect with some Northern Lisu elements. It is usually called the “Fraser script,” from the name of one of the inventors, or “the book language” (*tot’et ngot*). This writing system was initially prepared during the Christmas season of 1914 in Myitkyina of northern Myanmar by James O. Fraser from the China Inland Mission (CIM), the Karen evangelist Ba Thaw, and George J. Geis from the American Baptist Mission. In 1915 at Tengyue (now called Tengchong), Fraser and Ba Thaw revised the original system into the current form that has been widely used among transnational Lisu Christian communities since then (Bradley 1994: vi, 2006: “Lisu Orthographies;” 2008: 7, 2012: 2).

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<sup>36</sup> The Omega band is the most renowned Lisu Christian pop band within the transnational Lisu Christian communities in China, Myanmar, and Thailand (see more details in Chapter 6).

<sup>37</sup> In addition to these three writing systems, they have also recognized a distinct Pollard script system for Eastern Lisu (Lipo), known as “Dong Lisuwen” (Eastern Lisuwen), which was created by the British missionary Metcalf in the 1910s based on the dialects of Wuding and Luquan Counties in Chuxiong (Xu Lin, Mu Yuzhang, and Gai Xingzhi 1986: 119-123; Bradley 1999: 79-80; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 160).

The Fraser script uses upper-case letters—twenty-five upright and fifteen inverted—to designate segments (see Figure 2.4). Punctuation marks represent the six tones (Xu Lin, Mu Yuzhang, and Gai Xingzhi 1986: 7; Bradley 2012: 5; Jin Jie 2013: 41). David Morse, the third generation of the Morse missionary family, devised an easy-to-type computer font for this writing system, which I have used in this dissertation.



Figure 2.4. The forty letters (thirty consonants and ten vowels) of the Christian writing system, in the order that has been adopted in most Lisu Christian primers.

The Christian system in China is called “Old Lisu” (Lao Lisuwen) in contrast to “New Lisu” (Xin Lisuwen), which was devised in the 1950s based on the Hanyu Pinyin system and implemented within Nujiang Prefecture in 1957. This system was promoted in 1958-1959—primarily used in a few teaching-training and literacy classes—while Chinese was greatly promoted and Old Lisu was largely used in underground church activities during this period (Zhou Minglang 2003: 314-15). Upon the revival of Christian practices from the 1980s until the early 1990s, both the old and new systems were designated as official written languages in Nujiang and other Lisu autonomous areas.

Due to the wide popularity of Old Lisu among the Christian communities, New Lisu has gradually fallen out of use (for details about the debate on the selection of the old or new writing system, see Gai Xingzhi 2001; Rong Fengmei 2001; Ma Xiaoyi 2008: 136). Nowadays Old Lisu is not only used in most Christian literature, but also in a large

number of secular publications, such as *Nujiang Bao* (Nujiang Newspaper), school textbooks, and collections of Lisu folk literature and musical repertory (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 162, 173; Bradley 2010: 132, 2012: 2).

There was also a syllabic writing system created in the 1920s by Wang Renbo, a traditional Lisu religious leader from Weixi County, in which basic strokes are grouped together into blocks to represent a syllable. However, this indigenous orthography has never gained popularity in the Nujiang area (Xu Lin, Mu Yuzhang, and Gai Xingzhi 1986: 123-24; Ramsey 1987: 262; Bradley 2012: 2).<sup>38</sup>

The ability to read and write Old Lisu has become a significant criterion for distinguishing Christian Lisu from non-Christian Lisu. Throughout my investigation in Nujiang, I found that most Christian Lisu, regardless of their educational backgrounds, have a certain degree of Lisu literacy. By contrast, non-Christian Lisu often claimed that they could not read or write Old Lisu.

David Bradley believes that “A striking success that the Lisu have had in reunifying themselves as a transnational group is in the gradual reintroduction of the Christian orthography since 1980” (Bradley 1999: 81). My own research also supports such a view. The Lisu priests, pastoral staff members, and Bible schoolteachers whom I talked to all stated that most Christian Lisu, regardless of their nationality and dialect area, could use this standard Bible language to communicate.

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<sup>38</sup> Robert Ramsey recognizes three writing systems in the early twentieth century: two missionary ones and the indigenous system created by Wang Renbo. He particularly gives a brief description of the indigenous one (Ramsey 1987: 262).

## Religion of the Nujiang Lisu

One significant perspective by which we should consider the Lisu is religion. According to an early ethnographic study of the Lisu on the China-Myanmar frontier, the predominant pre-Christian religion among the Lisu was animism; as two authors write, “It adheres to its simple animism or *nǎt* (*nit*)-worship, in which the ancestral ghost plays a most important part, and no branch shows any trace of Buddhist thought or legend” (Rose and Brown 1910: 251). A similar view that “The Lisu believed in ghosts (*gui*) rather than Buddhism” can be also widely found in many Chinese-language historical materials (Gu Yongji and Lu Jianbiao 2013: 162-66).<sup>39</sup>

The Lisu believed that spirits/gods of the natural world and the soul after death are ubiquitous, and they conceptualized both of them as “*nit*.” They considered the main cause of illness or misfortune to be having offended the evil spirit(s), and therefore, it is important to conduct sacrificial rituals to communicate with and appease it (them) (Zhang Zehong 2006: 120; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 204; Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009: 5; Tao Yunkui 2012: 271-73). Among all spirits, the god of mountains (*misi nit*) was considered to be the supreme god who dominates the agricultural and hunting life (Song Enchang 1986: 177; Tao Yunkui 2012: 272-73).

I asked both Christian and non-Christians Lisu whether they believed in supernatural spirits. Some of them (including Christians) considered the traditional animistic worship and sacrificial rituals to be feudal superstition (*fengjian mixin*)

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<sup>39</sup> Some of the materials referred in their edited *Lisuxue Ziliao Congkan* (A series of materials in Lisu studies) include *Yunnan Tongzhi Gao* (General Annals of Yunnan), Vol. 184; *Xu Yunnan Tongzhi Gao* (The Continuation of General Annals of Yunnan), Vol. 160; *Zhuanxiu Yunnan Shangpa Yanbian Zhi: Fengsu* (Compilation of the Records of Shangpa on the Border: Custom); *Zhengji Changputong Yanbian Zhi: Li Su* (Compilation of the Records of Changputong on the Border: Etiquette and Custom).

activities, but they did not deny the possible existence of spirits and supernatural power, because they either had been possessed by an evil spirit before or had heard someone else's similar stories.

For the Christian Lisu, instead of holding on to the old animistic belief, they believe that the god of heaven (*wusa*) should be the only mighty god to be worshipped.<sup>40</sup> I also asked non-Christian Lisu about their understanding of the spiritual world of Christianity. Most of them tended to regard their neighbors and relatives' Christian practices as a certain way of living, which can be briefly summarized as abstaining from smoking, drinking, and working on Sundays.

There were two types of ritual practitioners (shamans): *nitpat* and *nitgguxpat*. A *nitpat* has a God-given talent of sorcery and can see spirits and communicate with them whereas a *nitgguxpat* only learns sorcery from his ancestors and is not able to speak to spirits when conducting the ritual (Zhang Zehong 2006: 122; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 205). Both Chinese-language literature and oral evidence from my fieldwork highlight the decisive role of spirit worship (*nitggux siggux*) in treating illnesses. A historical account recorded one such curing ritual thus:

The barbarian people of Shangpa, they had deep-rooted folk religions and prayer tradition; however, they did not build Buddhist temples or idols to worship. One would not believe in medicine once getting sick. Instead, a shaman (*nitpat*) was invited to conduct a curing ritual outside the house. The shaman chose a particular tree, on which a small quantity of white paper was tied. Initially, chickens and pigs were used to sacrifice. If the illness could not be cured, flocks and herds would be used as the sacrifices. (Nujiang Zhouzhi Bangongshi 1998: 64; Yunnansheng Bianji Weiyuanhui 2009: 19)

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<sup>40</sup> There was a supreme god called *wusa* in the Lisu traditional folk belief, although this was seldom orally mentioned (Tao Yunkui 2012: 274; Jin Jie 2013: 143).

The Lisu believed that every person had a soul inside the body. When one was sick or died, a special soul-calling ceremony would be held to take one's soul back to his body (Durrenberger 1975: 35, Zhang Zehong 2006: 123; Tao Yunkui 2012: 271, 290).

I met a church leader in his seventies who believed in Christianity since his childhood but became a shaman (*nitgguxpat* type) between the 1950s and 1970s. I asked why he had decided to practice animism back then. He told me that evil spirit worship was the only alternative solution to cure sickness at the time; as he put it, "When we believed in Christianity, we prayed hoping that the god could respond to our prayer and cure illness. Besides doing prayer, we also had medicine. Later we were not allowed to practice our Christian beliefs. We could neither pray nor have medicine, so we could only turn to our old tradition for help" (interview, July 24, 2014).

Nowadays, medicines have been widely distributed in Nujiang. I did not get the opportunity to observe any curing ceremonies during my entire fieldwork, but I was told that the simplified spirit worship was still being conducted on a very small scale in today's Nujiang, mostly for the purpose of curing the sick and comforting the dead; however, some non-Christian Lisu would turn to the church for help if the animistic ritual did not work (personal communication).

Ancestral worship also played a very important part in the family-scale religious rites. Most Lisu Christians I met in Nujiang did not worship ancestors any more, but a few non-Christian families still adhered to the tradition. Besides indigenous ancestral worship ceremonies, they also have adopted a similar Chinese festival to commemorate one's ancestors, Tomb-Sweeping Day (Qingming).

I observed a sacrificial ceremony given by the eldest brother of a family in January 28, 2014 in Da'nanmao Village. The eldest brother will go to each brother's home and conduct similar ancestral worship. I describe the process in my field notes thus:

The ceremony was conducted in the kitchen. Offerings included rice, meat, and wine. There was no special altar set up. During the ceremony, the officiant was first sitting in the inner room of the kitchen. He then walked out, standing by the door, and spilt the wine all over the floor while murmuring towards the sky. Finally, he squatted beside the ground fire. First, he poured a bowl of wine into the fire. He then mixed a small amount of rice and meat together, squeezed them into three rice balls, and placed each on the iron tripod over the fire while talking to the ancestors. (Field notes on January 28, 2014)

The Lisu used to believe in totemism. They not only worshipped totems but also adopted them as their clan symbols. According to the ethnographic research conducted in the 1950s, the Nujiang Lisu still retained the clan system until then. Most Lisu clans were named after animals or plants, which were also used as clans' symbolic totems (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 100-01; Tao Yunkui 2012: 258). The most frequently used surnames in today's Lisu families are still related to those clan names. In accordance with the Chinese naming custom; however, the Nujiang Lisu adopted new Chinese characters with the same pronunciation as the ones that designated the original totems of animals and plants. For example, the sinicized Lisu surname “余” (Yu) shares the same pronunciation with the character “鱼” (Yu), literally, “fish” (*ngual* in Lisu), one of the most important clan totems.

Today, the commonest animistic-derived religious activity is an institutionalized ritual known as “Climbing up the Hill of Knives; Jumping into the Sea of Fire” (“*Altat Ddait, Aldol Yairjjei*” in Lisu, “Shang Daoshan, Xia Huohai” in Chinese; for more details, see Chapter 2.2). It has become a must-have program in the Lisu new year celebration

(*korshir*) and the Spring Bathing Festival (*Zaotanghui*), two renowned annual festivals of the Nujiang Lisu promoted by the local government.

Compared with the indigenous animistic religion, Protestant Christianity and Catholicism were more recent imports to Nujiang. Catholics arrived in Nujiang earlier than Protestant missionaries; nevertheless, nowadays the paucity of Catholic religious activities in Gongshan County contrasts with the dominance of Protestant Christianity in all of the three frontier counties. Even in Liuku, where most of the Han Chinese and non-Christians live, Protestant Christian worship services are readily visible.

The French priest Annet Genestier (known as Ren Anshou in Chinese) first arrived in Gongshan in 1888. By 1924, he had built five churches and recruited 978 local adherents, mostly the Nu people and a few Tibetans in the area (Song Enchang 1985: 286).

Starting from the 1920s, Protestant missionaries from different missions, notably CIM, Assemblies of God, and Church of Christ, came to build mission stations in Lushui, Fugong, and Gongshan. Surprisingly, before 1950 both foreign and Chinese fieldworkers did not mention Christian activities in their published works (Rose and Brown 1910; Tao Yunkui 1935, 2012); however, the central delegation (*zhongyang fangwentuan*) sent by the newly founded Communist government in the 1950s reported in detail on the state of Christianity among the Lisu villages under investigation (Yunnansheng Bianji Weiyuanhui 2009: 18, 73, 97, 110, 115, 132-33; Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009a: 27-35; Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009b: 5, 28-29).

Incomplete statistics show that by 1956 the number of Nujiang Christians reached 21,000 and churches 207 (Song Enchang 1985: 290-91; Zhang Xinghong and Zhang

Huixing 1989: 65; Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009: 5; Gao Zhiying 2010: 74). Most religious activities were severely affected or ceased from 1958 to 1976, especially during the ten-year (1966-1976) Great Cultural Revolution (Wenhua Dage'ming). Christian churches were forced to shut down or destroyed. Evil Spirit worship resumed in some areas (Zhang Xinghong and Zhang Huixing 1989: 66).

Shi Fuxiang suggests that regardless of the religious prohibition, in former Bijiang County there were 2000-3000 Christian Lisu who still secretly held worship services in one church between 1958 and 1960 (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 207). According to my informal conversation with a few elderly Christian Lisu, there was temporary freedom of religious practice between 1962 and 1965 when Christians resumed their worship mostly in the family gatherings.

With the onset of more liberal political policies since 1978, Christian activities have revived in Nujiang Prefecture at an unprecedented growth rate. There were 21,441 Christian believers in 1980. The number reached 85,414 by 1996 and at least 88,981 in 2000 (Qin Heping 2010: 277). According to the brief report of the third standing committee (changweihui) of Nujiang Christian Two Organizations (Nujiang Jidujiao Lianghui) on December 13, 2012, there were approximately 100,000 Nujiang Christians with a majority of them being Christian Lisu.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Two organizations refer to the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches (Zhongguo Jidujiao Sanzi Aiguo Yundong Weiyuanhui) and the China Christian Council (Zhongguo Jidujiao Xiehui). In Chapter 3, I will explore in depth these two organizations and their influence on the development of Christianity in Nujiang.

The report also showed that there were more than 770 churches, including gathering points (tangdian), in Nujiang in 2012.<sup>42</sup> Personally, I attended six dedication ceremonies during my fieldwork. I continuously heard about the inauguration of the new church in the last few months from my informants' most recent comments in their WeChat circle of friends (pengyouquan). Therefore, it is most likely that the current number of churches in Nujiang might have reached 800.

Both ethnographic research and social investigation conducted in the twentieth century indicate that Han-derived traditions such as Confucianism and Daoism have never had a significant impact on the Nujiang Lisu (Rose and Brown 1910: 265-67; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 204-09; Tao Yunkui 2012: 271-78). There were no noticeable Buddhist or Taoist activities among the Lisu during my fieldwork in Nujiang. Most believers of Chinese Buddhism and Daoism were the Bai and Han Chinese, with the greatest concentration in Lanping County and a small number in Lushui County (Li Fushan 1990: 158-59). Their religious practices might have had a slight impact on those of the Lisu people living in the same neighborhood.

There have been mixed families comprising Buddhists, Protestant, and Catholics from different ethnic groups in Bingzhongluo County (Bingzhongluo Xiang) in the northernmost of Nujiang bordering Tibet. In 2000, believers of different religions in Bingzhongluo included 1369 Tibetan Buddhists, 205 Protestant Christians, and 515 Catholics (Gao Zhiying 2000: 73). Puhua Temple (Puhua Si) is the only Tibetan Buddhist monastery there holding regular religious rituals. Most Tibetan Buddhists were Nu and

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<sup>42</sup> Feng Rongxin (Pastor Jesse), chairman of the Nujiang Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches at the time, gave this report. I received his consent and copied its electronic version from his laptop.

Tibetans, but there were probably some Buddhist Lisu in those mixed families (personal communication). Nevertheless, I never met one during my fieldwork.

## 2.2 Indigenous Lisu Music

This section is a broad survey of musical genres considered as indigenously Lisu that have survived until today. The Lisu from different areas have their own repertoires. My survey focuses on the diverse soundscape of the Nujiang Lisu, with brief reference to a few renowned traditions outside Nujiang. Besides verbal description, I also illustrate this section with photographs taken during my fieldwork, transcriptions in staff notation from field recordings or existing scores in cipher notation. I introduce the music of the Nujiang Lisu on its own here but briefly mention the interethnic musical contacts in the next section (Chapter 2.3). I divide the indigenous Lisu music into four categories: folk songs, instrumental music, music for dancing, and ritual music.

### Folk songs

Lisu folk songs were listed among the first batch of state-level masterpieces of intangible cultural heritage (*feiwuzhi wenhua yichan*) announced by the State Council (Guowuyuan) on May 20, 2006 (Guowuyuan Bangongting 2006).

In accordance with a tendency in the Chinese literature to divide folk songs in terms of content and function, Lisu folk songs were also introduced by scholars in similar ways, with categories including marriage-escape songs, house-building songs, new-year songs, and hunting songs (Zuo Yutang 1999: 103-14; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 215). The current Chinese scholars tend to make a classification based on musical differences, and

most of their classifications, despite variation, have included *bbaishit*, *yoqyet*, and *mutgguat*, known as “sandadiao,” literally, “three great genres/category,” a concept formally proposed by Yang Yuanji.<sup>43</sup>

The different styles of the three genres can be roughly observed through each of the associated verbs indicating a particular singing style (see Figure 2.5).

Categories	Associated verb	Meaning of the verb
<i>bbaishit</i>	<i>bbai</i>	To chant
<i>yoqyet</i>	<i>yet</i>	To croon
<i>mutgguat</i>	<i>bbux</i>	To sing and narrate

Figure 2.5. Verbs associated with each of the Lisu song genres indicating the basic difference between singing styles.

Among these three genres, *bbaishit* is the most actively performed genre in present-day Nujiang; it is also the one I heard most during my fieldwork. Therefore, my analysis of Lisu folk songs here will exclusively focus on *bbaishit*, with a brief reference to the other two genres at the end.

The word “*bbaishit*” means “to talk and sing freely.” *Bbaishit* songs feature musical repartee between two people taking turns, and each passage of solo singing is followed by a chorus response.<sup>44</sup> Musically, the interval of a perfect fifth (or its inversion, perfect

<sup>43</sup> Mao Jizeng first raised such a division into three categories in 1962 (Jian Qihua and Mao Jizeng 1962: 32-33). According to my interview with Yang Yuanji on May 26, 2014, he formally proposed the term “sandadiao” in 1998 when he led the Nujiang Lisu Farmer Chorus to attend the fourth Beijing International Choral Festival (see more details in Chapter 5.1). According to Yang, the word “diao” in “sandadiao” does not mean “mode” or “tonality” in the Western sense, but stands for “category” (lei). Since there are sub-categories in each of the three categories, he had to choose the alternative term “diao” instead of “lei” to show the distinction. This information has yet to be verified; however, what we can observe is that the term has been widely used in the post-2000 non-academic publications, most media reports, and Chinese musicological writing (Zhao Shijian 2006; Yang Minkang 2008; Luo Mei 2012; Yang Xiaohong 2013).

<sup>44</sup> This kind of antiphonal singing (duichang or duige in Chinese) practice—usually with one male and one female partner—is widespread among China’s minority nationalities and the Han Chinese (*Zhongguo Yinyue Cidian* Bianjibu 2010: 92). For example, it is a common form of singing the hua’er (flower) songs in the local Han dialect by peoples of different ethnic groups in China’s northwestern Ningxia, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces (Yang Mu 1994b: 100-03; Tuohy

fourth) is of great melodic and harmonic importance. In most *bbaishit* tunes, there are only two tones a perfect fifth apart in the solo singing. The chorus sings in two- or three-part heterophony also based on the two-pitch-class melody. The singing contains obvious guttural trill (Zhang Xingrong 2010: 142-43).

Figure 2.6. A *bbaishit* tune entitled “Yuanfang de Keren Huanying Ni” (Welcome You, the Guests Come from Afar), sung by the Maoyuan Ethnic and Folk Art Troupe (Maoyuan Minzu Minjian Yishutuan, hereafter referred to as the Maoyuan Troupe) from Da’nanmao Village, Lushui. There were four male and four female singers in this rehearsal for the upcoming show during the 2012 National Day. It was recorded by the troupe in September 2012. The basic tune was repeated four times (four verses). The transcribed example is the second verse.

Note:

x-note indicates that the pitch is approximately the one given;  
The dotted note only approximately reflects the actual rhythm.

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1999: 65). Not far from Nujiang, the best-known Naxi folk song in Lijiang, *Gguq qil* (transliterated guqi in Chinese), may be also sung as a dialogue song (Rees 2000: 57).

nga bbe Alyir nissat zzirddu niaq, Alshuq nitket shuqgar lo;  
 So, Brothers have come to meet, Come and sing two verses;

*Chorus*

*female*

*male*

Yair -

7

*Chorus*

Alzi ni - ma mox-lei niaq, - ail - yair\_ Maiq-lat nit - ket  
 Sisters have come to see each, Come and sing two beautiful

12

*Male solo*

*Chorus*

yet-ggar lei. - - - yair-la-jjo  
 verses.

The criteria used for assessing a good *bbaishit* singer embody some other characteristics of this genre, including rich metaphorical vocabulary, the ability to utilize wide vibrato, and the appropriate body swing (interview with Li Xuehua, a state-level folk artist, on May 28, 2013; with He Guizhi, a provincial-level folk artist, on January 18, 2014).

*Bbaishit* lyrics are largely improvised—although even skilled singers use stock phrases—and metaphorical. For example, the words “flower” (*siqvei*) and “bee” (*bbiat*) are usually used as metaphors for women. The death of one’s father is often intricately expressed as “my father turned into fog in the sky when I was a little kid; and therefore now I always feel depressed on a foggy day.” Being rich and abundant in content, *bbaishit* lyrics represent the parallel structure featured in most Lisu folk poems.

*Bbaishit* singing is essentially a participatory tradition. Anyone interested can jump in on the chorus. Both lead singers and the chorus circle counterclockwise and swing their body along with singing. According to Li Xuehua, the body moving can help singers not only to reduce fatigue due to the periods of singing but also to hold a stable internal pulse to be in sync with everyone else (see Figure 2.7).



Figure 2.7. Participants from the day's *bbaishit* contest singing for fun afterwards, the 2014 Spring Bathing Festival, February 2, 2014.

*Yoqyet* is essentially a type of short ballad. There are two major kinds of *yoqyet* songs. One kind features elders sitting by the fireplace and singing about the disasters and grief of the past. It differs from elders' singing of *mutgguat* songs (mostly lengthy ancient epics) in terms of singing form. In this *yoqyet* singing, the elder sings alone, whereas the *mutgguat* singing comprises an elder lead singer and a chorus. The other kind of *yoqyet* form is often used for courting in very private settings between young unmarried people, in contrast to the group public *bbaishit* singing tradition for the similar purpose (Yang Yuanji 2012: 320-25).

#### Instrumental music

The traditional instruments of the Nujiang Lisu mainly include the four-stringed lute *qibbe*, four-holed vertical bamboo flute *dilitu*, transverse bamboo flute *jjitlit*, and mouth bow *maxggo* (Zhang Xingrong: 2006: 104; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 210-11; Yang Yuanji 2012: 328).<sup>45</sup> Nowadays, only *qibbe* and *dilitu* are most visible in the area—both in actual performance and in the official propaganda of the traditional Lisu culture.

The Lisu *qibbe* has an all-wood sound box with a long fretless neck. According to my personal experience of learning this instrument in the Maoyuan Troupe in January 2014, a player uses the right thumb to pluck the first and the second string, whereas the right index finger plucks the third and fourth strings.<sup>46</sup> The fourth string produces a drone sound and the other three generate melody. Traditionally, strings are made of goat gut,

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<sup>45</sup> *Dilitu* is the more popular name for this kind of flute. It is also called *orlil ormax* or *dit'ormax* (with slightly different construction), hereafter collectively referred to as *dilitu*.

<sup>46</sup> The numbering of the strings is as used by the Lisu players of the Maoyuan Troupe: the lowest string is the first string.

but now these have been replaced by steel strings to increase the volume. Lisu *qibbe* is primarily performed in three ways: to accompany dancing, to be played as a solo instrument, and to accompany singing (also see Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 210; Yang Yuanji n.d.).



Figure 2.8. Xiong Wenhua (front row right) from the Maoyuan Troupe playing the Lisu *qibbe*, Henghe Village, Tengchong City, April 24, 2014. Note that only Xiong was actually playing whereas other troupe members were only holding their instruments, pretending to be playing.

Lisu *qibbe* players tune the four strings in many different ways, and each tuning has its unique repertoire. The intervallic relationships between the four open-string pitches are mostly major thirds, minor thirds, and perfect fourths. There are at least twenty-four ways of tuning, seven of which are most frequently used (Yang Yuanji n.d.).<sup>47</sup> Skilled players often embellish the skeletal melody. One of the typical embellishments I found in

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<sup>47</sup> According to Yang, the most frequently used tunings are:  $a^1 c^1 e^1 a^1$ ,  $a^1 c^1 g^1 a^1$ ,  $a^1 c^2 a^1 d^2$ ,  $g^1 c^1 e^1 g^1$ ,  $a^1 e^1 a^1 e^2$ ,  $c^1 e^1 g^1 b^1$ , and  $g^1 c^2 a^1 d^2$ . My *qibbe* teacher, He Guizhi, introduced eight sets of tuning in class; however, there was only one common tuning between his and Yang's summary:  $a^1 c^1 e^1 a^1$ , which can account for the high flexibility of the *qibbe* tuning.

my fieldwork is the octave doubling of basic tones, a way not only to produce a drone effect but also to help beat time and increase the volume (personal communication from folk *qibbe* player Xiong Wenhua).

Tuning: a c<sup>1</sup> e<sup>1</sup> a<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2.9. One interpretation of the *qibbe* tune “*Yoqyet Lode*” (Playing While Dancing) played by Xiong Wenhua of the Maoyuan Troupe, recorded January 7, 2014 during the troupe’s regular rehearsal. The basic tune was repeated several times. I only transcribed the first cycle here. Note that the actual performance is a semitone lower than written.

Early ethnographic research records the existence of the three-stringed plucked lute *sanxian* and the mouth organ *lusheng* in Nujiang (Tao Yunkui 2012: 279); however, neither of them is actively performed there today. A similar type of three-stringed lute prevalent in Baoshan, Tengchong, and Longling has the same name as the four-stringed *qibbe*. The structural shape and name vary from place to place, but normally it has a small sound box and a long neck, and is plucked with a plectrum (see Figure 2.10). The development of the Lisu three-stringed lute is considered to be a result of the influence from the Chinese lute *sanxian* (Larsen 1984: 46; Tao Yunkui 2012: 279).



Figure 2.10. Two kinds of Lisu plucked lute *qibbe* (left: three-stringed *qibbe* from Tengchong; two on the right: four-stringed *qibbe* from Nujiang). Photo taken in Henghe Village, Tengchong, April 24, 2014.

The four-holed short vertical bamboo flute *dilitu* is made of locally produced bamboo known as *ormax*. It usually has three front holes and one hole on the back without a flute membrane on any of the holes (see Figure 2.11). The thin and short body can produce a soft and sweet sound with very small volume. A cluster of colorful balls of strings is often attached to the lower end as decoration. The *dilitu* is a favorite instrument for women. Nevertheless, most skilled *dilitu* players I met were men.<sup>48</sup> This kind of flute can be played as a solo instrument, but is more often played together with the plucked lute *qibbe* to accompany dancing (Yang Yuanji n.d.; Zhang Xingrong 2006: 105).

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<sup>48</sup> For example, He Guizhi and Che Siheng are both directors of the local folk art troupes with expertise in *qibbe* and *dilitu*. Xiong Wenhua always attached a *dilitu* to the neck of his *qibbe* so that he could play both alternatively.



Figure 2.11. (On the left) He Guizhi from the Maoyuan Troupe playing the Lisu *dilitu*, Henghe Village, Tengchong, April 24, 2014; (on the right) the front image of one *dilitu* made by Che Siheng. Photo taken in Laomudeng Village, Pihe Township (Pihe Xiang), Lushui County, June 19, 2014.

As with many other southwestern minority nationalities, the Lisu mouth bow (kouxian in Chinese and varied names in Lisu), used to be a popular instrument for women. There are two main varieties: one is called *maxggo* in Nujiang, a single bamboo strip with a cut-in reed that is placed in the mouth and plucked with the finger to produce sound (Figure 2.12); the other has three separate bamboo strips hand-held without a string (see Figure 2.13). The name of the three-strip mouth bow varies from area to area. For example, in Weixi it is called *chuchu*, but in Fugong it is known as *ddetddai* or *shanban*. The people in Gongshan name it *ledo* (Yang Yuanji n.d., personal communication).



Figure 2.12. Zhao Ke playing the Lisu one-strip mouth bow *maxggo*, Henghe Village, Tengchong, April 24, 2014.



Figure 2.13. Three-strip the Lisu mouth bows made of copper sheet (left) and bamboo (right), owned by Zhao Ke, photo taken on July 28, 2014.

I came cross several Lisu women who used to play the mouth bow, but none of them has an instrument now. The only mouth bow performance I have seen so far was in Henghe Village outside Nujiang on the Gaoligong Mountain, a four-hour drive from Liuku. The middle-aged woman, He Wanshun, told me that she could use it to convey

many emotions, especially to “talk love.” From our brief talk, however, I could not figure out how the coordination between strip sound, mouth breath, and singing words is implemented, except that the breath control generates melody (personal communication).

### Music for dancing

Lisu dances can be unaccompanied or danced with instrumental music. In addition to unaccompanied dances imitating farming practices and animal behaviors the more frequently performed dance forms are *qailngot* and *guakiq* (Zhang Xingrong 2006: 105-06; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 212-14; Yang Yuanji 2012: 327-28). The former is prevalent in Fugong and the latter popular in Lushui (Luo Shibao 1999: 942). I observed a close relationship between dance steps and *qibbe* music during my informal study with He Guizhi in the Maoyuan Troupe; as one troupe member, Xiong Wenhua, explains, “I would never forget how to play a certain tune if I can remember dance steps associated with it” (personal communication).

All my informants from different backgrounds (folk artists, Christian Lisu, and professionally trained ethnic singers) confirmed that *qailngot* (literally, “the tune played for kicking feet”) is a type of dance featuring a man and woman moving forward and backward and chasing each other. In the *qailngot* dance, men usually play the four-stringed *qibbe* and women play the flute *dililtu* and/or mouth bow *maxggo* to facilitate the dancing. The *qailngot* tune includes a repeated section followed by a variation that contains a variable number of kicked steps—the number of repetitions of a short melodic figure indicating the nature of the dance: one-, two-, or three-step dance, and so on (see Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.14. Multiple interpretations of a *qailngot* two-step dance tune. The upper line is my transcription of one realization on the *qibbe* by Xiong Wenhua, recorded January 8, 2014. The middle line is my transcription of a typical *dilitu* realization but demonstrated on the *qibbe* by Xiong, recorded January 8, 2014. The bottom two lines is my transcription of the tune played on the *dilitu*, *qibbe*, and mouth bow *maxggo* (not transcribed here) from the DVD *Fugong Lisu Qailngot* provided by Zhao Ke. Note that I transposed original pitches of the three performances to facilitate comparison.

8

15

For right foot kicking

1. 2.

2 **For left foot kicking**

The musical score is written for four staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. It contains two melodic lines, each with a first and second ending bracketed and labeled '1.' and '2.' respectively. The second and third staves are in bass clef with a 5/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and ornaments.

Note:

- Measures 17 and 18 include two repetitions of a melodic figure for each foot;
- The *dilitu* line, the ornament symbol is similar to mordent;
- The bottom *qibbe* line, only the major melodic line is transcribed.

The other form, *guakiq*, is a collective dance in which dancers join hands and move in a circle with or without instrumental accompaniment. Instrumentalists often stand in the middle (most often playing stringed instruments) and signal the changes in the dance steps through switching rhythmic patterns. Music is highly repetitive, and so are the dance steps and their combinations. In the unaccompanied *guakiq* dance, all the dancers stamp their feet hard on the floor with a strong rhythmic beat (Luo Shibao 1999: 942-43; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 213). Tao Yunkui described this kind of dance early in the 1930s and he emphasized that the primary purpose of dancing together was for unmarried young people to socialize and have fun (Tao Yunkui 2012: 279-80).

The best-known dance genre outside Nujiang is a song-and-dance form most popular in Weixi County, *alchir mutgguat*, literally, “goat’s singing”—the basic singing and dancing movements try to imitate goats’ sound and movements hence the name. Dancers are divided into male and female teams with each having a leader. The overall performance features powerful and rhythmic movements and complex formation changes (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 214; Yang Yuanji 2012: 312). *Alchir mutgguat* was also

included in the first batch of the state-level intangible cultural heritage items (Guowuyuan Bangongting 2006).

### Ritual music

Zhang Xingrong divides the ritual music of Yunnan's minority people into three categories: the music of indigenous natural religion, the music of imported religions such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Christianity, and the music of hybrid religion generated from varied origins (Zhang Xingrong 2007: 1). Since I only focus on the musical traditions that already existed in the pre-Christian era in this section, what I call "ritual music" here only refers to that used in non-Christian ritual ceremonies.

I did not personally experience any kind of Lisu rituals in their original contexts during my fieldwork. In addition, most of the related historical accounts I consulted rarely refer to the ritual music at all. Therefore, the following introductory survey is largely based on available scholarly writings, fleshed out with details acquired from limited interviews.<sup>49</sup>

During my interview with Yang Yuanji regarding Lisu ritual music, he first brought up its difference from Lisu folk songs. "Tunes excluding the major three categories of

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<sup>49</sup> According to Yang Yuanji, a few research groups came to Nujiang and wanted to learn more about Lisu ritual music; however, they could not just expect to see someone die during their short stay here. So he would ask the shaman to reproduce the process of a funeral without a dead person on site. Yang says, "I remember that when Prof. Li Wenzhen's research team came here, no animistic ritual was forthcoming. So I invited a shaman from Pihe Township and asked him to perform the main procedure. He refused to do so at the very beginning, because he could not conduct an imaginary ritual. Then, I suggested that he do a simple ceremony to bless the team with a safe journey" (interview with Yang on May 26, 2014). When I interviewed Hu Shuangyou, an apprentice shaman in Longling's Huanglianhe Village, I asked him to sing a little bit of ritual music for me, he also refused; as he explains, "Our koujue (incantation) cannot be optionally spoken to outsiders. It would be inappropriate to sing it [ritual song] outside the ritual context (personal communication on October 31, 2012).

folk songs are children’s songs and ritual music,” he said; “folk songs are popular among the common people (laobaixing) whereas ritual music largely belongs to the shamans. In addition, ritual music is often constrained by time and place—it is part of ritual ceremonies and cannot be performed in the daily life—however, folk songs can be sung at any time” (interview with Yang Yuanji on May 26, 2014).

Lisu shamans used to have a rich vocal repertoire to accompany various ritual ceremonies that they conducted. Their ritual vocal music has been called *nitggux ngot*, which literally means “the tune used for sacrifice.” Many tunes’ melodic contour is basically the same and repeated with slight variation. The sacrificial words are often improvised in accordance with the corresponding occasion and in view of the different spirit(s) the song is dedicated to (Yang 2012: 342). There have been many orally transmitted shamanistic scripts collected and translated into Chinese by scholars in China. The written text is classified as a form of folk literature.

Another feature of Lisu ritual songs is the parallel structure of seven- or nine-word sentences, which have a strong sense of rhythm. Yang describes it like this, “Each of the words is sung to one beat, very much like that of a duoban-style singing in the traditional Chinese operas. Ritual music sounds more like ‘talking’ than ‘singing’” (interview with Yang Yuanji on May 26, 2014; also see Yang 2007: 685).<sup>50</sup>

Scholars have classified Lisu ritual music differently based on their own research experiences in different locations. Hans Larsen studied the Lisu traditional music of Northern Thailand in the 1980s, and he considered there to be two kinds of Lisu ritual songs: one sung in soul-calling ceremonies and the other in special ceremonies in which a

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<sup>50</sup> Duoban is a form of rhythmic pattern in the vocal singing of traditional Chinese operas. It is usually in duple meter or with an unmetred regular pulse, with a short and compact phrase structure that is suitable for recitation (*Zhongguo Yinyue Cidian* Bianjibu 2010: 94).

possession often occurs. While both shamans and the elders—usually the heads of households—could sing soul-calling songs, the other type was essentially a shaman’s repertoire, and therefore these were also called shaman’s songs. According to Larsen, the Lisu of Northern Thailand used to say, “The spirits are like the sweet and beautiful sound of the mouth organ and the stamping feet of the dancers keep bad spirits in the old abandoned year and out of the new year” (Larsen 1984: 60).

In his article on a soul-calling healing ritual of the Lisu in Northern Thailand, Durrenberger does not mention any kind of music performed in the ceremony; instead, he describes how during the post-ceremony feast the male elders were repeatedly singing in a call-and-response style about “the torment of the individual whose soul had departed, and the means by which it had been returned” (Durrenberger 1975: 36).

Yang Yuanji has been working in Nujiang for fifty-five years. He tends to divide Lisu ritual music into three categories based on different functional roles: songs sung for invocation, such as in an animistic ritual of praying for gods’ blessing; for memorization, as used in ancestral worship; and for exorcism, such as a soul-calling song (Yang Yuanji 2012: 342). During my interview with him, Yang particularly introduced songs sung in funerals for the salvation of the dead. According to him, after an elder died all the villagers would stop working for three to five days. The relatives and friends would be singing songs and dancing around the dead elder while the shaman was conducting an exorcism (interview with Yang Yuanji on May 26, 2014; also see Yang 2007: 690).

Previous scholarship has rarely mentioned whether any musical instruments were used in the ritual music. Nowadays, the only ritual instrumental music that can be heard live is that performed in the animistic-derived institutionalized ritual, “Climbing up the

Hill of Knives; Jumping into the Sea of Fire,” either held alone or as part of the official Lisu New Year festival. The shaman in this ritual serves as a medium between climbers and the god of the knife. In addition to the shaman’s invocative chanting for protecting climbers from harm, a small all-percussion-ensemble comprising drums, cymbals, and gongs will perform in a simple duple meter to keep the pace of the climbers’ warm-up movements and create atmosphere.

### 2.3 Co-existence of Other Musics in Nujiang

In this section, I will summarize some of other musical traditions that have the greatest impact on the contemporary Nujiang music scene.

#### Western-influenced music

Western-derived music arrived in Nujiang in the early twentieth century along with the spread of Christianity. Lisu Christian music, the main subject of this dissertation, is the most obvious Western-influenced genre in the area. I will explore this subject in depth in Chapter 4; here, I just provide a brief introduction. Lisu Christian music can be roughly divided into three categories: *ddoqmuq mutgguat*, *xelgget mutgguat* (both meaning “hymns of praise”), and *mutgguat ssat* (small songs).

Translated from existing Western hymnals, *ddoqmuq mutgguat* have constituted the most stable repertoire of Lisu hymnody tradition, remaining almost unchanged since the day the genre took shape. Many of the melodies have stayed the same as their original source with texts translated into Lisu and tunes transcribed into Lisu cipher notation. *Xelgget mutgguat* have a meaning similar to that of *ddoqmuq mutgguat*. Also mostly

being composed with two to four vocal parts, they differ from the former in terms of authorship and variability. *Mutgguat ssat* refers to Lisu Christian pop songs featuring the instrumentation of one or two guitars, a drum kit, and keyboard, along with—though not always—the sign-language *daibbit* dance. It originated in the Burmese Lisu church, but now has gained wide popularity among the younger generation since the late 1990s.

With the development in the last two decades of the local tourism industry, starting from the late 1990s, tourists to Nujiang have a chance to appreciate the two Christian groups known as the Nujiang Lisu farmer choruses singing renowned multi-part choral music in Lisu in the tourist shows and other official performances. The establishment of the Chihengdi Red Song Lisu Farmer Chorus and its performance of the arrangements of old revolutionary songs in Lisu added new meaning to Lisu Christians' choral/hymn singing tradition inherited from the missionary age (for details, see Chapter 5).

The popularity of Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* music in the Nujiang Lisu church has brought more Western musical elements to the area, which include the style of singing while playing the guitar, the formation of Christian pop bands in the village, and the studio production relying heavily on the keyboard synthesizer that produces electronic sounds. The playing and selling of pirated recordings of studio-produced Lisu Christian music has become an ubiquitous soundscape in the farmers' markets throughout Nujiang (for more details, see Chapter 6.3 and 6.4).<sup>51</sup>

Another Western-derived musical genre prevalent in Nujiang is Chinese-language modern pop songs, which are most likely to be heard in the official festive celebrations

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<sup>51</sup> The first Lisu-language music album early in the 1970s, *Siljje Niqchit Mutgguat* (Songs of a Deep Yearning), featuring two-part duet singing over a solo acoustic guitar by two brothers from the Morse missionary, can be still found on the market.

and the commercial venues such as stores and restaurants, where it functions as background music aiming to create a lively atmosphere and entertain everyone present.

For example, the pop songs played during the 2013 Spring Bathing Festival were classic oldies written in the 1990s and early 2000s, which did not seem to entirely keep pace with the trend of the times. During my several visits to two of Liuku's KFC-style diners, I was surprised by the diverse music played in the two places. In MCK, Network love songs (wangluo qingge) were randomly played via the owner's laptop throughout the day together with the noisy sound of TV programs. The pop songs played in the other diner, Le'ermei, were the top hits sung by the most popular Chinese singers of the day from the recent Hu'nan TV singing show, "I am a Singer."

Foreign-language popular music is seldom heard in public, except a small number of Burmese love songs played in the farmers' markets mostly for the needs of the local Burmese businessmen. During my stay there I also found that "Gangnam Style," an Internet hit from 2012, was widespread. It was repeatedly played in the 2013 Spring Bathing Festival in Lushui as background music. It was also downloaded onto the cellphones of middle-school students in Fugong. It was even played on the top of Biluo Snow Mountain, where a teenager danced to the tune for his family outside his home.

I did not hear any Western classical music being openly played in Nujiang, except for the presence of one cello in an amateur instrumental ensemble that will be discussed shortly.

## Musics imported from the traditional Han Chinese

Although there have been indirect Han cultural influences under the successive rules of local Naxi, Bai, and Yi people, among whom chieftains and notables were designated as the native officials (*tusi*) to manage the Lisu and other smaller groups in Yunnan by the Chinese imperial court in the Ming (1368-1644), and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 73; Gao Zhiying and Huang Ronghua 2010: 96-99; Tao Yunkui 2012: 201-02), unlike other minority groups in the nearby regions—the Lijiang Naxi and the Dali Bai, or even the Tengchong Lisu, who have displayed a higher degree of sinicization—the Nujiang Lisu were not extensively affected by Han culture until the mid-1950s under the state administration. Therefore, it is no surprise to find that neither Han-derived indigenous musical traditions nor imported Han Chinese music have ever become widespread in Nujiang.

One Chinese-influenced music group that commonly has been performing in public is an amateur instrumental ensemble, *Odede* (formerly named *Hongxia*), comprising more than twenty middle-aged members of varied ethnicities who are mainly retired male intellectuals including schoolteachers, folk artists, and those who were previously professional performers from the prefecture song and dance troupe.<sup>52</sup> The members usually assemble once a week in the designated site around Liuku's Xiangyang Bridge, playing for personal entertainment or rehearsing for a public performance.

The main instruments include two-stringed bowed lutes, a large three-stringed plucked lute (*da sanxian*), a Chinese hammer dulcimer (*yangqin*), a transverse bamboo flute (*dizi*) and vertical flute (*xiao*) played by the same person, and a cello. Of all these

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<sup>52</sup> There were three women—including one singer, one percussionist, and one player of the two-stringed bowed lute (*erhu*)—taking part in the *Hongxia* Ensemble; none of them, however, continued to participate in the *Odede* group.

instruments, only the cello is a Western instrument, and most of others are Han imports. The musical repertoire is quite diverse, from Han-derived compositions to recent arrangements of local folksongs.

On their rehearsal for the performance in a real estate opening ceremony on December 12, 2012 in Liuku, they practiced four pieces, including the classic piece “Xiyangyang” (Jubilance) (1958); “Zai Xiwang de Tianye shang” (In the Field of Hope) (1982), reflecting the rapid changes since the Reform and Opening-up (Gaige Kaifang); “Taiyang Zhaodao Bianjiang” (The Sun Shines the Frontier) (1966); and “Gesheng Feichu Xinwowo” (Singing Flies Out of the Deep Heart), adapted from a locally composed song written in the 1970s based on the Nu folk music.



Figure 2.15. (On the left) Hongxia Ensemble rehearsing, the front square of the Lushui County Hall, Liuku, December 12, 2012. Note that all the instrumentalists were wearing unified Lisu costumes, despite the members’ ethnic diversity. (On the right) The female singer is a Bai but she was dressed in the Pumi traditional clothing.

During my stays in Nujiang between 2012 and 2014, I found that besides its presence in the urban areas this Han-derived instrumental ensemble did have some influence on the rural music scene. He Guizhi, the player of the large plucked lute,

invited the ensemble to give a guest performance in the Lisu traditional music show at his music transmission-and-learning institute (chuanxisuo) in Da'nanmao Village on January 2013. The ensembles also performed in the 2013 and 2014 Spring Bathing Festival, an annual festive gathering that would always attract a large number of villagers nearby to watch the performance. On April 24, 2014, the Odede Ensemble played two pieces in the exchange performance between the Maoyuan Troupe and the local Lisu folk artists in Tengchong's Henghe Village.

#### Interethnic influences

Firstly, the interethnic musical interaction has been apparent in the Christian communities. Lisu-language four-part hymns are currently sung by people of all ethnic backgrounds in the Protestant churches throughout Nujiang. The Christian Nu and Dulong have been attending Lisu-language church worship services, unless they lived in a Nu village where the Nu language is used for the sermon. Even in those Nu churches, the Christian Nu still use the Lisu-language hymnbook and Bible.

Such unification of congregational singing also exists in the Nujiang's multi-ethnic Catholic church. In Cikai Town (Cikai Zhen) of Gongshan County, a short walk from Xi'an Church (Xi'an Tang) takes you to a Catholic church. Catholics will come for a one-hour worship service on Sundays, in which congregation members of different ethnic backgrounds all sing mostly Chinese hymns, with a special inclusion of a short segment of Buddhist-chanting-style singing at the beginning and the end of the service by a small number of Tibetan believers.

Regional interethnic influences are also present in the field of traditional performing arts. For example, the Lisu and the Nu both use a four-stringed plucked lute that is quite similar in construction, but with different names and repertoires. The Nu *dabiya* is the counterpart of the Lisu *qibbe*. The Nu people in Gongshan County use the word “*qibbe*” to refer to their four-stringed lute. In addition, the Nu *dabiya* used to only have three strings (Yang Yuanji 2006b: 30). The current four-stringed structure is probably a result of being influenced by the Lisu *qibbe*. Another example of interethnic musical influence is the distinct *bbaishit* singing of the Lemo people (a branch of the Bai) in Luobenzhuo Bai Nationality Township (Luobenzhuo Baizu Xiang) of Lushui County. Yang Yuanji told me that the Lemo *bbaishit* is modeled after the Lisu counterpart, but is sung in Lemo (interview with Yang on May 26, 2014).

There has been no obvious evidence of any Naxi-, Bai-, or Tibetan-influenced genres in the musical traditions of the Nujiang Lisu. The following two examples demonstrate the noticeable Lisu-Yi interaction.

According to Gao Zhiying, the Lisu ritual-derived tradition, Climbing up the Hill of Knives, was a product of ethnic interaction between the Yi and Lisu people in Lushui County, or between the Han Chinese and Lisu in Tengchong. They believe that the state power and the driving force of the tourism industry further led to the transformation of the tradition from an ethnic festival to a cultural exhibition (Gao Zhiying and Yang Feixiong 2013: 56). Gao also noticed the members of the Lufeng Folk Art Troupe (a group renowned for its skills of Climbing up the Hill of Knives in Nujiang) are ethnically diverse, including the Yi, the Lisu, and Chinese. Therefore, the tradition is currently shared by all ethnicities within the area (Gao Zhiying and Li Xiaoqiang 2012: 78).

Lisu Professor Lu Jianbiao from Yunnan Nationalities University provides an interesting anecdote concerning the historical interaction between the Yi and Lisu due to government involvement; as he notes:

The number of Yi people in Chuxiong was not sufficient to form a single-minority autonomous region—today’s Chuxiong Yi Nationality Autonomous Prefecture (Chuxiong Yizu Zizhi Zhou)—in 1958. In order to make up the required number of the Yi people for the founding of the autonomous prefecture, the local Yi government officials had to “force” many Lisu people to change their ethnicity to the Yi nationality. As a result, it is entirely possible that some so-called Yi folk songs today used to be Lisu songs sung by the Lisu before they changed their ethnicity. (Lu’s supplementary remarks at the end of his meeting with the government officials of Sudian Lisu Township, October 2, 2013)<sup>53</sup>

#### 2.4 Lisu Performing Arts in New Contexts

In her research on cultural transformation on the western edge of the Tibetan-Yi Corridor, Gao Zhiying summarizes a series of trends of the cultural transformation in that area, respectively “Naxi-nization,” “Tibetan-nization,” “Lisu-nization,” “sinicization,” and “Christianization,” and she considers that “sinicization” has finally become the mainstream cultural force.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, she also emphasizes that “sinicization” and “Christianization” are the two concurrent trends in the development of the Lisu, Nu, and Dulong peoples on the China-Myanmar border (Gao Zhiying 2010: 9).

In this section, I focus on the complex changing social environment that the Lisu traditional culture has been exposed to in the past six decades. In addition to discussing

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas Mullaney also discusses how the state actually mixed minorities across cultures and ethnicities in order to categorize them (Mullaney 2011).

<sup>54</sup> The “Tibetan-Yi Corridor” is a historical-ethnic-regional concept proposed by the Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong around 1980. Geographically, it mainly refers to a vast region within Tibet, Sichuan, and Yunnan Provinces, in which all mountains and rivers are distributed in a north-south direction, in contrast to most others in China, that are spread in the east-west direction. Since ancient times, the “Tibetan-Yi Corridor” has been not only an important route of ethnic migration in the area, but also a significant venue for cultural communication and business trade.

the impact of “sinicization” and “Christianization,” in particular with respect to the government minority policies, I also investigate how the recently accelerating urbanization process has profoundly affected all aspects of Nujiang Lisu society, including their musical preferences and practices.

#### Christianization: Indigenous-Christian cultural interaction

The direct impact of the spread of Christianity on the Lisu indigenous musical traditions is the unwritten prohibition of singing and dancing to indigenous songs—particularly those associated with courtship and spirit worship—in the Christian communities since the missionary age.<sup>55</sup>

Traditionally, the Lisu used to conduct their courtship by singing and dancing together. For example, *bbaishit* musical repartee was largely—although not exclusively—associated with courting, and therefore the most active *bbaishit* singers were the young unmarried people ( Yuanji 2006a: 22, 2012: 323; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 216).<sup>56</sup> Early ethnographic writings also record the role of singing and dancing in courtship (Rose and Brown 1910: 254; Tao Yunkui 2012: 244); as Tao

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<sup>55</sup> The existing ethnomusicological writings indicate that this phenomenon of Christianity suppressing indigenous traditions is a commonality in the process of Christianization in various parts of the world. Some specific cases include religious music and dancing in Uganda being banned by missionaries due to their immoral connections (Gray 1995: 136); *raego*’ performances being reduced or eliminated by the Protestant missionaries in the Central Sulawesi highlands (Aragon 1996: 419); missionaries’ severe opposition to traditional Motu music (specifically, *gaba anedia*, “drum songs”) in Papua New Guinea (Niles 2000: 146); and the efforts made by both Protestants and Catholics to maintain “custom” (adat) while strongly suppressing the indigenous “religion” (aluk) in the Christianization of ritual music in the Toraja Highlands of Sulawesi (Rappoport 2004: 387). The shamanist practice—specifically, the joik and drum performances—of the Lapps (Sámi) was also prohibited in Christian Scandinavia (Ramnarine 2009: 197).

<sup>56</sup> According to Li Xuehua, it would be extremely inappropriate for a father and his daughter to sing *bbaishit* together (interview with Li Xuehua on May 28, 2013).

Yunkui writes, “The Lisu have social freedom before marriage. They conduct their courtship by singing instead of talking” (Tao Yunkui: 2012: 244).

One of the major first-generation missionaries among the Lisu people, Isabel Kuhn, directly criticizes the Lisu people’s courtship behavior and lifestyle in her writing:

With no shops, no radio, no books, no pleasures to break the humdrum monotony of their farm life, Satan knows the children of men must have some excitement, so he offers wine-drinking, quarrels, gambling, and immorality . . . The Lisu are naturally singers and love music; and Satan and sin have given them a set of licentious yodel songs which they call, “Try-to-say-it.” On the surface, I understand, it is nature-talk, as of birds, or the meetings of streams, but each is a metaphor so vile that no Christian Lisu will translate it for you or even repeat it. (Kuhn 1949: 15-18)

I did not find an explicit rule prohibiting Christian Lisu from performing traditional songs and dances in missionaries’ own writings. Leila Cooke, another significant first-generation missionary, just wrote about how the newly converted Lisu abandoned their indigenous music traditions; as she put it, “They also destroyed all their native musical instruments . . . The Lisu say that all their native love songs are heathen” (Cooke 1932: 35). The only related written record I found is the “Ten Commandments” (for details, see Chapter 3.4) summarized by local cultural workers based on oral history (Fu Abo, Hu Zhengsheng, and Pu Liyan 1987: 113; Li Fushan 1989: 108).

I interviewed two senior pastoral staff members about the reasons why the Lisu should abstain from practicing their pre-Christian musical traditions. According to Eugene Morse, it was the Christian Lisu themselves who felt compelled to get rid of their old traditions in order to embrace the new Christian beliefs wholeheartedly (interview with Morse on February 13, 2014). Hu Wanfa (born in 1921) from Longling’s Shidonghe Church said, “Our traditional songs are mostly sung in the farming work, weddings, and funerals and they are associated with various aspects of secular life; not to mention that

some of them contain vulgar content. Therefore, we stopped singing them soon after we became Christians” (interview with Hu Wanfa on October 31, 2012).<sup>57</sup>

However, I tend to agree with some of my informants’ opinion that the change in Christians’ musical tastes in the early days should have been a slow process rather than a sudden switch. After many years of conversion to Christianity, the following generations have already become incapable of performing Lisu traditional music. Many young and middle-aged informants told me that their grandparents and/or parents used to sing traditional songs prior to their Christian conversion. A few of them also emphasized the necessity of for a devoted Christian to divorce themselves from secular songs.

More than one person informed me that their hesitance to convert to Christianity resulted from their deep-rooted habits of drinking, smoking, and singing folk songs. Such was the case with Xiong Wenhua, the *bbaishit* singer and *qibbe* player mentioned earlier. He also admitted that he would like to become a Christian in the near future when he was too old to sing (personal communication).

The tension between Christianity and indigenous musical traditions still persists; however, the church’s attitudes toward traditional music are becoming more and more liberal, especially in those churches close to the major towns that have frequent contacts with the non-Christian Han Chinese. For example, many Christian Lisu in Dongfanghong Village near to Liuku also dance to the Eight Sets of Standardized Ethnic Dances—the institutionalized form of traditional *quakiq* dance—together with other non-Christian neighbors on special occasions (personal communication).

The misrepresentation of the Nujiang Lisu farmer chorus is another manifestation of the interaction between Christian and indigenous cultures. Four-part choral singing has

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<sup>57</sup> Shidonghe was one of the early Lisu churches built by the CIM missionaries outside Nujiang.

been promoted as a new tradition of Lisu performing arts in the Nujiang tourism boom since the late 1990s. Nowadays Christian-derived choral singing has gained equal fame with some of the old prestigious traditions. Most importantly, mass media and even a few scholars consider it to be a result of having benefited from the indigenous multi-part folk singing (for more details, see Chapter 5).

Nevertheless, the spread of Christianity played a significant role in preserving some elements of Lisu traditional performing arts.

First of all, two important features of Lisu folk poems—the extensive use of parallel structure and Lisu four-syllable compound—have been adopted not only in the translations of the Lisu Bible and Western hymns but also eventually in the oral communication and formal speech of the Christian Lisu (Jin Jie 2013: 142-54).

Leila Cooke recalled her experiences of learning Lisu folk vocabulary from two old women who were capable of reciting many folk poems from memory, during which she discovered that the parallel structure of the Lisu poetic form is very similar to that of the Bible chapters “Psalms of David” and “Proverbs.” Therefore, she was inspired to use the Lisu poetic pattern to translate some of the scriptures (Cooke 1932: 53).

Zhu Faqing (born in 1921 and died in 2012), church leader the best known of the Lisu native literati provides an anecdotal evidence for the missionaries’ effort to collect Lisu folk poems in order to acquire a better knowledge of the Lisu language for the translation of the Bible and hymns. Nevertheless, the evidence also indicates that they did not want to let the Christians know their action, and therefore the collecting work was conducted secretly (Zhu Faqing 2008: 842). According to Zhu Faqing, there are twenty-

two hymns in the standard Lisu hymnbook translated or written based on the Lisu folk poetic form (Zhu 2008: 842).<sup>58</sup>

A Lisu four-syllable elaborate compound (four-word-couplet) includes three lexemes in which one is repeated and the other two are different words which are synonyms (Jin Jie 2012: 144-51). For example, in the couplet “*et jjox xeq jjox*,” the repeated word, “*jjox*,” means “to have,” and the other different words, “*et*” and “*xeq*,” have a similar meaning, “good fortune.” The four-syllable compound used to be adopted widely in Lisu poems. The church absorbed and further innovated this stylistic couplet in the Christian domain. Jin Jie subdivides the Christian four-syllable compounds into seven categories, which witnesses the role that Christianity has played in preserving and developing the Lisu indigenous poetic vocabulary (Jin Jie 2012: 146-50).<sup>59</sup>

Secondly, in addition to the preservation of two important elements of Lisu folk poems in the Christian domain, many ingenious cultural terms have continued to be used there. Jin Jie summarizes a few terms commonly used in the Lisu folk poems but later absorbed into the Christian literature. For example, in the folktales, the word “*wusa*” traditionally means the legendary God who created human beings and the world (Zuo Yutang 1999: 71), but now it is used by the Christian Lisu to refer in particular to the almighty God in the Bible. Another example, “*ketshit*” is borrowed from the folk custom—vowing via drinking blood wine—and used in translating the title of the *Old Testament* (*Ketshit Lu Tot’et*) (Jin 2012: 143-44). My study particularly focuses on the

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<sup>58</sup> The numbers of the twenty-two hymns are 4, 13, 33, 39, 53, 68, 72, 80, 100, 127, 131, 140, 148, 154, 155, 167, 190, 206, 208, 241, 257, and 258.

<sup>59</sup> Several foreign missionaries have continued to gather Lisu folk vocabulary in their current mission work. David Morse was excited to discover pages of Lisu four-syllable compounds in my notebook that I had excerpted from Xu Lin’s *Lisu-Chinese Dictionary*. He told me that he was also interested in collecting precious Lisu vocabulary, and he asked me to give a copy of my collection to him (interview with Morse on February 18, 2014).

use of Lisu native terms in Christian music. I list some representative examples in Figure 2.16 and will provide a complete summary in Glossary A.

<b>Lisu word</b>	<b>Christian meaning</b>	<b>Original meaning</b>
<i>mutgguat</i>	hymn	music or poetry; a type of folk song
<i>xelgget</i>	to praise	a type of harvest song in Dehong <sup>60</sup>
<i>qibbe</i>	guitar	Lisu four-stringed plucked lute
<i>gguat'zu</i>	chorus	singing together
<i>laiqdu</i>	(time or key) signature	<i>laiq</i> : hand + <i>du</i> : print
<i>du-di-li</i>	chorus (refrain)	from the couplet <i>dudi duli</i> , meaning repetitive

Figure 2.16. Examples of borrowed Lisu native terms in Christian music.

#### Sinicization: Government policies towards minority performing arts

Defenders of Lisu traditional culture—local cultural workers, researchers, and government officials—not only draw clear boundaries between contemporary Lisu Christian culture and those elements considered to be longstanding indigenous Lisu traditions, but also blame the spread of Protestant Christianity for its negative influence on the preservation of Lisu traditional performing arts. Some of them believe that Christians do not necessarily have to stop singing and dancing to their traditional music, even though there are irreconcilable differences between Christianity and indigenous culture (personal communication). However, the Christian Lisu may not agree with this; as Feng Rongxin argued, “Admittedly, Christians do not sing *bbaishit* or *mutgguat* anymore; however, how many people can you find among those non-Christian Lisu who can sing old tunes” (personal communication)?

Albeit one-sided, his words indicate that there are other noteworthy factors that have great influence on the development of Lisu traditional performing arts today. Here, I

<sup>60</sup> This explanation is based on Jin Jie’s research (Jin Jie 2013: 1445), but the Christian Lisu in Nujiang I met did not know this particular meaning.

focus on the Han Chinese cultural influence, with a particular interest in the government minority policies, and turn to the impact of urbanization at the end of this chapter.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the central Communist government in Beijing, three thousand kilometers away from Nujiang, launched a series of ongoing projects to bring Nujiang's indigenous people and other ethnic groups into state control for the sake of unity in the Chinese nation-state. In addition to the milestone ethnic identification described at the beginning of this chapter, some other influential projects aiming to integrate the marginal areas and minority nationalities include the founding of all levels of minority autonomous regions and establishment of the state educational system to "civilize" the formerly marginalized minority population.

Next, I focus in particular on the government policies toward minority performing arts and how they have influenced and continue to influence the Lisu music making over the years. Some of the issues described below echo those previously summarized in the literature review (Chapter 1.2) on the studies of China's minority music.

Generally speaking, contrary to the churches' discouragement of the old, the Communist government recognized the cultural diversity of ethnic minorities and claimed that it was necessary to preserve their music and dance traditions.

The successive constitutions guaranteed the freedom of minority nationalities to self-develop their traditional culture; as the 1982 *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* puts it, "(Article 119) Organs of self-government of national autonomous areas protect and arrange the national cultural heritage, as well as develop and prosper national culture; (Article 122) The state conducts financial, material, and technical support for

each of the minority nationalities to increasingly develop their economic and cultural undertakings” (Wenhua Xuanchuansi 2013a).

Similar principles were reaffirmed in the 1984 *Law of Regional National Autonomy* which says that “(Article 38) Organs of self-government of national autonomous areas encourage the self-development of the national cultural undertakings with national forms and characteristics in the literature, arts, press, publication, broadcasting, film, and television” (Wenhua Xuanchuansi 2013b).

More specifically, the first influential move was the creation of state-sponsored song and dance troupes. The Central Nationalities Song and Dance Troupe (Zhong Minzu Gewutuan) was established in Beijing in September 1952 and since then has been serving as the highest national institution dedicated to the collection, adaptation, and promotion of minority performing arts. The precursor of the present-day Nujiang Prefecture Song and Dance Troupe (Nujiangzhou Minzu Gewutuan), Fugong Culture and Art Propaganda Team (Fugong Wenyi Xuanchuandui), was founded in 1961. It initially recruited twelve members including newly found talented folk artists and cultural workers and was reorganized into a prefecture group, Nujiang Prefecture Culture and Art Troupe (Nujiangzhou Wenyi Gongzuodui), in 1963. Five county-level culture and art troupes were successively set up since 1963.

According to the head of the prefecture song and dance troupe, Yang Yuanji, as a platform for political propaganda the main task of the troupe was “going up to the mountainous areas and down to the countryside” (shangshan xiexiang) to conduct propaganda for government policies through performance. The texts of some collected minority folk songs were re-written to suit that purpose, a practice known as “to put new

wine in old bottles (jiuping zhuang xinjiu)” (interview with Yang Yuanji on May 26, 2014; Yang Yuanji 2014).

For example, early in 1950, when a delegation of the central government (zhongyang fangwentuan) came to Nujiang, *bbaishit* singing was adapted to praise and express the gratitude to the Party and Chairman Mao for the first time in the welcoming performance. The Party was compared to “the sun from the sky” and Chairman Mao to “the moon” (Yang Yuanji 2004: 54-55). In this case, *bbaishit* was not just a folk genre for talking love, but also became a tool to sing for the new life in the socialist country. I have seen many new *bbaishit* compositions of this kind in several locally edited anthologies of Lisu folk songs. Such a phenomenon was common at that time; as Yang Mu puts it:

Under Mao’s guidance, a large number of professional composers, writers, and cultural cadres directly participated in re-writing folk songs, particularly the song texts, and then circulated them among the general community by every possible means. (Yang Mu 1994a: 308)

In recent years, the local government accelerated the speed of “sending culture to the countryside” (song wenhua xiaxiang), a reflection of the government’s new approach to the integration of minority cultures into the Han mainstream culture aiming to build an inclusive Chinese nation. According to the former head of the Foreign Affairs Office of the Propaganda Department of Fugong County Party Committee, Zou Jun, Fugong Stone Moon Folk Art Troupe (Fugong Shiyueliang Minjian Yishutuan) has become one of the government units affiliated with the county cultural bureau. Now the troupe’s various performances in the villages aim to compete with Christian culture there (interview with Zou Jun on June 17, 2013).

Another task of these song and dance troupes, according to Yang Yuanji, is to collect, arrange, and present stage performance of minority music (interview with Yang

Yuanji, on May 26, 2014). Early in the 1950s, musicians from The General Political Department Song and Dance Troupe of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (Zhongguo Renmin Jiefangjun zong Zhengzhibu Gewutuan, often referred to as Zongzheng Gewutuan) collected 240 folk songs—including 3 Nujiang pieces—during their trip to Yunnan and compiled them into an *Anthology of Folk Songs in Yunnan* in 1957. The first all-Lisu song anthology did not appear until 1964, compiled by musicians from the Yunnan Song and Dance Theater (Yang Yuanji 2014).

The collection of folk music and dance also provides compositional materials for professional musicians, who, according to incomplete statistics, have composed more than three thousand musical works of different styles and forms from the founding of the troupe until 2014 (Yang Yuanji 2014). Even during the Cultural Revolution, the collection and arrangements of local folk music did not cease. Two of the most renowned arrangements—"Joyous *Dililtu*" (Huanle de *Dililtu*) inspired by the *dililtu*'s three basic notes, and "Singing Flies from the Deep Heart"—were produced during this period.

According to Yang, some of his arranged folk songs were spread widely throughout Nujiang, so that a few younger folk singers would even consider them to be indigenous repertoire. He provides an anecdote to support his views:

One time we went to the countryside and tried to find promising folk singers there. The village cadres recommended a singer to us. We asked him to sing a few folk tunes he knew. He sang one piece, but it was one of my works. (Interview with Yang on May 26, 2014)

In accordance with the previous studies of the institutionalization and standardization of minority music, I also found a similar situation during my fieldwork in Nujiang, which will be described as follows.

First, I observed several times how the local government officials managed to showcase the standardized costumes of Nujiang's major minority nationalities in various official performances, in which a few audience members including political cadres, urban unit employees, and farmers from the nearby villages were required to wear their colorful national costumes and sit in the front rows for the sake of video filming.

Second, professionalization is another way of standardizing minority music. Following a national trend of sending promising minority performer to learn standardized styles of singing, dancing, and performing at a national or provincial conservatory or arts institution, the Nujiang Prefecture Song and Dance Troupe also has been seeking indigenous singers with good voices, recruiting them into the troupe, training them in national singing style and stage manners, and finally sending them to attend regional and national singing competitions. Rongbaxinna (female, the Pumi) and Apusasa (male, the Lisu) are the two minority singers who recently won national singing contests and now have become symbols of Nujiang's minority music.

The most recent state project that has profoundly influenced the traditional practices of minority performing arts is sponsoring talented folk musicians—labeled as “the bearers of intangible cultural heritage” (*feiwuzhi wenhua yichan chuanchengren*)—and enhancing their role in preserving indigenous music. Some of the culture bearers have an opportunity to participate in official performances with professional musicians from the song and dance troupes; and some are also supposed to impart their knowledge and skills in traditional music to whomever has an interest in it. Through 2015, in Nujiang there have been 3 national-, 36 provincial-, and 55 prefectural-level culture bearers recognized by the state (Ma Enxun and Li Qiong 2015).

Culture bearers receive government grants to support their transmission work, so they have to periodically demonstrate their work results in a presentational fashion, resulting in an inevitable change of music pedagogy: the presentation-oriented teaching manner has influenced what and how a culture bearer chooses to teach his or her pupils.

For example, as a provincial-level culture bearer He Guizhi is currently running a transmission-and-learning institute (*chuanxisuo*) under his Maoyuan Troupe. It is open to anyone who is interested in learning Lisu traditional music, although most of the apprentices are villagers and school students nearby. During my stay with the troupe in January 2014, he only taught students the most basic *qibbe* tune just for practice, as it would take a longer time to learn *qibbe* playing. He then mostly focused on teaching and rehearsing easier programs. In all formal performances I attended, only a few musicians actually played the *qibbe*—the rest of the performers just held the instruments as props. Moreover, the troupe’s performances between 2012 and 2014 largely remained the same.

Since the mid-1950s, modern standard Chinese, commonly known as Mandarin (Putonghua), has been promoted throughout China, including in areas where minority nationalities live in concentrated communities by means of school educational systems, official and mass media, and making plans for collecting spoken minority language, as he calls “corpus planning” (Zhou Minglang 2012: 1). Putonghua was officially designated as China’s national language in 1982. What facilitated the standardization of minority traditional folk songs was the implementation of the standard Chinese phonetic system, Hanyu Pinyin, and Chinese characters in schools, as nowadays not only Chinese scholars but also a few educated minority folk musicians will use Mandarin Chinese to write neo-folk songs or transliterate lyrics of traditional tunes originally sung in minority languages.

From a practical point of view, using Mandarin Chinese to transliterate minority language is necessary because it can make those minority songs more accessible to the Han Chinese audience members and other cultural outsiders who do not understand any language other than their own, not to mention the fact that most performers of the state song and dance troupes cannot read or write indigenous writing systems such as Old Lisu either.

Handling the language barrier in this way, however, is not advantageous for the transmission of the stylistic features of minority languages, which are very often a very significant part of minority traditional songs. I remember my experience of translating the Chinese transliteration of a Lisu song back into Old Lisu word by word; that was the only way I could truly understand the meaning and language features of the original song.

Besides the use of Chinese transliteration, the Chinese cipher notation also has played a part in the standardization and transmission of minority music. I did not observe any use of staff notation to write or transcribe minority music during my fieldwork in Nujiang except in the scholarly writings by researchers mostly from outside Nujiang.

Finally I provide an example of a standardized minority dance form to demonstrate the use of performing arts to reinforce the ideology of a unified multi-ethnic culture in Nujiang. In the 1980s, the Nujiang Prefecture Song and Dance Troupe planned a project to devise a series of standardized ethnic dances based on the traditional dances of Nujiang's six minority groups: the Lisu, the Nu, the Dulong, the Bai, the Yi, and the Pumi.<sup>61</sup> It was called the Old Eight Sets of Standardized Ethnic Dances (Lao Minzu Batao Guifanhua Wudao, hereafter referred to as Old Eight Sets), and it used to be both a

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<sup>61</sup> There were respectively two dances included for the Lisu and Nu, whereas for each of the other four groups there was only one dance included.

required study course and the student exercise program between classes in the Nujiang National Secondary Specialized School (Nujiang Minzu Zhongzhuan). Its video recording spread widely via major county song and dance troupes.

Later in the 1990s, a revised version with simpler dance steps, known as the New Eight Sets of Standardized Ethnic Dances (Xin Minzu Batao Guifanhua Wudao, hereafter referred to as the New Eight Sets), was created in order to better promote the standardized ethnic dances and encourage more people to participate (interviews with Yang Yuanji on May 26, 2014). In the New Eight Sets, dance steps are very easy to pick up for a novice, as there is only one featured dance movement in each of the sets. There are two new sets of dances of the Tibetan and Chashan (a branch of the Jingpo) people added in the New Eight Sets, and a revised set for each of the original six ethnic groups.<sup>62</sup>

The tradition of collectively dancing to the electroacoustic music of the New Eight Sets to conclude most significant outdoor official performances and festivities has persisted until today, a tradition serving as a kind of propaganda device to help with the necessary presentation on certain occasions of the national unity and cultural diversity to both guests from outside Nujiang and the local residents. I observed people dancing the New Eight Sets several times and personally participated at least twice during my fieldwork. Meanwhile, this tradition is also much enjoyed by the local people in the urban areas, as described at the beginning of this dissertation (see Chapter 1.1).

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<sup>62</sup> The comparison between the minority nationalities featured in the Old Eight Sets and those in the New Eight Sets is based on pirated video recordings of both dance sets.

Urbanization: The cleavage between the urban and rural Lisu communities

As Tao Yunkui describes in his early ethnography, “One of the characteristics of Lisu life style is that most Lisu villages, excluding those of the exception and sinicized communities, are situated in the high mountains, usually over 2000 meters above the sea level” (Tao 2012: 206). James O. Fraser also points out that the Lisu are usually to be found in the higher and colder regions of the mountains (Fraser 1922: 2). This unique living environment determined that a fireplace (*ggutzul* in Lisu; *huotang* in Chinese) used to be an essential article in each of Lisu households, for cooking, lighting and heating (see Figure 2.17).<sup>63</sup>



Figure 2.17. The hostess baking corn meal pancake (*kotxa baba*) over the fireplace for the family during the Lisu New Year, *Totbawapai* Village, Chengga Township, Lushui County, December 2012.

As a gathering center around which various family activities were conducted, the fireplace provided an important occasion for singing traditional Lisu songs. For example, as mentioned previously, the elders used to sing two categories of Lisu folk songs—*yoqyet* and *mutgguat*—around the fireplace while drinking. In another completely

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<sup>63</sup> Many other minority nationalities, especially southern minorities, consider the fireplace to be an integral part of the residential building (Guan Yanbo 1997; Luo Hantian 2000).

different context, the Lisu would sing dirges around the fireplace during a three-day vigil for the dead (Zhang Zehong 2006: 124). Gao Zhiying observes the transition of the Lisu gathering center from the “fireplace” to “church” (Gao 2008). In this section, I turn to the impact of urbanization on the decline of “the culture of fireplace” and on the Lisu performing arts in general.

While Nujiang Prefecture has been subjected to the state administration since the mid-1950s, its physical isolation has always been a great obstacle for the development of the local economy. Russell Harwood has observed two recent campaigns: one is “Open Up the West” (Xibu Dakaifa) and the other is “Constructing a new socialist countryside” (Jianshe shehui zhuyi xin nongcun), and both of these aim to further integrate ethnic minority groups into the Chinese state and allow the minority people to benefit from the state construction of modernization since 2000 (Harwood 2014: 24-26, 76, 78). The urbanization has been one of the most remarkable results from these two campaigns.

There have been various attempts to accelerate the urbanization process. Besides the construction of townships and towns modeled after the general urban construction mode throughout China, at the same time the recent “poverty alleviation and relocation” (fupin anju) project, which aims to improve the living conditions of the minority villagers and have them gradually move down from the hills, constituted a unique aspect of the urbanization process in Nujiang. Starting from 2003, the government invested 125 million yuan (\$20 million) to help villagers to renovate their dilapidated thatched houses on the hills or build new brick houses along the riverbank (see Figure 2.18).



Figure 2.18. (On the left) Traditional Lisu housing, *Magguadi* Village, Gudeng Township, Lushui County, June 15, 2014; (on the right) newly built houses on the west bank of the Nu River, *Danzhu* Village, Gongshan County, July 21, 2014.

Although the older generation still prefers to live in the mountainous areas, more and more Lisu are willing to move down from the hills and relocate by the river. On the one hand, the relocation project has provided convenience for villagers to travel back and forth along the Nu River for a variety of purposes, and therefore to have more contacts with people from the outside world; on the other hand, above all, gas or electromagnetic ovens have gradually replaced the former fireplace and iron tripod in the kitchen.

My distinct experiences of staying with the families living in the highland and those in the lowland can provide an account of the phenomena of change discussed above:

When I was visiting a lowland family, my conversation with the family members was mostly conducted in the living room with tables and chairs—sometime the television was left on most of the time—and we would sit and have an abundant meal together by the dining table in the kitchen. The hospitality I received from those relatively poor highland families is an entirely new yet challenging experience: I usually had to sit on the short bench by the fireplace for a long-time. The smoky fire usually brought tears to my eyes. Meals were often put on the floor. (Field notes)

Another project that has a close relationship with the government relocation project in the process of urbanization is the development of local transportation facilities, including the network of paved roads and bridges above the Nu River. There were only

narrow passes and the Ancient Tea-Trading Route (Chama Gudao) along the Nu River before 1949. The county seat of the northernmost Gongshan County, Cikai Town, was not accessible by cement road until May 1973.<sup>64</sup> Sliding along steel wire (liusuo) used to be the primary means of transportation between the east and west riverbanks.

The geographic obstacles and distances resulted in relatively little external influences on the region. In the field of performing arts, as Yang Yuanji recalls:

The commoners (laobaixing) just sang those songs daily before. There was no need to protect them. Now we have been talking about preserving the culture because it has been greatly influenced by the wider world (his original words: luanqibazao de dongxi, literally “a mess of things.” (Interview with Yang on May 26, 2014)

The “wider world” arrived in Nujiang much more quickly than ever before thanks to the increasingly improving traffic conditions. By 2013, 29 townships and towns are accessible by road (100 percent coverage), and the two sides of the Nu River are connected by a total of new 129 new bridges (Li Shouhua and Yu Ruishan, et al).

Meanwhile, the ameliorative traffic facilities have made the mobility of the population possible. With the market penetration throughout Nujiang in the last two decades, particularly in the forms of cash crop planting, small commodity exchange, the tourism industry—for example, the catering and hotel services in major towns—and extractive mining, there have been a large number of young people seeking non-agricultural work and opportunities in Nujiang’s urban areas and in cities outside Nujiang.

The effects of this labor migration on Lisu traditional music are obvious. Most of the younger people might have initially lost their interest in learning the music of older people, but now due to the long-term separation from their villages, they are losing

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<sup>64</sup> Yang Yuanji recalled that when he was assigned to work in Nujiang in 1959, it took him twelve days to arrive there from Lijiang. But now it takes only seven hours by express bus, mostly via highways (interview with Yang on May 26, 2014).

opportunities to learn in the first place. The modernization and its effects on ethnic traditions are highlighted in the documentary film *Treasure of the Lisu*, which tells the story of the dramatic changes in the life of one folk artist in Fugong's Lumadeng Village, Ahcheng, and his music.

In the film, Ahcheng had three children, among whom the first daughter was a migrant worker in Xinjiang; the second daughter married someone in He'nan Province; and the youngest son stayed at home, but he found his father's music very hard to understand because the lack of scores made it difficult to learn. Ahcheng's nephew had an interest in learning the *qibbe*, but the film also records how he continuously answered phone calls during his informal *qibbe* study from Ahcheng (Yan Chunsu 2010).

I also found a similar situation in the family of my Lisu music teacher, He Guizhi. His younger son used to be a trained singer and give performances in Kunming and Beijing. But now he has given up his music career—neither singing nor having any interest in listening to the music he used to sing a lot. Instead, he is currently helping with goods delivery between villages to make money. He told me that his greatest dream is to buy a sport utility vehicle in the near future and start his tourist business as a local travel guide. He's daughter was a singer in the Lushui Song and Dance Troupe, but she gave up that career after she got married and settled down in the suburbs of Kunming (personal communication in January 2014).

This situation is quite similar to what is happening within the Christian communities. The younger people working outside Nujiang are absent from church worship services and other activities. Therefore, they no longer have enough chances to practice four-part hymns. As a matter of fact, many of them are not knowledgeable

enough to sing from the hymnbook (personal communication with a few young Christian Lisu working outside Nujiang who came back for a while between 2013 and 2014).

Lastly, the urbanization process has also influenced the way in which the local song and dance troupes interact with their villager audience members and the corresponding effect their practices might have on the development of the traditional music of minority nationalities. Yang Yuanji describes such changes based on his experiences thus:

In the past, we had to carry all the performance equipment and costumes by ourselves and walk to the countryside. I still remember how villagers enjoyed our performances. But nowadays our actors cannot endure hardship anymore. They do not need to endure what we used to face, thanks to the easy traffic of the day. We used to give two hundred performances a year. Nowadays we do not assign any task to the actors because they simply cannot complete it. The mind of audience members has also changed. In the past, there were no television shows. Villagers did not have any other ways to entertain themselves except to sing and dance for their own enjoyment or to watch our performances periodically. But now many of them have learned to download and listen to music on their cellphones. (Interview with Yang on May 26, 2014)

Statistics show that the television coverage in Nujiang had increased to 90 percent by 2000 (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 171). I have surprisingly found that a television with set-top cable or satellite box has become a new focal point for the family members; however, without further investigation, it is difficult to judge the actual impact of the television mass media on the musical preferences and cultural values of those Nujiang Lisu villagers. I discovered that various musical programs and news reports attracted the least audience members in an ordinary family. More commonly, the kids got to choose what TV shows to watch and they usually watched cartoons. The television in a Christian family is largely used together with a DVD player for watching Christian music videos.

The musical activities throughout Nujiang should be much more complex than what I have described in this chapter. But my personal experiences as a researcher and friend

to many local people can still given an account of some of the representative aspects of the overall situation. I have summarized the roles of Christianization, sinization, and urbanization in transforming the Lisu traditional performing arts. Despite the difficulties of discussing the actual effect those forces have had on many individuals' music practices and cultural values, I have attempted to provide many examples as possible based on my personal communication.

### **Chapter 3: The Lisu Church of Nujiang Prefecture**

This chapter is a comprehensive overview of several significant aspects of the Lisu church that have provided a solid foundation for the contemporary musical practices of the Nujiang Christian Lisu. I first review the history of church-state interaction in Nujiang and then summarize various church networks throughout Nujiang. Next, I discuss features of Lisu Christianity, and conclude the chapter by examining the Lisu-language Bible and commonly used Lisu hymnal, the two most important items in Lisu Christian literature.

What are the origins of Lisu Christianity in Nujiang? What historical legacy has been left with the Lisu church and profoundly influenced Lisu believers' understanding of Christian belief and their religious practices today? These are the two main questions I will try to answer in this chapter. Building upon my previous discussion of minority-state relationships, I will continue to explore the subject in terms of the impact of state religious policy on the Christian Lisu over the past six decades.

I have gathered materials from a variety of sources about the early mission work among the Lisu. In addition to those precious primary sources preserved in the Records of the United States Home Council of Overseas Missionary Fellowship (CIM) in the Billy Graham Center, a few oral histories I obtained through numerous informal talks with the ordinary Lisu and a few interviews with the first-generation missionary Eugene Morse and his descendants, and with Nujiang's senior Lisu evangelists, have comprised the major sources on which the following analysis is based.

### 3.1 History of Christianity among the Nujiang Lisu

The interaction between Nujiang's ethnic groups and the state government started much earlier, before the arrival of Protestant Christianity in the twentieth century, under the native officials (tusi) system during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Starting in the sixteenth century, the Han Chinese government successively arranged for nine native officials (tusi) to rule smaller ethnic groups in Nujiang (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 73).

Overall, the traditional Lisu society has been described by Chinese scholars as one in a highly autonomous state in which individual households and villages were regulated by customary laws, trials by ordeal, and feuds between villages (Cao Yue'ru 2009: 43; Gao Zhiying 2010: 76; Tao Yunkui 2012: 201, 259). Gao Zhiying argues that "the emergence of the church provided the Lisu with a cohesive organization linked through shared religion for the first time, and therefore, to a certain extent the church became an agency of political mobilization that could contend with the surrounding ethnic groups with relatively more sophisticated political organization" (Gao Zhiying 2010: 76).

#### Lisu Christianity in Republican Nujiang (1912-1949)

##### *Origins and early development*

It is generally agreed that the first contact of the Lisu people with Protestant Christianity occurred at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Myanmar. George J. Geis, a missionary from the American Baptist Mission (ABM), first met several Lisu when he was evangelizing the Kachin people in Myitkyina in 1898. The conversion of a Lisu couple from a small village in Myitkyina in 1902 is considered to be the

beginning of Christianity among the Lisu (Gao Zhiying 2010: 72; Jinjie 2013: 28). The converted Burmese Lisu did not have an independent church of their own in the first half of the twentieth century, but mostly were affiliated with the Burmese Baptist Church in connection with the ABM. According to James O. Fraser, there were about one hundred Lisu Christian families affiliated with the BBC by 1922 (Fraser 1922: 10).

The most substantial missionary activities among the Lisu took place in China's Yunnan Province with two main directions of evangelizational work initiated by the missionaries of the China Inland Mission (CIM): one was in the northern region starting in the 1910s, and the other in the western area: the latter movement first built its stronghold in the Baoshan area (Tengchong and Longling), then spread out to Muchengpo and Fuyinshan to the east, and finally moved northward into Nujiang (Cao Yue'ru 2009: 33; Shen Xiaohu 2014: 6).<sup>65</sup> The following retrospective focuses on this second direction, especially the missionaries' activities in Nujiang.

The spread of Christianity among the Chinese Lisu in western Yunnan can be traced back to 1909 when Fraser first entered Yunnan via Myanmar's northernmost Bhamo and started to evangelize the Lisu in Tengchong (Leila Cooke 1948: 13; Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 62; Gao Zhiying 2010: 72; Shen Xiaohu 2014: 19).<sup>66</sup> This evangelizing route became quite common in the evangelization attempts made among Yunnan's minority peoples in the early twentieth century, because of the more convenient

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<sup>65</sup> Muchengpo was also known as "Stockage Hill" in the missionary age and located in present-day Luxi City's (Luxi Shi) Zhongshan Township (Zhongshan Xiang) in Dehong Prefecture. Fuyinshan (Gospel Mountain) was situated in today's Gengma County (Gengma Xian) of Lincang City (Lincang Shi), east to Muchengpo.

<sup>66</sup> Fraser went to Myanmar from Shanghai in 1909. He first arrived in Yangon and then went north to Mandalay (Myanmar's second largest city) and further to Bhamo in the Kachin State in the northernmost part of Myanmar, which lies less than 100 kilometers from the borderline with Yunnan.

transportation via Myanmar to Yunnan; as Qian Ning notes, “It is more convenient to reach western Yunnan from Myanmar rather than from China’s east coast and other inland provinces. After the third Anglo-Burmese War in 1885, Myanmar completely became a British colony, making the country headquarters of many denominations’ mission work” (Qian Ning 2000: 20).

Under the assistance of the Karen evangelist Ba Thaw and George Geis from the ABM, Fraser carried out his early mission work among the Lisu, including creating the Old Lisu script, translating Lisu scripture chapters and hymns, and evangelizing between China and Myanmar. Following the early achievements in Tengchong, the CIM missionaries founded the first Lisu parish church in Muchengpo in 1921 (Shi Fuxiang 1997: 45-46; Zhu Fade 2008: 631; Gao Zhiying 2010: 72).

Allyn Cooke and his wife Leila Cooke (hereafter referred to as the Cookes, unless otherwise specified; see Figure 3.1) went to Muchengpo in 1922 and took over the work there (Gao Zhiying 2010: 72; interview with Yo Fuduo on June 12, 2013; Shen Xiaohu 2014: 51). By the time the Cookes left for their first furlough, there were 1,338 Christian Lisu and 44 chapels in the area (Leila Cooke 1948: 31). Upon their return in 1927, the Cookes were sent to Fuyinshan in the east of Muchengpo and founded another mission station there preparing to introduce Christianity to the Lisu on the east side of Nujiang.



Figure 3.1. Photos of Allyn B. Cooke (left) and his first wife Leila Cooke (right). Reproduction of the original photos owned by You Fuduo, a senior Lisu evangelist who once studied with both Allyn Cooke and John Kuhn, upon his permission, June 12, 2013.

In 1927, four Lisu evangelists formed the spearhead and went to Nujiang for the preparatory work.<sup>67</sup> The Cookes joined them in 1928 and eventually founded a mission station in Maliping of Lushui County. After the church was taken over by John Kuhn, the Cookes moved to Liwudi (Luda) in former Bijiang County and built another church there in 1934 (Shi Fuxiang 2006:192; Gao Zhiying 2010: 73). The CIM missionaries, however, were not the only missionaries in Nujiang in the 1930s. The Assemblies of God built strong Christian communities to the north of Liwudi Church in what is now around Shangpa Town (Shangpa Zhen) of Fugong County (Zhang Xinghong and Zhang Huixing

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<sup>67</sup> There were two reasons for their move to Nujiang: the new believers up there were in need of a missionary teacher and the missionaries were eager to “get an adequate knowledge of the Lisu language, uncorrupted by Chinese influence” (Leila Cooke 1948: 55).

1989: 65; Gao Zhiying 2010: 73). In 1940, the Morse family from the Church of Christ moved their mission base from the Lancang River into Nujiang's Gongshan and remained there throughout World War II (Morse family n.d.).<sup>68</sup>

*Government attitudes toward missionary activities*

Sun Yat-sen (known as Sun Zhongshan in China) led the Revolution of 1911 (Xinhai Ge'ming) that overthrew the Qing dynasty and established the Republic of China. The new nationalist government founded in 1912 by the Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomingdang, hereafter referred to as the KMT) sent a frontier troop (zhibiandui) to Nujiang, establishing administrative committee offices (xingzheng weiyuan gongshu) (1916) and governing councils (shezhiju) (1928) in order to reinforce the border control (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 72-73; Tao Yunkui 2012:201).<sup>69</sup>

The frontier troop and foreign missionaries entered Nujiang in nearly the same period of time, but they had distinct impacts on the local Lisu society. The Nationalist government forcibly attempted to incorporate the Nujiang Lisu into the state control and imposed Han cultural values on them, whereas missionaries valued cultural differences

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<sup>68</sup> The Morse family members are still working among the Lisu and other ethnic groups in northern Thailand. David Morse, the eldest son of Eugene Morse, not only designed a computer font for Old Lisu but also made great efforts in translating and compiling Lisu hymns. Two of his cousins, Joni Morse and Bobby Morse, produced the first commercial Lisu music recording in the 1970s.

<sup>69</sup> A governing council was a county-level administrative institution. Both administrative committee offices and governing councils implemented the "baojia zhi," a system for household registration management established in the Song dynasty (960-1279), in which ten households make up one "jia" and ten "jia" consist of one "bao". The administrator of a "jia" unit is called "jiazhang" and that of a "bao" unit "baozhang." The former village headmen held most of these positions. In the Republic era, baojia served as the basic rural political system until 1949.

and tried to instill Lisu traditional elements into the Christian belief to make it more accessible to the Christian Lisu in certain domains.

Meanwhile, the local KMT authorities also imposed a heavy economic burden on farmers through collecting various taxes and fees, resulting in constant resistance and numerous uprisings (Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2008: 4; Cao Yue'ru 2009: 51; Gao Zhiying and Huang Ronghua 2010: 101). For example, the general director and eight officials of the Fugong Governing Council were killed in a revolt in 1935 (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianjizu 2008: 75; Tao Yunkui 2012: 267). You Fuduo provides a vivid oral history of another well-known conflict, the "Liwudi Incident" (also see Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 72; Cao Yue'ru 2009):

We managed village affairs by ourselves. After the KMT arrived, they took over everything. The old man [the village headman] was not happy about that. Moreover, they did not behave: they broke down our doors and they peed in the containers we used for grinding corn. Therefore, the headman discussed with villagers how to kill those evildoers. Eventually villagers hacked the small troop to death with axes. One person escaped. A large group of officers and soldiers came two days later and burned down the village. (Interview with You Fuduo on June 20, 2014)

Missionaries tended to help to ease such tensions between the Lisu and the Nationalist government through persuading the Christian Lisu to stay away from the non-Christians' fight against the Han Chinese; as Leila Cooke writes, "We felt the wisest course would be for our people to be loyal to their Chinese overlords, so we sent out letters all over the district exhorting our flock to stand with the Chinese" (Leila Cooke 1948: 71). Nevertheless, they were suspected by the Nationalist Government and

considered to be a threat due to the church's undeniable influence on the local governmental administration.<sup>70</sup>

According to missionaries' own accounts, the government also persecuted the church. Leila Cooke recalls how the magistrate once ordered the Christian Lisu to help with road construction on Sundays and deprived them of the privilege to have a meeting after the day's work was done; as he put it, "If you can pray and make a tree fall or move a stone out of the way, then you may pray! Otherwise you cannot pray or have meetings on my road" (Leila Cooke 1948: 60).

In spite of suffering persecution, the Lisu church still grew in strength. The establishment of the Rainy Season Bible School (hereafter referred as the RSBS) and various short-term training classes built a solid foundation for the church development. By 1949, there were more than 2000 Christians (19.3 percent of the overall Lisu and Nu population) affiliated with 213 churches. The pastoral staff totalled approximately 700 (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 63). The defeat of the KMT in the ten-year Chinese Civil War and the founding of the new Communist government in 1949 caused a major disruption for all Christian mission work in China. By 1950, all foreign missionaries were expelled from the country.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Leila Cooke recalls that when Moses came to ask them what the Christians should do—if they did not follow the order and plant opium, they would be put in prison—they (the Cookes) told Christian Lisu to "stand together and refuse to plant" (Leila Cooke 1948: 59).

<sup>71</sup> Allyn Cooke left China earlier in 1947. In January of 1951, John Kuhn, and Hudson Taylor, the founder of CIM, were under an order to leave the country (Lushui Xianzhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 1995: Dashiji [Chronicle of Events]). The Church of Christ mission fled to north Myanmar. Russell Morse was imprisoned in solitary confinement for 15 months (Morse family n.d.).

From the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 through the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)

*Communist religious policy from 1949 to 1957*

On the whole, there were normal religious activities between 1949 and 1957 in Nujiang (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 204). You Fuduo recalls the status of missionary work in the initial stage after the liberation in 1949:

We could still continue our Christian practices during that period of time; however, we were not allowed to missionize around. Instead, we only evangelized among our acquaintances. However, the benefits of believing in Christianity were self-evident to non-Christians—we (Christians) were usually energetic and had sufficient food and clothing; by contrast, a few irresponsible non-Christians did not take care of their own families. (Interview with You Fuduo on June 12, 2013)

In some respects, Christians enjoyed even more religious freedom during that time period. For example, in the early 1950s the construction of a new church did not require approval from the government—in contrast to the current situation of limitation, in which all religious activities should be conducted in the registered venues approved by the state areas—and the state did not interfere with the existing religious practices of the local people. There was no religious bureau in the early years of the PRC. Several Bai officials from Jianchuan County (Jianchuan Xian) were responsible for the local religious affairs (interview with You Fuduo on June 20, 2014).

Overall, the Communist policy toward the Protestant Christian church has been based on the “Three-Self” principles (self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation) that were established in the Three-Self Reform Movement in 1950 (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 204; CccTspm.org. n.d.). The CIM missionaries actually had promoted similar principles in the Lisu church, aiming to achieve the realization of church indigenization. However,

in contrast to the goals of missionaries, the Communist government advocated Three-Self principles to separate the Chinese Christian churches from their Western relations.<sup>72</sup>

Between 1950 and 1957, there was a steady increase in the number of Christians due to the relatively liberal religious policy. Within Bijiang County alone, the number of Christians increased to 10,169 from 5,500 in 1950, making up 32.6 percent of the overall county population of the time. The number of pastoral staff members also increased: there were 100 people serving in 37 churches in 1950, whereas by 1957, the number added up to 283 people serving in 74 churches (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 204).

*Interruption in the political movement from 1958 to 1976*

Influenced by the left-leaning ideology (left-wing extremism) after the Third Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee (Bajie Sanzhong Quanhui) of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the government launched a few nationwide campaigns such as the Great Leap Forward (1958), the People's Communes (1958-1976), and the Cultural Revolution, which not only caused great damage to economic construction but also changed the religious atmosphere. The Nujiang churches were quickly taken down starting in 1958, with a majority of the pastoral staff members being put into prison (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 206).<sup>73</sup>

I interviewed You Fuduo twice. Each time he took the initiative to recount his own experiences during the time of religious persecution; as he recalls:

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<sup>72</sup> A few old pastoral staff members I interviewed recall how they were summoned to attend the assembly in Kunming and study Three-self principles together, and how they were indoctrinated with the idea that the Chinese Christian churches should make great efforts to get rid of foreign control and to realize independent self-management.

<sup>73</sup> According to Feng Rongxin, the Nujiang church was influenced by the political movement much earlier than those in central China, where religious activities were not completely forbidden until the Cultural Revolution (personal communication on June 19, 2013).

I was locked behind bars in 1958. The conditions were terrible in the prison—there were many people locked together. I was beaten because I prayed before meals, a behavior considered to be related to the thinking of imperialism. I explained that I just had studied the Bible with missionaries. They did not believe and continued to beat me. I was released in 1959, but I was criticized between 1970 and 1972 again. (Interview with You Fuduo on June 12, 2013)

I was called a traitor, spy, anti-revolutionist, landlord, and imperialism's henchman. Most of my relatives ran away in 1958. There were more than twenty headmen and pastoral staff members of our village [Liwudi] who were put into the prison. (Interview with You on June 20, 2014)<sup>74</sup>

Most senior Christian Lisu I interviewed said that there were no written documents explicitly forbidding their religious practices. However, in reality most chapels were taken over and became the warehouses for the production brigade (shengchan dadui) or the village granary.<sup>75</sup> The village cadres also would force all Christians to go to repair roads on Sundays because they knew that doing work (road construction) on Sundays was a violation of the church rules.<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, since drinking and smoking were salient marks of Christianity, forcing Christians to drink or smoke was one of the best ways to integrate them into the secular life. Once a Christian was discovered reading the Bible or praying at home, he or she would have wine poured into their mouth. "I continued to believe in Christianity in my mind, but I drank water in front of them pretending I was drinking wine," says the current elder of Liwudi Village (personal communication). Shi Fuxiang records the secret

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<sup>74</sup> Most information provided by Fuduo in the remaining parts of this dissertation was acquired in either of these two interviews unless otherwise specified.

<sup>75</sup> There was a parallel situation in other Lisu churches outside Nuijiang. For example, according to Hu Wanfa, an old Pastoral staff member of Longling's Shidonghe Church, the production brigade used to live in the village (Shidonghe) church. Christians were not allowed to worship there (interview with Hu Wanfa on October 31, 2012).

<sup>76</sup> Cai De'en, an elder at the age of 87 from Qipanshi church in Tengchong, also recalled that how they were forced to work day and night thanks to the impractical economic model implemented in the Great Leap Forward (interview with Cai De'en on November 5, 2012).

worship activities of several thousand Christians affiliated with a single church in Bijiang County between 1958 and 1960 (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 207).

History from the late 1970s until today

*The initial revival*

The situation for religious practices has significantly improved since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee (Shiyijie Sanzhong Quanhui). Most of my informants could not articulate how exactly the initial Christian revival started; however, most of them admitted that the revival is dated back to 1978. When I interviewed the ninety-two-year-old Hu Wanfa, he took the initiative to talk about the beginning of the religious recovery:

I was asked to attend a conference in Kunming where I was notified that we could believe in Christianity again. Upon my return from the meeting, I summoned all the old people in the church and told them the good news. (Interview with Hu Wanfa on October 31, 2012)

The citizens' freedom of religious belief in accordance with law was reaffirmed in article 36 of the 1982 *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* (Guowuyuan 1982) and expressly stated in another major document for post-Cultural Revolution religious policies, "On the basic principles and policies of religious issues during the socialist period" (Guanyu woguo shehui zhuyi shiqi zongjiao wenti de jiben guandian he zhengce, hereafter referred to as the "Principles"), which also includes rules specifically directed toward the minority religious practices (Zhongyang Shujichu 1982). In Nujiang, article 9 of *Autonomous Regulations of Nujiang Lisu Nationality Autonomous Prefecture*, first

enacted in 1989, guarantees the religious freedom of Nujiang's various nationalities (Yunnansheng Renmin Daibiao Dahui Changwu Weiyuanhui 2005).<sup>77</sup>

According to the statistics provided by the Nujiang Prefecture Religious Bureau, there were approximately 21,441 Christians in 1980, and the number increased to 74,569 in 1989 and over 85,000 in 1996 (Li Fushan 1990b: 165; Qin Heping 2010: 277). Religious venues gradually reopened—there were 505 gathering points reopened between 1980 and 1989 (Li Fushan 1990b: 165). The first prefecture-wide Christian pastoral staff training class was held in August 1986 (see Figure 3.2).

By 2013, there were 81,714 Christians spread across Nujiang's 166 administrative villages within 29 townships (towns), making up 16.83 percent of the entire prefecture's population and one eighth of the overall Christian population in Yunnan. There were 723 chapels and 2,529 pastoral staff members (Bao Yueping 2013: 13).<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> The full text of Article 9 regarding the religious regulation reads as follows: "Any state organs, social organizations and individuals may not compel citizens to believe or not believe in religion, or discriminate against citizens who believe or do not believe in religion. Organs of self-government of autonomous prefectures protect normal religious activities and supervise religious affairs in accordance with law."

<sup>78</sup> Feng Rongxin's work report shows that by 2012 the pastoral staff in Nujiang totaled 2181, including 116 ordained and 120 non-ordained evangelists, 919 deacons, and 891 worship leaders (Feng Rongxin 2012a).



Figure 3.2. The graduation group photo of the first prefecture-wide pastoral staff training class held in August 1986. Reproduced from the original photo owned by You Fuduo, with his permission.

#### *Government's religious policy in the new era*

There are several points articulated in the 1982 “Principle” that have continued to have great influences on the Nujiang church, especially the regulations on the official religious publicity and the issue of minor/Communist Christians.

First of all, according to the Point 4, the state power should not be used to promote or prohibit a certain religion. The director of the office of the Lushui County Tourism Bureau, Zhao Yunsheng, explains the limitations on publicizing the Christian-based Lisu farmer chorus: they must avoid making the tourism promotion seem like religious publicity (for more details, see Chapter 5.2). Hu Xuecai, former director general of the Nujiang Administration of Religious Affairs (Nujiang Zongjiao Shiwuju), told an anecdote about his attempt to introduce Christianity in the official media thus:

As you might have noticed, there are few programs introducing Christianity on TV; however, when I was still the general director, I translated a few Bible stories into Lisu and had them published in *Nujiang Newspaper*. The vice editor is from Jiakedi Township, and most of his family members are Christians. (Interview with Hu Xuecai on June 16, 2014)<sup>79</sup>

Point 4 also claims that “the state never allows forcing anyone especially those adolescents under eighteen years old to convert to a religion.” However, the actual application of this rule has not been effective. By the end of 1986 there were about 21,284 teenagers attending Christian activities, making up 36.5 percent of the entire Christian population (Zhang Xinghong and Zhang Huixing 1989: 66). Additionally, although considered illegal, a few Sunday schools and youth summer camps are still being held in the church, indicating the flexibility of policy implementation in the area.

Point 9 explicitly states that CCP members are not allowed to participate in any religious activities; as it notes,

Different from an ordinary citizen, a CCP member is one of the members of the political party of Marxism, who should be an atheist rather than a theist. Our Party has repeatedly made it clear that a CCP member should not believe in any religion or attend any religious activities.

By the end of 1987 there were 154 Christian Party members and 601 Christian League members (Zhang Xinghong and Zhang Huixing 1989: 66). However, nowadays a majority of the Party members try to keep a distance from Christians in order to maintain their political career, except for a few retired cadres returning to church for worship in Fugong (personal communication). Hu Xuecai criticized his successors for their ignorance of the Christian church itself because they were concerned about the party committee’s ambiguous attitudes towards Christian practices. Therefore, they did not frequently visit the church except for delivering policies or solving problems.

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<sup>79</sup> All the following information provided by Hu Xuecai was collected in this interview unless otherwise specified.

The last point I would like to emphasize here is Point 6. On the one hand, it requires that any religious organizations or believers of a religion should not preach, evangelize, or publicize theism outside the designated venues; on the other hand, it provides that only Buddhist and Taoist temples, mosques, and churches (siguan jiaotang) can sell and distribute a balanced amount of religious books and journals and other cultural products within the religious sites, upon the approval of the relevant government department.

Next, I will focus on religious policies pertaining to religious publishing and foreign cultural infiltration, to which I will return to in the latter parts of this dissertation, as they have had a great influence on the musical practices of the Nujiang Lisu Christians.

State Council Order No. 426, “Regulations of Religious Affairs” (effective since March 1, 2005) set two main principles that provide guidance for publishing and distributing religious publications as follows (Guowuyuan 2004):

1. Religious products, works of art, and publications can be distributed within the sites for religious activities; (Paragraph 1 of Article 21)
2. Only registered sites for religious activities are allowed to edit and print religious publications as internal materials in accordance with relevant state regulations. (Paragraph 2 of Article 21)

These rules echo the Article 18 of State Council Order No. 315, “Regulations of Printing Industry Administration,” which expressly states that “The printing enterprise that has accepted a commission of printing religious publications as internal materials must verify the approval document from the department of religious affairs management of the provincial, prefecture, or municipal people’s government, as well as the certificate of printing approval from the publishing sector of the provincial, prefecture, or municipal people’s government” (Guowuyuan 2001).

The above principles have limited the publication of minority-language hymnbooks and audio-visual products. The discouragement of publicizing minority Christian culture outside of academic research has been in stark contrast to the promotion of their traditional performing arts. Hu Xuecai explained to me the difficulties of publishing Lisu hymnbook in Nujiang as follows:

In the 1990s, the Nujiang Lisu church once attempted to compile a new version of the Lisu hymnbook in addition to the old one edited by missionaries. Four church leaders gathered at the home of Zhu Faqing, the prestigious Lisu intellectual, for three months, and completed the first draft. However, eventually they did not get an approval from the prefecture united front work department (tongyi zhanxian gongzuobu) to publish the new hymnal. So I suggested that they print it out and circulate within the church.

Since the 1980s, the government has been making continuous attempts to resist foreign cultural infiltration in the frontier areas, particularly that of foreign religious forces. The major concern has been the border security, which are well epitomized in the following two official documents all enacted in 2011.

At the national level, the Office of the State Council distributed a notice on the printing and distribution of the plans to enrich the border areas as well as the people living on the frontier, in which Section 3 “Promoting national unity and border stability” claims that the construction of model villages demonstrating the unity of frontier minority nationalities aims to resist unhealthy cultural invasion and religious infiltration from both at home and abroad (Guowuyuan Bangongting 2011).

A similar concern was highlighted in the report on the religious work in Yunnan written by the Yunnan Nationalities Committee of the People’s Congress. The second section of the report, “Main problems that religious work is facing today,” emphasizes the prominent foreign religious infiltration and influences; as it states:

There are sixteen transnational ethnic groups living in our province [Yunnan] due to the long borderline . . . Along with the development of the socialist market economy and the opening up to the outside world, there have been frequent contacts and cultural exchanges in recent years. Various threats, especially the issues of minority nationalities, poverty, and religion, are intertwined. Therefore, there has been more and more instable hidden trouble. The border areas often become the key target of the foreign forces for their religious infiltration activities. (Yunnansheng Renmin Daibiao Dahui Minzu Gongzuo Weiyuanhui 2011)

In the publishing field, Dehong Publishing House (Dehong Chubanshe), a main platform for publishing books and audiovisual products in five ethnic languages including Lisu literature, is a nonprofit government-sponsored publishing unit. Just within the year of 2012, the press planned to publish twenty Lisu-language books in order to compete with the influx of Lisu Bibles from abroad (personal communication with the people working in the press).

### 3.2 Networks of the Lisu Churches throughout Nujiang

A few senior pastoral staff members told me that there had not been much contact between the churches of different counties or denominations in the missionary era. For example, according to You Fuduo, the CIM missionaries did not allow their Christians to interact or marry with those from the Assemblies of God, but they had limited interaction with people of the Church of Christ who not only used their translation of the Lisu Bible and hymnbook but also attended their Bible school.

Between the 1950s and the early 1980s, inter-church communication was also very limited due to the religious interruption caused by political turmoil; however, since the late 1980s, with the more liberal religious policies, the founding of the Nujiang Two Christian Organizations (Nujiang Jidujiao Lianghui), and gradual prosperity of Christian training classes and centers, the inter-church communications in mountainous areas have

greatly changed. Today, Christian musical repertoires are circulated and performed in complex networks in which the individual church is defined by and connected through internal and external relationships.

In this section, I explore such a network of relationships. I also discuss how Lisu Christian music is not only influenced by but also embodies this network. Note that the term “church” in this section refers in particular to the smallest unit of a registered site for the activities of Protestant Christians in Nujiang.<sup>80</sup> The network of relationships is summarized as follows:

1. Relationships within an individual church;
2. Relationships among different churches in relation to the two Christian organizations;
3. Relationships between the church and local government;
4. Relationships between Christian and non-Christian communities in the same village.

#### Relationships within an individual church

Firstly, relationships within an individual church can be reflected in the church’s organization. Each church has a management team of pastoral staff members (*mitmais*) directly elected by all affiliated Christians. It usually includes a nominal village elder, one or two deacons (*mitrritpat*), a worship leader (*wat’hotpat*), a finance secretary (*put’et’rrit*), and an evangelist (*malpat* in Lisu, literally, “teacher”; *chuandaoyuan* in Chinese). The team manages church activities and ensures the normal conduct of them.

The deacon manages specific affairs such as administrative management, baptisms, and punishing violators of the church rules. There is also a female deacon who handles women’s ministry in some churches. The worship leader is responsible for assigning

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<sup>80</sup> Most natural villages have a church of their own, but some small natural villages share a church.

specific tasks to people for each worship service.<sup>81</sup> The finance secretary manages the church income donated by the congregation and from outside sources. The evangelist—either ordained or resident—is mainly responsible for guiding believers’ spiritual life through teaching the Bible and explaining church etiquettes.<sup>82</sup> An ordained evangelist often has a high reputation not only within his own church but also among many other churches for which he is responsible.

Besides the evangelist, a person with musical talent is also popular in the church.<sup>83</sup> The worship leader, song leader (*mutgguat hot’su*) and sometimes the youth group leader (*colail hot’su*), are all able to engage in music ministry: teaching hymn singing before the Sunday worship and organizing rehearsals for important performances.

Music is an important lens to look into relationships within an individual church in terms of generational separation, gender, and ethnicity.

To start with the generational separation, generally speaking the experienced singers of four-part hymns are elderly and middle-aged persons, whereas the younger generation is keen on *mutgguat ssat* singing and *daibbit* dance. The elders have the least interest in any dance forms. In some more conservative churches, as recently as several years ago senior pastoral staff members still disapproved of any dancing in the church (interview with Shi Yongshe on June 11, 2013).<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> The worship leader often writes down the responsible persons’ names and their tasks on the blackboard ahead of time.

<sup>82</sup> An ordained evangelist is expected to work among more than ten churches whereas a resident evangelist is only responsible for guiding the spiritual life of his own church.

<sup>83</sup> Most evangelists, although not exclusively, tend to have less interest in music ministry. Many of them told me that they would rather read the Bible for the whole day instead of singing or writing music (personal communication).

<sup>84</sup> Shi Yongshe (Pastor Tiduo) was once the chairman of the Fugong TCO. A few parishes of conservative churches he mentioned include Pihe Township, Zilijia Township, Jiakedi Township, and Lishadi Township.

As for gender, three categories of Christian vocal genres—*ddoqmuq mutgguat*, *xelgget mutgguat*, and *mutgguat ssat*—are sung by both sexes. The *daibbit* dance is also open to both men and women; however, in the real practice, most dancers are female, except in the morning and between-class exercises at the Bible schools, where students of both sexes take part. Instruments such as the keyboard and guitar are mainly played by men. I only saw two women showing interest in guitar playing during my fieldwork.

Ethnic distinction is not so clear within a single church containing mixed ethnicities, mainly because not only is the language of the Bible Lisu but also various Christian songs are written and sung in Lisu. The shared musical repertoire has been a useful vehicle to blur the boundaries between church members of different ethnicities.

Last, but not the least, seat planning also visually emphasizes the relationships within a single church. During worship service and other gatherings, most pastoral staff members—the elder (*mitlopat*), deacon, worship leader, song leaders, and presider (*rriqhotsu*) of the day—usually sit on the platform facing the congregation. The seating arrangement reflects a certain degree of gender separation: all men are seated on the left side facing the platform and women on the right. However, children do not have to abide by such gender-based seating custom.

The generational divide is also reflected, although not exclusively, in the seating. The older Christians often seat in the front rows. Based on my participation in various worship services, I discovered that the elders always arrived much earlier than the scheduled worship time. Many of them sat at the corner of the churchyard, waiting there until the door was open. The latecomers, by contrast, were most likely to be the young

people, and therefore they had to sit in the back rows to avoid any interruption. I did not observe any obvious ethnic separation in the seating arrangement.

#### Relationships among different churches in relation to the two Christian organizations

On the most basic level, the churches within the same administrative village are grouped together for the convenience of management, and therefore a church tends to have more interaction with its neighboring churches in the same village than with those from outside.

The pastoral staff members of each church and the elder of an administrative village (hereafter referred to as the village elder) play key roles in the inter-church interaction. A village elder nominally manages, but is not directly involved in the affairs of each church. On the one hand, the village elder calls for and presides over the meeting concerning the church affairs of the entire administrative village; on the other hand, a church pastoral team often invites the village elder to attend important activities of their church.

Another way that intra-village churches interact with each other in the same village network is that they usually celebrate all the Christian calendric festivals together and take turns hosting the event. During those communal celebrations, the musical repertoire of congregational part-singing remains unified due to the widespread use of *Sipat dail Ddoqmuq du Mutgguat* (Hymns in Praise of Lord, hereafter referred to as DM), the most commonly used Lisu hymnbook in the transnational Lisu Christian communities. Musical discrepancies occur in the musical profession of faith, a section in which each of the church delegations performs in front of the village-wide Christians. In the 2012 Christmas celebration held in Lawu church, each of the five different church delegations

had one small songbook of their own that was specially prepared for the occasion (for more details, see Chapter 4.3).

Outside the intra-village church network, interactions also occur between inter-village and inter-county churches in non-festival celebrations and short-term training classes (*sozzirddu* in Lisu, literally, “the gathering for study;” *peixunban* in Chinese) or Christian training center (*Tot’et sohin* in Lisu, the equivalent to the Bible school; *peixun zhongxin* in Chinese). For example, many churches from neighboring townships and counties are always invited to attend the ceremony of church dedication, which provides them excellent opportunities to exchange musical repertoires that are either quite similar or totally different from each other. Christians from different churches also periodically study together and learn the same songs and *daibbit* dance, which they are most likely to teach the Christians of their home village after the study.

Most villages in Nujiang are located far away from each other due to the difficulties of transportation, and therefore it was necessary to set up as many of the churches as possible for Christians to attend weekly worship services. Over 700 state-registered churches are subject to the unified top-down management of the two Christian organizations. As social and folk organizations, they have served as the medium between the grassroots (*jiceng*) church and state political life since the 1950s. The Nujiang Two Christian Organizations was founded in 1988 (Li Fushan 1990b: 165).

The two Christian organizations (hereafter referred to as TCO) are the committee of the Three-Self patriotic movement of the Protestant churches (hereafter referred to as TSPM) and the Christian council (hereafter referred to as CC).<sup>85</sup> The Three-Self Reform

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<sup>85</sup> TSPM is the official English abbreviation used in the comprehensive news portal website of the National TCO.

Movement began in 1950 to unite churches of different denominations. The National TSPM was founded in the first national conference of Chinese Christianity in 1954 aiming to guide all Chinese Christians to adhere to the policy of independence. The China CC was established at the third conference of Chinese Christianity in 1980. Held every five years, the people's congress (renmin daibiao dahui) is the authority of the TCO at all levels (CccTspm. Org. n.d.).<sup>86</sup>

Under the national TCO are various provincial agencies such as the Yunnan TCO. Under the provincial TCO are the agencies at the city/prefecture level such as the Nujiang TCO. The rest can be done in the same manner. The lowest level is the township TCO.

The stepwise nature of such a management system reinforces the ability of the TCO to reach the most grassroots churches and coordinate inter-church affairs, and therefore strengthens the connection between churches. The stepwise system was and has continued to be maintained through an advanced training course system, a missionary legacy that resumed in the late 1980s and has rapidly developed over the last two decades. Initially, there was only a prefecture-wide training course open to pastoral-staff members once a year. But nowadays, both pastoral staff and ordinary Christians can not only receive training in their own administrative village but also attend advance classes on the county and prefecture levels. The well-developed training system ensures the standardization of the liturgy, festival customs, and associated musical practices (for more details, see Chapter 3.3).

In terms of musical practices, differences among churches are reflected in their varied attitudes towards the traditional performing arts and contemporary Christian pop

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<sup>86</sup> The core leadership of TSPM includes a chairman, a co-chairman, and a secretary general. The core leadership of CC includes a president, a vice president, and a general secretary.

music. The degree of secularization is another factor to consider. Varied singing skills are also recognized, as many Christian Lisu can quickly name the churches that they believe sing best. The different singing style is a further distinguishing feature in some churches. For example, the Laomudeng Church of Pihe Township is renowned not only for their grand church building but also for refined choral singing. The township pastoral staff team once organized a music workshop on teaching bel canto singing style to the pastoral staff representatives from each of the village churches, hoping that they could promote this singing style within their own churches after study.

#### Social interactions between the church and government

According to Hu Xuecai, nowadays the foremost government sectors responsible for or involved in minority nationalities' religious affairs is the united front work departments at all levels. As one of the functional sectors of the committee of the CCP, such a department plays an important role in monitoring minority people's religious activities.<sup>87</sup> The other two sectors include the administration for religious affairs at all levels representing the government, and the ethnic affairs commission (minzu shiwu weiyuanhui), which is the least involved unit.<sup>88</sup> The TCO serve as a bridge between the government and church. As mentioned previously, they are neither government-run

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<sup>87</sup> The United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee sets up multiple bureaus, in which the second is the bureau of national (ethnic) and religious work and responsible for the investigation and coordination of the major principles and policy issues on nationalities and religious work (Zhongyang Tongzhanbu 2010).

<sup>88</sup> The title of the administration for religious affairs was recently changed into the administration for ethnic and religious affairs. Hu Xuecai, former director of the Nujiang Administration for Religious Affairs, considers the concept of "ethnic religion" to be quite derogatory, as it makes it seem as if only minority peoples have religious faiths. I will continue to use the original appellation partly because I agree with his opinion and partly because the Nujiang Lisu I talked to were still used to using the previous title.

organizations nor government units, but managed by the administration for religious affairs and the society registration administration organ (shetuan dengji guanli jiguan) within the ministry of civil affairs (minzhengbu).

The important government laws and regulations are implemented through the TCO at all levels—fundamental church rules and regulations are posted in the most prominent place inside the church. Additionally, the administration for religious affairs and the united front work department nominate the leadership candidates of the TCO at the county level and above, and they are eventually elected by the church pastoral staff representatives.

The addition of political classes into the Fugong Bible School's curriculum—held each Thursday afternoon in the school's 2013 course arrangement—did not occur until recently. I observed one such political class on June 13, 2013, in which a folk artist came and advocated for the importance of preserving Lisu traditional performing arts. Qin Heping mentions a similar phenomenon in his article about the development of Christianity in present-day Nujiang (Qin 2010: 311).

The local government's involvement in the church does not always rely on the bridge function of the TCO. Oral history shows that from the early 1950s until today, the government has sent officials to propagandize their policies or announce important affairs during worship and festival hours when a large number of Christians are gathered together. I also observed a few occurrences of such official speech—mostly in Chinese—in the middle of a Christian gathering.

In terms of music, the newly created regional and ethnic tradition, Nujiang Lisu farmer chorus, is a perfect example of several types of interactions between the church

and local government (see Chapter 5 for a comprehensive analysis). I find it interesting that the two contrasting domains—the sacred and secular—are negotiated through music in this new tradition. It is also particularly interesting to compare the different intentions that the government and Lisu Christians had for participation in this chorus and the different functions it provided for them. More importantly, the creation of this farmer chorus, far from an isolated event in the local tourist boom, was part of the larger cultural politics of representing minority nationalities in the Chinese context.

Except for the cultural shows of these farmer choruses, other prospective public performances outside the church need to go through the layers of reporting to the superior administrative departments through the TCO. Shi Yongshe told me about the detailed process of receiving approval to perform in Hong Kong in the Christmas season of 2000. According to him, the invitation letter was initially sent to the Yunnan Administration of Religious Affairs and TCO. The notice was then passed on to the Nujiang TCO. After the list of six singers was reported to the provincial TCO, they sent out the final approval notification to the Nujiang Administration of Religious Affairs (interview with Shi Yongshe on June 11, 2013).

#### Relationships between the church and non-Christian community

As mentioned previously, attitudes toward drinking and smoking have been a salient symbol differentiating a Christian from a non-Christian.<sup>89</sup> The second sub-team of

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<sup>89</sup> However, I observed a different situation outside Nujiang. Shidonghe Church, located in Longling County of Baoshan City, includes four affiliated village churches: Shidonghe, An'le, Huanglianhe, and Yibasan. Currently, there are 520 Christians (120 households) in Shidonghe Church (interview with Yu Wenxiao on October 28). Contrary to the strict unwritten rules executed in Nujiang, Christian Lisu there were allowed to drink and smoke, as long as they did not get drunk (personal communication).

the central delegation investigating the situation of Yunnan's nationalities in the 1950s observed the prohibition of drinking and smoking's positive influence on the local society; as they write, "Those alcoholic non-Christians would spend most of their yearly harvest grain on the wine brewery, and therefore they always never had enough food to eat; by contrast, Christians lived a relatively easier life, as they would not waste the insufficient grain on wine drinking" (Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009a: 29).

You Fuduo provides a similar account of the separation between Christians and non-Christians due to their different living customs:

Most non-Christians did not study. The Christians lived a better life. Even during the missionary era, the Christians usually lived a better life than non-Christians. Non-Christians washed neither their faces nor their hair. They conducted evil spirit worship. After 1949, it was not allowed to publicize Christianity, so we just evangelized among acquaintances. However, many non-Christians heard about the benefits of believing in Christianity in contrast to the bad customs of non-Christians: spending most of their money on wine and ignoring their own children and wife.<sup>90</sup>

Another recognized differentiation between Christian and non-Christians is whether or not they work on Sundays. As mentioned in the previous section, one effective way to interfere Christians' practices during the period of religious persecution was to compel them to work on Sundays when they were supposed to attend the worship service.

According to an investigation conducted in the 1950s, Christians and non-Christians in Nujiang did not disturb each other before 1949. But after the 1949 liberation, there was some discrimination against Christians in the rural villages. Non-Christians would even insult Christians and attempt to persuade them to resume drinking and smoking. There

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<sup>90</sup> Even today, several pastors and many evangelists who have been working in the grassroots villages for years believe that excessive drinking is still one of the main causes of poverty in the area (personal communication). I would rather not to jump to any conclusion, as I did not interact with many poor non-Christian families or investigate this issue on my own during my fieldwork.

were mutual accusations concerning the impact of the drinking and smoking habits on the living condition (Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009a: 31).

Certainly, it is probably true that a certain degree of prejudice towards Christians still exists in some places nowadays. For example, Hu Xuecai mentioned that a few local cultural workers were not willing to have more contact with Christians, in order to avoid the gossip and negative influences on their career. But generally speaking, nowadays the status of the Christian Lisu has observably risen. I was told more than once that in some villages the church would lend their kitchenware to the non-Christians who needed a lot of tableware to prepare meals for a village-wide wedding or funeral, which brought the church considerable praise.

It is not uncommon to find a mixed family comprising both Christian and non-Christian members. Generally speaking, there is no internal animosity or separation, as long as the family members respect each other's religious customs. It is also not an issue for relatives and friends, regardless of their religious beliefs, to gather together for celebrating an important occasion. Alkix, my first Lisu informant, took me to his family's new year gathering in Shangpa Town on December 31, 2013. Before the dinner, Christian family members started to pray and sing hymns in the living room while a few non-Christian relatives were still playing Mahjong in the courtyard.

The coexistence of Christian and non-Christian music performances within the same village will be explored at length in Chapter 5.3.

### 3.3 Features of the Nujiang Lisu church

The Nujiang Lisu church possesses several noticeable characteristics. In addition to music, one of the most important parts of the Lisu Christian culture, which I will discuss

at length in Chapter 4, there are also several other renowned features such as their long-term Three-Self tradition and their leading role in Christian theological education among minority churches in northwestern Yunnan. The religious tradition inherited from missionaries also substantially affected many aspects of the Lisu Christians' daily life. I will provide some of examples of this at the end of this section. In addition, Lisu Christians have been strongly identified with their ability in reading and writing Old Lisu. Two of the most important items in the Lisu Christian literature written in Old Lisu—the Lisu Bible and Lisu hymnals—will be discussed in Chapter 3.4.

The history and current situation of the “Three-Self” principles

The influence of missionaries on the church's early development is undeniable; however, the local church soon achieved self-governance, while missionaries played a more significant role as “theological teachers” (Shen Xiaohu 2014:94). Individual missionaries, such as the Cookes, spent more and more of their time translating and editing the Bible scripture and hymnals. The indigenous deacons and evangelists selected by the Christian Lisu were responsible for the sermons in the worship services and for daily management of the churches; as Leila Cooke writes:

There were 40 village leaders—one would hardly dare call them pastors, for they had no training, but they were responsible to hold five meetings a week in the village where each of them lived. There were 60 deacons who managed the business of the church. (Leila Cooke 1948: 31-32)

Since I have already explored the current situation of self-governance in the previous section on networks in the Nujiang Lisu church, I will say no more about the issue here. Instead, I focus on the other two aspects of the Three-Self principles: self-support and self-propagation.

*Self-Support: Church funds raised from Christians*

James O. Fraser insisted from the very beginning that the Christian Lisu should become financially independent, because if the church was built upon external support, it would be under foreign control and therefore become rather weak (Crossman 1982: 130).<sup>91</sup> Leila Cooke confirmed such an attitude in her own writing; as she puts it, “Mr. Fraser charged us very carefully not to spoil the Lisu with gifts or money, and that we should not pay even for the services of a language teacher, as the work was to be entirely self-supporting” (Leila Cooke 1948: 26).

In reality, Fraser executed what he had advocated. The Christian Lisu in China built the first Lisu chapel in Sudian Township of Yingjiang County in March 1918 at their own expense, although it was only a simple building with a thatched roof and bamboo wall surface (Shen Xiaohu 2014: 38-39). The mission station at Muchengpo was opened in 1922, and by 1926 there were 44 chapels around the region, all built with no financial help from missionaries (Leila Cooke 1948: 31).

There were two main forms of monetary donation in the missionary age: one was the anonymous collective donation in the process of a religious festival or a weekly worship gathering (see Figure 3.3), where individual Christians would donate varying amount of cash money depending on their own economic conditions. The other form was real-name individual donation on certain occasions (Hu Xuecai 1990: 50; Yang Yue’na

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<sup>91</sup> At the same time, the idea of “self-support” should have certain relations to the problem of the CIM’s budget shortage, in contrast to the situation for the Assemblies of God, which had abundant funds so that it could give away something to their believers from time to time (Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009: 28). Hudson Taylor, founder of the CIM, emphasized the significance of the religious devotion and sacrificial spirit for each of the missionaries—they did not have a fixed salary (Dong Renda 2004: 169-70), which was probably one of the reasons the CIM missionaries did not support the local church since their limited salary was just enough for their own use.

and Dou Guisheng 2008: 98-99). Initially, most donations were handed over to the missionaries for better management. In the 1930s, the church started to select a Christian representative—the equivalent to a financial secretary in today’s Lisu church—to self-manage church funds (Shen Xiaohu 2014: 96).



Figure 3.3. Christians making anonymous donations into a packaging box during the dedication ceremony of Nongchang Church, May 24, 2015.

These two forms of donation continued in the 1950s when religious practices were still allowed. A research project conducted between 1956 and 1957 showed that “one or two family members of each household in the village [Yideng Village of Sede Township, Bijiang County] would go to attend the prefecture- or county-wide Christmas celebration and donate money to the host church that organizes the event. based on his or her own economic condition” (Yunnansheng Bianji Weiyuanhui 2009: 73, 126). The research team also observed the situation of intra-church donation in another village of Fugong County; as they write, “Each Christian has to donate one liter of grain to the church, yet several individuals are able to donate chickens” (Yunnansheng Bianji Weiyuanhui 2009: 126).

The similar tradition of donation continues today. During my fieldwork, I anonymously donated many times whenever I was attending dedication ceremonies, celebrations of three religious festivals, or special Sunday worship services. In addition to the Christians' self-support to the church, nowadays there are more sources of financial support such as donations—especially goods and materials that were in short supply—from some Han Chinese churches and even loans from the local rural credit cooperative (nongcun xinyongshe).

For example, according to Feng Zhanhai, the church elder of Lumadeng Township, there are three main financial sources for church construction: the church's own savings, donations raised from Christian villagers, and credit cooperative loans, usually borrowed in the pastoral staff's personal names (personal communication with Feng via WeChat on April 10, 2015). The local government provides a small amount of subsidy to the personnel of TCO at all levels but has given very little financial support to the grassroots church.

The following remarks from an active CIM missionary working among the Lisu provides information on how the raised donations from different sources were used:

With the exception of a trifling sum, no foreign money has ever been used in the construction of the forty-two chapels throughout the Lisu districts, while the food for the various outstation schools is given by the people together with all sums used for current expenses. But it was felt that entire self-support should be aimed at, and this the church proposes to accomplish within the next two years if possible. To do this it would be necessary to raise only about \$190 per year . . . for the support of a staff of six regular evangelists, two assistant evangelists, and six primary school teachers. (Gowman 1919: 168)

The current use of church funds has largely remained unchanged from the practices described by Gowman, including the support of pastoral staff members, church management, chapel construction, and theological education; these are described below.

One important aspect of self-support, which has continued since the missionary age, has been to provide an allowance for the pastoral staff and evangelists; as Leila Cooke writes in her report to the CIM headquarter, “When the class was over, we held a deacon meeting in which we decided to sponsor a regular indigenous evangelist and provide partial support for those assistant evangelists who would volunteer to work for six months or more” (Leila Cooke 1934: 131).

In the present-day Lisu church, there are no full-time pastoral staff members other than ordained evangelists, and to some degree even they still have to work to earn a living from the soil. Many of them I encountered also actively engage in planting cash crops such as caoguo (a ginger-like plant), walnuts, and sugarcane (exclusively in Lushui County) in order to support their families and evangelical work.

Nowadays, church construction or renovation is probably the most costly activity in the Nujiang Lisu church. For example, the reconstruction of Latudi church in Shangpa Town started in January 2015 and is scheduled for completion in October. The estimated costs are 450,000 yuan (\$70,533) and over 300,000 yuan (\$47,022) has been raised so far from about 600 Christians (personal communication with *Alkix*, resident evangelist in Latudi church via WeChat on April 10, 2015).

In contrast to the church’s great enthusiasm for raising money from Christian villagers to build a new church, most of the churches I visited made only limited funds available for the music ministry, primarily used to purchase basic multimedia equipment to satisfy the demands of *mutgguat ssat*-related musical activities. Instead, the church tends to invest most of its tight budget on theological education. Therefore, individual Christians and groups who have interest in music learning and composition will need to

engage in music practices at their own expense, an issue that will be further discussed later in Chapter 6.3. Now I will turn to another important part of the budget use—for the organization of the Bible schools and various peixunban.

### *Self-Propagation through the church educational system*

The tradition of both long-term and short-term Christian training classes in the Nujiang church originated in the missionary age. Missionaries working among the Lisu left us plenty of descriptions about the early Bible study ministry.

Bible study began in the Lisu church of western Yunnan in the 1920s in Muchengpo; as Allyn Cooke recalls:

In the second or third year at Muchengpo [1923 or 1924], the Bible schools were held, in which we found Christian Lisu so keen to learn more of the word, keen on singing. In this first Bible School, they started the four part singing. We went to the villages for Bible Schools, after that had Bible Schools for old people and for women. Schools held for two weeks whenever possible. Have carried on these Bible Schools ever since, one thing was not an organized thing in Fraser's time.<sup>92</sup> (Allyn Cooke 1939)

Leila Cooke records the terrible condition of the classroom; as she writes, “Unlike the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, or the Moody Bible Institute, the roof is made of grass and the walls of woven bamboo. There are only sawhorse benches. Each young man and woman came carrying sufficient rice or money to buy food during the classes” (Leila Cooke 1926: 153).

In the missionary era, there were two main models of Christian training. One was the short-term training class, also called the “Bible School,” in which the ordinary Christians could learn basic theological knowledge; a typical school day was a

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<sup>92</sup> According to Leila Cooke's recollection, there were Christians from eighteen different villages attending two Bible schools in 1925, and Mr. Gowman held twelve short-term Bible schools with a total attendance of 562 in 1926 (Leila Cooke 1926: 153; 1948: 32).

combination of “the first session in prayer, Bible study classes, a writing class, and a singing class” (Leila Cooke 1948: 16). The other type, better known as the Rainy Season Bible School (hereafter referred as the RSBS), was mainly held for training pastoral staff (Gao Zhiying 2010: 75; Shen Xiaohu 2011: 251).

Held once a year for three months, the RSBS was first initiated by John Kuhn in 1934 in Maliping Church and was relocated in Chengga in 1947 until 1950 (Yang Yue’na and Dou Guisheng 2008: 85).<sup>93</sup> John Kuhn recalls that the RSBS of 1939 already recruited twenty-eight students of all levels from different regions, including eleven evangelists and seventeen ordinary Christians (John Kuhn 1939).<sup>94</sup> By 1950, there were fifty graduated students who had become evangelists (Zhengxie Nujiangzhou Wenshi Ziliao Weiyuanhui 1994: 1076). Those indigenous evangelists played a significant role in the church’s self-propagation in the following years.

The theological education continued between 1950 and 1957 after the missionaries were all expelled (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 205). For example, short-term classes for training evangelists from both Fugong and Bijiang counties were held each winter from 1954 to 1957 (ibid.: 205). Several ways of evangelization inherited from the missionary legacy in the 1950s included young people studying together in the evening, religious education for children, and short-term Christian training classes (Song Enchang 1985: 291).

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<sup>93</sup> The RSBS was given the name because each year the period from June to August is Nujiang’s rainy season, when villagers were able to be free from farm work and come to study within a concentrated period of time. Covell believes that the RSBS was held twice a year in February and August, but I have not yet found similar information in other sources (Covell 1995: 146).

<sup>94</sup> Among seventeen ordinary Christians (laymen, as called by John Kuhn), there were five people from Maliping, four from Kumu, six from Liwudi, and two from Shangpa (John Kuhn 1939). Meanwhile, in Liwudi Church, which the Cookes were responsible for, a similar three-month RSBS was started in 1941 with twenty-seven students (John Kuhn 1941).

Although the church educational system was interrupted during the successive political movements between 1958 and 1976, it gradually recovered in the late 1980s. Following the first prefecture-wide short-term classes for the training of pastoral staff members in 1988, similar two- or three-week classes were held annually in churches with good conditions; however, these still could not meet the requirements of the Christian Lisu at the time (Feng Rongxin 2012a).

In 1995, the Nujiang Prefecture Christian Training Center was established in Zhu'en Church of Liuku Town and it offered Lisu-language Bible study classes.<sup>95</sup> The center ceased to operate in 2003 and resumed in 2008, when it started to try out a Chinese-language Bible class for a course of two years. By 2012, among 353 students graduating from the center, there were 258 of them currently serving in the church (Feng Rongxin 2012a).<sup>96</sup> According to Pastor Feng Rongxin, the government has rarely provided the center with training funds, and therefore most expenses have to be self-raised.

Similar to the organizational system in the missionary age, there also have been two major models of Christian training since the religious revival in the 1980s. One has been the long-term recurring training classes in the four major Christian training centers, similar to the previous RSBS. In addition to the prefecture Christian training center, there are currently three county-level Christian training centers founded in Lushui (Denglongba Village, 2002), Fugong (Mu'nima Village, 2004), and Gongshan (Cikai Town, 2000).

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<sup>95</sup> Initially, a course of study comprised of three years, in which there were only three months of study time per year. Later the mode was changed to one year with eight months of study time.

<sup>96</sup> There were 3 vice chairmen, 2 vice presidents, and 2 general secretaries of the county TCO, along with 38 ordained evangelists, and 82 un-ordained evangelists, 12 township elders, 18 village elders, 83 deacons, and 17 worship organizers.

These four centers are not only open to the local Christians, but also attract students from the neighboring areas (Feng Rongxin 2012b).

The other model of various provisional training classes organized by grassroots churches was similar to the short-term training in the missionary age but better known as *peixunban* today.<sup>97</sup> Organized for specific groups or occasions, they are mostly available for the local Christians. I will mention several characteristic *peixunban* in the following chapters. The Nujiang church has also sponsored qualified students to study in the major seminaries outside Nujiang, primarily in Yunnan Christian Seminary; very few of them also studied at the seminaries in Sichuan Seminary, Zhongnan Seminary and Nanjing Union Seminary. Since this is not the mainstream in the Nujiang church, I will not go into detail here.

The core function of the church educational system, using the words of Leila Cooke, is “a means of great spiritual growth” (Leila Cooke 1926: 153). The route of self-propagation—Christians first receive training in the Bible school/Christian training center and various *peixunban*, and then spread what they have learned far and wide after graduation—has largely remained the same from the missionary era until today. Furthermore, there are two other aspects of the Nujiang church education that have remained constant over the years regardless of the changing social circumstances.

First, there appears to be a consistency in the core curriculum—the combination of Bible study, Old Lisu learning, hymn singing, and training in preaching. Needless to say, the Bible study was and will always be the core part of the church education. As for the language learning, the first book written in Old Lisu, *Ma-I-Mi Tot’et*, was not only a

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<sup>97</sup> *Peixunban* is a Chinese term. Its equivalent Lisu term is *sozzirddu* (the gathering for study). Since the Chinese term *peixunban* has been even more popular in the church. I will adopt it in the remaining parts of this dissertation.

catechism about basic theological knowledge of Christianity, but also served as a primer. It is not used in the Nujiang church anymore; however, teachers of different training centers edited the primer for their own use. There are special classes designed to teach students the techniques of preaching. Students from the Christian training center were often sent to the village churches to give sermons in the Sunday worship services on a weekly basis.

Second, the schoolteachers have to devote a tremendous amount of time and effort into their teaching work but without much reward. There is not much pay for ordained evangelists either. As previously mentioned, they received only limited donations from Christians that can support their basic life, similar to the situation in the missionary era (personal communication; Leila Cooke 1948: 31-32; Feng Rongxin 2012a).

Three main changes are noticeable. First of all, nowadays the church needs to apply to the government for the approval of organizing any kind of Christian training classes. In the application, the church has to report the content, place, and time of the training, as well as the number of prospective students (Qin Heping 2010: 309; Feng Rongxin 2012b).

Second, in recent years, there are more and more peixunban especially designed for female Christians at both prefecture and county levels due to a growing number of female Christians.<sup>98</sup> The 2012 work report of the prefecture TCO announced nineteen peixunban of this kind between 2007 and 2013, and these peixunban aim to teach women how to

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<sup>98</sup> Before 1950, fewer female Christians were able to receive theological education. According to Cheisifu, a senior Christian Lisu who once studied under missionaries, there were thirty-seven students in the first RSBS in 1934, and the class included no female students at all (interview with Cheisifu on June 19, 2013). The remaining information provided by him was collected in the same interview.

manage a household, raise children, and maintain a harmonious family in accordance with the Bible (Feng Rongxin 2012b).

Lastly, one change that cannot be neglected is that besides their role as a place of theological study, four Christian training centers have also provided primary social and religious education for Lisu Christians and their children. I met a few mischievous teenagers who were sent to the training center to be disciplined in school by their parents (personal communication). Additionally, they have been, over the last two decades, one of the principal contexts for the transmission of traditional hymn singing and Christian pop music, which will be explored in depth in Chapter 4.

#### Distinguishing between Christians and non-Christians

To the outsiders there have been two major forms of symbolic behaviors for a Christian Lisu. The first of these is that Christians carry what the missionaries called “book-bags,” inside which there are always two items (the Lisu Bible and DM), and go to church for worship services five times a week. The second is restraining oneself from drinking and smoking, which contrasts with the behavior of many non-Christians. An anecdote in the 1950s vividly documents a conflict between Christians and non-Christians associated with their different lifestyles thus:

When Christians and non-Christian Lisu were having the representative meeting together in Lijiang, the two parties could not get along with each other mostly because of their different lifestyles. Christians loved singing hymns in the evening that non-Christians found troublesome, whereas non-Christian delegations often became noisy after drinking, giving Christians no peace. In the end, Christians and non-Christians had to stay separately. (Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009: 31)

Although not mentioned in the missionaries’ own accounts, a few Chinese social workers believe that in addition to instilling the Christian Lisu with the ideas of the Ten

Commandants (*Turwat Ci Jjeit*) in the Bible, the CIM missionaries also made another set of “ten rules” for them. While some of these also are in the original Ten Commandments, the five newly created rules include no flirting with women; no drinking or smoking; no singing of traditional music; being close to and assisting evangelists; and loving one’s neighbors as oneself and helping other Christians (Li Fushan 1990: 76; Bao Shanyi 2008: 100; Fu A-Bo and Hu Zhengsheng 2008: 108; Pu Sifu, He Xiangqian, and Mi Zhenghua 2008: 176).<sup>99</sup> Indeed, whether or not missionaries issued these unwritten rules, based on my personal observation the strict enforcement of them has been a very significant part of the ethos of the Christian communities in present-day Nujiang.

Next, I will look into several other aspects of the missionary legacy in the current Lisu church.

According to several old pastoral staff members, they learned several hygiene habits from missionaries such as sweeping the floor and washing faces, and these were taught in the form of singing and dancing in the courtyard in the Bible schools (and peixunban). In addition, I was surprised to discover their preference—regardless of their living conditions—for using serving chopsticks and spoons in a communal meal, even if there was no serving table at all and everyone had to squat on the floor for eating. Many informants told that they were very proud of this sanitary eating habit, which was considered to be an imitation of a foreign lifestyle.

In terms of marriage, a research project conducted in July 1954 in Fugong details the marriage norms of the Christian Lisu at the time; as the investigator writes, “Christians can only marry a Christian. Moreover, the marriage has to be approved by the

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<sup>99</sup> By some accounts, there was one more rule: no telling of the legends of ancestors and history (Li Fushan 1990: 76; Fu A-Bo and Hu Zhengsheng 2008: 108).

evangelist or deacon of the church. The violator would be severely punished—even worse, one might be forbidden to marry forever or expelled from the church” (Yunnansheng Bianji Weiyuanhui 2009: 133). Nowadays, based on my informal talks with many Christians, free marriage—meaning the couple makes acquaintance on their own rather than through the church introduction—is still not allowed; however, the punishment for violators is not as severe as it used to be—the couple just cannot get married or receive blessings from the pastor. A mixed marriage between a Christian and non-Christian is also not uncommon today, as there might one half of the couple recently becoming a Christian.

Social investigations conducted in three Lisu villages in the late 1950s show that one of the most important reasons why a few Christian Lisu quit the church was that they found that believing in Christinity, or precisely, praying to God, does not guarantee a cure for disease—many persons died during a large epidemic in 1958—and they also saw the occasional effectiveness of traditional sacrifices to spirits to cure a disease (Yunnansheng Bianji Weiyuanhui 2009: 73, 97, and 110). Nowadays, a few Christian Lisu are still swinging between spirit worship and prayer to God when they get sick. When the prayers to God fail to cure disease, they will most likely turn to traditional spirit worship for help (personal communication).

My own fieldwork revealed the significance of another missionary legacy: handshaking, for individual Christians; as Leila Cooke recalls, “a black record means that one can neither take Communion nor shake hands with his fellows” (Leila Cooke 1948:

31).<sup>100</sup> However, most individuals I spoke to were not able to articulate the origin of their handshaking custom, but just took it for granted.

Nowadays, handshaking has become a significant sign of a Christian on most occasions. Handshaking with anyone else who is present is an indispensable part of a gathering, showing solid fellowship both between Christian individuals and among communities. Besides using simple everyday Lisu to communicate with the person I had just met, another important etiquette I learned to get close to the Christian Lisu was to take the initiative to shake hands with them while saying “hual hual’ar” (How are you?).<sup>101</sup>

Lastly, although Western/missionary-derived traditions have had the greatest impact on the current religious practices in the Nujiang Lisu church, one of the most important Lisu traditions, their family-/village-oriented collective activity, was retained in Christian weddings and funerals from the very beginning; as Leila Cooke observes, “[In a funeral] almost the whole village came to help and not a single Lisu wanted wages for their work. In accord with Lisu custom we served a feast for those who helped” (Allyn Cooke 1935).

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<sup>100</sup> Shen Xiaohu believes that the habit was not taught by missionaries; instead, Christians learned by themselves after they saw missionaries shaking hands when greeting each other (Shen Xiaohu 2011: 252).

<sup>101</sup> I still remember the “magnificent” handshaking scene at the end of the Christmas gathering in the church of Lazao Village on the December 27, 2013. After the last service was held, all pastoral staff quickly walked out of the church and stood by the church door, ready to shake hands with several hundred Christians who would make a quiet exit. Each Christian going out would stand next to the previous person, forming a line and shaking hands with the next person. The line was getting longer and longer until the last person exited. I did not get the chance to take any photo of this impressive scene because I participated in the entire rite. In other words, I shook hands with everyone else present except myself.

### 3.4 Lisu Christian Literature

As previously mentioned, the Lisu Bible and standard Lisu hymnbook have been the two most important items in what a Christian Lisu would carry in his or her bookbag to attend church activities. In this section, I first give a brief overview of the history of the Lisu Bible translation from the missionary age until today.<sup>102</sup> I then focus on the compilation and use of various Lisu hymnals over the years.

One significant source of information on the characteristics of Lisu hymn repertoire is in the printed hymnals produced by missionaries before 1949 and later by the Christian Lisu themselves. In this section, I only deal with the historical aspects of hymnal compilation within the Nujiang Lisu church, with brief reference to major Lisu hymnals from other places. In Chapter 4, I will turn to the musical aspects of the hymnals and the characteristics of Lisu hymns of varied genres.

#### Old Lisu and the translation of the Lisu Bible

After Fraser and his colleagues, Ba Thaw and George J. Geis, created Old Lisu between 1914 and 1915, they quickly used it for the translation of the Bible verses and other Christian literature. Fraser initiated the translation of the Lisu Bible, which became one of the main focuses of the rest of his mission work. In the 1920s, he and Ba Thaw first translated a few items of Lisu Christian literature including a Lisu catechism, along

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<sup>102</sup> Starting from 1912, another two CIM missionaries, George E. Metcalf and Arthur Nicholls, began to use the Pollard script—a Christian script devised by Samuel Pollard for the Miao people—to translate the Bible verses, primarily for the Christian Lisu in northern Yunnan, based on the local Lisu dialect. This version in the Pollard script only generated limited regional influence (Wang Zaixing 2008: 54). In my dissertation, I only focus on the translation of the Lisu Bible using Old Lisu that has been widely adopted in most Lisu Christian communities.

with a handful of hymns, the Gospels of Mark (1921) and John (1923) (Leila Cooke 1948: 23; Chen Jianming and Wang Zaixing 2009: 160).<sup>103</sup>

In the 1930s, the Cookes and another CIM missionary, Carl Gowman, took over the translation work with the help of their Lisu assistant Nguali (better known by his Christian name, Moses). Following the completion of three Gospels (Mark, Luke, and John) and the Book of Acts by 1933, the Cookes finished the translation of the entire New Testament at the end of 1937, and the printed manuscript was brought to Shanghai for printing in 1938 (Fraser 1937: 135; Leila Cooke 1938: 76; Zhu Fade 2008: 895; Jinjie 2013: 35). Due to the poor conditions of the mail service and transportation facilities at the time, the Christian Lisu did not receive those copies until 1939, but the Lisu New Testament was soon widely used in the Nujiang church in the 1940s (Leila Cooke 1939: 76; Shen Xiaohu 2014: 64).<sup>104</sup>

The translation of the Lisu Old Testament started in 1956 in Chiang Mai, directed by CIM missionaries (Allyn Cooke, John Kuhn, and Allan Crane).<sup>105</sup> The first draft was finished in 1959. After a long period of editing work, on February 25, 1962, a special memorial ceremony was held in Geis Memorial Church of Myitkyina (see Figure 3.4) to celebrate the completion of the Bible translation. However, the entire Lisu Bible was not published until 1968 (hereafter referred to as 1968 edition) in Hong Kong (Sitifan 2001: 245-246; interview with Ma'nasi on February 23, 2014). There have been several other

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<sup>103</sup> According to Shi Fuxiang's oral account, the Lisu catechism was first completed and published in Yangon, supported by the Burmese Baptist Church, in 1919 (see Zhu Fade 2008: 883).

<sup>104</sup> A 1935 letter of Leila Cooke shows that the Cookes intended to go to the coast (Yantai or Shanghai) in 1935 to print the completed Lisu New Testament, but Moses's illness hindered the scheduled work (Leila Cooke 1935).

<sup>105</sup> By 1949, only Genesis and Psalms from the Old Testament were translated into Lisu (Sitifan 2001: 245).

versions of the Lisu Bible, among which the 1986 edition by the Lisu pastor Jesse Yangmi, known as the Concordant Literal Version, had great influence on a large scale (Jin Jie 2013: 36; personal communication).

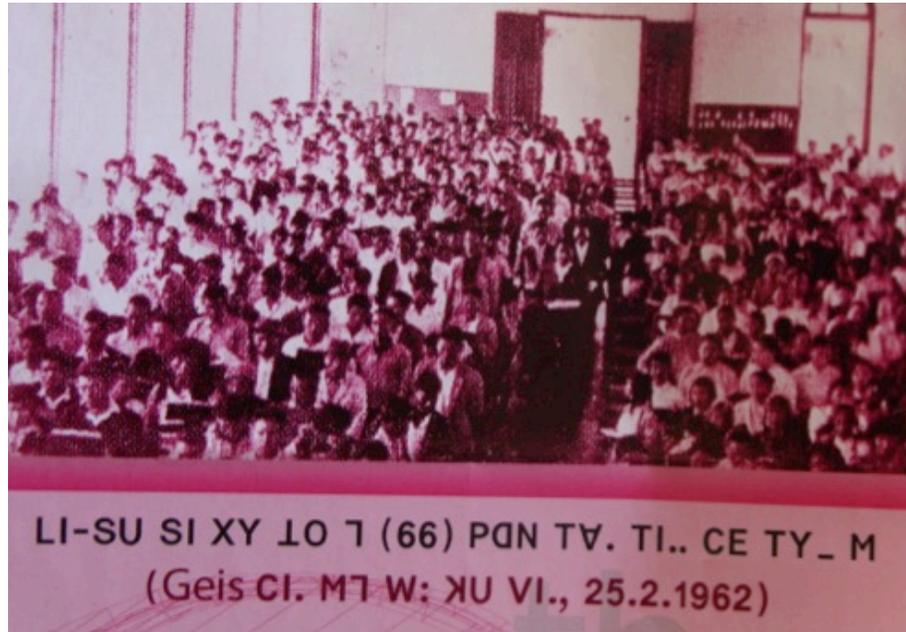


Figure 3.4. The memorial ceremony celebrating the completion of the translation and revision of the entire Lisu Bible, Geis Memorial Church, Myitkyina, February 2, 1962. Reproduction from an old pictorial calendar owned by Ma'nasi, a senior Burmese Lisu pastoral staff member.

In Nujiang, an investigation team found that by the end of 1950 there had already existed an edition of the Lisu New Testament, a collection of 289 hymns of praise, and a Lisu catechism, not to mention three more recently printed items of Lisu literature: the gospel essence, a health booklet, and a textbook of Lisu Pinyin (Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009: 30, 37). Almost all the copies of the Lisu New Testament were confiscated and destroyed between 1958 and 1976 (personal communication with a few senior Lisu pastoral staff members).

Upon the revival of Christian practices in the early 1980s, Pastor Yuexiu (original name Che A'en) tried hard to find a copy of the Lisu Bible (1968 edition) and sent it to

be reprinted in Kunming, which solved the problem of the urgent need for Bibles in the Nujiang Lisu church. (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 219). For quite some time, the Nujiang Lisu church has been using the most popular 1986 edition. In 2010, the West Lisu Writing Bible translation team was established under the guidance of the Yunnan TCO and started to produce a new edition of the Lisu Bible with brief annotations (Feng Rongxin 2012b). According to the latest news, this new annotated Lisu Bible is already finished and the celebration for its first release was held on February 1, 2015, in Dongfanghong Church of Lushui County (Zhongxinshe 2015).<sup>106</sup> According to Pastor Feng Rongxin, the 10,000 copies of the first print edition were already sold out and the church is planning to print additional 30,000 copies by the end of 2015 (personal communication with Feng on WeChat on October 16, 2015).

While the Lisu pastoral staff members in China were more concerned about the understanding and explanation of the existing Bible, in Thailand the Morse missionary family saw language problems in the old versions; as Eugene Morse explains:

David [David Morse, the oldest son of Eugene Morse] is currently working with the specialists to re-translate the Lisu Bible based on the pure original Lisu [the northern dialect]. The old version is just full of grammar mistakes—Fraser learned Chinese first, so he added Chinese grammar to the central Lisu dialect [on which the translation of the 1968 version was based]—which does not sound like Lisu. David could not start the revision work until all the other old pastoral staff died. (Interview with Eugene Morse on February 13, 2014)

The essential role of the Lisu Bible as the spiritual foundation of the Lisu church is undeniable. However, based on my personal contacts with many Christians outside the religious contexts, I noticed that few of them, except for some pastoral staff members,

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<sup>106</sup> This information was first learned through Lisu pastor Yu Yongguang's sharing of photos with his circle of friends via WeChat; I then confirmed the news published on the website of the China Ethnic Languages Translation Bureau (Zhongxinshe 2015).

would actually read the Bible on a daily basis.<sup>107</sup> In her recently finished dissertation on the religious practices of the Nujiang Lisu, Aminta Arrington also had a similar observation; as she puts it, “While the Lisu viewed their Bible as the authoritative Word of God, they read it only in ritualistic contexts, not for personal Bible study or in devotional setting” (Arrington 2014: Abstract).

In addition to the religious role the translated Bible has fulfilled, what are equally important to look at are the other social and cultural influences of the Bible translation. On the one hand, Old Lisu, created along with the Bible and hymn translation, played a key role in the Lisu literacy education. An investigation team in the early 1950s reported the literacy rate (referring to that for Old Lisu) among the Nujiang Lisu as over fifty percent (Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009). In present-day Nujiang, among many rural Lisu families I visited where there were no educated adults, a copy of the Lisu Bible was the only literature I could see besides children’s books.

On the other hand, as Bradley puts it, “Partly as a consequence, much of the traditional Lisu oral literature is disappearing, though the genre survives within new Christian material” (Bradley 2011: 43). The most exemplary feature of Lisu oral tradition, the parallel structural form in the folk poetic language, was adopted for the Bible translation. It is particularly reflected in the translation of the Psalms—the title itself was translated as *Ngot Jjex*, meaning “couplet.” The adoption of the couplet in the translation of Lisu hymns will be discussed in Chapter 4.2.

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<sup>107</sup> Generally speaking, for those who are simply occupied by the church’s various administrative works, they do not have time to read the Bible. Within the pastoral staff team, the evangelist and worship leader are the two main types of people who love/have to regularly read the Bible.

## The hymnal: Cultivating the musical literacy of the Christian Lisu

Current evidence shows that in the first half of the twentieth century, among all the missionary forces, the CIM missionaries seemed to be more industrious than their counterparts from the Assemblies of God and Church of Christ, as they dedicated considerable time to introducing four-part hymns of either British or American derivation to the Christian Lisu. The Assemblies of God did not have a hymnbook or Bible of their own, so they secretly made copies from those edited by the CIM missionaries (Fu Abo and Hu Zhengsheng 2008: 105; interview with You Fuduo on June 12, 2013; interview with Eugene Morse on February 13, 2014).

The CIM missionaries seemed to have adopted two contrasting strategies simultaneously. On the one hand, they tended to cultivate Lisu Christians' musical literacy through disseminating hymn collections with translated Lisu text and transcribed tunes in the Lisu cipher notation; on the other hand, they largely focused on the singing practice itself—how to sing multi-voice music through oral solmization—rather than instilling musical knowledge into the new believers, as I found no signs of any primers of musical rudiments in the hymnals or in any other Lisu-language items of literature.

Prior to the completion of a printed Lisu hymnal, the scattered translated hymns first appeared in *Ma-I-Mi-Tot'et* (the equivalent of the English catechism) and the early versions contained the Old Lisu alphabet, basic Christian doctrine in question-and-answer form, the Lord's prayer, and a few monophonic hymns (see Figure 3.5).

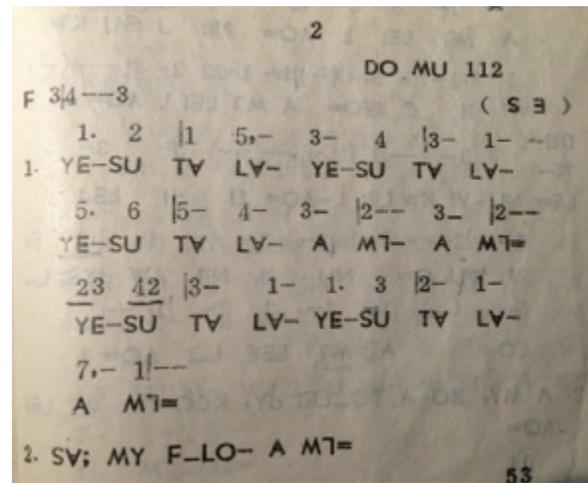
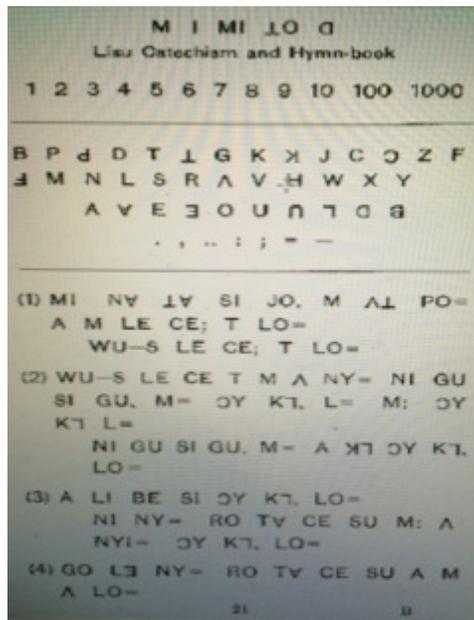


Figure 3.5 (On the left) The first page of the *Lisu Catechism* as shown in Leila Cooke’s *Honey Two of Lisu-land* (Leila Cooke 1932: 21). It starts with the numbers and alphabet of Old Lisu, and the beginning of the Lisu catechism, “Who created the world?—God created it”; (on the right) the second hymn tune in one Lisu catechism I collected (n.d., both front and back covers are missing). The tune is quite similar to a classic Chinese children’s song for celebrating the new year; however, the original lyrics, “Happy New Year,” are replaced with “Jesus has arrived” (*Yesu dail lai*) in the first verse.<sup>108</sup>

Fraser and Ba Thaw edited the first Lisu catechism after they devised Old Lisu, and it was published by the Burmese Baptist Church in Yangon in 1919 (Leila Cooke 1948: 23; Zhu Fade 2008: 883;). According to Allyn Cooke, one of their translated hymns, “Hail Stones Weighing a Talent will Fall on You,” was included in the first catechism (Allyn Cooke 1939). The second catechism contains fifty hymns and came out some time before 1923 (ibid.).<sup>109</sup> According to Eugene Morse, Fraser’s catechism was also the first hymnbook they used in Gongshan, and it included a separate hymn section of thirty one-part hymn pieces at the end (interview with Eugene Morse on February 13, 2014).

According to two schoolteachers of the Lisu Bible School organized by the Lisu Christian Church in Lashio, John Kuhn once compiled a booklet, *Colail bu Wusa dail*

<sup>108</sup> This edition contains thirty one-part hymns in total.

<sup>109</sup> The earliest edition of the Lisu catechism I have found so far was printed in 1922 with fifty hymns. There is another early edition published in Hong Kong, probably in the 1930s.

*Xelget Ddu* (For the youth to praise the Lord), which includes about fifteen small tunes, each accompanied by a verse of scripture. Only pastoral staff members owned a few copies, and they were supposed to teach those verses and tunes to the young Christian Lisu (interview, February 23, 2014).

On the whole, the situation of hymnal compilation in the Lisu church is quite simple, as there was only one standard collection of hymns, *Sipat dail Ddoqmuq du Mutgguat*. Since the key words of the title, *ddoqmuq*, literally, “praise,” is usually abbreviated as DM as the indicator of the source of a certain hymn in several other Lisu hymnals, hereafter I use DM to refer to this best-known Lisu hymnal. It has been predominantly used in the transnational Lisu Christian communities over the years.

Although the name of the DM compiler(s) has never appeared on the title page of any DM editions, based on my interviews with the senior pastoral staff members who once studied with foreign missionaries, and the missionaries’ own accounts, the Cookes and the Morse brothers were the main persons engaging in the compilation of the first DM edition that became the basis for the standard hymnbook currently used in the Lisu church (Griffin n.d.; interview with You Fuduo on June 12, 2013 and with Eugene Morse on February 13, 2014). As You Fuduo recalled:

Without *Alyirddat* [Allyn Cooke], we would never have our DM or hymns. There were originally only 289 hymns in DM. Before it came out in 1948, we had a catechism edited by Fraser, which included about 30 one-part hymns. There was another hymnal printed right before 1948 that was also edited by *Alyirddat*. It was printed on one side only, due to the low quality of the paper used.<sup>110</sup>

According to Eugene Morse, in 1948 he and his brother Robert Morse, together with Allyn Cooke, worked in Los Angeles for five months and finished the compilation

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<sup>110</sup> Eugene Morse also mentions that prior to the printing of the first complete DM in 1948, there was another one-sided-print hymnbook printed by CIM.

of the first DM containing 289 pieces. Finally, 10,000 copies were printed. Following the first DM edition compiled by missionaries, the subsequent reprints of DM present different situations from place to place.

The first major change occurred in Myanmar. In 1972, the Burmese Christian Lisu added thirty more hymns to the original DM, and grouped them together in a separate section labeled as *mutgguat shil* (literally, “new songs”), in contrast to the previously existing *mutgguat lu* (old songs). Printed in Yangon, this 319-piece DM was the original version upon which later DM reprints are based (interview with Eugene Morse on February 13, 2014; David Morse’s personal note).<sup>111</sup>

Another major variation was also from the Christian force in Myanmar. David Morse, current director of the North Burma Christian Mission, compiled a massive Lisu hymnal, *Sipat dail Ddoqmuq du bbei Vulddut Teirma Mutgguat* (Hymns of Praise and Worship, known as DX, the abbreviation used by David Morse himself). DX was produced by the department of Christian Literature Fellowship within the Mission.

In the DX hymnal, hymn texts are also written in Old Lisu, with the music written in the Lisu cipher notation. David Morse’s personal notes show that DX went through three editions (1998, 2002, and 2009). The newest edition contains 618 hymns, including all of the 319 DM hymns—yet in a different order—and other newly added four-part hymn pieces. The DX hymnal is currently being widely used in the Thai Lisu church; however, it has not been widespread in Nujiang—only a handful of people there knew about it. I only saw two pastoral staff members owning copies of the DX hymnal. Since

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<sup>111</sup> According to Eugene Morse, between the initial version (1948) and the enlarged one (1972), there was another edition printed in Myanmar in 1954; however, it is uncertain whether there were any changes, as I did not see it in person.

those copies were brought back from Myanmar, the popularity of DX there should be higher than in China.

In China, DM has remained largely unaltered through several reprints since the religious revival in the 1980s in Nujiang. The Yunnan TCO printed the first edition in 1988 and reprinted it in 2005. In between, the China Christian Council (CCC) produced another edition in 1997. All these three editions have a similar layout with the 1972 edition—a separation between the original 289 hymns (*mutgguat shil*) and 30 new songs (*mutgguat lu*). The emphasis on the old-new division was eliminated in the 2011 reprint.

In addition to the continuous use of DM, 270 other four-part Lisu-language hymns from varied sources—all in strophic or verse-chorus forms—were compiled into a new hymnal first printed by the Nujiang TCO in 1997 (the collection work started earlier in 1994). Entitled *Wusa dail Xelgget du Mutgguat* (Hymns in praise of God, hereafter referred to as XG, abbreviation based on the key word “*Xelgget*,” literally, “praise”), this new collection of Lisu hymns has gone through two editions: the first 1997 edition was printed in larger size than the later 2001 edition.<sup>112</sup> Feng Rongxin, one of the compilers, briefly described the editing process to me thus:

In 1994, we started to collect Lisu hymns written from the 1980s. We took everything we collected to Kunming and examined them together: whether the harmony was correct, whether the meaning of the lyrics was in accordance with the Bible. We also selected a few Han Chinese hymns and translated them into Lisu. (Personal communication)<sup>113</sup>

DM is entirely a missionary legacy, whereas XG compilation involved cooperation between the Lisu and Han Chinese Christians. On the one hand, there were two Chinese

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<sup>112</sup> Yang Minkang believes that the first print edition came out in 1994 (Yang Minkang 2008: 132).

<sup>113</sup> Hu Xuecai also talked about this matter, but emphasized different important points (for recapitulation, see Chapter 3.1).

pastors working together with four Lisu church leaders in the initial work; on the other hand, the repertoire itself was the mixture of Lisu and Chinese hymns. There is not much information on the strategies of selection or sources of XG hymns, except that we know that there are ten source hymnals (Yang Minkang 2008: 147), of which the most identifiable source is *Xinbian Zanmeishi* (Chinese New Hymnal), the universal hymnal used in the present-day Chinese church and first compiled in 1981; it is abbreviated as **H7**: (*het* in Lisu, literally, “Han Chinese”).

XG has not gained the same popularity as DM. For example, many Lisu congregational members I talked to could locate a particular DM hymn upon hearing it—this is how I was able to keep track of the actual use of certain DM hymn tunes in the church—whereas they could hardly tell the exact number of a XG hymn tune (personal communication). Nevertheless, certain XG hymns are still being selected to be sung during the worship services and religious festivals (for more details, see Chapter 4.1 and 4.3).

One of the reasons why the Chinese Lisu church paid little attention to compiling new hymnbooks, according to Feng Rongxin, is simply because there was limited time and money available for this kind of work; as he put it,

We even did not have enough time to revise the Lisu Bible [referring to the new version of Lisu Bible just completed in February 2015], not to mention a new hymnbook. However, I hope that one day I could compile a brand new collection of Lisu hymns, like what David did for the Christian Lisu. There are many nice Christian songs written by ourselves out there, but not everyone knows about them right now. (Interview with Feng Rongxin on June 23, 2014)

Another important reason is related to DM’s existing authority in the mind of Lisu Christians. I was surprised to find that most of the Christian Lisu I talked to would distinguish between DM and XG in a similar way: “DM was compiled by missionaries

and comprises renowned foreign hymns, and therefore should not be altered; whereas XG was compiled much later by ourselves. It is something still under constant change” (personal communication).

Nowadays, besides DM and XG there are also numerous ad hoc small songbooks, anonymously being compiled for a particular occasion and circulated within a narrow range. More likely, instead of compiling a collection of Christian songs, Christians just sing from a sheet of paper or a worn notebook in which the performed song has been written. In peixunban music classes, students often learn a new song—either the reproduction of a particular song from a hymnal or the teacher’s own composition—usually from the reproduction of the original handwritten score. Sometimes the teacher will just write lyrics on the blackboard and teach the melody by rote if the song lacks a written score.

In his earlier research on the Christian hymnody of the Nujiang Lisu, Yang Minkang concludes that *New Chinese Hymnal* only had limited impact on the musical practices of the Christian Lisu in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Yang Minkang 2008: 152). In my own investigation between 2010 and 2014, I observed a similar situation: it is common to see Chinese hymnbooks used in the four Christian training centers and a few suburban churches close to the major county seats, but certainly not in a majority of churches in the mountainous areas; as the pastor Yu Yongguang, resident teacher from the prefecture Christian training center, explained to me:

On the whole, it is predominately young people who like to sing Chinese hymns—the older generation does not speak Chinese, and therefore they are not able to sing those Chinese hymns even if they want to. At present, the most commonly used Chinese hymnals in the Lisu church include *Chinese New Hymnal* and *Zanmei zhi Quan* (Spring of Praise), and *Tianlai zhi Sheng* (Sound of Heaven). Personally speaking, I particularly like hymns written by Xiaomin in the hymnal *Jia’nan*

*Shixuan* (Collection of poems from Canaan) that contains over 1200 spiritual songs for personal use to communicate with God. (Interview with Yu Yong'guang on May 28, 2014)

Compared with the Chinese hymnal's limited influence on the religious practices of the Christian Lisu in Nujiang, the hymnals compiled and edited by the Burmese Lisu church have played a more important role in the Nujiang Christian music scene.<sup>114</sup>

The influences of the Burmese-produced Lisu hymnals started in the beginning of the Nujiang church revival in the early 1980s. There was a shortage of DM copies, as most hymnbooks were confiscated and destroyed during the political movements. The first edition published by Yunnan TCO in 1988 was based on one Burmese edition (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 219; personal communication).

My first DM copy was a gift from Alkix, current resident evangelist in Latudi Church, also my first Lisu informant. It was a pirate copy with no publishing description. All I knew was that Alkix bought it from a Burmese, so it was probably printed in Myanmar. Two years later, my assumption was able to be verified when I found the 1999 reprint of DM, almost identical to the pirate copy I had received from Alkix.

During my fieldwork, the most frequently used Burmese Lisu hymnal I found is *Yox diaq ma Nimoxddu* (The Sheep in the Light, hereafter referred to as *NMD*), in which most hymns written in simple four-part harmonic progression by pastors from the Burmese Lisu Baptist church between 2009 and 2011. *NMD* was first printed in 2011; yet

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<sup>114</sup> In China, the single publishing authorities (TCO) of Christian hymnals are subject to the government regulations regarding the publication and circulation of religious products. By contrast, there are five different denominational forces within the Burmese Lisu church, namely the Lisu Christian Church, the Burmese Lisu Baptist Church, the Church of Christ, the Assemblies of God, and the regional Christian Church (interview with Pastor Ma'nasi on February 22, 2014; with *Alleibo* on February 23, 2014), among which the Lisu Baptist church and the Assemblies of God are more industrious in terms of music ministry.

within one year it quickly spread across Nujiang. I heard the singing of tunes from *NMD* on various festive occasions.

Besides *NMD* I also found a few other copies of Burmese-derived hymnals, but these were used on a small scale. For example, the former county head of Fugong, Yu Yaohua, has an early collection of hymns in Lisu compiled and published by the Assemblies of God of Burma in 1979. According to Yu, the copy should have been brought from Myanmar in the 1980s. He saved it from being confiscated by the local public security bureau (interview with Yu Yaohua on April 15, 2013). Yage, elder of Baihualing Church in Lushui County, also had this hymnal for ten years; as he explained, “Our church purchased twenty copies from Fugong and we often select hymn tunes from this hymnal” (interview with Yage on November 25, 2012).

In order to further demonstrate those Burmese influences, it is worthwhile to mention one particular collection of Lisu hymns, *Wusa dail Xelgget du Mutgguat* (Hymns of praise, the same title with XG), which was compiled outside of Nujiang by the Longchuan TCO in 2007. This hymnal largely resulted from the deep impact of the Burmese Lisu Christians’ hymn-writing practices. The editor used to teach in the Myitkyina’s Christian training classes organized by the Burmese Lisu Baptist church. He collected many four-part hymns of Burmese origin at that time and compiled them into a hymnal for use primarily in the church in Longchuan. However, the hymnal was introduced to Nujiang through the peixunban system and soon acquired a certain degree of popularity there (personal communication).

Admittedly, the above review of the situation of hymnal compilation does not provide much information for the actual hymn singing in earlier times. Nevertheless, the

investigation of the historical aspects of Bible translation and hymnal collection can set a foundation for understanding the musical practices of the Nujiang Christian Lisu in contemporary contexts, the main subject that I will explore in depth in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4: Christian Music of the Nujiang Lisu

This chapter is a comprehensive musical analysis of genres and categories of Christian music and an overview of the major hymnals used in the present-day Nujiang Lisu Protestant church. Following the general introduction of the Christian music repertoire in the first part, I then discuss different types of indigenized hymns either translated by missionaries or composed by the Christian Lisu over the last three decades. Finally, I examine three principal modes of hymn singing and the varied ways in which they have been jointly utilized in various contexts of the church activities.

### 4.1 Music Repertoire

The indigenous perception of Christian songs (*mutgguat*)

In Lisu, the term equivalent to the English word “hymn,” word-for-word, is *sipat dail ddoqmuq du mutgguat* (a song in praise of God), or, simply *ddoqmuq mutgguat*. If capitalized, *Sipat dail Ddoqmuq du Mutgguat* becomes the title of the most important Lisu hymnal, for which the abbreviation is DM. As a verb, “*ddoqmuq*” means “to praise.” In the Christian context, it is specifically used to praise God. By broad definition, all types of Lisu Christian songs can be called *ddoqmuq mutgguat* (songs of praise); in terms of musical style and origin, however, in the Lisu church *ddoqmuq mutgguat* refers in particular to an invariable hymnody repertoire, the 319 Western-derived four-part DM hymns. A particular *ddoqmuq mutgguat* in DM is referred to in the following fashion: DM 1 means the first *ddoqmuq mutgguat* included in DM, DM 2 means the second, and so on.

The term *mutgguat* is a little bit more complicated. It is, first of all, the generic term for “songs.” It also refers to a particular indigenous song genre (see Chapter 2.2). There are two primary Christianized meanings of *mutgguat*: a general reference to a variety of Christian songs commonly sung in the church and, when capitalized the title of Psalms in the Bible. Throughout this chapter, the term “*mutgguat*” will be used in the former sense unless otherwise specified.

Most Christian Lisu I talked to did not consciously categorize their *mutgguat* repertoire; however, they frequently used three terms, *ddoqmuq mutgguat*, *xelgget mutgguat*, and *mutgguat ssat*, to describe what they often sing in the church. They were also able to make distinctions between these categories. Therefore, I tend to follow such indigenous taxonomy and divide Lisu *mutgguat* into three categories. I compare and contrast their differences and correlation based on both musical criteria and non-musical factors.

The history of *ddoqmuq mutgguat* is almost as long as that of the spread of Protestant Christianity in Nujiang. The earliest use of the term in referring to this category can be traced back to the early catechisms printed starting in 1919. A small number of monophonic short *mutgguat* with strophic texts and basic melody written in Lisu cipher notation were included, and their source hymnal was abbreviated as DO MU (*Ddoqmuq*).<sup>115</sup>

Not until 1948, when the first large-scale Lisu hymnal entitled *Sipat dail Ddoqmuq du Mutgguat* (DM) was completed for use in the church, did *ddoqmuq mutgguat* become a fixed repertoire with identifiable distinct features. Distributed in a printed hymnal using

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<sup>115</sup> Although the numbering of DO MU matches that in DM according to the existing catechisms, it is still hard to determine relationship between DO MU and DM without further evidence.

Lisu cipher notation, *ddoqmuq mutgguat* shaped the congregational singing of the Christian Lisu for decades thereafter. Theological subjects such as the life of Jesus (*Yesu*), conversion, the assurance of salvation, the life of a Christian (*Si'ssat*), and the joys of heaven were quickly spread through music.

The music of *ddoqmuq mutgguat* is characterized by simple major-key melodies with simple harmonic chords in four-part settings—the melody is in the top voice. It is mostly homo-rhythmic; that is, all parts move with the same or similar rhythms. Frequent repeated melodic and rhythmic patterns go along with the textual repetitions of individual phrases. DM 109, “*Sairmia Bbaiket Teima*” (These Words of Life), deriving from a famous American gospel hymn, Philip Bliss’s “Wonderful Words of Life” (1874), can illustrate most of these features (see Figures 4.1.a and 4.1.b).

av. Hymns. 110) SV; MY BV K7 13 M 109  
*Wonderful Words of Life* (DO ON)  
 G 6/8 -- 1

	3- 3	3 4 3	3- 2	2-	5, 2	2 3- 2	1- 5-
	5- 5,	5, 6, 5,	5- 4,	4-	4, 4,	4, 5- 4,	3- - -
(1)	SV;	MY BV K7 13	M	AW TV	LE;	LI HW, GW.. G7	LV=
(2)	SV;	MY BV K7 13	M	RO TV	G7	SU NY JI- SU	AO=
(3)	SV;	MY BV K7 13	M	SU TV	A	MI MI P J	FI=
	1'- 1'	1' 1' 1'	1'- 1'	7-	7	7 7 7- 7	1'- - -
	1'- 1'	1' 1' 1'	5- 5	5-	5	5 5 5- 5	1- - -

	3- 3	3 4 3	3- 2	2-	5, 2	2 3- 2	1- - -
	5- 5,	5, 6, 5,	5- 4,	4-	4, 4,	4, 5- 4,	3- - -
(1)	N	N S.. M	AW	SQ	NI, XN..	D0 J M7.. M BV	K7=
(2)	YI.	XU.. M	SV TV	N N	LV..	D0 J M7.. M BV	K7=
(3)	RO	FUI A	J0 YI	G:	G7 L..	D0 J M7.. M BV	K7=
	1'- 1'	1' 1' 1'	1'- 7	7-	7	7 7 7- 7	1'- - -
	1'- 1'	1' 1' 1'	5- 5	5-	5	5 5 5- 5	1- - -

	3- 3	3 4 5	6-	5-	3- 3	3 4 5	6- 5-
	1- 1	1 2 3	4-	3-	1- 1	1 2 3	4- 3-
(1)	N	S.. M	SV; MY	BV	K7.. J0..	NI, MYE: AW TV	M.. LO=
(2)	NYE	KW JE	N M	WU.	TY.. A..	TO.. LE DE: G7	L.. M..
(3)	CYU.	XU	SU YI	LI	RO AO..	LI 3I; LE.;	SI XY LE FIO=
	1'- 1'	1' 1' 1'	1'- 1'	1'-	1'- 1'	1' 1' 1' 1'	1'- 1'-
	1'- 1'	1' 1' 1'	1'- 1'	1'-	1'- 1'	1' 1' 1' 1'	1'- 1'-

DU-	5 4 4	4-	4 3 3	3-	3 2 1	2- 7,	1- 3 5-
	3 2 2	2-	2 1 1	1-	5, 5, 5,	5- 5,	5- 1-
TI-	N	N S..	M..	SV; MY	BV K7..	D0 J M7	DU A LO=
LE=	5' 5'	5' 5'-	5' 5'	5' 5'-	5' 4'	3' 4'- 2'	3'- - -
	5 5 5	5-	1' 1' 1'	1'-	5 5 5	5- 5	1'- - -

	5 4 4	4-	4 3 3	3-	3 2 1	2- 7,	1- - -
	3 2 2	2-	2 1 1	1-	5, 5, 5,	5- 5,	5- - -
	N	N S..	M	SV; MY	BV K7..	D0 J M7	DU A LO=
	5' 5'	5' 5'-	5' 5'	5' 5'-	5' 4'	3' 4'- 2'	3'- - -
	5 5 5	5-	1' 1' 1'	1'-	5 5 5	5- 5	1'- - -

Figure 4.1.a. The score of DM 109, “*Sairmia Bbaiket Teima*” (These words of life), included in the DM copy I received from Alkix.

Figure 4.1.b (next page). DM 109 transnotated into staff notation with Lisu texts. Only the first verse and refrain are provided, with Lisu Pinyin in the first line, literal English translation in the second line, and the original English texts below the bass line.

# Sairmia Bbaket Teima (Wonderful Words of Life)

Original English Lyrics by Philip Bliss

Composer: Philip Bliss

Lisu texts transcribed and word-for-word English translation by Diao Ying

Sair-mia bbai-ket tei ma nguaq dail leir tit huaq ggua gget laix= Na na sa ma nguaq  
 life words these me only one time sing give to beau-ti-ful my

Sing them o-ver a-gain to me, Won-der-ful words of life Let me more of their

6

sel - niq shi ddut-jjat me - ma bbai - ket= Na sa-ma sair-mia bbai-ket jji niq mit nguaq dail  
 knowledge new won-der- words beau-ti-ful life words faith duty me

beau - ty see, Won-der-ful words of life; Words of life and beau - ty, Teach me faith and

12

*ddudilleir (refrain)*

mal lo= - Na na sa ma sair-mia bbai - ket ddut - jjat me - ddu nga' lo=  
 teach beau-ti - ful life words won-der - ful is

du - ty; Beau - ti - ful words won - der - ful words, Won - der - ful words of

16

lo= - Na na sa ma sair-mia bbai - ket ddut - jjat me - ddu nga' lo=  
 beau-ti-ful life words won-der ful is

life; Beau - ti - ful words won-der-ful words, Won - der ful words of life.

The translated Lisu texts are slightly different from the original English words; however, the feature of textual repetitions remains the same. For example, in this short twenty-measure verse the thematic phrase “*sairmia bbaiket*” (words of life) is repeated four times. The musical repetitions are realized through exact replication and melodic sequence (mm. 13-14 and mm. 17-18).

DM 109 uses a verse-chorus form—three to six stanzas with different texts are set to one melodic strophe, separated by a recurring refrain—which is the most common form used in *ddoqmuq mutgguat*. In addition to verse-chorus form, they also often adopt strophic form, featuring repetition of the same music for all strophes with no chorus between stanzas.<sup>116</sup> There are also ten large-scale *ddoqmuq mutgguat* that adopt through-composed form in a linear fashion.

Only a few highly educated Christian Lisu were able to elaborate the meanings of musical symbols in the *ddoqmuq mutgguat* scores. Nevertheless, most of the Christian Lisu I asked would emphasize the part-singing (*tit-nit-sa sair*) aspect of this repertoire. The Lisu term “*sair*” originally referred to any kind of sound. Christians have used it to refer to what is the equivalent of a “part” or “voice” in a Western choral piece. All the *ddoqmuq mutgguat* have four parts. Each part is simply named by number as *tit sair* (part 1, soprano), *nit sair* (part 2, alto), *sa sair* (part 3, tenor), and *lil sair* (part 4, bass).

In a *ddoqmuq mutgguat*, the melodic interest is concentrated in the top line, *tit sair*. The bass line, *lil sair*, has no melodic function but solely contains the tones from the tonic, dominant, and subdominant chord. Usually, women sing the melodic part and men sing the bass line as a support, presenting a typical melody-plus-accompaniment

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<sup>116</sup> There are eight *ddoqmuq mutgguat* with only one stanza of text sung to one single strophe of either eight or sixteen bars, including DM 145, DM 165, DM 234, DM 235, DM 240, DM 273, DM 274, and DM 275.

homophonic style. The middle two parts (*nit sair* and *sa sair*) are flexibly chosen, regardless of gender. In the actual singing, however, the third part (*sa sair*) is usually missing or submerged under the melodic part. Only a musically trained church choir can sing all four parts in balance.

The next category of Lisu Christian music is called *xelgget mutgguat*, and these hymns have a musical style that is very similar to *ddoqmuq mutgguat*, with homophonic texture, chordal harmonization, and verse-chorus form. Even the name of *xelgget mutgguat* means the same thing as *ddoqmuq mutgguat*—both *xelgget* and *ddoqmuq* means “to praise.” Therefore, these two categories can be differentiated primarily by non-musical factors.

First of all, *ddoqmuq mutgguat* and *xelgget mutgguat* have different recognizable origins: *ddoqmuq mutgguat* are considered to be “foreign hymns,” the unchangeable classic repertoire handed down from the missionary era, whereas *xelgget mutgguat* are other four-part Christian hymns not included in DM. Since Lisu Christians themselves wrote most of the *xelgget mutgguat*, the repertoire has also become a synonym for “indigenous hymns,” in contrast to those “foreign hymns.”

Secondly, unlike *ddoqmuq mutgguat*, which are entirely associated with the DM hymnal and therefore mostly remaining unchanged, *xelgget mutgguat* are either orally transmitted or printed in other hymnals, and are undergoing continual change. As mentioned in the last chapter, some newly composed *xelgget mutgguat* for special occasions will be compiled into small songbooks and circulated on a small scale.

Third, learning to sing *ddoqmuq mutgguat* is an indispensable part of religious practices for a Christian, as the repertoire is predominantly used in the regular worship

service.<sup>117</sup> Since they use the same hymnal and sing *ddoqmuq mutgguat* together, mostly on the same occasions, it is likely that each Christian will learn a similar *ddoqmuq mutgguat* repertoire. By contrast, *xelgget mutgguat* are mainly sung as a musical profession of faith on various occasions. For Christians, learning *xelgget mutgguat* is something that is done on a voluntary basis (for details, see Chapter 4.3).

The third category, *mutgguat ssat*, is a generic term for the contemporary Christian short pop songs that have mainly emerged in the Nujiang Lisu church since the late 1980s with a predominant influence from the musical practices of the Burmese Christian Lisu. Often accompanied by a guitar or band comprising electric instruments, *mutgguat ssat* have been spread widely mostly through studio produced pirated recordings and live performances in the church activities over the last decade.

The general musical features of *mutgguat ssat* are directly reflected in the literal meaning of the term itself: the adjective “*ssat*” (literally, “small”) attached to the root term “*mutgguat*” (song). *Mutgguat ssat* are generally written in a conversational style with simple spoken words centering upon such themes as love for and gratitude to God, often, but not always, emphasized through repetitions of stock phrases (see Figure 4.2).

<b>Lisu Pinyin</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<i>baba wusa</i>	Father God
<i>wusa (sipat) dail xelgget (ddoqmuq)</i>	to praise God (Lord)
<i>wusa reitqeit ddatma</i>	God’s great grace
<i>wusa dail yotbbu xalmo lai</i>	We thank God
<i>mutgguat gguax si (qibbe qil si) xelgget lai</i>	sing a song (play the guitar ) to praise
<i>etsat xelssat (etngot xeqngot) gget’su wusa</i>	God, the person who give us the gospel
<i>yirssar nissar bu (qotbaiq bu)</i>	fellow Christians (friends)
<i>atkel gaqchit (gaqchit nasa)</i>	very joyful (of joy and happiness)

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<sup>117</sup> Interestingly, the American northern urban gospel music, from which a majority of *ddoqmuq mutgguat* derive, was intended for informal gatherings rather than regular worship services (see the entry “Hymnody” written by Paul Richardson in *Grove Music Online/Oxford Music Online*).

<i>mi'nai taitsi/mutgua mi'nai/mutgua hin gua</i>	in the world/heaven and earth/in the heaven
<i>titniq titwat/titcit titba</i>	whole-hearted/lifetime
<i>xalmo ddoqmuq</i>	to thank and praise

Figure 4.2. Summary of frequently used stock phrases in the *mutgguat ssat* texts.

Nowadays in the Nujiang Lisu church, *mutgguat ssat* singing is very often accompanied by a very popular dancing genre called *daibbit*, literally, “to imitate by movement.” It is a type of sign-language dance, so it has another name, *qilu lairlu*, literally “to move hands and feet.”<sup>118</sup> Dancers do not sing while dancing, but dance to pre-recorded music or live singing. Early VCD recordings as well as most of my informants indicate that in the beginning, between the late 1990s and early 2000s, the dance movements were simply a combination of the basic walking motion and hand gestures interpreting the keywords of lyrics (see Figure 4.3). In recent years, however, various decorative motions unrelated to the lyrical meanings such as twirling, gymnastics routines, and formation changes have been added. I will explore *mutgguat ssat* writing and production in the transnational context in depth in Chapter 6.

<b>Dance gestures</b>	<b>Denotations</b>
holding hands on one’s chest	<i>xalmo</i> : Thank (God)
hands up pointing to the sky	<i>wusa</i> : God
open palm upon one’s lips as if calling someone	<i>ddoqmuq</i> : to praise (God)
two arms slowly raised up	<i>Sair yirla</i> : Jesus Christ has resurrected.
arms lifted up, body and arms whirling or arms waving in front of the chest	<i>xelgget</i> : to praise (God)
fingers on the lips	<i>wusa bbaiket</i> : God’s words
hands open and finger tips pointing to the chest	<i>wusa niqma</i> : God’s love
arms stretching outward from the chest	<i>hualqit</i> : understand, be aware of

Figure 4.3. The most commonly used *daibbit* dance gestures and their denotations

<sup>118</sup> Some Christian Lisu also used the Chinese word “shengwu” (literally, sacred dance) to introduce this dance genre to me as well as to other guests from outside Nujiang (personal communication).

While the above analysis is mainly in terms of musical factors, Lisu Christian music can also be understood according to age and gender. Today, there are visible generational gaps between individuals' music preferences. There are certain types particularly for children and teenagers, some preferred by young adults, and some mainly sung by middle-aged and older people.

What has distinguished the children's *mutgguat* from those of the middle-aged and older groups is language. Children's *mutgguat* are usually taught in the informal Sunday school classes. Introduced by Chinese Christians, most of them were originally composed for use in the Chinese Sunday schools. By contrast, older people do not speak Chinese at all. *Mutgguat* associated with them have been exclusively *ddoqmuq mutgguat* or, broadly speaking, *mutgguat* that require part-singing. *Mutgguat ssat* and *daibbit* are primarily associated with, though not exclusive to, the younger generation.

In terms of gender division, *mutgguat* singing is open to both sexes; *daibbit*, however, is almost exclusive to women, although there have never been rules preventing men from dancing. Both men and women can lead part-singing in the worship services. There is an obvious gender-differentiated tendency in playing musical instruments. Women do not generally play the guitar or keyboard, although a few might be interested in learning them. The gender differentiation in the Christian music is quite consistent with the norm in Lisu secular musical traditions.

DM: Core repertoire

The DM edition prevalent in present-day transnational Lisu Christian communities is a collection of 319 four-part hymns—including both texts and tunes—mostly

originating from American hymnals compiled in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The investigation of major identifiable source hymnals in DM can illuminate why *ddoqmuq mutgguat* are musically unified and what specific foreign musical influences they have received that also had longstanding impact on the Lisu hymn writing of future generations.

None of the *ddoqmuq mutgguat* in DM indicate the hymn's composer or lyricist. The source hymnals and original numbers are the only additional information that DM provides. Each of the source hymnals is represented by the abbreviation of the original title. For example, "S.S.S." is the abbreviation for *Sacred Songs and Solos: Two Thousand Pieces*, compiled by Ira Sankey, and S.S.S.23 (DM1) means that the first *ddoqmuq mutgguat* in DM is adapted from hymn No.23 hymn in *Sacred Songs and Solos*.<sup>119</sup>

Close examination of all major source hymnals indicates that the most important musical basis of a majority of *ddoqmuq mutgguat* is American evangelical and gospel hymns; more precisely, northern urban gospel music, hereafter referred to as gospel music. There are 145 hymns selected from S.S.S., which is considered to be the world's greatest gospel song collection for use at evangelistic meetings.<sup>120</sup> Besides Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos*, other identifiable hymnals of gospel music, most of which were

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<sup>119</sup> DM1 or S.S.S.23 is "To God Be the Glory" with tune composed by William H. Doane and lyrics by Fanny J. Crosby.

<sup>120</sup> There have been five traditions in the history of the development of gospel music: northern urban gospel, southern gospel, black gospel, country and bluegrass gospel, and traditions around the world influenced by one or more of the first four (see the entry "Gospel Music" written by Shearon et al., in *Grove Music Online/Oxford Music Online*). From this perspective, the core repertoire of Lisu hymnody can be considered as the part of the fifth tradition that was influenced by northern urban gospel.

edited and compiled by the representative figures in the development history of gospel music, are listed in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4. The list of major American hymnals from which a majority of *ddoqmuq mutgguat* in DM derive, from the hymnal with the most adapted hymns to the least. Publishing information is not completely provided in order to keep the list simple yet informative. (“?” indicates that the deciphering of the hymnal abbreviation is tentative)

<b>Number of hymns selected</b>	<b>Source Hymnal (Abbr. in DM)</b>	<b>Source Hymnal (full name and informative analysis)</b>
145	S.S.S.	Sankey, Ira David, comp. <i>Sacred Songs and Solos, Twelve Hundred Hymns.</i>
24	Fav. Hymns	<i>Favorite Hymns of Praise</i> , published by Tabernacle Publishing Company.
21	C. I. M.	<i>China Inland Mission Hymnbook</i> (1895)
13	Voice of Thanks No. 4	Source not yet identified
10	Tab. Hymns No. 3	<i>Tabernacle Hymns No. 3</i>
10	? World Renowned	Torrey, Reuben Archer, ed. 1909. <i>World Renowned</i> (a collection of 246 hymns for evangelistic meeting, prayer meeting, Sunday school, young people’s societies, and the regular services of the church).
9	Meth.	Source not yet identified
6	Standard Songs	<i>Standard Songs of Evangelism.</i> 1946. Tabernacle Publishing Company.
4	Voice of Thanks No. 3	Source not yet identified
3	Service Hymnal	<i>The Service Hymnal, Compiled for the General Use in All Religious Services.</i> 1935. Chicago: Hope Publishing Company.
4	Tab. Hymns No. 4	<i>Tabernacle Hymns No. 4.</i> 1941. Chicago: Hope.
3	Consecration and Faith	<i>Hymns of Consecration and Faith: For Use at General Christian Conferences, Meetings for the Deepening Spiritual Life, and Consecration Meetings</i> (1902?). London: Marshall Brothers, Keswick House.
2	Redemption Songs	<i>Redemption Songs: A Choice College of 1000 Hymns and Choruses for Evangelistic Meeting and Solo Singers, Choirs, and the Home.</i> 1900. London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd.
2	Hallowed Hymns	Sankey, Ira Allan, ed. 1909. <i>Hallowed Hymns, New and Old: For Use in Prayer and</i>

		<i>Praise Meetings, Evangelistic Services, Sunday Schools, Young People's Societies, and All Other Departments of Church Work.</i> Chicago: Biglow & Main Company.
2	Choir Favorites Vol. 2	Smith, Arthur B., ed. <i>Choir Favorites Vol. 2: Inspiring Songs for Volunteer and Rally Choirs.</i> 1954. Michigan: Singspiration Inc.
1	Alex No. 3	Alexander, Charles McCallon, ed. <i>Alexander's Hymns No. 3.</i> Philadelphia: Blue Mountains Publishing Company.
1	Singspiration No. 1-6	Smith, Alfred B. and John W. Peterson, eds. 1941. <i>Singspiration: Gospel Songs and Choruses,</i> Grand Rapids: Singspiration
1	Triumphant Service Songs	Rodeheaver, Homer A., ed. 1934. <i>Triumphant Service Songs.</i> Chicago: Rodeheaver Company.
1	Tab. Hymns No. 2	<i>Tabernacle Hymns No. 2.</i> 1921. Chicago: Tabernacle Publishing Company (a large collection of 351 missionary songs).

The table shows that the impact of gospel music on the *ddoqmuq mutgguat* repertoire is obvious. First, the listed source hymnals were largely published by those companies engaging in publishing music for gospel songwriters, such as Hope Publishing Company, Tabernacle Publishing Company, Biglow & Main Company, and Marshall Morgan and Scott. Additionally, these selected hymnals cover the entire early period of gospel music between 1870 and 1920. In terms of individual hymns in DM, many of them derive from the famous works of representative gospel hymnists such as “Rock of Ages” (DM 104), “The Ninety and Nine” (DM 78), “Wonderful Words of Life” (DM 109), “There shall be Showers of Blessing” (DM 134), “Jesus is Calling” (DM 123), “The Solid Rock” (DM 49), and “He Leadeth Me” (DM 167).<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Other famous gospel songs written by representative gospel hymnists include DM99 “What can Wash away My Stain?” DM147 “We are Marching to Zion,” DM34 “Low in the Grave,” DM141 “Jesus, Keep Me near the Cross,” DM1 “To God be the Glory,” DM 66 “Jesus Love Me!” DM108 “Jesus Saves!” DM180 “Blessed Assurance,” DM155 “Throw out the Life Line,” DM150 “Hold the Fort,” DM52 “The Light of the World is Jesus,” DM177 “I Know Whom I

The influence of a relatively unified style of gospel songs on the musical taste of the Christian Lisu can be reflected in their choices of four-part hymns to translate for XG (“*Wusa dail Xelget du Mutgguat*”), the other commonly used Lisu hymnal. For this collection of 270 Lisu-language hymns, according to pastor Jesse (Feng Rongxin), one of the compilers, they selected a few (46 pieces) pleasant Chinese-language hymns from *The Chinese New Hymnal* and translated them into Lisu. However, as a matter of fact, only 10 out of 46 selected hymns that were originally composed by Han Chinese, whereas 20 pieces were actually American gospel songs that had been earlier translated into Chinese and included in this Chinese hymnal.

The influence of the American gospel songs on the Lisu Christians’ musical practices can also be seen in the scope of the actual singing of *ddoqmuq mutgguat*. According to incomplete statistics of all the *ddoqmuq mutgguat* I heard during my fieldwork in Nujiang, there were 143 pieces (out of 319) sung in different churches on various occasions, and 27 of them were performed more than five times, including 15 pieces from gospel music collections, the hymn used for money collection (DM162, 9 times), and DM82 (7 times) for closing a worship service.

At the beginning of this dissertation, I introduced the Lisu cipher notation used in this hymnal (for more details, see “Notes on Notation”); it has been the primary notational system used for writing and teaching a variety of Lisu *mutgguat* in the years following its formal introduction in DM in 1948. In addition to the information I have provided in the previous notes, another significant aspect of the indigenous modification

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have Believed,” DM144 “Have Thine Own Way, Lord,” DM30 “The Old Rugged Cross,” and DM298 “How Great Thou Art” (see “Hymnody” by Richardson and “Gospel Music” by Shearon et al. in *Grove Music Online/Oxford Music Online*).

of this notation system is the rhythmic instruction on the right upper part of a score that greatly facilitates the leading of congregational singing.

The instruction consists of two Lisu words: the first indicates the number of beats per measure and the other denotes the hand gesture of the initial beat in the first musical measure, either a complete or incomplete one. For example, in the rhythmic instruction showed in Figure 4.1a, “**ᄇᄇ ᄇᄇ**,” “**ᄇᄇ**” means that there are eight beats—in this case, a beat is equal to an eighth note—in a measure, and “**ᄇᄇ**” indicates that the first measure starts with the downbeat. Two other Lisu terms denoting hand gestures and more examples of rhythmic instruction are introduced in Figure 4.5. This system is well received by the Christian Lisu, as it provides vivid images and metaphors associating different hand gestures for time-beating with the more familiar labor actions, without referring to the concept of downbeat or incomplete musical measure.

Lisu terms of hand gestures and their literal meaning	Indication in the time-beating instruction	Examples of actual application in the rhythmic instruction
<b>ᄇᄇ</b> : ( <i>piat</i> , lateral chop)	The first measure starts with the last second	<b>L I ᄇᄇ</b> : ( <i>lil piat</i> ), four beats in a measure and the first measure starts with the last second beat; often used 4/4
<b>ᄇ</b> , ( <i>eiŋq</i> , to scoop up)	The first measure starts with the last beat	<b>S ᄇ</b> , ( <i>sa eiŋq</i> ), three beats in a measure and the first measure starts with the last beat; often used in 3/4 and 3/8.
<b>ᄇᄇ</b> ( <i>chi</i> , to hew)	The first measure starts with the downbeat	<b>NY I ᄇᄇ</b> ( <i>nit chi</i> ), two beats in a measure and the first measure starts with the downbeat; often used in 2/4.

Figure 4.5. Different hand gestures for time-beating in a musical measure, their association with daily labor actions, and the indication in the examples of the time signature.

There are also thirty-four *mutgguat* in DM with unidentified sources—in the hymnbook, they lack specific abbreviations for sources. Of special interest to ethnomusicologists are the fifteen pieces identified by David Morse as Lisu-derived (see more details in the next section).

#### 4.2 The Creation of Indigenized Lisu Hymnody

In this section, I will discuss different types of indigenized Lisu multi-part *mutgguat* either translated by missionaries or composed by Christian Lisu from the early twentieth century until the present. If I adapt Kaplan's six-mode typology of indigenization (Kaplan 1995b: 9-28), three of these categories—namely, translation, assimilation, and Christianization—can be re-contextualized to account for what is presented here.

I first examine the ways in which missionaries initially adapted American northern urban gospel songs, the essential part of the *ddoqmuq mutgguat* repertoire, to suit the local tastes. Next, I focus on a few early four-part *mutgguat* that David Morse considered to be indigenous creations; their musical styles, however, largely remain the same as those of most translated gospel songs in DM. Finally, I briefly analyze several multi-part *mutgguat* composed by one renowned contemporary Lisu composer, Chu Yongping (*malpat* Yobei), in order to demonstrate various factors that the Christian Lisu might have been affected by in their Christian music composition in present-day Nujiang.

Translation: The initial adaptation of foreign hymns

Generally speaking, the adaption of imported gospel songs to suit the local taste can be applied to both tunes and texts, such as original tunes remaining unaltered while texts

are re-written in accordance with indigenous language idioms, or vice versa—the original texts translated with utmost faithfulness and the tune altered considerably or even replaced with indigenous pre-Christian folk music. In the case of the Lisu, the adaptation only occurs when the texts are creatively re-written to suite the Lisu folk poetic form while the tune and harmony remain unaltered. In terms of music itself, missionaries made little effort to set texts to appropriate existing Lisu tunes or musical forms.

This situation is easy to understand when we have a better comprehension of musical differences between the main features of the gospel songs and those of certain Lisu folk genres prevalent in the area where the CIM missionaries were missionizing among the Nujiang Lisu (Lisu and Bijiang Counties). Three outstanding differences are summarized as follows:

- (1) The stylistic melisma—a syllable sung to multiple notes—in Lisu folk songs is in stark contrast to the syllabic feature—each syllable of text is only matched with a single note—commonly found in most gospel music;
- (2) The lack of strict meters in some Lisu vocal genres is incompatible with hymns, especially for those gospel songs with a strong sense of rhythm;
- (3) The traditional musical dueling, as well as solo and chorus responsorial mode, is not applicable to the part-singing in unison in the congregational singing of gospel songs.

Compared with the difficulties of composing new music based on Lisu folk tunes for the translated liturgical texts, it is relatively easier to absorb Lisu language idioms into the text translation—in either literal translation or paraphrasing—as the missionaries tried to do in the Lisu Bible translation. Moreover, Lisu is a single-syllable language, a feature quite compatible with a hymn meter. There are two primary kinds of such absorption of the Lisu language. The first is to translate English texts using a Lisu poetic structure featuring verses in parallelism. DM4, “*Leizeil Matjjo ma Mutgua*” (The Spacious Firmament), is one such representative example (see Figure 4.6).

Line	Original English texts	Lisu texts	Translation of Lisu version
1	The spacious firmament on high,	<i>Leizeil matjjo ma mutgua gua,</i>	The sky is borderless,
2	with all the blue ethereal sky,	<i>yibel matjjo ma mutwut gua</i>	and the firmament is endless.
3	and spangled heavens, a shining frame,	<i>Gussar serlerler dexdal ma,</i>	The stars are brightly shining,
4	their great Original proclaim.	<i>mitmi bbirleirleir ngotda ma</i>	and the sun is illuminating the earth.
5	The unwearied sun from day to day	<i>Yi dail jeir watnix a ma lairpaiq,</i>	The almighty hands that created it,
6	does his Creator's power display;	<i>yi dail desair jox ma lairpaiq</i>	and the powerful hands that sowed it;
7	and published to every land,	<i>Mutgoq dduddu gua molgget la,</i>	Present the work to the world,
8	the work of an almighty hand.	<i>muttair goqtait gua malgget la</i>	and tell it to the people.

Figure 4.6. Comparison between the original English text of the hymn “The Spacious Firmament” and the Lisu version “*Leizei Matjjo ma Mutgua.*”

As previously discussed in Chapter 2.4, there are twenty-two *ddoqmuq mutgguat* whose original texts were almost entirely translated or re-written in this fashion (Zhu Faqing 2008: 842). Closer examination shows that most of their original English versions do not have parallelism at all; however, their common feature, the repetition of individual phrases and/or a refrain following each verse, is favorable to the application of the Lisu poetic form: using two sentences—respectively comprising different individual words to express a similar meaning (see Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7. The demonstration of how the parallel structure are used to substitute for the original recurring phrase based on DM72 “*Nguaqzhi Qarsair Guabbei Alshit Matjjo,*” the Lisu version of “Only a Sinner.”

Line	Original English texts	Lisu texts	Translation of Lisu version
1	Only a sinner, saved by grace!	<i>Nguaq niaq zujjotsu a leit ngax mi</i>	I am a sinner, but—
2	Only a sinner, saved by grace!	<i>Nguaq niaq qargelsu a leit ngax mi</i>	I am a demon-filled person, but—
3	This is my story, to God be the glory—	<i>Yi reitqeit guabbei sairmia me a ma</i>	Having life in his grace.
4	I'm only a sinner, saved by grace!	<i>Yi niqnu a ma guabbei jjiu me a lo.</i>	Saved in his love.

In the above example, two repeated phrases (“only a sinner” and “saved by grace”) are vividly translated into parallel-paired verses, in which “sinner” is also elaborated as “a demon-filled person;” and the other phrase “saved by grace” is expanded with an additional layer of meaning, “save in his love.”

For example, in DM 53, “*Sipat niaq Yot Lodei nga lo*” (A Shelter in the Time of Storm), the key word “storm” in the featured repeated verse “a shelter in the time of storm” was translated into both “*totngot*” (storm wind) and “*lohan*” (storm rain). Another recurring thematic phrase, “Jesus’s rock,” is not only literally translated into “*Sipat niaq yot lo’ddei nga lo; Jisu niaq yot ealqi nga lo*” (Lord is my rock and Jesus is my rock), but also further interpreted with various descriptive paired verses, such as “*lo’ddei guabbei yijjai ddola; ealqi guabbei bbiatyi ddola*” (water outflows from rock; honey is collected from rock).<sup>122</sup>

The descriptive parallel-paired verses are also used in the free translation. DM 80, “*Yesu Mutgua ddaijjei niaq*” (literally, “Rising up to the heaven”; original English title, “Holy Spirit, Faithful Guide”), is a perfect example to illustrate this usage. The recurring texts at the end of each stanza, “Whisper softly, ‘wand’rer, come! Follow me. I’ll guide thee home,” was freely translated using multiple verses in the parallel structure, all of which are unrelated to the literal meaning of the original lyrics.

The second type of absorption relates to the first one, but it particularly highlights another important feature of Lisu language: the Lisu four-syllable compound (the four-word-couplet) in which the first two syllables (words) are semantically repeated in the latter two. When such a phrasal structure is adopted in the textual translation, the first

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<sup>122</sup> The second Lisu word for rock, “*ealqi*,” means a particular type of rock wall where rock bees are often nesting.

half of the compound often occurs in the first verse of translated parallel-paired lines and the second half in the other verse. There are fourteen Lisu four-syllable compounds used throughout the translation of the hymn “I will Never Cease to Love Him” in DM 206, “*Sipat Nguaq bbeix’et Yeimiat Nil*,” a song featuring strict parallelism throughout (see Figure 4.8).

Lisu four-syllable compounds	The division of each compound	
SI . . ɖ YE-SU	SI . . ɖ	YE-SU
Sʋ; ɠ W: ɠ	Sʋ; ɠ	W: ɠ
ɽ ɽ ɽ P	ɽ ɽ	ɽ P
NI, Nŋ NI, ʌ0	NI, Nŋ	NI, ʌ0
ɽ NYI ɽ Jŋ,	ɽ NYI	ɽ Jŋ,
M. ɠ M0. ɠ	M. ɠ	M0. ɠ
Rɛ: N, YE N,	Rɛ: N,	YE N,
JE Nʋ, Xɛ Nʋ,	JE Nʋ,	Xɛ Nʋ,
J GU Cɛ, GU	J GU	Cɛ, GU
NI, Nŋ Xɛ ʋ	NI, Nŋ	Xɛ ʋ
L0. . Kɔ H, Kɔ	L0. . Kɔ	H, Kɔ
CYU J G0. , ɠ	CYU J	G0. , ɠ
NI, Nŋ NI, ʌ0	NI, Nŋ	NI, ʌ0
XU RU YE J	XU RU	YE J

Figure 4.8. Fourteen Lisu four-syllable compounds used in DM 206 “*Sipat Nguaq bbeix’et Yeimiat Nil*” (I Will Never Cease to Love Him). Each is divided into two parts that are separately used to create parallel-paired verses. In order to better demonstrate the feature of the compound and how it can be divided, all examples are written in Old Lisu.

So far, I have examined the typical strategy that most missionaries adopted in the initial translation of Christian belief: to use appropriate indigenous idioms to express Christian ideas and concepts (Kaplan 1995: 13). In the Lisu hymnody, such strategy was to use the parallel structure and four-syllable compound in the translation of hymns to make the ways in which the Christian message is delivered more familiar to the Lisu.

Assimilation: Early four-part *mutgguat* composed by Christian Lisu

Seventeen *ddoqmuq mutgguat* included in DM have been identified by David Morse as music composed or/and lyrics written by the Christian Lisu, although he could

not articulate the process of identification (interview with David Morse on February 18, 2014). In fact, based on my cross-check of the information on these seventeen pieces' source hymnals provided in the 1997 edition of DM published in China, only eleven of them are likely to be Lisu compositions.

In the study of this small corpus of repertoire, I found that Lisu composers have seldom used indigenous musical materials as pre-compositional resources or experimented with musical hybridity combining both Western hymnody and Lisu vocal genres. Kaplan uses the term "assimilation" to characterize those cases in which elements from a non-Christian setting have been introduced into essentially Christian rituals (Kaplan 1995: 15). I have taken that idea and reversed it: through the assimilation of Western hymnody, Lisu Christians seemed to have mastered the basic composing techniques of writing four-part harmony, and they tried to use them in their own composition as much as possible, as analyzed below.

Besides David Morse, I also consulted other informants in order to identify prospective Lisu compositions within the *ddoqmuq mutgguat* repertoire; however, most of them expressed ignorance of this subject. For those few people who could provide limited information, they all reached a consensus that DM 140 "*Sipat Yesu Nguaq Jjaggu*" (Lord Jesus, My Road) was one indigenous *mutgguat* composed by Pastor Moses, one of the first-generation Lisu pastors, and also the first Lisu to write four-part *mutgguat* for worship.

Following the strophic structure of typical gospel songs, DM140 has four stanzas with each of the stanzas containing four lines of seven syllables. Repetition is the predominant feature of this tune. In this short eight-bar tune in ABAC structure, the same



In this example, parallel terms in the first two lines include “*Yesu*” and “*Jisu*” (“Jesus” and “Christ”), and “*jiagu*” and “*jjeipeir*” (“road” and “way”). The combination of two lines is essentially saying the same thing: Lord Jesus Christ is my road that leads in my life direction. In the same manner, the paired words in the next two lines, “*xet*” and “*jjei*” (“travelling” and “walking”), “*loqyei*” and “*gulei*” (“complete” and “finished”), and “*gaqchit*” and “*niqpu*” (“joyful” and “desired”), are set in parallel structure with each other, placing emphasis on the expression of the joyfulness of walking on the Lord’s road and eventually finishing the journey.

Besides DM140, according to David Morse, Pastor Moses translated “Bringing in the Sheaves” (DM154 “*Zzax’er ma tai Niqpu*”), one of the very popular gospel songs with texts originally written by Knowles Shaw. Moreover, Moses was also considered to have written the lyrics for four other *ddoqmuq mutgguat* (DM67, DM106, DM128, and DM220). Closer examination of them shows that in addition to parallelism Moses seemed to have adopted other strategies to write texts.

The text of DM 220, “*Mi’nai teima Gua diaqma tabol*” (As Long as We Are in the World), was written in both a prose and poetic style. Within four strophic stanzas, there is no structure of parallelism at all; instead, the prose-style texts are divided into phrases (pattern of syllables: 8:6:8:7) with little repetition in content. By contrast, the chorus starts with parallel-paired verses with internal repetition (see Figure 4.10), reinforcing the main idea that Christians’ grief will turn to joy in the love of Lord Jesus.

*ddudillei* (chorus)

*Jjox-sa lo, jjox-sa lo niq-pu lo, niq-pu*  
 Happy happy rejoicing rejoicing.

5  
*lo. A-lio-bbai niaq Ye-su Sip-pat, yot daiq niq-ma gu-get*  
 Because is Jesus Lord, we are heart given

9  
*diaq.*  
 is.

Figure 4.10. Trans-notation of the chorus of DM220 “*Mi’nai teima Gua diaqma tabol*” (As Long as We Are in the World) demonstrating the texts written in both prose and poetic styles. Note that only the melodic part, *tit sair* (part 1), is trans-notated.

Next, I will discuss three *ddoqmuq mutgguat* that have explicit dates of composition, DM220 (1917), DM15 (1918), and DM128 (1928), with a particular interest in the compositional techniques the Christian Lisu including the prospective use of traditional cultural elements as composing material, if applicable.

The first thing I found interesting is that all three pieces have a common musical form, rounded binary, or A-B-<sup>1/2</sup>A. <sup>1/2</sup>A means that the section repeats only half of the first A section (see Figure 4.11.a, Figure 4.11.b, and Figure 4.11.c).

Figure 4.11.a. The phrase structure of DM220 (1917) “*Niqma Gu’gget diaq*” (As Long as We Are in the World), a sectional rounded binary.

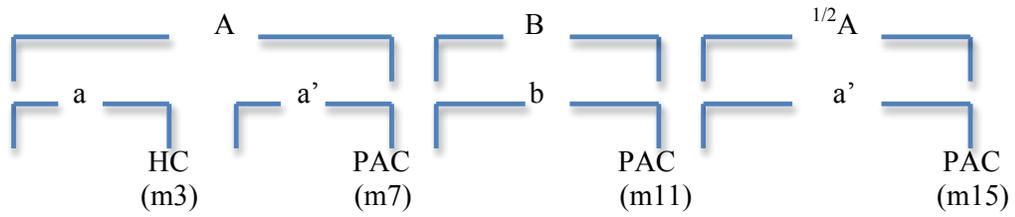


Figure 4.11.b. The phrase structure of DM15 (1918) “*Atnei Yesu Hun a taii*” (Of Old When Jesus Was Born), a sectional rounded binary.

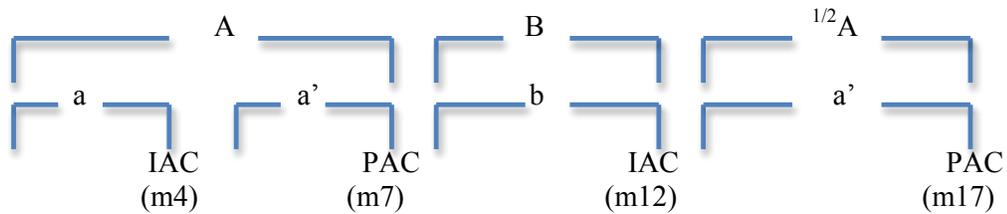
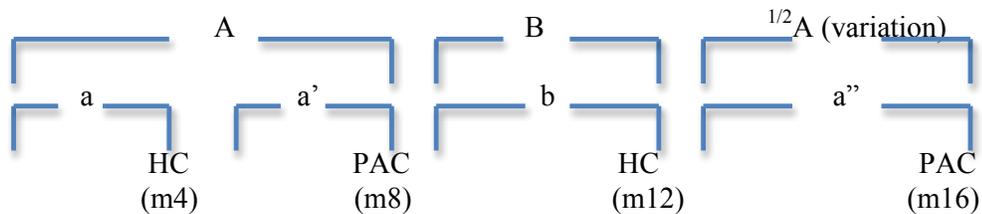


Figure 4.11.c. The phrase structure of DM128 (1928) “*Wusa niaq Yot dial Ku diaq lo*” (God Is Calling Us), an imperfect sectional rounded binary.



Note: HC=half cadence; IAC=imperfect authentic cadence; PAC=perfect authentic cadence.

Figure 4.11. Comparative structural analysis of DM220 (1917), DM15 (1918), and DM128 (1928), demonstrating their common musical form, rounded binary, or A-B-<sup>1/2</sup>A.

Close examination of the above figures shows that it is entirely possible that the composer of these three tunes might have been the same person, who was likely to have learned to compose using a certain musical form. Over the years between 1917 and 1928, it is noticeable the composer seemed to gradually master the compositional technique of this particular sectional rounded binary form. In DM220 (1917) and DM15 (1918), the

two parts of the binary form are of different length—the second part is longer—however, in DM128 written in 1928, not only are the two parts of the binary form of equal length (8+8), but there are also two phrases within a period (4+4). Additionally, in DM128 the songwriter made some modification in the  $^{1/2}A$  rather than completely copying a ' from the A section (see Figure 4.11.c.,  $^{1/2}A$  variation).

Besides the common musical structure, all three works are written in G major. In particular, the melodic contours of DM220 and DM128 have certain similarities (see Figure 4.12). It can be seen that the composer's creative skill in DM220 is less mature than that in DM128, as some melodic segmentation is not in accordance with the general setup of placing the longer note in an accent position throughout the remaining part of the hymn tune, which produces a sense of unbalance (see Measure 2, 3, 5, and 13).

**Melodic comparison between DM 128 and DM 220 (first part)**

Pastor Moses	Anonymous Lisu
DM 128	
DM 220	

Figure 4.12. Trans-notation of the first parts of DM128 and DM220, demonstrating the similarity of melodic contour between the two and the sense of unbalance in DM220, resulting from placing a short note in the accent position in Measures 2, 3, 5, and 13.

The three *ddoqmuq mutgguat* discussed above also retain two other linguistic features of most translated American gospel songs in DM. First of all, they often set a longer note to an auxiliary word to close each line, such as *niaq* (be), *lo* (exclamation), or *daiq* (a word to express passivity). Second, composers largely paraphrased Biblical texts for their lyrics rather than writing completely new texts. For example, the textual basis of DM220, “As Long as We Are in the World), is John 16: 33. The content of DM15 “Of Old When Jesus Was Born,” is based on Luke 2:7, and that of DM128, “God Is Calling Us,” is based on Mark 11:28-30 and John 8: 12; 19: 9.

It is worth mentioning how, in the actual singing practices, the local people might collectively alter some notes regardless of what is actually written in the hymnbook. During my fieldwork, I heard seven different congregations—from a small group within a village church to a large congregation of more than five hundred Christians—singing DM1 “*Middot airrit Lei’ar*” (To God Be the Glory).<sup>124</sup> Surprisingly, each of the congregations made the same melodic change in bars 15-17 (see Figure 4.13).

Original score

5 Actual singing version

Figure 4.13. Comparison between the original score and the transcription of seven congregations’ singing of mm. 15-17 in DM1 “To God Be the Glory”. Note that the actual pitches were sung differently; I standardized both transcriptions in E-flat Major (the original key signature indicated in the hymnbook) to facilitate comparison.

<sup>124</sup> The title of this hymn tune was translated as “*Sipat dail Ddoqmuq Lai*” in David Morse’s DX hymnal, which is more faithful to the original English title.

Figure 4.13 shows that the half step between E-flat and D was avoided by simply repeating the E-flat in bar 15. Then, in bar 16, in order to make the melodic flow smoother, the congregation made a corresponding change: since there are already three E-flats in bar 15, they chose to sing A-flat—G—F rather than G—G—F to avoid another repetition.

According to the song leaders I talked to, even though they realized those wrong notes in the congregational singing, they would tolerate the error, as most of the Christians learned this tune as it was from the very beginning, and therefore were already accustomed to singing it in this way. A few of them did try to teach the congregation the correct notes, but with little success (personal communication).

All accidentals in the original Western hymns were retained in the DM hymnal, represented by the letters A, E, O, U, and Y (see Figure 4.14). In the actual singing, ordinary Christian Lisu would often ignore these musical symbols and tend to sing slightly higher or lower than written. However, it is difficult to say whether the Lisu have problems singing a semitone, as both versions in Figure 4.14 have a semitone from G to A-flat, which they can sing in tune, not to mention the fact that skilled choir singers can sing those accidentals correctly.

C-major diatonic scale written in Lisu cipher notation	1	A	2	E	3	4	O	5	U	6	Y	7	1'
Solfège in the major scale	C do		D re		E me	F fa		G so		A la		B si	C do

Figure 4.14. C-major diatonic scale written in Lisu cipher notation, demonstrating musical symbols used in DM to designate chromatic notes (accidentals) within the scale.

Case study: Contemporary multi-part *mutgguat* composed by Chu Yongping (Yobei)

Although the Christian Lisu did use indigenous cultural materials for their new compositions, such adoption is rather minimal and far from being musically innovative. Besides the musical differences between certain Lisu vocal genres and American gospel songs as discussed at the beginning of this section, another important reason is that creating hybrid hymns required a solid bi-musical knowledge of both Lisu traditional music and Western hymn musical idioms, and most Christian composers have been lacking in these areas of knowledge over the years. As far as I know, there were no hymn composers in Nujiang who received formal musical training in higher education. Even within the church, pastoral staff members will just use Lisu solfège to facilitate the oral teaching of the hymn tune instead of giving the congregation instructions on how to read a DM score correctly.

I have discussed the ways in which the first-generation Lisu pastor Moses adopted indigenous cultural elements in his hymn composition, which was mainly shaped by his acquired knowledge of Lisu traditional music prior to his conversion to Christianity and his working experiences of assisting the Cookes with the Bible and hymn translation. In the present-day Nujiang Lisu church, there are a small number of hymn composers who graduated from the Yunnan Christian Seminary (Yunnan Jidujiao Shenxueyuan) and are currently teaching throughout Nujiang's Bible training centers and short-term peixunban.

Next, I will analyze multi-part *mutgguat* by one renowned Lisu composer, Chu Yongping, better known as *malpat* Yobei (Teacher Yobei, hereafter referred as Yobei), and use them to illustrate several noticeable factors that have had an impact on the hymn composing practices of the Christian Lisu in present-day Nujiang.

Yobei is one of Nujiang's first-generation seminary students (between 1998 and 2000) and currently a senior resident teacher in the Nujiang Prefecture Bible Training Center (he used to be an elementary school teacher). Several pastoral staff members I met had described him as the most prolific hymn composer in Nujiang. He can preach in both Lisu and Chinese, which makes him very popular in the Nujiang Lisu church.

Yobei never emphasized his ability to write complicated four-part *mutgguat* or talked in any detail about his composing process unless I took the initiative to ask him about a particular hymn tune. Sometimes he even forgot that he had written it. According to the composer himself, he has written several hundred Christian songs including both multi-part and monophonic short *mutgguat*; however, many of the manuscripts were not preserved well. He has been teaching a few of his surviving compositions in the Christian training classes, and some of his works are also being taught by other schoolteachers.

Preliminary examination of Yobei's most recent multi-part *mutgguat* shows that his music making has been influenced by several other styles in addition to the gospel song style. The modes of his composition include all three categories: translation, assimilation, and Christianization. In Kaplan's explanation of Christianization, he emphasizes the idea that "the process of Christianization involved the adaptation of a traditional African ritual so that it became of value to the development of a Christian life in a Christian community" (Kaplan 1995b: 16). Similarly, I use the term to refer to how a secular tune (either Chinese or Lisu) was adapted to facilitate the writing of a Christian song. Yobei's compositions fall mainly into three categories:

- 1) Gospel song style in stanza/refrain or strophic form (assimilation);
- 2) Text set to a newly composed tune inspired by a traditional Lisu tune (Christianization);
- 3) Composition with Chinese influence (translation and assimilation).

1) Gospel song style in stanza/refrain or strophic form (assimilation)

Most of Yobei's four-part *mutgguat* are modeled after typical gospel songs in the stanza-refrain or strophic form that most Christian Lisu have been exposed to from the very beginning of their conversion to Protestant Christianity. He has been following the conventional technique of balancing between tunes and words: a single syllable is usually set to a single note. The following is one of the representative examples in this category. It is also a good illustration to demonstrate how the *ddoqmuq mutgguat* repertoire in DM might provide the Lisu with melodic inspiration. Note that he replaced the original stanza/chorus with a strophic form (see Figure 4.15a and Figure 4.15b).

*Etssat Xelssat Un'ni Lai* (Too Much God's Grace to Count)

Chu Yongping (Yobei)

Chu Yongping (Yobei)

The image shows a musical score for a four-part setting of the song "Etssat Xelssat Un'ni Lai". The score is written in 4/4 time and consists of three systems of two staves each. The first system contains measures 1 through 5. The second system starts at measure 6 and contains measures 6 through 10. The third system starts at measure 11 and contains measures 11 through 15. The music is characterized by a steady, rhythmic accompaniment in the lower voice parts and a more melodic line in the upper voice parts. The harmony is primarily based on major thirds and perfect fourths, as noted in the caption.

Figure 4.15a. Transnotation of Yobei's "*Etssat Xelssat Un'ni Lai*" (Too Much God's Grace to Count), demonstrating his four-part *mutgguat* composition and his preference for using the major thirds and perfect fourths as harmonic intervals.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Robert Provine has noted (personal communication) that there are some "extraordinary things" such as the half-note chord in bar 6 and the simultaneous pitches D-E-F-G in bar 9 that are

## *Xelssat Niq Ddatma (At Calvary)*

William R. Newell

Daniel B. Towner



Figure 4.15b. Transnotation of the melody of DM 31 “At Calvary,” demonstrating its melodic similarity to the hymn tune shown in Figure 4.15a.

It should be noted that although many syllables’ tonal marks were omitted in DM, such omission, according to most of my informants, would not influence their understanding of the text meaning—as most of the texts used vernacular language or were selected from the Bible. Nevertheless, for maximum clarification Yobei would tend to mark the tone of each individual syllable in as many as possible of his own compositions.

2) Text set to a newly composed tune inspired by a traditional Lisu tune (Christianization)

Multipart songs adapted from traditional Lisu tunes are scarce—there are relatively more music examples composed in this style in the monophonic *mutgguat ssat* repertoire (for more details, see Chapter 6.2). The Christian Lisu today still do not have any obvious consciousness of using traditional music in their compositions. I have never

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uncommon in conventional four-part choral music. However, in the actual singing practice, since congregations rarely sing all the four parts, these unusual stylistic features are not noticeable.

heard a *mutgguat* composed in responsorial style, as featured in the traditional *bbaishit* singing, during my fieldwork. But I discovered that Yobei’s two Lisu-style multi-part *mutgguat* based on a traditional Lisu *yoqyet* tune were being taught in a short-term peixunban on the women ministry held at Zhu’en Church in July 2010 (see Figure 4.16a, Figure 4.16b, and Figure 4.16c).

A short excerpt of one of the traditional *yoqyet* tunes



Figure 4.16a. Transcription of the skeleton melody of a traditional *yoqyet* tune based on Yobei’s short verbal rendition on May 27, 2015.

*Niqca Yesu daiq Han'lei lai* (To Have a Faith in Jesus Quickly)

Chu Yongping (*Yobei*)

Chu Yongping (*Yobei*)



Figure 4.16b. Transnotation of Yobei’s Lisu-style song “*Niqca Yesu daiq Han'lei lai*” (To Have a Faith in Jesus Quickly).

### *Sipat Mit Nu Yei dial la* (Are You Willing to Do God's Work)

Chu Yongping (Yobei)

Chu Yongping (Yobei)

Allegro

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with a key signature of one flat. The second staff starts at measure 5, the third at measure 9, and the fourth at measure 13. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the fourth staff.

Figure 4.16c. Trans-notation of the other Lisu-style song “*Sipat Mit Nu Yei dial la*” (Are You Willing to Do God’s Work?) by Yobei. Note that only the melodic part is provided for the purpose of better demonstrating the recurring melodic figures of the perfect fourth, minor third, and major second within a minor pentatonic mode.

As in the traditional *yoqyet* tune, a minor pentatonic scale is used throughout these two Lisu Christian compositions. Meanwhile, similarly to the recurring melodic figures in the *yoqyet* tune, they also emphasize such intervals as the perfect fourth, minor third, and major second. As a matter of fact, Yobei’s preference for using the perfect fourths and major thirds as the main harmonic intervals is quite consistent with his other compositions in gospel song style.

### 3) Composition with Chinese influence (translation and assimilation)

Besides the influence of Lisu traditional music and gospel song styles, Yobei’s *mutgguat* composition was also affected by his long-term interaction with the Han Chinese. His Chinese educational/teaching background—he has sixteen years of Chinese teaching experiences in three elementary schools within his hometown Chengga Xiang

(Chengga Township)—gave him access to various Chinese-language songs including patriotic revolution songs. One of his early songs, “*Wusa Yiljeir Mit Mi Ddot*” (Glory that God Has Created), written in August 2006, bears melodic similarity to the famous patriotic song “*Wo wei Zuguo Xian Shiyou*” (I Dedicate Myself to the Oil Exploration for My Country), from the 1960s.

As for the translation of Chinese hymns, on the one hand, Yobei tried writing hymns in Chinese directly and then providing Lisu subtitles below the Chinese text; on the other hand, like most other seminary students, he translated many Chinese hymns that he had learned in the seminary into Lisu, and taught both Chinese and Lisu versions to his Lisu students in various peixunban. He, as well as several other Lisu seminary graduates, translated a few hymns composed by their teacher, Du Peiliang, a renowned Chinese hymn composer.

However, there has been a linguistic problem in the process of translation, as Chinese is more succinct than Lisu. Regardless of the possibility of different translated Lisu versions, omitting unnecessary words without sacrificing the accuracy of the translation has become a commonly used strategy to solve this problem, as Yobei explained to me thus:

As you might have noticed, your language (Chinese) is more succinct than Lisu. For example, when we translate the four-syllable Chinese phrase “*bici xiang'ai*” (love each other) into Lisu, it becomes a nine-syllable one: *tityot qot tityot niqnu* (love between one person and another). If there are only four notes for each of the syllables in the original Chinese song, in order to keep the melody unaltered what we can do is to remove unnecessary words from the literal translation in order to set Lisu text to the tune. In this case, the first half of the translation—*tityot qot tityot* (one person and another person)—can be omitted. (Personal communication with Yobei on May 27, 2015)

## Conclusion

In this section, I have demonstrated different styles of indigenized Lisu multi-part *mutgguat*. In addition to the imitation of American gospel songs, Lisu cultural elements and those of the Han Chinese also have affected the hymn composition of Christian Lisu to varying degrees. Noticeably, Lisu musical style has never played an essential role in the process of musical indigenization, whereas language and folk literature have played a greater role as evidenced in the frequent use of indigenous literary language and poetic forms. Such an attempt has resulted in the unexpected revitalization of certain aspects of indigenous culture in the Christian domain, such as the use of parallelism in a sermon, in a slogan hung on a church wall, or in a Christian New Year couplet.

I was intrigued by this anomaly in the indigenization of Christianity. Why have the Nujiang Christian Lisu rarely composed what we can perceive as Lisu-style hymns with a highly audible Lisu affiliation? Why has there never been an obvious attempt to advocate indigenous musical expression over translated English hymnody in the indigenous hymn composition? These are questions that I try to answer toward the end of this dissertation.

### 4.3 Modes of *mutgguat* singing on various occasions

This section analyzes the primary contexts in which different kinds of *mutgguat* are sung within the church. Certain genres and categories are highlighted in different kinds of activities.

Nowadays there are three principal modes of *mutgguat* singing in the Lisu church. The most fundamental mode is congregational singing. This is the mode in which the entire congregation sings *ddoqmuq mutgguat* during regular worship services and on

other special occasions. Another mode is choir singing. In this mode, a choir—either a relatively fixed church choir or an ad hoc group formed on site—sings in front of the entire congregation. The singing style is similar to that of the congregational singing, except that a majority of performances are pre-prepared, and the repertoire is more diverse—any four-part hymns can be performed, not just *ddoqmuq mutgguat*. The third, and also the most flexible, mode is the musical profession of faith by an individual or a small group.<sup>126</sup> Individual singing is also pre-prepared; however, the repertoire and performance style are distinct from those of the first two singing modes.

In practice, different modes of singing are mixed together. The following discussion will be based on the contexts and events in which all of the three modes are differently utilized. Figure 4.17 is a summary of the major church activities containing singing.

Figure 4.17. Major activities in the Lisu Protestant church.

English names	Lisu names in Lisu Pinyin
A. Worship (five times a week) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wednesday worship</li> <li>- Saturday worship</li> <li>- Sunday worship (three times)</li> <li>- Communion worship (first Sunday of each month)</li> </ul>	worship ( <i>watku zzirddu</i> ) Sunday noon worship ( <i>sipat hainrni morlo watku zzirddu</i> ) Holy Communion ( <i>Sipat Baba</i> )
B. Bible-study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long-term studies in the Christian training center</li> <li>- Short-term training classes (<i>peixunban</i>)</li> </ul>	Bible study ( <i>wusa malmi so</i> )
C. Sunday school	<i>sipat hainrni so zzirddu</i>
D. Holidays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easter</li> <li>- Festival of Thanks (New Rice Festival)</li> <li>- Christmas</li> <li>- New Year</li> </ul>	Easter ( <i>Sailyirla Bair</i> ) Festival of Thanks ( <i>Xalmo Bair</i> ), also called New Rice Festival ( <i>Zzaxshir Bair</i> ) Christmas ( <i>Yesu Heinbair</i> ) New Year ( <i>Korshir</i> )

<sup>126</sup> Sometimes the group is even bigger than a choir, but always smaller than the whole congregation.

<p>F. Other Spiritual Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Related to the church growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Dedication of a new church</li> <li>b. Celebration of the foundation of a new Bible school</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Related to the life cycle of an individual Christian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Baptism</li> <li>b. Marriage</li> <li>c. Funeral</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>dedication of a new church (<i>hinshir ddu bair</i>)</p> <p>baptism (<i>ggoxddeit diq</i>)  marriage (<i>ssarmerje</i>)  funeral (<i>coshil dul</i>)</p>
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In the worship service

As the worship service forms the foundation for most other church activities, it is essential to first examine the relatively fixed liturgical form of a worship service and how singing is customarily embedded in it. The Lisu term for the worship service is a combination of a noun and a verb: the noun “*zzirddu*” means “a gathering,” indicating the organizational form of the activity, and the verb “*watku*” means “to pray,” specifying the purpose of the gathering.

The tradition of having five worship services a week—one on Wednesday evening, one on Saturday evening, and three on Sunday—started early in the missionary age (personal communication). The entire Sunday is devoted to worshipping God, and three services are separately held in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. There are two types of Sunday service: the ordinary service and the Communion service (*sipat baba*) held on the first Sunday of each month. The standardized liturgical agenda used throughout Nujiang has never been expressly stated; according to most church leaders I talked with, however, it is a tradition inherited from generation to generation. One learns the procedure simply through going to church with parents in one’s childhood and attending church activities by oneself when growing up (personal communications).

There are two main reasons for taking the procedure of the Sunday noon service (*sipat hainrni morlo watku zzirddu*) as an example to demonstrate how various types of *mutgguat* singing have been integrated into the service (see Figure 4.18). First, it is the lengthiest service with the maximum number of attendees—the other four services are much shorter and often omit the section of musical profession (see Figure 4.18, point 6 and 8).<sup>127</sup> Second, it contains all of the three singing modes.

English names	Lisu names in Lisu Pinyin
1. Opening singing (optional)	<i>wulddu mutgguat gguax</i>
2. Opening prayer;	<i>wulddu watku</i>
3. 1 <sup>st</sup> congregational singing	<i>atrritsu mutgguat gguax</i>
4. All singing “Doxology”	Doxology ( <i>Sayo Titggoxddeit Xelggetddu</i> )
5. Second prayer	
6. 1 <sup>st</sup> musical profession of faith—a section of devotional singing to God	<i>xelgget rriq</i> , literally, “time for praise singing”
7. Sermon	<i>malmiit ja</i>
8. 2 <sup>nd</sup> musical profession of faith (optional)	
9. 2 <sup>nd</sup> congregational singing	
10. Closing prayer	<i>loqyei watku</i>
11. Closing singing	<i>loqyei mutgguat gguax</i>

Figure 4.18. The standard procedure of the Lisu Protestant Sunday noon service

The entire service constitutes three core parts: a sermon, three prayers, and *mutgguat* singing in between.<sup>128</sup> Additional practices are dispensable, varying from church to church, but the three core elements remain the same.

Usually, about fifteen minutes before the service starts a pastoral staff member will lead everyone present to sing together or will teach a new song. The length of pre-service singing is quite flexible, depending on how many Christians arrive ahead of time and

<sup>127</sup> Nowadays many young Christians work in the Nujiang’s urban area, and therefore would not attend services on weekdays, or even the Sunday morning service. The Sunday noon service is the only one where a majority of churchgoers are probably present.

<sup>128</sup> The only exception I have observed is that in some small and remote churches there are no preachers, and therefore their worship services only contain prayers and *mutgguat* singing.

how long it takes to wait for the others to arrive. The service then begins with the presider (*rriqhot'su*) saying words to God (opening prayer) asking for a blessing for smooth progress in the service of the day.

After the opening prayer, the assigned song leader (*mutgguat hot'su*) then leads the entire congregation to sing two or three *ddoqmuq mutgguat*. Ideally, the selected *mutgguat* should textually relate to the sermon content of the day; however, in most cases song leaders tend to choose those of the most familiar or their favorite *mutgguat*, regardless of the relevance of their content. Each *ddoqmuq mutgguat* has a fixed key in DM; in the actual performance, however, the congregation just follows the pitch set by the song leader—he or she always gives the tonic chord in arpeggio fashion and concludes on the held tonic note.

When congregational singing is finished, the entire congregation stands up and sings a short “Doxology” (*Sayo Titggoxddeit Xelgetddu*, literally “the praise of the Holy Trinity”). It is usually sung in unison; in some churches, however, I heard male Christians adding an additional melodic line, often a third above or below.

The second prayer quickly follows the “Doxology” without any interruption. Then comes the first musical profession of faith, a section of devotional singing dedicated to God on a voluntary basis. This section only allows limited performances due to the time limitation. If there are too many people signing up in advance for the devotional singing, the musical profession of faith will be divided into two parts, with the second one scheduled after the sermon; otherwise, there will be only one musical profession of faith.

The sermon interprets the selected Biblical verses in vernacular Lisu in an easily understandable way. The preaching is assigned, though not exclusively, to a pastor, an

evangelist, or one of the resident pastoral staff members who has a certain degree of theological training. The sermon is the essential part of the service and lasts at least half an hour, depending on the topic as well as the preacher's oratory style. The Biblical verses to be interpreted will be announced at the beginning of the sermon. Then, the entire congregation reads after the preacher, sentence by sentence.

The concluding part of the service includes the second congregational singing, closing prayer, and closing singing. The second communal singing is similar to the first one but often led by a different song leader. Quickly following the final prayer without any pause, a short congregational singing of "*Reitqei Ddatma*" (Great Grace) concludes the worship service.<sup>129</sup> Other commonly sung closing pieces include the first verse of DM82 "*Wusa Nu Xalmo*" (We Thank you, God; or Revive Us again), excerpts from DM105 "*Nguaxnu Put'a ma Malmit dail Na'naq*" (What Did He Do), and DM266 "*Nilni Jjix'a ma Titnil Goljjei o*" (O Lord, Another Day Has Flown).

The entire congregation leaves the church quietly according to position and gender: first the women seated in the front, then the women at the back, followed by the men sitting in the front, and finally the men at the back. All church pastoral staff members are the last to leave.

During the worship service, the presider and the preacher often sit on the left side of the platform. Two song leaders and the persons who pray on behalf of the entire congregation are seated on the right. Distinguished guests are invited to sit on the left

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<sup>129</sup> This short song is not included in DM. None of my informants could tell its source hymnal. They just learned it in the church activities. Later I found it by myself in a hymnal titled *Mutgguat be Wusa Malmit* (Hymns for worship and selected scripture readings in Lisu) without any publishing information. The hymnal was owned by an old senior evangelist, Yu Xiangqian, in Shidonghe Church.

with the presider.<sup>130</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 3.2, the congregation is primarily separated by gender. Men often sit on the left (facing the platform) and women on the right; this is an arrangement made in order to avoid unnecessary talking between male and female Christians during the service (personal communication). Also, older people are mostly seated in the front whereas the young Christians sit at the back mostly due to their late arrival.

After this introduction of the skeleton liturgical form of a Sunday noon service, I now focus on how different singing modes are customarily utilized in it.

There are two segments of congregational singing in the service. The first warms up the service and leads to the sermon. The second is after the sermon and concludes it. Congregational singing also aims to cultivate a collective act of worship for the praise, glory, and pleasure of God. The repertoire for such communal singing is exclusively *ddoqmuq mutgguat* from DM. I did not observe any other kinds of hymns being sung within this context during my fieldwork.

By contrast, individual singing in the musical profession of faith section is not only the most flexible part of the worship service but also the only way through which an individual Christian stands out, facing the entire congregation. This section directly determines the length and spiritual atmosphere of the service. Any individual or group can pre-prepare one singing program or more for presenting on a given day.

The order of performance is pre-arranged by the presider, and the names of the presenters and songs are then announced one by one during the musical profession of faith. Christians from the host church often perform first, but if the church runs a Sunday

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<sup>130</sup> I was always considered to be a special guest, and therefore was invited to sit on the platform whenever I attended a church activity. Every time I had to kindly refuse their kindness and stay in the proper position for the purpose of better documentation.

school, before the official performance there is a time slot reserved for the school children.<sup>131</sup> The teacher(s) always stand(s) at the side and perform(s) along with those children. The announcement is quite simple: “XXX (name of the individual performer or the group), *xelgget laix* (come and sing to praise God). XXX (name of the individual performer or the group for the next program), *jjatgget* (prepare yourself).” Everyone concludes the performance by saying “*Wusa reitqeit dail xalmo* (Thanks to the grace of God).”

In terms of music repertoire, *xelgget mutgguat*, and *mutgguat ssat* are the most-sung genres in the musical profession. One or two ad hoc choirs always sing four-part *xelgget mutgguat* first. Other individual singing—mostly the combination of *mutgguat ssat* singing and *daibbit* dance—follows.<sup>132</sup> A few conservative churches did not allow the *mutgguat ssat* and *daibbit* performances in the weekly worship service until recently, and therefore only one musical profession of faith is scheduled after the sermon.

In the three great religious festivals

Major Christian holidays in the Lisu church include Easter (*Sailyirla Bair*), Festival of Thanks (*Xalmo Bair*)—also called New Rice Festival (*Zzax'shir Bair*)—and Christmas (*Yesu Heinbair*). In general, all the churches within a large administrative village often celebrate each of the religious festivals together. Each church usually takes a turn to host the event; however, some churches organize more than the others do, because they own a larger church building, as well as a better-equipped kitchen. Since the core procedure of

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<sup>131</sup> There are two primary purposes to open Sunday school courses: one is to instill children with Christian beliefs in an easy and informal way (singing, dancing, and drawing) and the other is to prevent children from playing around the church, thus ensuring the normal conduct of the service. Kids are gathered together in a small room or simply outside the church.

<sup>132</sup> In the second stage of my fieldwork in Nujiang, there were more programs featuring *daibbit* dance accompanied by pre-recorded *mutgguat ssat* music.

all festivals largely remains the same in spite of their varied themes, I will conduct a thematic analysis with the focus on the features of musical practices instead of giving a separate discussion of each festival.

Both Christmas and Easter span several days. The starting and ending dates of Christmas are relatively fixed: to begin no earlier than December 20 or conclude later than December 27. By contrast, the date of the Easter celebration is quite flexible. While most churches in Lushui celebrate it on the same weekend each April, coordinated by the county two organizations, there is no unified regulation of the Easter schedule in Fugong: it can start on the evening of any Friday in April—or even in late March—and continues until the Sunday evening of the same week or the next Monday morning.

The date of Festival of Thanks is most flexible among the three religious festivals. Meanwhile, unlike the Easter and Christmas celebrations that are held over a prolonged period of time, it is a one-day or one-service event and can be celebrated on any Sunday between late September and early December, depending on the actual time of the annual corn harvest from place to place. Since many villages will have their Festival of Thanks gathering at different times, Christians are able to attend more celebrations nearby without influencing their participation in the most important one held by their own church. Strictly speaking, it is more like a celebration for a good harvest year, as indicated in its more popular name, New Rice/Harvest Festival. The only obvious religious association is that Christians have ascribed the harvest to God's blessings and protection.

In terms of the ways of celebration, all three festivals comprise two essential parts: the themed service and the communal feast. The procedure for the themed service varies

between festivals, especially in the content of prayers, sermons, and *mutgguat* singing, but the skeleton form is highly standardized, in accordance with that of a Sunday noon worship service. For the Festival of Thanks celebration, there is only one large service, whereas both Christmas and Easter contain a series of services, usually three full services—in the morning, at noon, and in the evening—in the middle two days, and two short services at the beginning and end of the festival. In the case of Easter, the first short service is on the Friday evening and the last on the Monday morning.

Between services, all participants have a collective repast: either everyone eats together in the church courtyard or they eat separately in small groups due to the space limitation. In the latter situation, the representatives of each visiting church get the food from the kitchen and bring it back to the place where they live. The host church is in charge of preparing two meals a day, one in the morning around 10 AM, after the morning service, and the other in the afternoon around 5 PM, after the noon service. There is only one big feast during Festival of Thanks (see Figure 4.19).



Figure 4.19. The banquet held during the Festival of Thanks in Baihualing Church on November 25, 2012. Guests and representatives of neighboring churches not only gave performances in the main festive service but also offered fresh pork, live chickens, and bags of newly cropped rice.

Meanwhile, in the celebrations of Easter and Christmas, the hosting church provides accommodations for visiting Christians; however, due to the large number of participants, there is always a lack of enough sleeping space, and therefore several people very often have to share one bed, not to mention the fact that everyone has to bring their own bedding.

Prior to the first service of each festival, the people of the host church will line up at the church gate and give a warm welcome to the visiting church delegations from afar through singing DM273 “*Bair Yesu Gaketgua diaq*” (Welcome to Festival Guests). Most sections of musical profession of faith in the three festivals are lengthier than those in the regular worship service. Each of the festivals will reach its climax after the most significant sermon, such as the one describing the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter and the one telling the story of his birth on Christmas. After that comes the lengthiest musical profession of faith, which tends to turn the festival into a gala party. Sometimes the party will become more secular and moments of bordering on chaos will occur.<sup>133</sup>

I still remember one such gala party. On the evening of April 7, 2013, the second-to-last day of the Easter celebration within Lishadi Village of Fugong County, after pastor Jesse (Feng Rongxin) finished preaching, food and drinks had been immediately brought into the church before the second musical profession of faith started. From then on, the entire evening gathering, which was supposed to be the most important one, turned into an indoor pageant. The highlight was still a variety of music performances, twenty-two of which were *mutgguat ssat* songs and/or *daibbit* dances (with only two

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<sup>133</sup> Missionaries also had a similar observation on this feature; as Eugene Morse writes in his memoir, “Given the Lisu nature, these conventions [during the 1968 Christmas season] were as much a social gathering as a religious occasion” (Morse 1974: 178).

choir programs); however, food, drinks, and chatting between Christians inevitably distracted everyone's attention from the original focus of the night: to celebrate God's resurrection.

In the musical professions of faith in all three festivals, the host church will perform first: usually, but not always, depending on the musical ability of its church members, a new *mutgguat ssat* and *daibbit* combination specially written for the occasion. Each of the delegations, on behalf of their own village church, is supposed to prepare at least one program for each service during the festival. Although any musical styles are welcomed, there are actually much more programs of individual singing and dancing to *mutgguat ssat* music than those of choir singing. In the case of Festival of Thanks, the section of musical profession itself is the highlight of the celebration. In the Festival of Thanks I attended in Baihualing Church on November 25, 2012, there were sixteen programs of the *mutgguat ssat* and *daibbit* combination in stark contrast to the five choir performances of the day.

The preference for *mutgguat ssat* performances in most of the religious festivals I attended is quite apparent; however, I never heard Christians belittle traditional four-part singing, even though some of them were not interested in choir singing at all. By contrast, it is the performance of *mutgguat ssat* and *daibbit* on which there are different views. I also found that the acceptability of *mutgguat ssat* and *daibbit* repertoire to the Christian Lisu might have some correlation to the degree of their contact with the outside world, as evidenced in my observation between two Easter celebrations in Fugong.

Shuangmidi Cun (Shuangmidi Village) of Shangpa Town is a poor village, just five kilometers away from the town but lacking country paved road access. According to the

village elder Ge Shadi, there were about 1,200 villagers in the village by 2013, among whom 840 were Christians including 105 aged believers (personal communication). Shuangmidi's 2013 Easter celebration was held from March 29 to April 1. During the entire series of eight services, Christians sang twenty-eight *ddoqmuq mutgguat* in the form of congregational singing, not counting those sung in the musical professions of faith. Although there were still a large number of *mutgguat ssat* and *daibbit* performances, the general atmosphere was rather solemn.

By contrast, Yiludi Church is situated right along Nujiang's main road within the seat of Shiyueliang Township. The church hosted the 2013 Easter celebration of Lishadi administrative village on April 5-8. There were only sixteen *ddoqmuq mutgguat* performed, including those sung by the congregation and by groups in the musical professions of faith. Christian pop music obviously occupied a dominant position in the overall festival music scene—more than thirty of the items performed were *mutgguat ssat* and *daibbit*.<sup>134</sup> In the evening gala party on the second-to-last day, I saw a small number of non-Christian Han Chinese joining the church for the musical entertainment.

Christmas is the most important Christian holiday in the Lisu church. Even a small village is willing to accommodate hundreds of guests and welcome Christians from neighboring churches to celebrate Christmas with them. One of the CIM missionaries F.J. Fitzwilliam describes the scene of a Lisu Christmas thus:

Folks are arriving all that day [the day before the festival starts]. Each one must enter the village through the gate built for the occasion up on "Reception Hill." The guests must wait outside the gate while the villagers and previously arrived guests sing the welcome song. The song is punctuated at frequent intervals by shots from the numerous guns brought out to help celebrate the event. After the song everybody inside the gate lines up, the guests come in and shake hands with each one. (Fitzwilliam 1931: 1987)

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<sup>134</sup> This is just incomplete statistics, as I did not attend each of the musical profession sections.

The Christmas tradition mentioned in this quote, gun firing in order to welcome the guests from afar, has now completely disappeared; however, some other traditions are still well preserved, including the arch of flowers as the welcoming gate, festive plant decorations within the church, and occasional game playing between services. Western carols (DM14-23), part of the *ddoqmuq mutgguat* repertoire, are the most commonly sung pieces in a Christmas gathering.



Figure 4.20. An outdoor Christmas gathering, Zileng River (Zileng He), Pihe Township, December 25, 2013.

Money collection is not the central focus of all festivals, but is always integrated into the major service. In the Easter celebration, a donation is often collected on Saturday evening. There are two ways of donating money. Most often, all participants—from pastoral staff members to the ordinary Christians—successively bring their donation to the collection box (*dilggerggu*) at the front and then return to their seats. This is an orderly mode of collection, presenting a kind of solemn atmosphere. By contrast, the other mode usually causes a certain degree of chaos. In this mode, the collection box is passed around the seated congregation. People just throw money into the box.

In either mode, the same DM162 “*Alshit Lairshu Jjoq’a La*” (Will There Be Any Stars?) is repeatedly sung by the entire congregation until the end. Other commonly sung *mutgguat* for the money collection are DM33 *sair*<sup>1</sup> “*Cojeirsu Nguaq Watdil Ddatma*” (When I Survey the Wondrous Cross) and DM160 “*Mityei Lai*” (To the Work). As a side note, in the dedication of the new church, in addition to the second “chaos” mode of donation, there is also a registered money collection prior to the ceremony starts. The church representatives will give their donations to the host church staff members at the reception desk; both the donators’ names and the amount of donation are recorded.

Singing on other occasions

#### *The New Year*

The Lisu term for the new year is “*korshir*”; literally, “*kor*” means “year” and “*shir*” stands for “new.” The Lisu New Year has been designated as a prefecture holiday since 1990, and it is scheduled annually on December 20<sup>th</sup>. Nowadays, along with the development of Nujiang’s tourism industry, the Lisu New Year has been refashioned into an official festival (*bair*). The holiday events are held either in October along with the National Day celebration or in December. In recent years, the prefectural or county governments have taken turns hosting a themed activity of the year. Participation in those official celebrations is limited to urban residents and tourists from outside Nujiang. Very different from the official new year celebration, in the vast rural areas both Christian and non-Christian Lisu often celebrate it based on the family unit. In those family gatherings, it is the slaughter of pigs for the big repast and reunion of family members that become a synonym for the New Year. The time of celebration differs from place to place.

Not every church has a formal celebration, except for the special services held on the Eve or the first day of the New Year. For all those having a tradition of organizing more activities, the festival performances and other festival activities such as sports and games are usually held starting on January 1 and continuing for several days.

Many churches in Fugong County, especially those in and around Shangpa Town, have a tradition of delivering blessings on New Year's Eve starting at midnight. The church pastoral staff members will take ordinary Christian volunteers—divided into small groups—and send New Year blessings from door to door to all the Christian families affiliated with the village church.<sup>135</sup>

I attended one such activity on December 31, 2013, in Latudi Village of Shangpa Town. There were ten small teams with ten persons included in each of them. I joined in the one led by Alkix. Once we arrived at each household, Alkix and another female leader would knock on the door first. Alkix then led the team to sing a short tune (sung to the melody of “Happy Birthday”) saying that “. . . This year has passed and a New Year already started. Open the door and be ready to receive God's blessings” (see Figure 4.21-1). Meanwhile, during the singing, the female leader affixed the house door with a red couplet of Christianized New Year blessings, similar to the chunlian tradition of the Han Chinese. After the blessed family opened the door and handed over their pre-prepared new year offerings—mostly food such as eggs, rice, and fruit, but a few people also give money—to the singing group, who was supposed to not only sing the blessing songs to each household but also carry the collected food offerings all the way along (and Figures 4.21-2).

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<sup>135</sup> In the grassroots church, the pastoral staff members know every affiliated Christian very well, and therefore they can identify which households are Christian families in their own village.

## **KORSHIR MUTGGUAT**

New Year Song

Anonymous

Lisu lyrics transcribed by Ying Diao

Musical notation for the song 'KORSHIR MUTGGUAT'. It consists of three staves of music in 3/4 time. The first staff contains the lyrics: kor shir hainr ni qi la'o kor lu hainr ni gol. The second staff contains: 5 jjei wu sa reit qeit dail xal mo - wu sa nu dail xal. The third staff contains: mo=.

English lyrics: The New Year has arrived; the old year just passed; thank the grace of God; thank you, my God. (Translated by Diao Ying)

Figure 4.21-1. Transcription of the last part of the New Year tune sung before the house owner opens the door and welcomes the group, January 1, 2014. The singing group sang in different keys each time, so I transcribed it in C Major to demonstrate the basic “Happy Birthday” melody.

## **ETSSAT XELSSAT NU METZZIX**

You Have Received Blessings

Anonymous

Lisu lyrics transcribed by Ying Diao

Musical notation for the song 'ETSSAT XELSSAT NU METZZIX'. It consists of four staves of music in 2/4 time. The first staff contains the lyrics: et ssat xel ssat nu met zzix. The second staff contains: 5 et ssat xel ssat nu met zzix. The third staff contains: 9 wu sa reit qeit nu met zzix. The fourth staff contains: 13 nu wat dail xal mo lo - lo.

English lyrics: You have received blessings; you have received blessings; you have received the grace of god; you have been thanked.

Figure 4.21-2. Transcription of the blessing song sung during the food donation process. Similarly, I transcribed the basic melody in C Major, as the singing group sang in different keys each time.

Besides regular worship services, three religious holidays, and the Lisu New Year, there are other recurring spiritual events in the Lisu church, and they aim to celebrate either an important occasion in the development of a church such as the dedication of a new church or a milestone in the life cycle of an individual Christian such as one's baptism, wedding, or funeral.<sup>136</sup> Generally speaking, there are fewer music performances in the celebration for personal events than in those for the church affairs, but the main purpose of singing in both type of events is to offer praise and thanksgiving.

#### *The dedication of a new church*

The dedication ceremony of a new church (hereafter referred to as dedication) is not only the first church activity I attended early in my preliminary trip to Nujiang in January of 2010 but also the type of event I was invited to most frequently in the latter extensive fieldwork. I personally participated in seven dedications, not to mention that I was invited to several others that I could not attend. As indicated by its indigenous name—*hinshir ddutbair*, literally “a festival for celebrating the completion of a new church”—the dedication is more like a festival than a religious observance (see Figure 4.22).

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<sup>136</sup> For the Christian Lisu, even the renovation of a Sunday school classroom is worth celebrating in an equally ceremonious way. I attended one such event held in Guquan Village of Shangpa Town on June 9, 2013. I did not know until the very end that the ceremony was held just to celebrate the completion of a Sunday-school classroom.



Figure 4.22. The pageantry of the grand dedication of Shimengen Church, Lumadeng Township, Fugong County, July 27, 2014. (On the left) guests entering the festival gates; (on the right) congregational singing *ddoqmuq mutgguat* during the service.

The dedication has become one of the most important events in the Christian communities nowadays. It is held in the newly built village church, but a solitary celebration is rare. Instead, a dedication celebration often turns into a prefecture-wide event: not only are church representatives and guests from nearby villages invited, but also representatives of two organizations on different levels will attend the event and officially congratulate the local church, presenting a sense of communal pride in the growth of the Nujiang Christian community. From this perspective, the dedication has a certain resemblance to the Lisu tradition of building a new house, which also demonstrates the importance of communal efforts and activities in the daily life of the Lisu people.<sup>137</sup>

The formal ceremony of this one-day event usually commences at noon. It contains three central elements: the ritual for opening and entering the new church building,

<sup>137</sup> The Lisu epic “*Hinxaq Mutgguat*” (Song of House-Building) describes the Lisu traditional customs of house construction. For example, a new house must be built within one day; failure to achieve this goal was considered as bad luck. Therefore, a family house construction was usually a village affair: most of the villagers would go to help with new house construction and in return the family members would prepare a big feast for the helpers (Zuo Yutang 1999: 245).

congratulatory speech and worship, and an extended musical profession of faith. The third element—the live performance—is the highlight of the event. Each invited church delegation has to prepare for their performance several days in advance; however, unlike in the three religious festivals, there are fewer new hymns specifically composed for the occasion. In the dedication, both the length of musical profession and singing content are unlimited. On the one hand, participants from other village churches are welcomed to perform as many songs as possible; on the other hand, texts of *mutgguat* sung in the dedication do not necessarily refer to the theme of the event. Actually, several times I heard familiar music that I had frequently heard elsewhere in the dedication.

Lastly, the preference for performing the combination of *mutgguat ssat* and *daibbit* dances and a kind of dominant-female-dancer demography are especially prominent in the dedication. For example, in the dedication of Nongchang Church on May 25, 2014, there were 33 programs performed during the musical profession of faith from 12:20 PM to 3:45 PM, and 28 of them were *daibbit* dances accompanied by *mutgguat ssat* recordings. Out of 166 *daibbit* dancers there were only 15 male performers—less than one tenth of the number of female dancers.

#### *Events related to the life cycle*

Major church events related to the important life cycle of an individual Christian include baptisms, marriages, and funerals. Each of these is not built upon the basic agenda of a regular Sunday worship service, but instead has a special form of ritual of its own. Another difference between these three rituals and the rest of the church activities including the Sunday worship service is that they generally do not have the third singing

mode—the personal musical profession of faith—but only comprise the congregational singing and/or choir singing of conventional *mutgguat* appropriate for the occasion.

For example, in one Christian wedding held in Xincun Church in Da’nanmao Village on January 22, 2014, three *ddoqmuq mutgguat* were successively sung at a specific time during the wedding ceremony.<sup>138</sup> When the bride arrived at the church, a small group of Christians from the local host church with which the groom’s family affiliates started to sing DM 275 “*Qirma’lail ma Qi’la lo*” (literally “The bride has arrived,” officially translated as “Welcome the Bride”). After the couple entered the church, seated, the whole congregation inside started to sing DM 216 “*Wusa Reitqeit Yot dail Gget*” (literally “God gives us his grace,” officially translated as “Happy the Home”); shortly after that, the congregation sang another hymn, DM 271 “*Atnei Al’ddai a be Eiq’wa*” (literally “the ancient Adam and Eve,” better known as “Marriage Hymn”). Such a wedding repertoire was confirmed through my informal talks with some other Lisu.

In addition to these three DM hymns, the only other song heard in this wedding was a *xelgget mutgguat* sung by an ad hoc choir as a kind of blessing to the couple (see Figure 4.23). Similarly, besides DM272 and DM272, no other music is heard in a funeral.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> For the purpose of comparison, here I provide a brief description of the music heard in two secular weddings of the non-Christian Lisu in Da’nanmao Village that I attended. In one of these two weddings held on January 15, 2014, I did not hear any music at all. In the other one held on January 18, 2014, I did not observe any live music performances either, but only some noisy electronic background music played in the bride and groom’s room while all the guests were dining outside in the courtyard. Since these two weddings were held in the village close to the urban town, without further investigation it cannot say music is no longer important in a secular wedding in many other rural Lisu villages in present-day Nujiang.

<sup>139</sup> On the funeral held on June 1, 2014 in Xingfu Village, a handful of relatives sang several lament songs right in front of the deceased when they went to express their condolence to the bereaved family. The singing was largely in a sobbing tone with repetitive slow melodic patterns in a small-interval range. Meanwhile, the singing did not have the regular recurrence of rhythmic patterns; instead, it seemed to be divided in accordance with the singer’s “talking” content.



Figure 4.23. A Christian wedding held in Xincun Church, Xinjian Village, Lushui County, January 22, 2014. On the front left, the bride and groom (in the middle) and the bridesmaid and groomsman are sitting under the arched gate. In the back, an ad hoc choir comprising local churchgoers is singing a *xelgget mutgguat* to bless the couple.

Weddings and funerals can be held throughout the year, but Christians often receive baptism around the time of Easter or Christmas. The ritual is held in the creek close to the host church (see Figure 4.24). The most important part of the ritual is the baptism itself, in which the essential part is what the ritual’s indigenous name, *ggoxddeit diq* (literally, “to soak the body in the water”), suggests. It is also the time when the only *ddoqmuq mutgguat* singing occurs—a small choir comprising volunteers from the host church will repeatedly sing DM 28 “*Yesu Ggoxddeit guabbei Ddo a ma*” (There Is a Fountain) until all the baptisms are completed.



Figure 4.24. The baptism service held on April 7, 2013 in the creek near Lishadi Church, Shiyueling Township, Fugong County.

## **Chapter 5: Secular-Sacred Interface: Lisu Farmer Chorus and Representation of Minority Music in Nujiang**

Like many other forms of Lisu traditional music, Christian music of the Nujiang Lisu has also gone through significant changes since the late 1990s. The hymn-singing tradition, has on the one hand experienced a tendency of secularization within certain limits, which could not have occurred without the regional economic development, government involvement, and self-motivated individuals who had the initiative to adjust in compliance with the trend; on the other hand, there has been a lack of young people interested in practicing and writing four-part *ddoqmuq mutgguat* and *xelget mutgguat* due to their preference for the Christian pop genre *mutgguat ssat*.

This chapter examines one result of secular-sacred interface in Nujiang, the newly created Christian-based Lisu farmer chorus that features a group of musically untrained “farmers” singing four-part choral music derived from hymns or secular songs. Until the mid-1990s, the four-part choral singing of the Christian Lisu maintained its local significance solely within the church. Nevertheless, the Lisu farmer chorus had achieved a reputation at the provincial, national, and international levels by 1998. Initially, the traditional multi-part folk songs were promoted as the heart of the farmer chorus tradition; however, nowadays its Christian association has been no secret.

A variety of names have been given to the tradition over the last two decades. In the following general analysis, I will address this tradition simply as the “Lisu farmer chorus” (Lisuzu nongmin hechangtuan)—as this term was and has continued to be used

in the official introductions and promotional materials—unless I refer in particular to an individual chorus group with a separate name.

I start with the early history of the Lisu farmer chorus, as well as its impact on the founding of the subsequent groups—either fixed choruses or ad hoc groups performing on particular occasions. I then compare and contrast the tourist performances of two renowned farmer choruses based in Baihualing and Da’nanmao, two villages near Liuku Town, with a particular interest in their core repertoire and strategies for staging tourist concerts with respect to making compromises between their religious needs and those of the government. Next, I examine the nomenclature and representations of this tradition by people from different backgrounds. Finally, I look into the changes in the tradition and further analyze the ways in which music has become an important force to connect the Christian Lisu with secular society.

### 5.1 Early Development of the Lisu Farmer Chorus

The initial formation: The legendary performance of “Auld Lang Syne”

The initial formation of the Lisu farmer chorus can be traced back to the opening ceremony of the Fifth China Golden Rooster and Hundred Flowers Film Festival (Zhongguo Jinji Baihua Dianyingjie)—the most influential, most authoritative, and oldest film festival in China—in Kunming on October 9, 1996. The chief director, Huang Yihe, planned to prepare a unique program featuring an abnormal combination of “classic film, live dubbing, and folk singing” (*Yunnan Guangbo Dianshibao* 1996). Based on a recommendation of an acquaintance of Yang Yuanji—the general director of the Nujiang Prefecture Song and Dance Troupe—in the provincial literary and art circles, the festival

organizing committee eventually invited a group of thirty Lisu farmers from Nujiang to provide the folk singing for the program.

During the formal 4'32" performance, the footage of *Waterloo Bridge*—a 1940 Hollywood film starring Vivien Leigh and Robert Taylor, and translated as *Hunduan Lanqiao* (literally, “death in the Blue Bridge”) in China—was projected on the stage screen with the dialogue dubbed on site by the renowned voice actors, Qiao Zhen and Ding Jianhua.<sup>140</sup> The highlight of the performance was the singing of “Auld Lang Syne,” the film’s theme song, which had been adapted into a four-part choral work and sung by the thirty invited Lisu farmers (see Figure 5.1), under the name “Nujiang Lisu Folk Chorus” (Nujiang Lisuzu Minjian Hechangtuan).



Figure 5.1. The Nujiang Lisu Folk Chorus singing “Auld Lang Syne” in the opening ceremony of the fifth Golden Rooster and Hundred Flowers Film Festival. Kunming Stadium, October 9, 1996. Yang Yuanji, leader of the group, stands at the left end of the first row. Reproduction from the festival program owned by Yang Yuanji.

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<sup>140</sup> *Waterloo Bridge* was one of the first imported Western films in the 1980s in Mainland China. “Auld Lang Syne” was modified by Herbert Stothart and used as the theme song and background music in the film. Most Chinese audience members have known the song—alternate name, “Safe Journey” (Yilu Ping’an) in China—because of the film.

The performance produced an unusual artistic effect, which was, using Yang Yuanji's words, "the stark contrast between the 'Western' (yang) and 'rustic' (tu) styles" (Yang Yuanji, 2006). Farmers have been associated with poverty, backwardness (luohou), and illiteracy (wenmang) in Chinese society, and thus it was inconceivable to see them singing refined Western choral music. With that kind of stereotypical impression, there is no doubt why the Lisu farmer chorus's premiere performance in the film festival could cause such a sensation at that time. Throughout the film festival, many newspapers reported on the farmer chorus's outstanding performance. Below are some of the representative reports:

Thirty Lisu farmers performed the four-part "Auld Lang Syne" in Lisu. A journalist from Beijing exclaimed, "(Their singing) is even comparable to that of the Central Radio Chorus [Zhongyang Guangbo Hechangtuan]." Why is their singing so touching? It is said that the Lisu would sing after farm work every evening. (*Jinling Wanbao* [Jinling evening newspaper] 1996)

The Lisu from the Nujiang Great Canyon have beautiful voice. They are folk singers and have never received formal bel canto [meisheng changfa] training before. Nevertheless, they have yearning for beautiful things so that they often gather and sing together at leisure time. (*Chuncheng Wanbao* (Spring City evening newspaper] 1996)

"Auld Lang Syne" was totally strange to the chorus members. In late July, both the score with Chinese lyrics and demonstration tape were brought to Nujiang. With the strong support from the Nujiang Prefecture Board of Education [Nujiangzhou Jiaowei] and Nujiang Ethnic Affairs Commission, the lyrics were translated into Lisu based on the feature of parallelism and then handed out to the chorus members. According Yang Yuanji, the reason why the singing of the farmer chorus is no less articulate than any professional chorus is that their singing has benefited from the Nujiang's alpine canyon environment and their traditional musical traditions. (*Yunnan Ribao* [Yunnan daily] 1996b)

The reports listed above were quite unified on the reason for the Lisu farmers' excellent choral singing—due to their supposed expertise in their folk multi-part music tradition. The group's official name—the Nujiang Lisu Folk Chorus—and the original

idea of the director to incorporate “folk singing” into the performance were in accordance with such an interpretation. However, what was not revealed was the fact that not only were twenty-seven chorus members (ninety percent) Christians, but they also already knew the melody for “Auld Lang Syne,” because it is used in the DM79 hymn “*Sitxai Mahan, Niqpu Ggetsu*” (Holy Spirit, Bringer of Happiness) that they had been singing for years before they heard “Auld Lang Syne” for the first time.

Yang Yuanji explained to me that he had chosen the Christian Lisu this time because of their familiarity with the tune, considering the limited preparation time left for him (interview with Yang Yuanji on November 9, 2012).<sup>141</sup> He further added, “In the program review process, when the organizing committee asked me why the chorus could sing so well, I did mention that the singers were Christians and that they were familiar with the tune.”<sup>142</sup>

Another thing that the media did not report was the identity of the person mainly responsible for the training of the farmer chorus. Feng Rongxin (not yet a pastor at the time) was a chorus member in the 1996 performance. According to him, Yang Yuanji was just a nominal director; it was the church leader, Chu Bide (the father of Chu Yongping), who organized most rehearsals (interview with Pastor Jesse on October 19, 2012).<sup>143</sup> Another chorus member, Cha Ying, confirmed this information; as she put it, “Before we went to Kunming, we had been trained in Liuku for one week. Yang Yuanji was just the group leader (lingdui). *Malpat* Jesse and Chu Bide were teaching us most of the time” (interview with Cha Ying on November 27, 2012).

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<sup>141</sup> The rest of the information about the farmer chorus provided by Yang Yuanji was all obtained in the interview with him on November 9, 2012, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>142</sup> However, these detail were never publicly reported.

<sup>143</sup> The rest of the information about the farmer chorus provided by Pastor Jesse was all obtained in the interview with him on October 19, 2012, unless otherwise specified.

Other performances between 1996 and 2001

The 1996 premiere performance brought the Lisu farmer chorus not only a nationwide reputation but also more performing opportunities. Although performances in the following years were somewhat different from the first one in terms of the composition of the ad hoc groups and singing repertoire—several adapted local folk songs were added—the main selling point of the farmer chorus largely remained unchanged: the choral singing of both folk and Western-derived works by a group of musically untrained farmers. The major public performances between 1996 and 2001 included the Fourth China International Chorus Festival in Beijing (1998), the Kunming International Arts Festival (1999), the Fifth China International Chorus Festival (2000), and the Second Kunming International Tourist Festival (2001).

The performances at the 1998 chorus festival attracted the greatest attention from all parties. The chorus was invited to perform six times during the festival on various occasions, including the formal competition, a special *bbaishit* performance in the opening ceremony, and performances showing gratitude for the relevant state departments who had supported the poverty alleviation work in Nujiang. It is worth noticing that “Auld Lang Syne” was sung neither in the opening ceremony nor in the competition. Instead, the adapted choral versions of Lisu folk songs—*bbaishit*, *yoqyet*, and *mutgguat*—were showcased, among which the *bbaishit* singing in the opening ceremony won the audience members’ prolonged applause. According to Yang Yuanji, originally each of the programs in the ceremony was limited to three minutes, but the farmer chorus’s performance lasted about ten minutes, as they were requested to perform an encore (Yang Yuanji 2006).

Pastor Jesse provides a meaningful anecdote about the selection of singers for the 1998 chorus festival. He did not attend the festival, but helped to recommend promising Christian singers to the organizer Yang Yuanji. According to him, half of the Christian candidates he had recommended were dismissed and replaced by non-Christian Lisu who were asserted to be good folk song singers. Meanwhile, Yang Yuanji told me that he had decided to recruit more Christians, given their proficient skills in multi-part singing, as long as they agreed to sing folk songs, but he was not explicit on the reason why eventually only one third of the members were Christians.

Yang's records of participants for each of the ad hoc groups show that the percentage of Christian members consistently decreased, from ninety percent in the 1996 film festival to one third in the 1998 chorus festival. The number of the Christian singers for the 2000 chorus festival is unknown, but it probably does exceed that of 1998. In contrast to the decreasing number of the Christian participants, the songs in the chorus's repertoire that are linked to Lisu hymns, such as "Auld Lang Syne" (DM 79) and "Ode to Joy" (DX 471, added in 1998), were retained in most of early performance programs, even if they were not actually performed for various reasons.

In the 1999 Kunming International Arts Festival, the farmer chorus prepared the largest number of Lisu hymn-derived pieces to date. Besides "Auld Lang Syne" and "Ode to Joy," newly added pieces included DM23 "*Si'liq Mahai, Sitxai Mahai*" (Silent Night, Holy Night), DM281 "*Mi'nai bbei Mi'naigua Bbi'cax ma*" (The Earth, And All in It) (DM281), and DM286 "Hallelujah Chorus" (Yang Yuanji 2006). Since the early 2000s, these five songs have comprised the core repertoire of the Lisu farmer chorus in the tourist performances, a phenomenon that I will explore in length in the next section.

After the group members returned from the 1998 chorus festival, the government authorities not only praised their achievement but also validated the worth of the Lisu farmer chorus as a representative of regional and ethnic cultural heritage. As Zhang Yaowu, the secretary of the Nujiang Prefecture Communist Party Committee (Nujiangzhou Dangwei), put it, “You, thirty farmers, did not let us down. You made great contributions in propagating Nujiang and Nujiang’s minority cultures” (Yang 2006).

People of different backgrounds in Nujiang were still talking about the farmer chorus’s initial achievement several years after the 1996 premiere, and many of their comments can be read in a government-planned book compiling various reviews on the farmer choruses’ performances between 1996 and 1999 (Li Fushan 1999). Yang Yuanji, leader of the early ad hoc farmer choruses, has kept treasured folders containing various materials, especially newspaper cuttings related to the performances of each farmer chorus he organized.<sup>144</sup>

All of these examples account for the importance of the farmer chorus as a newly developed cultural brand (wenhua zhaopai) that belongs not only to Nujiang but also to the Lisu people in particular. Therefore, there is no doubt why this tradition was selected to be showcased in the local tourism industry.

## 5.2 The Tourist Performances of the Lisu Farmer Chorus

### Establishing tourist shows

Like its counterparts from other places with large concentrations of minorities that have promoted their grand landscape and diverse ethnic cultures to the outside world,

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<sup>144</sup> I am greatly indebted to him for his generosity in sharing his precious newspaper cuttings with me, based on which I could discuss the representations of the Lisu farmer chorus in the mass media.

such as Xinjiang (desert, oasis, and Uyghur culture) and Inner Mongolia (grasslands and Mongolian culture), the government of Yunnan Province also successfully sold and has continued to sell Yunnan as the home to twenty-four diverse ethnic minorities and as a province with spectacular scenery; as the Yunnan Tourism Bureau (Yunnan Lüyouju) advertises on its webpage, “Colorful Yunnan of China, tourism paradise of the world” (Qicai Yunnan, lüyou tiantang).

Yunnan’s tourism industry has developed rapidly since 2000. During the “Tenth Five-Year Plan” (Shiwu Guihua) between 2001 and 2005, foreign tourist arrivals reached 6.0388 million, domestic visitors 0.277 billion, and total tourism earnings 165.298 billion yuan (“Yunnansheng ‘Shiyiwu’ Lüyou Fazhan Guihua” Bianzhizu 2005). Just ten years later, in the year of 2014 alone, the total tourist numbers rose up to 0.286 billion and tourism sales were 266.574 billion yuan (Sheng Lüfawei 2015).

Unlike other top tourist destinations in Yunnan such as Lijiang, Dali, and Xishuangbanna where the local tourism development was launched in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it was not until the late 1990s that the government of Nujiang started to pay more attention to the tourism domain, considering it to be a major opportunity for Nujiang’s economic development. The Nujiang Prefecture Tourism Bureau was not established until 1994 and the Lushui County Tourism Bureau not until 1998.

Among three frontier counties in Nujiang, the tourism development in Lushui has been the best. Between 1998 and 2007, according to the official statement of the Lushui Tourism Bureau at the press conference held during the 2007 Lisu New Year (hereafter referred to as the 2007 Speech), Lushui’s tourism industry developed at a rate of sixty percent above the average speed of other local industries, and successfully made a

transition from a tourist mode of “business reception” to one of “enterprise management” (Lushui Lüyouju n.d.b)

Through the distribution of more than forty promotional videos, and the organization of four press conferences and two reception meetings welcoming hundred of reporters to Nujiang, there was an obvious increase in the number of foreign visitors between 1998 and 2010: only 132 visited Lushui in 1998, but by 2010 the number rose up to 6520. The number of domestic tourists reached nearly 110,000 by 1998 and further increased to 610,000 by the end of 2012 (Lushui Lüyouju n.d.a).<sup>145</sup> In terms of the prefecture-wide tourism development, the government’s 2012 work report announced 760,580 tourist arrivals and 4.16 billion yuan annual earnings from tourism by the end of the year (Li Si’ming 2012).

Besides devising plans to construct tourism sites along the Nujiang Great Canyon and promote Nujiang as the core region of the Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan Protected Areas, the government also exploited ethnic cultural resources centering on those of the Lisu, making Nujiang one of the top featured folklore (minsu) tourist destinations. One of the most noticeable folklore attractions is the Lisu New Year, which has been refashioned to be an annual ethnic festival including tourism, business, and ethnic cultural presentations. Starting from 2008, the prefectural government sponsored a series of themed activities during the Lisu New Year, which assured the importance of “cultural tourism” in Nujiang’s tourism industry (Li Si’ming 2012).<sup>146</sup> Besides the Lisu New Year

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<sup>145</sup> It is notable that there were only twenty-two international arrivals in Nujiang in 2003; however, the number rose to 1306 the next year.

<sup>146</sup> These activities include the Nujiang *Korshir* Cultural Tourism and Yunnan National Apparel and Accessories Cultural Festivals (2008), the Nujiang *korshir* Cultural Tourism and Yunnan First Toasting Song Assembly (2009), the Nujiang *korshir* Cultural Tourism and Yunnan Nujiang

festival, the local government also developed other forms of tourist products such as the nationally renowned Climbing Up the Knife Hill (Daoganjie) and the Spring Bathing Festival (Zaotanghui).

The Nujiang's tourism boom has been added into the revised *Brief History of the Lisu People*. The authors particularly mentions the slogan "Culture setting up the stage, on which economy sings" (Wenhua datai, jingji changxi), indicating that the importance of the cultural promotion as a significant stimulus for the local tourism development (Lisuzu jianshi bianxiezu 2008: 217). Due to the nationwide success of the Lisu farmer chorus in the late 1990s and important role it played in publicizing Nujiang, the chorus's four-part choral singing was also announced as one of the many core cultural resources unique to the region (Lushuixian Lüyouju n.d.b).

Eventually two designated tourism sites showcasing the four-part choral singing of the Lisu farmer chorus were successively established in two village churches within Lushui County, close to the prefecture seat: one is Baihualing Church (since 1999) and the other is Da'nanmao Church (since 2008).<sup>147</sup> Both the local tourism bureau and church leaders have played an important part in turning a Christian-based music tradition into a culturally oriented tourism product. However, their motivations—even between two participating churches—were different from each other.

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First Kayak Open Tournament (2010), the Nujiang *korshir* Cultural Tourism Festival (2011), and "Colorful Yunnan Nationalities Village, Joyful Trip to Nujiang *korshir* Festival" (2012).

<sup>147</sup> Baihualing Church was established in 1980. By 2000 there were 456 Christians (out of 994 villagers) and 3 pastoral staff members (Baihualing Church n.d.). According to one of the chorus leaders, Yu Jinhua, Da'nanmao Church (initially just a gathering point) was established in the mid-1980s. Between 1995 and 2000, there were only 50 Christians; however, the numbers have gradually increased since Timotei (Chinese name: Xiong Yuhua) became the deacon and carried out more flexible church regulations in 2000. There were about 120 Christians in Da'nanmao, constituting one third of the overall population in the village by 2012 (interview with Yu Jinhua on December 9, 2012).

For the local government authorities, the main purpose of establishing two formal sites was to cater to visitors who had learned about the chorus's four-part singing in the press and wanted to listen to it during their travel in Nujiang; as the Director of the executive office of the Lushui Tourism Bureau, Zhao Yunsheng, explained:

Da'nanmao and Baihualing are both government-recognized tourist sites to provide four-part singing to tourists. At the request of many visitors, we [Lushui Tourism Bureau] established a reception point (jiedaidian) in Da'nanmao in 2008. There was also a point in Baihualing earlier in 2001, and later their church leaders applied for a cultural business license by themselves.<sup>148</sup> If visitors want to listen to Lisu four-part singing, we suggest that, as far as possible, they go to these two places. They can contact a tourist agent or directly reach the chorus directors. Visitors can also hear four-part singing during their regular Sunday worship services. (Interview with Zhao Yunsheng on June 21, 2013)

Explanations by church leaders of the initial formation of tourist four-part singing shows tell quite a different story. Li Zhongwen, leader of Baihualing Church, told me that it was his brother working in the prefecture tourism bureau who recommended Baihualing Church to the government and suggested that they set up a tourism site in the church. The early tourist performances between 2001 and 2010 did not aim to earn money, as most income from tourists was directly donated to the church on the insistence of the elder, Yage, music director of the chorus in the same period (interview with Li Zhongwen on June 22, 2013).<sup>149</sup> Li also provided details of the interaction between the church and government in the initial stage; as he put it, "After we started tourist shows, government officials would constantly bring their guests to the church for the shows. We could not refuse their requests. After all, they gave us fifty thousand yuan to support our church renovation project, not a small amount at the time."

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<sup>148</sup> According to the registration certificate hanging on the church wall, however, church leaders actually applied for a license as a people-run (minban) non-enterprise unit in 2011. The Lushui Civil Affairs Bureau issued the license.

<sup>149</sup> The rest of the information about the farmer chorus provided by Li Zhongwen was all obtained in the interview with him on June 22, 2013, unless otherwise specified.

By contrast, the interaction between Da'nanmao Church and the local government is more like a partnership. Similar to Baihualing, church leaders of Da'nanmao also took the initiative to negotiate with government authorities about the feasibility of establishing a reception point in their church; however, the desire to receive predictable financial benefits—with a precedent in Baihualing—was a more important factor driving church leaders to take a new path: as a tourist reception site catering to tourists and offering official performances (interview with Yu Jinhua on December 9, 2012).<sup>150</sup>

Although four-part chorus shows started much later in Da'nanmao Church than those in Baihualing, on the one hand the Da'nanmao farmer chorus received more government support and performing opportunities; on the other hand it had higher media exposure than Baihualing, because of the unique social and cultural environment in which Da'nanmao Village was situated at the time the tourist show was initiated, as discussed below.

In Nujiang, particularly in Lushui County, rural tourism started earlier, in 2000, but not much progress had been achieved until 2006, the year when the State Tourism Bureau announced “rural tourism” (xiangcun you) as the theme for the annual tourism promotion in accordance with the state plan to “construct a new socialist countryside,” one of the key acts in the “Eleventh Five-Year Plan” (2006-2010) (Liu Limei 2006). Following this national trend, the total rural travel sales in Lushui County reached 525,000 yuan by the end of 2007 (Lushuixian Lüyouju n.d.b.).

In particular, Da'nanmao Village in which the Da'nanmao farmer chorus is based received more government support starting from 2009, when the State Ethnic Affairs

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<sup>150</sup> The rest of the information about the farmer chorus provided by Yu Jinhua was all obtained in the interview with him on December 9, 2012, unless otherwise specified.

Commission (SEAC) and Financial Department jointly launched a pilot project to develop featured minority villages. In 2014 the SEAC announced the first 340 recognized such villages, in which Da’nanmao was included together with other four villages in Nujiang (Jingji Fazhansi 2014). In addition to the government support, convenient traffic (six kilometers away from the downtown Liuku) and diverse cultural resources—the coexistence of the Christian four-part chorus and multi-part folk singing—were the other two advantages for the village to develop a promising rural tourism industry (Lushuixian Lüyouju 2010). All of these created a unique environment for the growth of the Da’nanmao farmer chorus, in contrast to that of the Baihualing chorus.

#### Core repertoire and staging strategies

Shortly after I arrived in Liuku, I attended the farmer choruses’ tourist shows in both churches: one was held in Baihualing Church on November 27, 2012 and the other was in Da’nanmao Church on December 8, 2012. Both of them were formal performances with all singers dressed up. Surprisingly, the programs of both tourist shows presented a high degree of consistency, and they were also not very different from the early ad hoc farmer choruses’ core repertoire formed in the late 1990s. Figure 5.2 is a comparison of the two choruses’ programs of the day.

	<b>BFC</b>	<b>DFC</b>
Guest arrival	Singing a welcome song	Singing a welcome song
Guests seated in the church	Main performance: 1. “Ode to Joy” 2. “Silent Night, Holy Night” 3. “The Same Song” 4. “Hallelujah Chorus” 5. “Auld Lang Syne”	Main performance: 1. “Ode to Joy” 2. “Silent Night, Holy Night” 3. “The Earth, And All in It” 4. “Hallelujah Chorus” 5. Two <i>daibbit</i> dances

		6. “Without the CCP There Would Be No New China” 7. “Auld Lang Syne”
Interaction section	None	Guest speech
Departure of the guests	Singing a farewell song	No farewell song—instead, taking pictures.

Figure 5.2. Comparison between the tourist performance program of the Baihualing Farmer Chorus (BFC) on November 27, 2012, and that of the Da’nanmao Farmer Chorus (DFC) on December 8, 2012.

Based on the table above and my talk with the chorus directors, the generic procedure for a farmer chorus’s tourist show is described as follows:

It starts with the singing of a welcome song upon the arrival of guests. Singers stand in line and repeat the song until all guests enter the courtyard. The lyrics of the welcome song have no Christian content but simply say “You’ve come a long way here. We warmly welcome your arrival.” After all guests are seated in the church, the main performance begins. Four to six songs are performed, which are usually selected from “Ode to Joy,” “Silent Night, Holy Night,” “The Earth, And All in It,” one or two non-Christian songs, “Hallelujah Chorus,” and “Auld Lang Syne” as the ending song.<sup>151</sup> The main performance is followed by an interaction section for tourists to make comments or dance with the chorus members. At the end, the chorus sings a farewell song, after which the guests depart.

Next, I analyze several interrelated aspects of these performances to illuminate the strategies that church leaders have adopted to stage their hymn singing tradition in accordance with the government demands. I also compare different tactics used between the BFC and DFC.

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<sup>151</sup> The chorus members learned most of the secular songs in two government-sponsored short-term multi-part folk song peixunban in 2009 and 2010 (for more details, see Chapter 5.4).

The first decision both church leaders had to make is in recruitment. First of all, all four parts should be covered, but vocal quality was not the primary factor for consideration in recruitment. “The chorus was open to anyone who was interested at the very beginning,” Yage (born in 1928 and died in 2013), the former director of the BFC, said (interview with Yage on November 25, 2012).<sup>152</sup> The leader of the DFC, Yu Jinhua, also explained that the recruitment was on a voluntary basis. There were no restrictions on the appearance or age of singers.

The generational division between the BFC and DFC is obvious. Among the registered members in the DFC by 2012, the oldest singer was fifty-two and the youngest was eighteen. The group’s average age was thirty-four, which was much younger than that of the BFC, in which a majority of singers were in their forties.<sup>153</sup> Such generational distinction is also visible in their distinct costume designs. For the regular tourist show in the church, the DFC’s female singers wore yellow tops and black pants with colorful kerchiefs, whereas those of the BFC were dressed in old-fashioned black gowns along with traditional shell-decorated headbands.

In the BFC, by 2012 there were approximately 60 registered members, whereas the numbers of chorus members in the DFC had risen from the original 20 to 105. In both choruses, there were more female singers. Either chorus had a relatively fixed group roster, but a registered member did not have to attend each of the scheduled performances. Fan Jianwen, current director of the BFC, told me that he would choose

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<sup>152</sup> The elder Yage set very strict rules for managing the chorus when he was in charge. He required that all income gained from the tourist performances should be donated to the church. The rest of the information about the former chorus provided by Yage was all obtained in the interview with him on November 25, 2012, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>153</sup> According to Yu Jinhua, usually younger singers will be summoned for the performance outside Nujiang, given that the elderly people might not be able to tolerate the fatigue of a long journey.

members from his roster depending on the occasion and then call them to check their availability (interview with Fan Jianwen on June 23, 2013). It was also not uncommon to form an ad hoc group on short notice to perform for the unexpected visiting guests—all singers in these groups wore their everyday outfits.

In terms of performing repertoire, the county tourism bureau allowed both choruses to decide their regular programs on their own, as long as four-part choral music was included. Eventually, church leaders decided to perform a few *ddoqmuq mutgguat* also known as world-famous music (*shijie mingqu*).<sup>154</sup> As Yu Jinhua explicitly said, “Our core repertoire should not change, because this is world-renowned music and tourists love to hear their familiar songs.”

Furthermore, the leaders of both choruses mentioned two other considerations in the selection of specific Lisu hymns: for one thing the core repertoire should be mainly composed of hymns, because singing them was helpful to ease Christians’ nervous tension, given that most of them did not have much experience of stage performance; for another, considering that all the members had been busy with heavy farm work or housework during the crop-planting time, few rehearsals could be arranged, and therefore it was necessary to choose whatever they were already acquainted with to ensure the success of the performance.<sup>155</sup> Relatively speaking, the BFC held a more conservative attitude on the selection of the performing repertoire. Yage told me explicitly that he had

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<sup>154</sup> A few chorus members told me that before they participated in the tourist performance they had not known that several *ddoqmuq mutgguat* that they were familiar with were known worldwide (personal communication). Although the church leaders were not specific on how they could recognize those “world-famous” hymns, apparently their choice was influenced by the existing core repertoire of the early farmer choruses.

<sup>155</sup> However, rehearsals will be scheduled for out-of-church performances.

never thought about rehearsing multi-part folk songs to sing in the tourist shows and that he was not happy with the recent addition of secular songs into the church.

Neither the origin of the repertoire nor the history of the tradition was introduced in the two tourist shows I observed. In the performance of the DFC, Yu Jinhua announced the pieces to be sung.<sup>156</sup> With the emphasis on the “world-renowned” aspect of the music and singers’ farmer identity, Christian elements—except for the church venue itself—of the show were not easy to detect for a non-Lisu speaker

For example, the last song was always introduced to the audience members as “Auld Lang Syne;” however, both choruses actually sang the words of DM79: the original song lyrics regarding unending friendship were replaced by the theological text “Holy Spirit, the bringer of the happiness.” For another example, the last farewell song sung by the BFC was the refrain of DM 278 “*Nilni Haq Laiko a Ma Hainrni gua*” (May God Be with You). In the tourist show of the DFC, the atmosphere of Christian culture was further highlighted through two *daibbit* dances accompanied by recorded Christian pop *mutgguat ssat*.

However, this tourist show was not organized to showcase Lisu Christian culture. Therefore, although the local tourism bureau neither was involved in the selection of program nor scrutinized song lyrics, it managed to maximally neutralize this Christian-based music tradition into a culturally oriented tourist performance. For example, the show was held within the church, but the government provided financial support for the renovation of Da’nanmao Church in accordance with Lisu traditional decoration style, including two representations imitating the neck of the Lisu four-stringed lute *qibbe* as

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<sup>156</sup> Yu Jinhua was a registered local tourist guide. According to him, if he brought tourists to the church for the show, it would not be appropriate for him to announce the pieces; instead, one representative of the singers could name the piece to be performed in Lisu.

the pillars of the church's front door; the use of cobblestones as an imitation of Lisu ornamental shells; a huge Lisu crossbow erected in the church courtyard; and bamboo woven mats attached to the lower parts of church walls.



Figure 5.3. Two representations of the neck of a Lisu *qibbe* erected on both sides of the front door of Da'nanmao Church; its construction materials include cobblestones imitating the Lisu ornamental shells. Photo taken on June 26, 2013.

### 5.3 Representations of the Lisu Farmer Chorus

#### Names attached to the farmer chorus

Here I examine how ethnicity and religion have been socially constructed in relation to the cultural politics of representing minority music at both the local and national levels in the Lisu farmer chorus from a new perspective: varied representations of the Lisu farmer chorus by different agents. The nomenclature of this newly created regional and ethnic tradition provides a useful perspective for looking into the issue. There is a similar situation of the changing names given to the Dongjing tradition in

relation to the diverse interpretations over the years due to the different cultural backgrounds of the namers and the social environment they lived in (Rees 2000: 171-74).

Most of the appellations under discussion here are those that have frequently appeared in media reports, performance programs, Yang Yuanji's application essays, and scholarly writings, as well as in the perceptions of the chorus members themselves. By the 2000s, the generic term used to refer to the performing group was the "farmer chorus" (nongmin hechangtuan), and the performing form was called multi-part or four-part choral singing.

The first thing worth noting is the disguised replacement of the members' Christian identities through adding the prefix "nongmin" (farmer) to the word "hechangtuan" (chorus) in the initial formation of this tradition. By promoting the chorus members as musically untrained farmers, yet still having refined performing skills, the local cultural workers and government aimed to highlight this artistic abnormality as a major selling point (maidian) in the external media press and later in the local tourism industry without touching on any sensitive issue. A similar unified discourse can be easily found in the official book compiling various reviews on the popularity of the Nujiang Lisu Farmer Chorus between 1996 and 1999 (Li Fushan 1999).

Similar to the ambiguity of the members' Christian identities, the initial interpretation of the origin of the tradition was also reflected in the nomenclature. The official discourse, as seen in Li Fushan's edited book (1999) and most other media reports, all ascribed the farmer chorus's excellent singing skills to their living environment in an alpine valley region and most of all, to the Lisu folk multi-part singing tradition.

For example, in the farmer chorus's debut performance in the opening ceremony of the 1996 Fifth China Golden Rooster and Hundred Flowers Film Festival, the application submitted to the Nujiang Prefecture Cultural Bureau to get the approval for the proposed trip to the film festival used the term "Nujiang Lisu Folk Chorus," ignoring the fact that ninety percent of the participants were Christians, and did not mention the relationship between the farmer chorus's entry song and the Lisu hymn DM 79. However, the word "folk" has never been used since the 1996 performance.

Admittedly, many Lisu folk multi-part songs and those of Nujiang's other minority nationalities were included in the four early major performances (1996, 1998, 1999, and 2000); however, the choruses that have been actively performing today under the name and fame of the former Lisu farmer choruses are essentially Christian-based amateur groups in terms of the featured performing repertoire, the performing venues in the tourist context, and the members' Christian identity. Considering the restrictions on the public propagation of Christianity, it is understandable that a more neutral name was chosen in order to weaken its Christian associations. In the last decade, within Nujiang the preferred term in print would add "multi-part" or "four-part" to prefix or replace the word "farmer," highlighting the artistic features and values embodied within the tradition.

Yang Minkang observes an obvious change in terms of the official report on the minority Christians' public performances a decade after the Lisu farm chorus's rise to fame in the 1990s. According to him, when the Xiaoshuijin Miao Farmer Chorus from Fumin County (Fumin Xian) repackaged their Christian choral singing tradition on stage and reappeared in the public view, both the official and folk websites, including those of

the “two Christian organizations,” all reported their performances without hiding the chorus’s relationship to Christianity (Yang Minkang 2011: 49).

Last, but not the least, since the farmer chorus was promoted as a regional tradition, the prefix “Nujiang” or the name of a particular village such as Baihualing, Da’nanmao, or Chihengdi was often added. When villagers were summoned to form an ad hoc chorus representing all of Nujiang and sing in government-sponsored performances, especially those held outside Nujiang, the term “Nujiang” was always added as a prefix to the chorus name, specifying the geographical origin of this tradition and reinforcing the impression of the multi-part/four-part singing of the Lisu farmer chorus as one of Nujiang’s cultural brands.

The prefix “Lisu” was used most of the time, except in the name of the group established for the 2000 chorus festival, in which the word “Lisu” did not appear, as the chorus comprised singers from diverse ethnic groups, including the Lisu, Bai, Pumi, Yi, Naxi, Nu, and Han people. In most other cases, the inclusion of the word “Lisu” indicates that multi-part/four-part choral music has become a very unique part of the Lisu cultural heritage nowadays.

The directors of non-government organized choruses named their groups differently, and their nomenclature indicated their interest in presenting the musical features of their own chorus. For example, Ci Luheng gave his chorus based in Chihengdi Village in Luma’deng Township the name “*niaqmetnei gguaxzzux*” (literally, “black bulbul chorus”) in his application form for the founding of the chorus in 2011, in contrast to the chorus’s official name known to the public, Fugong Chihengdi Farmer Red Songs Chorus. According to Ci Luheng, the black bulbul is a unique bird in Nujiang with a

sweet sound. He included the name of the bird in the chorus name as a metaphor for the beautiful music sung by his chorus. Similarly, the director of the DFC named his group “*mutgguat daibbit gguaxzzux*” (literally, “song and sign-language dance chorus”), indicating the inclusion of two major Christian genres in their tourist performance.

#### Representations of the tradition by different cohorts

Before examining the representations of the farmer chorus by different social and cultural cohorts, I first take a look at some historical comments by missionaries on the four-part singing of Lisu Christians—their accounts certainly did not include the name “farmer chorus.” Missionaries rarely wrote about the musical aspect of their mission work, but there were a handful of descriptions of the Christian Lisu people’s interest in music and their talent for singing four-part harmonious hymns.

According to a description of a group hymn-singing scene by Allyn Cook, one of the editors and translators of the Lisu DM hymnal, early in the 1920s the tradition of singing in a large group among the Christian Lisu began to take shape; as he writes:

Now, come again after supper and sit around the campfire with us and hear these nearly five hundred Lisu sing hymns. (Cooke 1924: 138)

John Kuhn expresses his praise for their musical talent in his article published in *The Million*, the official journal of OMF, as follows:

The Lisu are a musical people and the Christians love to sing God’s praise in four-part harmony. High spot of any conference (this one was in the early 1940’s) is the learning of a new hymn. (Kuhn 1959:51)

In the same article, Kuhn also gives an ardent description of the multipart singing of the Lisu: “The sweet strains of harmonious Lisu voices blending together in those hymns that had become precious throughout the years was almost too much for [the] heart to

hear” (Kuhn 1959: 52). Many times, I also heard the similar words of praise for the Lisu Christians’ natural talent in part-singing from Eileen Kuhn, John Kuhn’s second wife, during our informal conversations between 2011 and 2014. His first wife, Isabella Kuhn, describes the singing of the “Hallelujah Chorus” in the Bible school as follows:

Mr. and Mrs. Cooke while at Bana, translated this wonderful piece [referring to “Hallelujah Chorus”] of inspiration into Lisu, taught it to Luke, Homy and A che and sent it back with them. Luke is now teaching it to us of the Bible School and though I have heard it more than once in America, it has never so thrilled me as when our Lisu sing it. They love it and sing it with all the passion. (Kuhn n.d.)

Eugene Morse writes about the Christian Lisu people’s enthusiasm for hymn singing within the community life in the jungle on the Myanmar-Indian border. He writes about the music scene in one convention held in the Christmas season of 1968 as follows:

At that 1968 convention each village came with its own choir, which had been practicing special songs for the occasion. Each group had an opportunity to sing in one or more of the seven services held during the convention . . . This great service, with hundreds of joyful voices harmonizing in old hymns like “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” and “Amazing Grace,” was a true feast to God—a feast of music. Though we brought them hymns, we had as much to learn about music from the Lisu as they from us. (Morse 1974: 180)

These missionaries’ accounts and comments offer a good explanation of the Christian Lisu people’s longstanding tradition of multi-part choir singing. There is no doubt that why decades later audience members were so thrilled to hear the singing of “Auld Lang Syne” by the Lisu farmer chorus mainly composed of the Christian Lisu who had inherited that tradition. Now I turn to the discussion of the representations of the farmer chorus and its part- singing tradition by different cohorts as categorized below:

1. Popular media;
2. Scholars and cultural workers;
3. Government;
4. Non-local visitors; and
5. The Christian Lisu, tradition bearers.

### *Representations by popular media*

There were many reports in both provincial and local newspapers about the tremendous success of the farmer chorus's debut performance in the 1996 film festival. Besides the representative quotes from reports as previously mentioned in Chapter 5.1, here I will provide another summary of the typical views of the popular media at that time. An article written on October 6, 1996, in *Yunnan Daily* titled "A Glimpse of the Rehearsal Scene of the Film Festival Opening Ceremony," states:

The Nujiang Lisu Folk Chorus is from remote mountainous areas of Yunnan. It is hard to believe that this harmonious yet beautiful music was sung by a group of authentic [di'dao] farmers who had never been to the provincial capital [Kunming] before. The chorus is made up of thirty farmers from Fugong, Gongshan, and Lanping of Nujiang. The oldest member is sixty and the youngest just sixteen. (*Yunnan Ribao* 1996a)

From the quote above, we can see that the major theme that the media focused on is the perfect singing of four-part choral music by a group of farmers from the remote mountainous areas of Yunnan. Farmers in China were pictured as men with "muddy legs" (nituizi), and their lives were considered to be exclusively associated with farm work and having little to do with performing arts. Most importantly, farmers were regarded as musically untrained people who could only perform simple and easy music.

This tendency of raising the artistic value of the farmer chorus's performance while understating their Christian background is evidenced in the reports, which emphasize the fact that most chorus members heard "Auld Lang Syne" for the very first time just before the film festival (*Yunnan Ribao* 1996a; *Minzu Wenhuaobao* 1996).

One tendency to ascribe the origin of the farmer chorus to Lisu traditional multi-part singing tradition continued to be prevalent in the media reports on the 1998 choral festival, because the folk part-singing itself—instead of the signature song "Auld Lang

Syne” sung in the 1996 film festival—was the main repertoire in the 1998 performances. The special weekend edition of *Yunnan Ribao* details how the chorus’s six performances were highly appreciated by both foreign and domestic audience members. The report specially emphasizes the praise that the chorus received from music academia by quoting the comments of Du Yaxiong, professor from the China Conservatory of Music (Zhongguo Yinyue Xueyuan): “The singing of the Nujiang Farmer Chorus is flawless in terms of rhythm and intonation” (*Yunnan Ribao* 1998).

An interesting anecdote can illustrate the reason for such a shift in the public interest in the farmer chorus’s featured songs: from world-renowned music back to their traditional folk music. According to one leader of the farmer chorus for the 1998 performance, a staff member working on the day of the rehearsal for the opening ceremony suggested that the chorus sing ethnic songs; as he put it, “Your performance of ‘Auld Lang Syne’ is outstanding too. But everyone knows that song. You should sing your own traditional folk songs this time. I hope you can win; China’s farmers can win” (Li Daosheng 2007: 14).

From the showcase of a single world renowned song in a national film festival (1996) to the emphasis on the ethnic musical heritage in an international choral festival (1998), and to the juxtaposition of both ethnic and Christian/Western-derived songs—the latter still promoted as the world famous music—in the 99 Kunming International Arts Festival (KIAF), the interface between the “foreign” and “indigenous/ethnic” programs has largely resulted from the Chinese discourse on minority culture—especially that of many scholars and cultural workers—that does not consider the imported hymn genre as the traditional music of the Lisu, even though a large number of Lisu have been singing it

for nearly a century. Therefore, in the Lisu farmer chorus, the conventional impression of Lisu traditional music was maintained through obfuscating the origin of four-part choral singing or showcasing more Lisu folk songs as the primary focus.

The only constant in the descriptions of the farmer chorus in the early media reports is the singers' unpolished vocal timbre and virtuosic part-singing skill. The combination of virtuosity and simplicity also became one major selling point of the Lisu farmer chorus in the later tourist context, as reflected in the tourist slogan (see Figure 5.4) “Sound of nature” (Tianlai zhi yin).



Figure 5.4. Two tourism signs for the performance of the BFC at the entrance to Baihualing Village. Words on the left signboard: “Multi-part; Sound of nature” (Duoshengbu; Tianlai zhi yin); on the right: “Nujiang, sound of nature” (Nujiang, tianlai zhi yin).

#### *Representations by scholars and cultural workers*

Yang Yuanji has been working in the Nujiang Song and Dance Troupe successively as the vice director, director, and the party branch secretary since the troupe was founded

in 1974. He retired at the age of fifty-five in 1996, and in the same year he was assigned to organize the first ad hoc farmer chorus for the film festival. He was also the organizer of the following ad hoc farmer choruses between 1998 and 2001. Therefore, his personal reflections have been an important part of the documentation of the farmer chorus's early history, which includes a review on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the farmer chorus (2006), a survey of important performances of the farmer chorus, and a review of the chorus's initial formation. In 2007, he even proposed to organize a permanent farmer chorus representing Nujiang, but the proposal was not approved.

Yang Yuanji makes clear the distinction between “*bbaishit*” and “hymns;” as he puts it, “Nothing is in common between these two in terms of the musical genre, singing environment, singing fashion, and style. So mutual influence is impossible” (Yang Yuanji n.d.: 8). Apparently, Yang had a preference for Lisu traditional folk songs over Christian music, given that he had been collecting, studying, and arranging them for years. Although he had to mainly select Christians for the first farmer chorus due to the limited time he had and the close relationship between the assigned song “Auld Lang Syne” and Christians’ familiar hymn DM 79, in the following choral festivals (1998 and 2000), not only were the majority of chorus members non-Christians, but also the main repertoires consisted of folk songs of both the Lisu and other ethnic groups.

Besides a few unpublished manuscripts he was generous to share with me, he also provided more details that were not known to the media. Overall, we had a candid discussion on the farmer chorus.<sup>157</sup> His personal views on the recently formed Chihengdi

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<sup>157</sup> However, he did not quite understand why I was so interested in the story of the Lisu farmer chorus. Many reporters had interviewed him about the chorus many times before; however, he was surprised to find that my concerns and questions were quite distinct from those he had been asked before.

Red Songs Farmer Chorus are quite interesting, and I quote from them here: “What benefits (haochu) can you [referring to the Christian Lisu] get from praising your God? It is probably better to praise the CCP, because the Party has built roads and erected wire poles for you. What exactly has your God given to you?”

In a totally different academic atmosphere, in *Studies of the Religious Music of China's Minority Nationalities* edited by Zhang Xingrong, Yang Yuanji's representation of the farmer chorus is more straightforward; as he puts it:

Almost every Christian—men or women, the old or the young—can pick up this music score [in Lisu cipher notation] and sing Lisu four-part world renowned songs fluently such as “Hallelujah,” “Ode to Joy,” and “Auld Lang Syne.” Their singing is flawless in terms of intonation, rhythm, euphony, and clear pronunciation. Tourists travelling to Nujiang have always been amazed to hear their singing. The Nujiang farmer chorus is specifically renowned for their performances of these world-renowned pieces. (Yang Yuanji 2007b: 286)

In his recent article on the new trends in the contemporary Christian music of the Yunnan's minority nationalities, Yang Minkang summarizes the developmental path of minority people's Christian music and musically related multipart music “from local survival, to peasant performance, to artistic exhibition, and to tourist exhibition,” which, according to him, reflects the frequent interactions between government bodies, secular social groups, and local churches (Yang Minkang 2012: 133).

In the same article, Yang uses the example of the Lisu farmer chorus to comment on the representations of minority Christian music in the Han Chinese mainstream culture in recent years. He states that in the era of globalization and a fast-growing tourism industry, the presentation of minority people's Christian hymns “from their homeland onto China's main stream stage” involves the cultural strategies that “were rational and

compatible with both local and national conditions. The packaging of Christian music is considered to be a particular component” (Yang Minkang 2012: 136-37).

The revised edition of *Brief History of Lisu People*—first published in 1983—has added information on the Lisu farmer chorus without covering its relationship to the Lisu Christian hymn tradition; the authors write, “The four-part singing has become a renowned cultural brand of the local Lisu church and the chorus comprised of Lushui Lisu farmers (Christians) once performed in Kunming and Beijing, and gained a national recognition” (Lisuzu Jianshi Bianxiezu 2008: 217).<sup>158</sup> To some extent, such a specific emphasis on the singers’ Christian identity in parentheses can be accounted for by the more liberal atmosphere within academia on religious propagation, given that the book is one of a series of books introducing individual brief histories of China’s minority nationalities, organized and published by the SEFC.

#### *Representations by the local government*

The introduction of the farmer chorus tradition by the local government is quite different from that found in academic writing.

For instance, the DFC was once invited to perform in the Yunnan Nationalities Village (Yunnan Minzucun) during the National Day “Golden Week” (Huangjinzhou) in 2011 and 2012. The chorus was introduced to the visitors as follows:

This chorus is composed of authentic farmers from the Nujiang Great Canyon. They are Christians and they will sing four-part choral music in their own language. The music retains its original taste and flavor [yuanzhi yuanwei]. The experience of appreciating their authentic four-part choral singing here in the Village is the equivalent to hearing them singing in Nujiang. (Introduction of the farmer chorus in the program provided by the Villages)

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<sup>158</sup> The editor for the revised edition is Qin Heping, who has been doing research on the history of religious transmission in Yunnan for years.

Since the Nujiang Prefecture Tourism Bureau was also engaged in organizing the farmer chorus' performance in the Village, I asked Zhao Yunsheng, the official from the tourism department, whether they had written this introduction. He explained to me that it would be impossible for the tourism bureau to make such a statement; as he put it:

We would never mention Christians in our promotion—the introduction must have been written by the Nationalities Village. When we propagate the farmer chorus, we try to avoid using any church-related terms as far as possible. We only need to promote it to be an ethnic culture rather than to make our promotion like the publicity of religion. On the one hand, the government will not encourage people to believe in Christianity; on the other hand, they also try not to interfere with people's choice of religious belief. (Interview with Zhao Yunsheng on June 21, 2013)

According to my personal communication with Yu Ruishan, reporter for *Nujiang Newspaper* (Nujiang Bao Nujiang's official newspaper of the CCP), not only church-related written reports but also pictures of church architecture and activities have been occasionally published in *Nujiang Newspaper*. The limitations of publicizing Christianity in the official reports can also be commonly found in other government-run media. Moreover, one way of introducing the farmer chorus in the official documents is to juxtapose or mix the concept of four-part and multi-part choral music. One such exemplary statements is that made in the official manuscript of "History of Lushui Tourism," which tells us:

Lisu multi-part music is represented by Lisu folk "three categories," whereas Lisu four-part music is based on Lisu multi-part music and combined with the foreign Christian culture. Now the unaccompanied four-part singing has become a cultural tourist product in the rural tourism, and the singing group, the farmer chorus, has become a cultural enterprise supported by the government (Lushuixian Lüyouju n.d.a)

The recent large-scale official reports on the farmer chorus in 2011 were about their participation in the "Red songs entering church" activity, especially in a series of red song competitions held throughout Nujiang to celebrate the ninetieth anniversary of the

founding of the CCP (for more details, see the next section, Chapter 5.4). Those official newspaper articles downplayed the chorus members' Christian identities.

For example, in the report on the Chihengdi Farmer Chorus's participation in the Fugong red song contest, the chorus was given the name "representative team of Lumadeng Township," further weakening the chorus members' religious identities (Ni Yucui 2011). An ad hoc chorus composed of students from the prefecture Christian training center attended the prefecture-level red song contest. In the news report, the chorus was also assigned a new name, "Zhuangfang Village Youth Chorus" (Yu Ruishan and Wang Jingsheng 2011). The only article referring to the chorus's association with the church emphasized the members' joyfulness in singing red songs, just as with their feeling of singing hymns to praise God (Feng Linxiang 2011).

Lastly, my interview with Zou Jun, general director of the foreign affairs office of the Fugong County Party Committee Propaganda Department (Fugongxian Dangwei Xuanchuanbu), can reflect the ambiguous attitude of the local government towards the farmer chorus. When I asked about the government-organized performances and red songs contests that the farmer chorus had been invited to, he did not answer my questions directly; instead, he showed his curiosity about the reason why I was interested in the topic. Finally, he briefly explained that there were never paper documents—just the informal verbal notice to the responsible persons of the farmer chorus—and details were usually discussed between both parties involved (interview with Zou Jun on June 17, 2013).

*Representations by non-local visitors*

In various travel websites, appreciation of the farmer chorus's four-part singing show as part of an organized group trip to the Nujiang Great Canyon is usually arranged during the stay in Liuku in the evening time, either at the beginning or the end of the trip. Some package tours such as the 17-day Western Yunnan Tour found on the website of the Holiday China Tour, just provide a brief introduction without mentioning the specific location of the show.<sup>159</sup> I found a description on the website of Yunnan Travel Information summing up very well the standard introduction of the farmer chorus's four-part tourist show in the Chinese-language tourism advertising media. It describes the show as follows:

First day in Liuku:

After dinner, you will go to appreciate the Lisu four-part singing (sound of nature) (introduction: the four-part singing is based on Lisu multi-part choral singing and combined with the foreign Christian culture. The music is unaccompanied and renowned for its original flavor at home and abroad).<sup>160</sup>

According to what I have read from many Chinese-language personal blogs, besides emphasizing the heart-shaking effect of the farmer chorus's part-singing, many bloggers also mention its close relationship with the Lisu hymn-singing tradition.

Guests from Shanghai in the tourist show that I attended on November 27, 2012 in Baihualing Church talked to me about their impressions of the singing they just had heard. Besides the most frequently heard words of praise such as "amazing singing" and "wonderful performance," they also commented on the abnormality that illiterate farmers were able to sing complicated four-part choral music. One guest told me that she was

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<sup>159</sup> For more details, see [http://www.holidaychinatour.com/tour\\_view.asp?id=179](http://www.holidaychinatour.com/tour_view.asp?id=179) (accessed on Oct.1, 2015).

<sup>160</sup> For more details, see [http://www.yunnaninfo.com/yunnan/nujiang/line/nj\\_6.htm](http://www.yunnaninfo.com/yunnan/nujiang/line/nj_6.htm) (accessed on Oct.1, 2015).

enjoying the performance and amazed by the villagers' expertise in singing world-famous music. Another one of them said, "I have never heard about this farmer chorus before; the local guide took our group here for the performance. But it is a rewarding trip. I am truly impressed" (personal communication on November 27, 2012).

One guest complained about the missing dancing section that should have been scheduled in the show. According to Li Zhongwen, a Christian training class was actually supposed to be held in the church building during the scheduled tourist show. Since guests arrived later than the scheduled time and students had already stopped the class for a while to make the church available, in the end the show had to be shortened through cutting the dancing part to minimize the influence on the rest of the evening classes.

The performance held in Da'nanmao Church on December 8, 2012, was arranged by the local government officials for a delegation from Beijing on a tourism study tour in Nujiang. Jia Yunfeng, chief director of the Research Center for China Leisure Tourism Culture (Zhongguo Xiuxian Lüyou Wenhua Yanjiu Zhongxin), was invited to make a closing speech about his impression of the performance. He described his feeling thus:

I am deeply touched by your singing. I can never imagine that there has existed such amazing music in this part of China. [He turns to the government officials and continues]. Why not promote this music to the outside world? Why not perform this music outside the church? We've owned the best cultural resources, but we should also have the best marketing strategies. [He then turns back to the Lisu audience members]. You are transmitting a civilization. Keep this tradition going further.

This particular speech summarizes both the cultural and business values of the farmer chorus tradition from the perspective of tourism development.

*Representations by the Christian Lisu, tradition bearers*

For the ordinary Christian Lisu I contacted, many of them might have heard about the singing reputation of Baihualing Church or/and Da'nanmao Church, but just a few knew that a tourist show existed in either church. The former chorus that has a relatively higher recognition is the Chihengdi Chorus because of their exemplary singing of red songs since 2011. Some Christians especially the churchgoers of those churches near towns, admitted that nowadays more and more travellers came to attend their Sunday worship services but mostly just stayed for the congregational four-part hymn singing—a phenomenon that I also observed during my participation in many Sunday services.

The opinions differ within the Christian communities because of the different social stances and purposes. I interviewed two senior church leaders who were not involved in organizing any farmer choruses, and they respectively emphasized certain concerns.

Yu Wenliang, current chairman of the Yunnan Two Christian Organizations, considered it a patriotic act for the Christian Lisu to sing red songs on various occasions outside the church, which should be respected. Meanwhile, he also criticized the inappropriate behavior of having Christian and non-Christian singing red songs together within the church (interview with Yu Wenliang on October 17, 2012). He had a good knowledge of the farmer chorus. Initially, I only knew of the BFC through the introduction of online travel blogs and articles. It was he who introduced the DFC to me.

His comments further related the farmer chorus tradition to the exploitation of religious culture in the tourism industry. He believed that religious culture can give life to tourism, but he was also concerned about the consequence of secularization that religious tourism might bring to the church. According to him, one possible solution to minimize

such a negative effect is to encourage a voluntary donation to the church instead of paying singers for the tourist show.

Finally, it is worth mentioning his meaningful comment on the fact that neither Christian cultural background nor singers' Christian identities was explicitly mentioned in the early media reports. "Well, the CCP (you know) . . ." The remark of Zhu Falin, current president of the Nujiang Christian Council, may add what was not elaborated in his comment; as he put it:

. . . You know, our government does not like to publicize religion, especially Christianity. I have been to Baihualing before for their four-part choral singing. I was not happy that they still introduced themselves to us as a farmer chorus. I told them it is okay to say that to tourists, but within the church it is unnecessary to downplay your Christian identity. (Personal communication with Zhu Falin on May 27, 2014)

The most negative reflection to the farmer chorus that I heard was from Fan Jianwen, music director of the Baihualing farmer chorus. He used a parable to refer to the current awkward situation that the farmer chorus was facing; as he put it, "The farmer chorus is just like a chicken rib, literally, 'a thing of little value or interest.' It probably never dies, or has a promising future." With a cloud of disappointment over his face, he continued to explain to me why he did not have confidence in the chorus's future:

Since you [referring to every chorus members] have already joined in the chorus, you should take your participation more seriously; however, many singers seem to have no knowledge of why they are doing this. They look unhappy on stage. I cannot tell whether they are singing to the God or to the tourists. (Interview with Fan Jianwen on June 23, 2013)

When I asked Yage, Fan Jianwen's teacher, about his reflections on the chorus that he once coached, he showed a feeling of pride. He said there had been no chorus in Baihualing Church for a very long time. Visitors coming to Nujiang occasionally heard their congregational singing during worship services, and gradually the fame of hymn

singing spread far and wide. He also pointed out that there is not much difference between the hymn singing and tourist show; as he put it, “We just pretend to sing to the God. The only difference is that there is a conductor in the tourist show.” I also learned of similar comments from a few other chorus members (personal communications).

Yu Jinhua’s reflections show that conscious motivation certainly played a part in the establishment of the DFC. During my interview with Yu, he focused more on the economic benefits that the farmer chorus had brought to individual Christian families than on its negative effects. He recalled the old days when a large number of Christian families in Da’nanmao Village were not so wealthy as some of their non-Christian neighbors, and therefore were looked down upon by them, not to mention the fact that the church was still in debt due to the church reconstruction project. “That’s why we decided to learn from Baihualing Church and apply for setting up a four-part singing tourism site here in Da’nanmao at the very beginning,” he added.

However, this does not mean that every member only considered the participation in the farmer chorus to be an opportunity to improve his or her economic life. Unfortunately, I was not able to talk to more singers, but at least according to several female singers I did talk to, they felt happy during the rehearsals and performances—singing and dancing could relax them after a busy day’s housework.

It is uncertain whether the four-part singing of the Lisu farmer chorus as a must-see program in the Nujiang touring package will persist in the future, given the fact that many senior singers are getting old whereas the younger generation tends to have less interest in singing traditional four-part hymns. Furthermore, with the development of the local

economy, one of the factors that attracted a few Christians to participate in the tourist performance—earning extra money—will gradually lose its attraction.

#### 5.4 The Farmer Chorus Performing in More Secular Contexts

Now I turn to analyzing more interactions between Lisu Christians and their secular surroundings through looking into more musical practices of the Lisu farmer chorus outside the church in more secular contexts.

##### Expanding repertoire

Without government interference, it is difficult to say whether church leaders would expand their singing repertoire for the tourist show in the short term. As previously mentioned, Yage, former music director of the BFC, made it clear that he would never consider rehearsing folk songs in the church. In his opinion, singing for tourists other than for worship—a few Christians could even earn extra money because of it—was already a departure from the original intention of hymn singing, not to mention performing secular songs on other occasions. Why then were secular songs included in both tourist shows I attended? When and where did chorus members learn those new repertoires?

The story can be traced back to the two successive multi-part folk song peixunban organized by the prefecture bureaus of tourism and culture in 2009 and 2010. I found this clue in a graduation photo (see Figure 5.5) entitled “Graduation group photo of the Nujiang Lisu multi-part folk song performance training classes” (Nujiang Lisuzu duoshengbu mingge biaoyan peixunban jieye heying), stuck to the wall of Da’nanmao Church. I asked Yu Jinhua about this photo. He told me the story as follows:

In 2009, we attended a one-week peixunban studying to sing multi-part folk songs in the Nujiang Nationalities Specialized Secondary School (NNSSS). The people of Baihualing Church went to study too. We were required to attend another peixunban in 2000, as the lyrics of what we had learned for the first time were considered inappropriate by the authorities—some of them are about praising God—and therefore we had to learn all the songs again with new lyrics.



Figure 5.5. The graduation group photo of the first Nujiang Lisu multi-part folk song performance peixunban taken on August 22, 2009. Reproduced from the original photo.

In order to figure out the cause and effect of the whole incident, especially the focus of the Christianized translation, I found Fan Jianwen, one of the translators. According to him, the culture and tourism bureaus both thought that the farmer chorus should rehearse more songs favored by tourists, which, as conceptualized by the government officials, were classic folk songs and broadly defined red songs (interview with Fan on November 28, 2012).<sup>161</sup>

The “red songs” (hongge) are also known as patriotic and revolutionary songs, written in different periods since the early twentieth century. Narrowly defined, red songs are mainly those praising the CCP, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), and the

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<sup>161</sup> Unless specifically mentioned, all the information provided by Fan Jianwen in this section was collected during the same interview conducted on November 28, 2012.

motherland (zuguo). Since the PRC, PLA, and CCP all have adopted red as the main background color for their flags, the songs in praise of them are conventionally called “red songs.” Broadly defined, songs that reflect and eulogize the new life and national unity since the Reform and Opening-up in the 1980s are also called red songs.

Among fifteen songs handpicked for teaching in the second peixunban, eight of them were broadly defined red songs.<sup>162</sup> The other seven included three folk songs derived from either Han Chinese or national minorities, two songs about universal love, the theme song of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, “You and Me,” and “Auld Lang Syne.” Nothing can illustrate the cooperation and collision between the church leaders and government better than the contested meaning conveyed from those translated Lisu-language red songs.

Since church leaders could not decide what they should sing in public, they translated lyrics as they saw fit; as Fan Jianwen put it, “I was assigned to harmonize original monophonic tunes and translate Chinese lyrics into Lisu. I just made a liberal translation, some of which were very similar to our hymn texts, but not many.” Figure 5.6 fully embodies how he Christianized the original secular lyrics.

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<sup>162</sup> The eight red songs are “Dang a, Qin'ai de Mama” 党啊，亲爱的妈妈 (The Party, Dear Mother) (1984), “Shandandan Kaihua Hongyanyan” 山丹丹开花红艳艳 (Red Flowers Blooming All over the Mountain) (1972), “Meiyou Gongchandang jiu Meiyou Xin Zhongguo” 没有中国共产党就没有新中国 (Without the China Communist Party, There Would Be No New China) (1943), “Ai Wo Zhonghua” 爱我中华 (Love My China) (1991), “Yuanfang de Keren, Qing Ni Liuxialai” 远方的客人请你留下来 (Please Stay, guests from Afar) (1953), “Nanwang Jinxiao” 难忘今宵 (Unforgettable Night) (1984), “Baowei Huanghe” 保卫黄河 (Defending the Yellow River) (1938), and “Tong Yishou Ge” (1990) 同一首歌 (The Same Song). Three folk songs include the renowned Chinese folk song “Moli Hua” 茉莉花 (Jasmine Flower), the classic regional Yunnan folk song “Xiaohe Tangshui” 小河淌水 (Little River Dripping Water) (1947), and an arrangement of Nu folk music, “Gesheng Feichu Xinwowo” 歌声飞出心窝窝 (Sound Flying Out of the Heart) (1971).

Original lyrics	Christianized lyrics
The flower once told me (Xianhua ceng gaosu wo)	Every path you have taken <i>Nu xelge ma jjaggu ei</i>
How you had walked through (Ni zenyang zouguo)	Jesus knows YE-SU <i>sel lo</i>
The earth knew (Dadi zhidao)	What you are thinking <i>Nu niqma alshit ddujtjat nga'mi</i>
Every corner of your heart (Ni xinzhong de meiyige jiaoluo)	God knows <i>Wusa sel lo</i>
Sweet dreams (Tianmi de meng a)	Your prayer <i>Nu et ddeitket dail</i>
Nobody would miss (Shei dou buhui cuoguo)	The Lord will help to realize <i>Sipat pitlazi lo</i>
Finally has arrived (Zhongyu yinglai)	Our get-together is <i>Yot moxlei kor ma mi</i>
Today's joyful get-together. (Jintian zhe huanju shike).	Also his arrangement. <i>Yil lei jjatgget diaq.</i>

Figure 5.6 Comparison between the original lyrics of the first verse of “The Same Song” and its Christianized version. I give corresponding Hanyu Pinyin for the original lyrics and Lisu Pinyin for the Christianized version originally written in Old Lisu, except for the proper noun YE-SU (Jesus). I also provide my English translations for both.

The translation initially passed the official examination and was ready for use in the first peixunban.<sup>163</sup> According to Fan Jianwen, he was responsible for teaching more than one hundred trainees, mostly Christians. “There were no sermons in class, though,” he added. However, officials from the propaganda department of the prefecture party committee (hereafter simply referred to as the propaganda department) eventually discovered these “inappropriate” Christianized lyrics and they considered them not suitable for red songs. Here, it is interesting to see the internal disagreements within the governmental sectors: officials from the tourism bureau seemed to care little about the

<sup>163</sup> Fan Jianwen was not explicit about the government sector(s) that had approved the translation, but according to Zhao Ke, the tourism bureau should have played a part (see the next page). However, I did not ask the tourism officials in person, as it was a sensitive issue and I did not want to bring any potential bad effects to my informant.

content as long as the four-part choral music was added, whereas the propaganda department focused more on the content of the songs than their artistic value.

In the end, songbooks used in the first peixunban were withdrawn, and all Christianized lyrics were re-translated by Heng Kaiyan, chief editor of *Nujiang Newspaper*, and Zhao Ke, office director of the Nujiang National Languages Film Translation and Dubbing Center (Nujiang Minzuyu Dianying Yizhi Zhongxin).<sup>164</sup> Another workshop was organized in the next year, using the revised songbook in which all the songs remained unaltered but all “inappropriate” lyrics were completely removed and replaced with the new official version. I confirmed this with Zhao Ke. He described his experience of translation thus:

Christians’ own translations were not carefully inspected by the responsible persons from the prefecture tourism bureau and NNSSS. When the propaganda department discovered their Christian content, they immediately summoned us to re-translate the lyrics. (Interview with Zhao Ke on July 28, 2014)

Both Da’nanmao and Baihualing villages are close to Liuku, home to the seats of Lushui County and the prefecture government. Short-distance transportation provides convenient conditions for the government authorities to implement their policies by going back and forth to the nearby churches. The prefecture government certainly played the deciding role in expanding the repertoire of the farmer chorus; however, the Christian Lisu made their own decisions on how they would perform those imposed non-Christian songs in the actual performances; or, more accurately, the decision about which version—the Christianized lyrics or the revised version more faithful to the original lyrics—they would choose to sing depending on the occasion (for more details, see the following examples).

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<sup>164</sup> That is why I could only see partial Christianized lyrics based on Fan Jianwen’s memories and several video clips of the presentational performance at the end of the first perxunban.

“Red songs entering church” activity

The year of 2011 was the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of the CCP. The local government held a series of celebrations, among which the prefecture-wide red song singing activities had a great influence on the farmer choruses’ musical practices. The singing activities were held not only in government units and non-profit organizations, schools, and urban communities but also further away, deep in the mountainous villages. How did the Christian Lisu or the Lisu farmer choruses engage in this tide of red song singing?

Early in 2010, the revised songbooks with translations faithful to the original lyrics—not the Christianized version—were not only used in the second multi-part folksong peixunban but also were distributed to many village cultural activity centers by the propaganda department, laying the foundation for the next year’s prefecture-wide red song singing activities.

According to Zhao Ke, the main person responsible for introducing and teaching red songs in the countryside, initially thirteen villages were chosen as the main experimental places. Finally, Chihengdi Village was considered to be an ideal site to intensively promote red song singing, partly due to the musical talent of the chorus director Ci Luheng, and partly due to the villagers’ great willingness to participate.<sup>165</sup> I asked Zhao Ke why they did not consider developing the BFC or DFC into a red-song chorus. He explained to me, “Although both churches are much closer to Liuku. It is convenient for us if we choose them; however, their singing lacks strong emotions, the key to singing a red song well” (interview with Zhao Ke on July 28, 2014).

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<sup>165</sup> Ci Luheng engaged in harmonizing the monophonic red songs. There were more than eighty villagers initially registered for the rehearsals. At the end, only sixty of them were selected to stay in the chorus.

Along with the foundation of the Chihengdi Red Song Farmer Chorus (hereafter referred to as Chihengdi Chorus) in March 2011, an activity known as “Red songs entering church” (Hongge jin jiaotang, hereafter referred to as RSEC), held at the same time in all other parts of China in order to celebrate the ninetieth birthday of the CCP, was gradually promoted within the church throughout Nujiang. For example, I also found a church chorus in Tengchong’s Shaohuiba Church specializing in singing red songs.<sup>166</sup> Their red song repertoire was quite similar to that of Nujiang’s red song repertoire (personal communication with the chorus director, Yu Yingbao, on November 4, 2012). The tourist performance of the farmer chorus contained both sacred and secular elements, whereas singing red songs on various occasions, especially within the church, was a totally secular phenomenon for the Christian Lisu.

The Chihengdi Chorus in the RSEC was a significant role model only on the local level until the first half of 2011. The chorus gradually gained wider recognition at prefectural, provincial, and national levels after their participation in the production of the official red song promotion DVD, *Hongge Changxiang Shanzhai* (Singing Red Songs all over the Mountainous Villages), planned and sponsored by the Propaganda Department and Office of the “Four Masses” (Siqun) Education of the Fugong Communist Party Committee.<sup>167</sup> The DVD contains thirteen four-part Lisu-language red songs sung by the Chihengdi Chorus, most of which were also taught in the two multi-part folksong peixunban. According to the news report, the government planned to make ten thousand copies and send them to many other communities with high concentrations of Lisu,

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<sup>166</sup> By 2012 there were thirty-five Christians registered for the chorus, and a majority of them were aged between eighteen and forty. The chorus often performed in town.

<sup>167</sup> The term “Four Masses” refers to four key aspects of improving the relationship between the masses and the CCP, including the mass view, mass route, mass benefit, and mass work.

mainly in Myanmar and Philippines, hoping that the Lisu around the world would be able to hear the Lisu-language red songs from Nujiang (Nujiang Minzongwei 2011).

Without further investigation, the actual impact of exported music videos on the overseas Lisu communities is uncertain. However, this red song DVD spread widely within Nujiang in 2011, and so did the reputation of the Chihengdi Chorus. Based on my personal communication with many Christian Lisu—mostly the church pastoral staff, and a few ordinary believers—the name of Chihengdi was almost synonymous with red-song singing at the time.

Although the musical repertoire of the three major farmer choruses discussed above was quite uniform, the proficiency in red song singing in terms of the breadth of the repertoire and singing technique became salient in differentiating the Chihengdi Chorus from the other two. The Chihengdi Chorus had received professional training before they recorded the official DVD, and therefore their singing is more polished with a good balance of four vocal parts; the singing of the other two choruses, by contrast, is plain and more straightforward, a style closer to that of normal hymn singing.

Besides singing red songs in the official promotional DVD, on June 24, 2011, the Chihengdi Chorus also attended the Fugong ethnic-language red song contest and ranked number one. Later on September 21, 2011, at the third show in a series of art performances, “Yunling Odes Dedicated to the Party” (Yunling song’ge xian’gei dang), held in order to celebrate the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of the CCP, the Chihengdi Chorus sang two red songs, “The Party, Dear Mother” and “Red Flowers Blooming All Over the Mountain,” representing the entire Nujiang region. This was the first time the chorus performed outside Nujiang. They finally won the first prize as well

as the prize for the best team organization. Following this success in Kunming, the Chihengdi Chorus was invited to attend the sixteenth National Arts Festival “Galaxy Award” (Qunxingjiang) in August 2013 and finally received the “excellent” award.<sup>168</sup>

Red songs were first taught in the multi-part folksong peixunban, aiming to broaden the farmer chorus’s repertoire for the tourist shows. Then, in a totally different context, the same repertoires were still performed by the farmer chorus but for the purpose of political propaganda in the official red song promotional video. The nature of the red songs reinforced the role of a small number of Christian Lisu in political life—although such participation was reactive, not proactive—and then brought greater official media exposure. Similar to the national recognition and performance opportunities that the farmer chorus had received in the late 1990s, the success of the Chihengdi Chorus also brought great honor to Nujiang in a more politically specific context.

The 2012 report on the work of the Nujiang Two Christian Organizations especially emphasizes the church’s participation in the 2011 red song singing activities in the report’s sixth section, “To play a positive role in the spiritual civilization and economical development.” The report summarizes four examples of participation. Besides two performances of the Chihengdi Chorus as mentioned above, two other ad hoc groups attended red song contests at different levels: students from the prefecture Christian training center attended the prefecture red-song singing contest and won the second prize; and the students from the Gongshan Christian training center participated in the county-level contest and won the first prize (Feng Rongxin 2012b).

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<sup>168</sup> Held by the Ministry of Culture (Wenhua Bu) every three years, the “Galaxy Award” is the top award among various mass culture competitions in China.

For the local government, the prefecture-wide promotion of red songs within the church not only was a gift dedicated to the Party's ninetieth anniversary, but also served as an important initiative to resist the foreign religious infiltration (*zongjiao shentou*). The church leaders of the farmer choruses basically cooperated with the government towards that goal, at least in their words. For instance, as leaders of Baihualing Church wrote in their work summary, "Recently, in Baihualing Church a series of work has been done to resist foreign religious infiltration, among which the activity 'Red songs entering church' has played an important part" (Baihualing Church n.d.). For another example, in his application for the establishment of the Chihengdi Chorus, Ci Luheng particularly pointed out that one of the main purposes of founding a red-song chorus in his village was to assist the resistance against the foreign cultural infiltration (Ci Luheng 2011).

Ci Luheng did not say to me that it was an honor for his farmer chorus to promote red songs as a way of expressing their gratitude to the Party and the government—something he had already told other reporters—but he felt fortunate to take advantage of this opportunity to organize a relatively fixed chorus and bring villagers all together through music (personal communication). His words are credible, as his love for music is unquestionable—he produced Nujiang's first Lisu-language music VCD (for more details, see Chapter 6). For church leaders of the BFC, the inclusion of red songs in the program was just a compromise. The chorus sang them less often unless the performance was scheduled for a governmental visiting group. Hymn-derived pieces still made up the chorus's core repertoire. The ways in which the DFC interacted with the government and the secular music troupe in the same village are quite different from the other two farmer choruses, a distinct phenomenon that I will discuss in the next section.

## Interactions with the secular music troupe

Da'nanmao Village was designated as one of the first batch of provincial tourism villages in 2007. One of its advertised tourist attractions is the abundant folk music activity undertaken within the village folk art troupe.

Built upon the former folk art team, the Da'nanmao Ethnic and Folk Art Troupe (hereafter referred to as the art troupe) was founded and officially recognized by the county government in 2003. According to He Guizhi, head of the art troupe, the troupe comprises four branch groups, including a *bbaishit* chorus, the Maoyuan Art Troupe, Folk Art Troupe, and the DFC (interview with He Guizhi on June 26, 2013). Hereafter, the term “folk troupe” is primarily used as the generic name for the first three groups, unless specified otherwise, to distinguish them from the church-based farmer chorus. In 2004, Da'nanmao was designated as “the hometown of folk songs” (*min'ge zhi xiang*).

The folk troupe and farmer chorus have become two major highlights, not only in the culture construction (*wenhua jianshe*) but also in the tourism development of Da'nanmao Village since the mid-2000s, and therefore have played a significant role in the village's economic growth. Although the farmer chorus is part of the entire art troupe, it has been quite independent. However, according to Yu Jinhua, deputy head of the both the farmer chorus, his title as a deputy head of the art troupe is nominal. Additionally, the farmer chorus and folk troupe never rehearsed together or communicated with each other about their music when performing on the same occasion.

I asked He Guizhi about possible mutual influences between the farmer chorus and folk troupe. He said to me that he was not sure whether the Christian group would interact with his folk troupe privately, but there should be at least no conflict. As he put it,

“Christians can learn my folk music, but they just do not have enough time. I can play their music too. You know, ‘Auld Lang Syne’ can also be played on the [Lisu four-stringed plucked lute] *qibbe*” (interview with He Guizhi on June 26, 2013). He even played several phrases of the song as a demonstration.

However, based on an in-depth case study of the impact of Christianity on the ethnic culture of Da’nanmao Village, in recent years, with the increase of the number of Christian believers, the Christian atmosphere has been becoming stronger and stronger—some folk troupe members also became Christians and joined in the church singing. For example, two female members—one at the age of sixty-eight and the other in her thirties—had just joined the church in the month prior to the researchers’ investigation between September and October in 2010 (Song Jianfeng and Li Baolin 2011: 90).

Next, I will examine two instances in which the farmer chorus became inseparable from the village soundscape and became a significant aspect of the cultural resources in Da’nanmao Village.

The first example is the gala evening celebrating for the tenth anniversary of the founding of the art troupe on June 8, 2013. Prior to the evening performance, there was a show in the afternoon primarily displaying the state-recognized Lisu intangible musical heritage. The folk troupe performed a majority of the programs. The farmer chorus did not participate in this cultural show at all.

The following gala evening aimed to celebrate the founding of the art troupe. A variety of guest troupes performed, including the prefecture song and dance troupe, the Lushui County Art Team, Hongxia Band, and Da Pengche all-female dance group. As one branch group of the art troupe, the farmer chorus also performed in this particular

festivity. There were twelve programs in the evening performance. Besides two programs performed by the farmer chorus, most others were the arrangements of traditional songs and dances of Nujiang's ethnic groups—the Lisu, Dulong, Yi, and Tibetan.

The farmer chorus was composed of five men and ten women, all quite young in their twenties or thirties. They performed the first of the evening programs—a famous red song “Love My China” adapted into a four-part choral piece sung in Lisu. All singers were dressed up in their official costumes designed for use in the major official performances and in the Yunnan Nationalities Village (see figure 5.7 left). It stands to reason that having a patriotic song sung nice and loud right at the beginning could remind all the people present who the bringer of happiness is. Standing under the spotlight, it is understandable why the chorus chose to sing the translation that is faithful to the original lyrics about praising national unity and the motherland China instead of their preferred Christianized translation in praise of God.

Later on, ten female singers of the chorus also performed a *daibbit* dance along with a Christian pop *mutgguat ssat*. Most interestingly, the program was given the irrelevant name “Brothers and Sisters Meeting Each Other” (*Alyir nima zzix lait'ho*), which has nothing to do with the actual singing about gratitude and joyfulness in the love and benevolence of God. Since the chorus did not have much freedom in the first chorus program, they prepared the second perfectly innocuous program according to their own preferences. After all, audience members would mostly focus on the dancing part rather than the song lyrics (see Figure 5.7 right).



Figure 5.7. The Da'nanmao Farmer Chorus performing in the evening gala to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Da'nanmao Ethnic and Folk Art Troupe at the site of the Maoyuan Art Troupe and the village music training institute. June 8, 2013. Photos taken from a screenshot of the performance video.

The second example is the farmer chorus's participation in the annual gala evening of the Xinjian Village Art and Sport Meeting (Xinjiancun Wentihui). Xinjian Village, the administrative village to which Da'nanmao belongs, manages twenty-five village groups (cunmin xiaozu). An annual art and sport meeting has been held during the Chinese Spring Festival (Chunjie) since 1988. On the last day of the meeting, there would be a gala evening held on the playground of the village elementary school, including dozens of programs prepared by each of the village groups.

The farmer chorus has been participating in the evening gala since the late 2000s. Based on the videos of the 22<sup>nd</sup> (2009), 24<sup>th</sup> (2011), and 25<sup>th</sup> (2012) performances, and my personal observation of the 26<sup>th</sup> meeting in 2013, each time the DFC sent a small group of young female members to perform a *daibbit* dance accompanied by the recorded music of a Lisu Christian pop song.<sup>169</sup> I was told by the audience members of the 2013

<sup>169</sup> There were six female members in the dancing group in 2009, ten in 2011, and ten in 2012. The number of female dancers in the 2013 performance is uncertain, as I lost most of my fieldwork data collected between late December 2012 and May 2013 after my data disk was damaged.

evening gala that the chorus came to sing once or twice, but one *daibbit* dance was the item performed most frequently by Christians (personal communication).

From the demonstration of traditional music to the arrangements of folk songs and dances given by professionals, and from the youth singing Chinese-language pop love songs to a group of middle-aged women performing a fitness dance, one can find in the evening gala an arena of exhibiting how diverse the music preferences can be within a suburban village. For many chorus members who should have already performed on a larger stage several times, singing in such a relaxed and happy environment was not considered a performance at all. The audience members were mostly their relatives and friends, together with whom they might have still been cooking for the family gathering right before the evening performance. It is noticeable that the farmer chorus's *daibbit* performance was announced to represent Da'nanmao Church, indicating not only the unique status that the church had acquired in the social life of the entire village, but also the harmonious coexistence of the Christians and non-Christians in the village.

Other performance opportunities besides the tourist shows

Generally speaking, the four-part singing of the farmer chorus has been a necessary program in Nujiang's various large-scale art performances since their success in the 1998 Beijing International Choral Festival. The first major performance, recalled by Hu Xuecai, former director for the prefecture bureau of religious affairs, was in the celebration for the official Lisu New Year in 1998. On December 20, the prefecture government organized a farmer chorus made up of approximately one hundred Christians living around Liuku. They performed "Ode to Joy" and "Auld Lang Syne." Following this

performance, in a very similar context in the celebration of the Lisu New Year in Fugong County on December 21, 2003 another large-scale farmer chorus—comprising more than one hundred Christians from Shangpa Town and Jiakedi Township—performed the first program: “Hallelujah Chorus” and “Auld Lang Syne” (interview with Hu Xuecai on May 27, 2013).

The BFC and DFC give tourist shows most often in the church. In the early 2000s, according to Yu Jinhua, the government officials would often request an off-site performance from the DFC for their visitors, such as the Da’nanmao Yalayi Garden of National Amorous Feelings (fengqingyuan), the Nujiang Garden (Nujiang Yuan), and the Jinneng Grand Hotel. Yu also admitted that they gradually had become familiar with the bosses of these external reception sites, so later they also received private invitations from them and were able to perform there without the governmental recommendation. He added, “We received about thirty yuan per person in 2004 and 2005. But we seldom perform there nowadays.”

Besides ad hoc farmer choruses, the BFC and DFC also took turns performing in the government-sponsored festivities. According to Yu Jinhua, the Da’nanmao chorus performed in almost all the main venues in the Liuku area, including the National Stadium (Minzu Tiyuchang), the Tongxin Square (Tongxin Guangchang), and the Nujiang Hall (Nujiang Huitang); as he recollected:

If Baihualing [referring to the BFC] does not go, we go. The organizer would contact either of us and request the performance. But it does not mean we must go if they come to us. Generally speaking, if they want a group that looks old, they will go for Baihualing, as the average age of their chorus members is higher than ours. We have a younger team.

According to Fan Jianwen and Li Zhongwen, in September 2011 the BFC was invited to sing a piece of four-part background music for a specific plot—to be shot in Nujiang—in the documentary film *Wo de Kangzhan 2* (My Anti-Japanese War 2).<sup>170</sup> A group of twenty-one singers together with a group leader, vice director of Lushui Tourism Bureau, made their twenty-seven-day trip to Beijing. The chorus not only recorded the music there but also sang it live at the film’s press conference held at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse (Diaoyutai Guo Binguan) on September 16. Afterwards, the chorus also performed in a few tourist sites in the Haidian District of Beijing. They even went to Zhongguancun Elementary School and performed there.

The DFC’s out-of-Nujiang engagements were mainly in the Yunnan Nationalities Village. The chorus was invited to sing in the village during the National Day Golden Week (Huangjinzhou) in two consecutive years (2011 and 2012).

In 2011, a series of themed activities, “Colorful Yunnan Nationalities Village, Joyful trip to the Nujiang *kuoqshir* festival,” was held in the Village during October 1-7, organized by the Nujiang Tourism Bureau and Yunnan Nationalities Village. The Da’nanmao Farmer Chorus, composed of twenty singers, joined in other secular folk art troupes to provide performances there.<sup>171</sup> The chorus performed in different locations at different times each day, including the Tuanjie Square (Tuanjie Guangchang), the Jingpo Village Square (Jingpo Cun Guangchang), the Dianchi Grand Stage (Dianchi Dawutai),

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<sup>170</sup> The Haidian Tourism Bureau of Beijing sent the invitation to the Nujiang Tourism Bureau. The latter gave this opportunity to the Baihualing Farmer Chorus. It was Fan Jianwen, music director of the chorus, who harmonized the original music. *My Anti-Japanese War* is a documentary film in animation style with thirty episodes planned by the famous presenter, Cui Yongyuan, from the China Central Television (CCTV).

<sup>171</sup> Other folk art troupes include the Stone Moon Art Troupe based in Fugong, The Sanjiang Art Troupe based in Lanping, and the representative team from the Nujiang Nationalities Specialized Elementary School.

and the Daogan Square (Daogan Guangchang). They even performed in a Miao church within the Miao village. The DFC together with other folk troupes gave more than 230 performances within seven days.

What could best represent the intra-prefecture esteem and the sense of pride in the farmer chorus tradition was the application for a four-part performance of “Auld Lang Syne” in the closing ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The prefecture government produced a promotion video introducing the farmer chorus’s glorious history and their signature song “Auld Lang Syne” to facilitate the application (see Figure 5.8). Hundreds of Lisu villagers from Fugong County, mostly Christians, took part in recording the song for this video. “Our request was very close to success,” Yang Yuanji, the main person responsible for this event, said regretfully.



Figure 5.8. The cover design of the official video as the application material submitted to the Beijing Olympic Committee for the performance of “Auld Lang Syne” in the closing ceremony. Reproduced from the original cover.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the different intentions of the Christian Lisu and the government in their participation in the farmer chorus tradition. For the local government, it was initially hoped that the cultural brand of the Lisu farmer chorus could bring more economic benefits and greater recognition of Nujiang. The government neither denied its connection with the Christians' hymn singing tradition nor publicized such a connection. The later RSEC activity aimed to imbue Christian Lisu with more love of the country and the Party than for their God.

For the Christian Lisu, all the dilemmas they confronted have reflected their struggles to balance between their Christian beliefs and secular surroundings. The tourist show provided them with an opportunity to publicly display what they considered to be the essential part of their Christian culture. On the one hand, to be able to perform in the tourist contexts, they had to present themselves as what both tourists and the government found acceptable; on the other hand, church leaders made great efforts to maintain Christian aspects of the tourist show or to minimize the impact of the imposed red-song singing on the religious life of the church.

Having been created within the last twenty years, the Lisu farmer chorus has become a regional and ethnic cultural symbol represented and reinterpreted by different agents—including the tradition bearers themselves—over the years. However, this tradition has not really spread into the everyday life of many more ordinary Christians. Instead, it is those “backstage” Christian pop *mutgguat ssat* developing side by side with the farmer chorus that have generated a comprehensive influence on the contemporary Christian culture of the Nujiang Lisu, which will be discussed in length in Chapter 6.

## **Chapter 6: Transnational Migration, Musical Exchange, and Religious-Social Changes on the Frontier**

In Chapter 5, I discussed the impact of state involvement in the transformation of Lisu Christian music in Nujiang. This chapter will shed light on another way that the musical practices of the Nujiang Lisu have been greatly influenced: the increasing rise of Christian popular culture influenced by the Burmese Christian Lisu, starting from the late 1990s and early 2000s and the massive creation and studio production of the Christian pop genre *mutgguat ssat* in Nujiang over the last five years.

First, I briefly review the history of Lisu migration from China to Myanmar, especially the significant role that the spread of Christianity has played. Next, I focus on the sound of *mutgguat ssat*, with particular interest in comparing distinct features between songs written in the two countries and in analyzing representative songs in the Lisu-style repertoire. Finally, I examine the writing, production, and distribution of *mutgguat ssat* in Nujiang under the influence of the Burmese Lisu.

Throughout the chapter, I also touch on other factors that have played a part in the cross-border flow of music ideas and repertoire over the last three decades, including the more flexible border policies, technological progress, and, as always, government religious policies. Meanwhile, in the post-1949 era Christian beliefs became an important force to unite all Christian migrants in Myanmar together, although denominational divisions still existed. In addition to the common religious belief and language, here I also attend to the role of a shared music repertoire in reinforcing the transnational religious-social network among the Christian Lisu.

## 6.1 History of Lisu Transnational Migration on the China-Myanmar Border

Prior to the founding of the PRC

According to Fang Guoyu's research on the historical geography of China's southwestern area, as early as the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), the ancestors of the Lisu should have arrived in the west piedmont of Gaoligong Mountain, the territory of today's northern Myanmar (Fang Guoyu 1987: 846). By the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) a large number of Lisu had already migrated and lived there (Gao Zhiying 2010b: 72).

Gao Zhiying believes that one major reason for the wide distribution of the Lisu on both sides of the China-Myanmar border was the blurred borderline prior to the formation of modern countries, because for a long period of time this isolated area was historically divorced from the central rule—even far away from the core area of the native official (tusi) system—which guaranteed easy mobilization and border crossing for the Lisu living on the frontier (Gao Zhiying 2009: 348-51; 2010b: 71). Shi Fuxiang expresses a similar opinion in his review of the history of Chinese Lisu migration to present-day Burmese territory;<sup>172</sup> as he puts it, “Over the past 400 years the Chinese Lisu continuously climbed over the Gaoligong Mountain and entered Myanmar. For those settling down in the region with an undefined boundary between China and Myanmar, they did not become Burmese residents until the official establishment of the demarcation of the China-Myanmar border in 1960” (Shi Fuxiang 2011: 19).

Starting from the early twentieth century, Western missionaries came to missionize among the Lisu in this border area, and since that time the migration and cultural

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<sup>172</sup> For this reason, I use “migration” instead of “immigration” to describe the continuous movement of large numbers of Chinese Lisu from one place to another, even though it seems to be rather like a process of immigration—coming to live in Myanmar, which is not the Chinese Lisu people's own country.

interactions of the Lisu on the frontier were also influenced by the spread of Protestant Christianity. Meanwhile, the arrival of the National Government's territorial force in Nujiang resulted in more conflicts between the Lisu and alien Han Chinese rulers. Economic exploitation and heavy taxes by the local authorities also forced the Lisu to move westward to the region with an undefined boundary or to a place where fewer taxes would be collected.<sup>173</sup>

From the 1950s to the late 1970s

Upon the founding of the PRC in 1949, some Nujiang Lisu quickly fled to Myanmar because they had some doubt about the new government's attitudes towards them based on their unhappy memories of the previous Han rulers (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 31). Meanwhile, the CCP's religious policy had a tremendous impact on the development of Christianity in China, because all of the foreign missionaries were forced to leave the country.

For example, according to an investigation conducted by the Nujiang group of the central delegation in the 1950s, 242 Lisu households in Gongshan escorted the Morse family to northern Myanmar (Morse family n.d.; Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009a: 35), and a few Christian Lisu from the Assemblies of God in Fugong also followed their foreign church leader to Myanmar (Yunnansheng Bianjizu 2009a: 32). In her fieldwork in Myanmar, Gao Zhiying discovered that many Burmese Lisu there were migrants from Fugong County during the early 1950s (Gao Zhiying and Huang Ronghua 2010: 101). Gertrude Morse also writes in her memoir, "During the summer of 1954, many Lisu

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<sup>173</sup> For several examples, see Yunnansheng Bianjizu (2009a: 250-51) and Zhengxie Nujiang Wenshi Ziliao Weiyuanhui (1994: 457).

refugees came [to the Putao area of northern Myanmar] from China” (Gertrude Morse 1998: 336).

From 1958 to 1978 in a series of political movements, the execution of religious prohibition caused another wave of cross-border migration. Between 1958 and 1960 alone, there were 2496 Lisu running away including 1182 Christians (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 206).<sup>174</sup> For those who migrated to Myanmar, in 1962 General Ne Win succeeded in overthrowing the authorities in power. The social turbulence forced many Christian Lisu to leave Myanmar for Thailand, India, and elsewhere, resulting in the current distribution of the Lisu as a transnational ethnic group (Shi Fuxiang 2006: 31).<sup>175</sup>

Contemporary situation since the 1980s and the response of the government

The trans-border migration of the Lisu has experienced remarkable changes since the Reform and Opening-up in 1978. Due to the restoration of the policy of religious freedom, fewer Christian Lisu would leave and seek religious refuge in Myanmar. Instead, political and family reasons have become major impetuses.

On the one hand, the influence of official policies is obvious, such as the local government’s transnational relocation project and one-child policy; in the latter case, families that violated the policy would leave for Myanmar in order to avoid penalties (Gao Zhiying and Huang Ronghua 2010: 102); on the other hand, according to many of my Lisu informants, especially those who have relatives and friends in Myanmar, seeking

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<sup>174</sup> Within Bijiang’s Liwudi Village alone, 31 households (over 150 persons) migrated to Myanmar in 1958 (Cao Yue’ru 2009: 17).

<sup>175</sup> In particular, when the Burmese government officially ordered the Morse family to leave Myanmar by December 31, 1965, some Lisu followed the family members and further trekked to the Myanmar-India border, beginning a seven-year community life in the wilderness (for details, see Eugene Morse 1974; Gertrude Morse 1998: 423; Morse family n.d).

help from relatives, family reunions, and cross-border marriage are important personal factors in the wave of Lisu migration. It is worth pointing out that unlike previous waves of migration, usually in the direction from China westward to Myanmar, nowadays the direction is the other way around.<sup>176</sup>

However, religious impetus still has been a factor in the cross-border interaction. In the church's initial recovery in the 1980s, the prevalence among the younger generation of receiving systematic Christian training in Myanmar was a result of one urgent problem at the time: the lack of the sufficient evangelists (teachers) to help with ordinary Christians' theological studies. For example, three resident teachers of today's prefecture Christian training center all studied in northern Myanmar in the late 1980s and early 1990s (personal communication). This prevalence of studying in Myanmar has continued until today. Burmese Lisu-language Bible schools and peixunban still have had a great appeal to the Nujiang's young Christians (Feng Rongxin 2012a).<sup>177</sup>

At the very beginning, the church was suspicious toward those foreign-trained Christian Lisu and hesitated to recruit them to teach in the local peixunban. Even though the church was reassured and started to use them later, they were unable to be nominated as ordained evangelists (personal communication with Feng Rongxin and Hu Xuecai). As for the attitude of the government, according to one of the resident teachers in the prefecture training center, Timotiwu (Chinese name: An Nanyi), the government tried to

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<sup>176</sup> For example, in the government-organized migration project, the Nujiang Lisu were relocated in the mountainous region of Myanmar, so their new life there was even worse than what they used to have in China. As a result, those migrants who once had a moderately comfortable life in Nujiang soon returned (Gao Zhiying and Huang Ronghua 2010: 102).

<sup>177</sup> Currently, there are eight Lisu-language seminaries in northern Myanmar, including four in Myitkyina City and four in the northernmost Putao area. There are also two newly opened training centers aiming at the young Christian Lisu in Nujiang (Feng Rongxin 2012a).

impose ideological political education on those who received their religious training abroad; as he put it:

We were given the title of “pastoral staff members returning from self-support studying abroad” (zifei liuxue guiguo jiaomu renyuan) and were required to attend a two-week intensive study of the state policies and regulations in Kunming Socialist College (Kunming Shehui Zhuyi Xueyuan). The government provided us with all study expenses and finally issued us with certificates. (Interview with Timotiwu on June 5, 2014)

In recent years such transnational communication, conceptualized as “religious infiltration” (zongjiao shentou), has raised government’s additional concerns. The 2010 work report and 2011 work plan of the Ethnic and Religious Committee of the Nujiang Prefecture Peoples’ Political Consultative Conference (Nujiangzhou Renmin Zhengzhi Xieshang Huiyi) includes four pieces of advice for the work of resisting foreign religious infiltration as follows (Nujiangzhou Zhengxie Minzu he Zongjiao Weiyuanhui 2011):

1. Strengthening the organizational leadership of the work for resisting foreign religious infiltration and constructing the relevant cadres team;
2. Strengthening the administration of the non-governmental organizations [two Christian organizations], and expatriating all suspicious activities of religious infiltration according to law;
3. Publishing a balanced number of annotated Bible and hymnals [DM] through proper channels in order to satisfy Christians’ needs;
4. Properly resolving the problems about the insufficient funds of Nujiang’s religious organizations, and the overlooked daiyu (literally, “treatment,” primarily referring to income] of religious representatives.

Although the government also has noticed the “musical infiltration” in the Christian domain—the flood of pirated recordings of Burmese-produced Lisu Christian pop songs on the local farmers’ markets—there has never been any strict control.

## 6.2 The Sound of Lisu *Mutgguat Ssat*

### Origin of Lisu *mutgguat ssat*

It is impossible to retrace the origin of *mutgguat ssat*—who wrote the first piece or when it was written. However, it is certain that the first *mutgguat ssat* recording, a cassette tape album *Siljje Niqchit Mutgguat* (Songs of a Deep Yearning, hereafter referred to as *Siljje*) was made in the 1970s (interview with Ahdi Mark on February 19, 2014; Jin Jie 2013: 177). The album comprises thirty-four ballad-style lyrical songs, most of which were written and sung by Joni Morse (singer) and Bobby Morse (guitarist), two brothers from the Morse missionary family.

The album's musical style is quite unified, featuring soft two-part duet singing over a solo guitar. The use of acoustic guitar accompaniment demonstrates a notable influence from the music of the American folk music revival in the 1960s. Despite the uniform musical style, the album has diverse content. Besides Christian songs, there are also secular ballads on topics such as homesickness and friendship. For example, a widely known song, “*Mileix matdda a'ma Mulashiddei*” (Unforgettable Mulashidi), expresses two singers' longing for their hometown in northern Myanmar. The last song tells a story about how a young man saved his friend's life out of friendship. In addition to a majority of original compositions, there are also songs adapted from the Western pop hits of the time, including the Beatles' “Let It Be” and Ian Tyson's “Four Strong Winds,” first recorded by the folk duo Ian and Sylvia in the early 1960s.

This unprecedented music album caused a great sensation within the Lisu Christian communities in Myanmar, Thailand, and India when the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC) played *Siljje* songs in their Lisu Christian program in 1973 (interview with Ahdi

Mark on February 19, 2014; Jin Jie 2013: 177). The album was also given a rapturous reception by the Chinese Christian Lisu in the 1980s after its cassette copies were brought to Nujiang for the first time. According to Pu Sijia, seventy-three-year-old country doctor in Fugong's Guquan Wangzi Village (Guquan Wangzi Cun), the *Siljje* cassettes sold very well at the time, although they were expensive (personal communication on June 24, 2014). He has a large collection of cassettes including a copy of the *Siljje* album.

The fame of *Siljje* songs and the Morse brothers has persisted until today in Nujiang. Almost all the middle-aged and elderly Christian Lisu I contacted know the repertoire. Hu Dawei, schoolteacher of the prefecture Christian training center who once received theological education in northern Myanmar, taught his favorite *Siljje* songs to his students. I also came across a middle-aged church pastoral staff member in Fugong's Lumadeng Township. When I asked him about *Siljje* songs, he immediately started to sing "Unforgettable Mulashidi" and was willing to write down its lyrics from memory for me (personal communication).

The musical styles and the model of music making that this album created have been significant for the development of Lisu *mutgguat ssat* music.

First of all, the unified musical styles of *Siljje* songs have great influence on those *mutgguat ssat* written by the Christian Lisu themselves over the last three decades, and most of them have similar features to those of the *Siljje* songs—short vocal pieces (running between two-and-half and three minutes) organized into verse-chorus form, often at a slow tempo. Although in recent years the styles have undergone significant changes influenced by contemporary Western mainstream pop songs, especially the rock bands that use powerful electric instruments, the *Siljje* songs' narrative style that

prioritizes voice and the message conveyed over accompaniment has continued to hold an important place.

Secondly, the younger generation has been attracted to the singing of a ballad-style lyrical song over an acoustic guitar. Songs such as “*Qibbe Gwuabi*” (Inside the Guitar) and “*Qibbe Nitba*” (Two Guitars) not only demonstrate the changing connotation of the term “*qibbe*” from “Lisu traditional four-stringed plucked lute” to “guitar (both acoustic and electric)” but also affirm the ability of guitar playing to express one’s Christian faith and emotions of gratitude and pleasure. Even when *mutgguat ssat* are performed by a rock band—as they are often now in the Burmese Lisu church, though still in an immature stage of development in Nujiang—the acoustic guitar is still a significant instrument to accompany singing.

Next, the Morse brothers both created and performed their original compositions in the *Silje* album. Such a creative model led to the emergence of a group of singer-songwriters who became household names in Myanmar and later in Nujiang. Meanwhile, following the first *Silje* album, the Burmese Christian Lisu decided to make music recordings and albums by themselves in the late 1970s (interview with Ahdi Mark on February 19, 2014; Jin Jie 2013: 177). WaNyi Ahwu, Bbiat SaMoeYi, and Cao Rubbi are two of the early renowned Burmese Lisu singers and songwriters who engaged in making *mutgguat ssat* albums—WaNyi Ahwu is still quite famous in the Christian communities in Nujiang today.

According to Marteeyet, bandleader of the influential all-Christian Lisu band Omega, there existed three Lisu-language music albums prior to the foundation of the band in 2003, including the one in which he gave his debut performance, *Jjisu nailgua*

*Colail* (Youths in the Christ). Omega has participated in producing more than fifty albums up until today (interview with Marteyet on March 1, 2014).<sup>178</sup> In Nujiang, it is generally believed that a group of youths from Fugong's Chidengdi Village produced Nujiang's first Christian music VCD, featuring original *mutgguat ssat* accompanied by the guitar and simple *daibbit* dance (personal communication).<sup>179</sup>

#### Introducing *mutgguat ssat* from an insider's perspectives

As mentioned previously, since *mutgguat ssat* music is more like a category than a genre with a set of musical styles, in this section I demonstrate the different ways in which both ordinary Christians and songwriters introduced *mutgguat ssat* to me.

Most of the non-hymn types of monophonic short songs I listened to while doing fieldwork have been given a general name “*mutgguat ssat*.” As explained in Chapter 4.2, “*ssat*” means “small,” indicating the small-scale nature of the music, and “*mutgguat*” is a generic term for “song,” not referring to a particular vocal genre in the traditional Lisu performing arts. Therefore, broadly speaking, *mutgguat ssat* can denote any Lisu-language short songs in varied styles, from music with Lisu traditional elements to a ballad sung to an acoustic guitar to a song in the contemporary worship style, or one accompanied by a rock band. The expression of *mutgguat ssat* has been a creation of the Christian Lisu seldom known outside Christian communities.

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<sup>178</sup> The rest of the information provided by Marteyet was all obtained in the interview with him on March 1, 2014, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>179</sup> However, according to Hu Chunhua, one of the most renowned Lisu songwriters in Nujiang at present, his group based in Dongfanghong Village already produced a VCD of Christian music earlier in 1997, which includes both four-part hymns and *mutgguat ssat* sung over guitar playing. In the next two years, they made another two albums. All three albums came out earlier than Chihengdi's 2000 album. Nevertheless, Hu did not deny its impact on the local music scene (interview with Hu Chunhua on July 2, 2014). The rest of the information provided by Hu Chunhua was all acquired in this interview with him unless otherwise specified.

Despite the potential style difference, most *mutgguat ssat* are similar in several aspects: in structure, they are in verse-chorus form with two stanzas; in texture, the vocal part is mostly monophonic or sometimes includes an additional harmonic line; in content, *mutgguat ssat* aim to praise and worship God with simple spoken words that can be easily understood. Most songwriters I talked to explained the meaning of being “small-scale” in terms of texture: a *mutgguat ssat* should at most have two melodic lines; otherwise, it should be grouped into four-part *xelgget mutgguat*.

I interviewed Marteeyet, renowned Burmese Lisu songwriter, singer, and guitarist. He particularly compared *mutgguat ssat* with “*cogala mutgguat*,” a term used by Christians to refer to secular songs with vulgar lyrics sung by the non-Christian Lisu.<sup>180</sup> According to Marteeyet, the word itself used to be a derogatory term. Now Lisu Christians tend to use a more neutral word, *nu'niq mutgguat* (love songs). He further explained, “The lyrics of *mutgguat ssat* are mainly sacred singing about God; a small number of them, however, also refer to family, fellowship, and other church events.” Marteeyet has been writing and selling love songs to other singers or studios as a compromising way to earn money for a living and for supporting his voluntary church service. Composing sacred *mutgguat ssat* is almost unprofitable.

During my interview with Pu Yicai, Nujiang’s renowned Christian songwriter, he especially compared conservative attitudes held by the Nujiang Lisu church in contrast with the Burmese Lisu people’s open mind on the making of secular music; as he put it, “The Lisu songwriters in Myanmar were able to compose secular songs and perform them in public. However, here [in Nujiang] we are basically not allowed to do that. I have

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<sup>180</sup> Most Nujiang Christian Lisu I talked to did not mention the term “*cogala mutgguat*” until I brought it up.

never written a secular song before, except a recent one written to celebrate the Lisu New Year in Fugong” (interview with Pu Yicai, translated by Ge Sanhua, on June 18, 2014).<sup>181</sup>

Hu Chunhua, noted that there are a few cover songs in addition to the original compositions among the vast *mutgguat ssat* repertoire. According to Hu, when he was studying the Bible in Yingjiang Xian (Yingjiang County), the Burmese Lisu teachers there introduced various foreign pop songs to the class. Hu described several examples thus:

We listened to pop songs from Korea, Myanmar, the U.S., and China. We even tried to adapt a song from an American pop song. There was one cover song adapted from “Jungang zhi Ye” (Night at the Naval Port)—the Christian lyrics speak about the advent of the judgment day and the necessity of personal repentance. The Burmese Lisu also used the tune “Wanshui Qianshan Zongshi Qing” (Love and Passion) and rewrote the lyrics to be about the love for Jesus.<sup>182</sup>

Actually, I discovered much earlier that a few *mutgguat ssat* written by the Burmese Lisu adopted American/British or Chinese pop tunes with almost no variation in terms of rhythm, melody, musical structure, and even singing style. Such music preference should have something to do with the influence from the Burmese “copy thachin” music, a genre closely modeled on the sounds of English-language pop tunes but with new lyrics (for more details of “copy thachin,” see MacLachlan 2011: 51-54).

For example, WaNyi Ahwu recorded his version of “More than I Can Say” with the lyrics remaining unchanged—a passionate expression of love. I also found the Backstreet Boys’ signature song “I Want It That Way” adapted into a Christian song with completely different lyrics about the great rejoicing after conversion. In a similar fashion,

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<sup>181</sup> The rest of the information provided by Pu Yicai was all obtained in this interview with him, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>182</sup> “Night at the Naval Port” is a Chinese military song, which used to be considered as low-taste music with a “decadent sound” and received criticism when it was first performed in 1980. “Love and Passion” is the theme song of a 1982 Hong Kong film with the same name.

Ahci, another renowned Burmese Lisu songwriter and singer, composed “*Bbaqbba Maqma*” (Father and Mother) with new lyrics regarding parental love set to a Chinese love song, “*Jiubai Jiushijiu Duo Meigui*” (Nine Hundred and Ninety-Nine Roses).

Marilyn Khopang Morse, daughter of Eugene Morse, is a female songwriter and singer, almost a household name in the Lisu transnational Christian communities. She used the term “worship song” to refer to most of the *mutgguat ssat* she had written. During my interview with her, Marilyn played a recent work, “Only You,” to demonstrate the features of those “worship songs”; as she put it, “This is a type of song performed by a praise and worship team before a worship service starts. The team leads the song, and congregants sing along. The music makes you feel a close relationship between yourself and God, just like what is said in the lyrics: ‘Only you, father, you send your son to die for us and to save me, so that I do not have to go to hell. I want to worship you’ ” (interview with Marilyn on February 13, 2014).

Ahdi Mark, head of the Gospel Broadcasting Mission (GBM) based in Chiang Mai, has been producing a daily Lisu Christian program broadcast through the FEBC. There are two or three *mutgguat ssat* that he would call “gospel songs” played both before and after the sermon. He also used an interchangeable term, “praise songs,” to refer to most Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat*, which he often selected for making Lisu music videos in karaoke style (interview with Ahdi Mark on February 19, 2014).

SaMoeYi Ahki is another program editor in the GBM and a pastor serving in the Chiang Mai Christian Lisu church. He wrote a few Lisu-style *mutgguat ssat*. When he introduced various Lisu songs to me, he divided them into three categories: four-part *ddoqmuq mutgguat*; instrumental music (often with guitar) including Christian praise

songs and secular love songs; and traditional music such as spirit-calling songs and drinking songs. In his view, *mutgguat ssat* are Lisu praise songs, often with guitar accompaniment.

I have discussed *mutgguat ssat* music in general terms without distinguishing the internal differences, but this is an important issue that I will focus on in the next section regarding the variation of Nujiang-produced *mutgguat ssat* in contrast to their inspirational Burmese counterpart.

#### Comparing Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* to those written by the Nujiang Lisu

The Burmese Christian Lisu started to write *mutgguat ssat* early in the 1970s, when all Chinese Christian Lisu were still suffering from the disastrous Cultural Revolution. Since the 1980s, along with the religious revival, *mutgguat ssat* have been introduced to Nujiang and gradually incorporated into the worship services and other church activities used for devotional singing. Before continuing, I would like to explain why the Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* were initially so popular with the Christians in Nujiang.

First, the introduction of *mutgguat ssat* to the Nujiang Lisu in the 1980s provided the local Christians with a chance to appreciate more Lisu-language songs besides the traditional four-part *ddoqmuq mutgguat*. Furthermore, in such an isolated region like Nujiang where the local people only had limited contacts with the outside world several decades ago, there is no doubt that “locally-produced” *mutgguat ssat* from the other side of Gaoligong Mountain yet relatively closer to Nujiang’s many Lisu villages, were more easily attractive to those who were willing to accept new music. Second, the Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* used to be a primary source of music learning for those gifted

Nujiang Lisu who wanted to engage in songwriting. Since they did not have much opportunity to formally study music, they could get inspiration for their own compositions from listening to those imported *mutgguat ssat* recordings.

Several elements distinguish the *mutgguat ssat* written by the Nujiang Lisu from those by the Burmese Lisu despite their common features.

Firstly, unlike many Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* featuring solo singing accompanied by an acoustic guitar(s) or a simple rock band that comprises two guitars (acoustic or/and electric), a keyboard, and a drum set, *mutgguat ssat* written by the Nujiang Lisu rely heavily on the keyboard synthesizer and the electronic sound it produces to accompany the vocal part. Generally speaking, the Burmese Lisu pay attention to the sonic balance between singing and accompaniment in the studio recording, which, according to Jenevy, is what her band (Omega) tried to pursue (interview with Jenevy on February 23, 2014). In stark contrast, in many Nujiang-produced *mutgguat ssat* recordings I heard there are constant strong electronic drumbeats generated by the drum programming that almost overwhelm the voices.

Secondly, their singing styles are also distinguishable. The Burmese Lisu singers usually have more polished voices. There are a few Burmese female singers renowned for their unique sounding voices throughout the transnational Lisu Christian community, whereas there have been no female singers widely known in Nujiang. The sound of guitar playing is also an index difference between the two. The Burmese Lisu guitarists can play more complicated melodic patterns; however, there have been few comparable Lisu guitarists in Nujiang, as most of them could hardly receive formal guitar training due to the limited educational and economic sources available.

Another difference between the two is found in lyrics. In addition to sacred songs, very often a few Burmese Christian Lisu would compose love songs and sell them to earn money for a living. In the Burmese Lisu church, the line between the sacred and secular is quite blurred, as many *mutgguat ssat* singers and songwriters such as Marteyet and Ahei “cross over” between two domains. However, such a boundary has always been distinguished within the Nujiang church. The Christian Lisu in Nujiang might sing and write secular songs, but the scope of their content is limited to family, brotherhood, or hometown. Some young Christians I met in Nujiang admitted that they would listen to Chinese love songs in private on their cellphones but would not dare to listen to or even write a romantic song in public (personal communication).

There are two kinds of songs rarely found in the Nujiang-produced *mutgguat ssat* repertoire. One is the cover song. As previously discussed, the Burmese Lisu often select popular songs and replace the original secular lyrics with a Christian message or neutral lyrics. The other kind is the “encouragement song,” with inspiring lyrics such as those intended to arouse a sense of proudness in being Lisu or to appeal to building solidarity among the Lisu around the world. One of the most famous songs of this category is “*Titnit Titwa*” (One Mind, Same Root), a song written by the Burmese Lisu schoolmaster Lazarus Fish and performed in 2004 by an ad hoc Christian group in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Nujiang Prefecture (for more details, see Chapter 6.5).

However, it is worth mentioning that although *daibbit* or *qilu lairlu* (waving hands and moving feet)—a Christian dance form using body movements to interpret key words of the song texts—did not originate in Nujiang, the female Christian Lisu in China have

fully accepted and absorbed this dance form, making it an attractive point in various church activities.

The next difference relates to the production of *mutgguat ssat* music videos. In the Burmese-produced videos, lyrics usually appear at the bottom of the screen; sometimes they are shown along with changing color to guide the singer, a practice known as the “karaoke-style” and also commonly used in Myanmar’s pop music video production (MacLachlan 2011: 57). Nevertheless, in the music videos made by the Nujiang Lisu, the words of the song are also shown at the bottom of the screen, but seldom in the karaoke-style. In terms of visual representation, a few Burmese *mutgguat ssat* videos contain well-designed acting of a story line about family or religious affection. Such creativity is what the videos produced in Nujiang generally lack. Instead, many of them feature scenes of female *daibbit* dancers performing in different locations.

#### Lisu-style *mutgguat ssat*

Compared with the conservative attitude toward fusing traditional musical elements with four-part hymns, there have existed a few Lisu-style *mutgguat ssat*. In this section, I will choose representative music examples to demonstrate the main strategies that the Christian Lisu have adopted to make *mutgguat ssat* sound more Lisu, even if the Nujiang Christian Lisu did not always consciously make such an attempt.

#### *Mixing Lisu musical elements with foreign musical ideas*

On Christmas Day in 2000, the Lisu Church of Christ organized a magnificent outdoor gathering in Hkamdi of northern Myanmar to celebrate another millennium.

Nearly sixty thousand people attended the event. The evangelist Moses composed a special song known as “2000 *Kor Jilmeddu*” (In Commemorating AD 2000, hereafter referred to as C2000), which was recorded in the tape album *Youths in the Christ* before the celebration (interview with Marteyet on March 1, 2014; personal communication with Feng Rongxin).

This song is essentially a mixed style: it contains both Lisu and Western musical features. First of all, all the music is built on the skeletal melody of a *yoqyet* tune (personal communication with Yu Yongguang and Che Siheng). A short guitar solo passage at the beginning is an imitation of a traditional *qailngot* dance tune played on the four-stringed lute *qibbe* (see Figure 6.1). A shortened keyboard version reappears at the end. Furthermore, the guitar playing also uses the stylistic double-tone playing technique of the Lisu *qibbe*.

**Opening of 2000 Kor Jilmeddu (C2000)**

Songwriter: Moses

(Drum enters)

Figure 6.1. Transcription of the opening guitar solo of C2000, imitating the skeletal melody of a traditional *qailngot* tune, based on the original recording in the cassette album *Youths in the Christ*.

Western influences in C2000 are also obvious: in addition to the instrumentation of an acoustic guitar, a keyboard synthesizer, and a drum kit, there is a rap interlude sung by Marteyet that expresses the joyfulness of gathering together to welcome the arrival of the year of 2000.

C2000 is an interesting example because the Nujiang Lisu made several cover versions with more Lisu elements, and such variations had much to do with different intentions, knowledge, and religious attitudes between different parties.

In 2000, Ci Luheng, a young Christian Lisu in his early thirties from Chihengdi Village, organized a VCD recording that features *mutgguat ssat* singing accompanied by acoustic guitar and *daibbit* dances. C2000 was included, and it was a very attractive performance. In the video, the original music recording was played through a tape recorder on the scene and several traditional dance movements were added, visually giving it more of a Lisu flavor.

Another noteworthy cover version was prepared to perform on the international stage. The exhibition tour of the Bible ministry of the churches in China, “A Lamp to My Feet; a Light for My Path,” (Jiaoqian de Deng, Lushang de Guang), was held in the United States between April and June in 2006. The music performance following each of the presentations was always the highlight of the day. The performing team comprised nine people including five Nujiang Christian Lisu. In addition to four-part hymns and a few other *mutgguat ssat* sung over guitar playing, the Lisu group also performed a version of C2000 that had been specially arranged for the occasion. There were four major variations in the U.S. version in terms of the song’s nature, climactic moment, singing style, and instrumentation.<sup>183</sup>

The greatest change was that C2000 had been adapted into a song-and-dance tune, whereas the original *moderato* music was not designed for dancing. The U.S. version

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<sup>183</sup> The Lisu group performed C2000 several times in the U.S. The following musical analysis is based on the one performed in New York at the Chapel of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

features a pair of male and female dancers performing choreography including typical gestures of *qibbe* playing (male) and *maxggo* (mouth organ) blowing (female) which, together with a guitar solo in between, was the most exciting moment during the entire performance. Meanwhile, besides wearing delightful Lisu traditional outfits, the female singers' high-pitched vocal timbre was also distinct from the original soft singing style. In terms of instrumentation, the use of an acoustic guitar and replacement of the rap interlude with a guitar passage indicated the removal of major Western elements in the original version.

In conforming to the typical impression both Han Chinese and Westerners have had of minority people's great talent in singing and dancing, the Nujiang Christian Lisu adapted C2000 into a song-and-dance piece containing a highly audible and visible ethnic affiliation in order to present an ethnically distinct Christian music tradition on an international stage (personal communication).<sup>184</sup> This version demonstrates to the utmost degree what a Lisu-style *mutgguat ssat* could be like; however, there have been few songs written in a similar style for the local church events in Nujiang.

C2000 is an early demonstration of fusing Lisu sounds. This compositional strategy has continued to be used by several other Burmese Lisu songwriters. The frequent use of the “*qibbe* sound” is used to bring an ultimate Lisu flavor to a *mutgguat ssat*, although the way of implanting pre-composed stereotypical melodies is more like an embedded advertisement for Lisu identity.

For example, in his signature song “Lisu,” Ahci added a 30-second intro, a 16-second interlude, and a 15-second coda, all played on an electric guitar, with melodic and

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<sup>184</sup> Actually, according to Ci Liheng, the guitarist and singer in the group, his other *mutgguat ssat* singing over the acoustic guitar was also well received by the American audience members (personal communication on July 25, 2014).

rhythmic patterns similar to those heard in a traditional *qailngot* tune. Furthermore, an excerpt from the intro, a 4-second melodic figure, is played 10 times on its own over the electric guitar throughout the song. Statistically, the “*qibbe* sound” lasts about 100 seconds; that occupies 38% of the entire song.

A similar use of the “*qibbe* sound” is also heard at the beginning of the thirty-minute Lisu Christian program broadcast daily via the FEBC. The reason for this, as two program editors explained, is “Because the sound of *qibbe* has been widely considered a signifier of Lisu culture—we [Christians] do not play the *qibbe*, but we recognize its sound. So anyone would know that it is a Lisu program upon hearing it” (personal communication).<sup>185</sup> Their motive is similar to the compositional motivation for fusing traditional musical elements in *mutgguat ssat*; as Marteeyet put it, “The inclusion of *qibbe* melodies aims to emphasize Lisu identity because the *qibbe* is our cultural marker.”

#### *Fusion of the elements of Han Chinese and non-Lisu minority nationalities*

Among the available *mutgguat ssat* repertoire composed in the early 2000s, I have found two VCDs produced in Gongshan with songs distinct from many contemporaneous Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* in terms of musical styles. I found them by chance among the many music VCDs and DVDs collected by Pastor Jesse (Feng Rongxin). They caught my attention because both VCDs were early recordings (2002) that seemed to me to be very informative in offering some fragments of the early *mutgguat ssat* making in

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<sup>185</sup> Interestingly, when I first heard one of those Christian programs before a worship service held in Latudi Church, the local churchgoers told me that it is a program from Myanmar rather than to emphasize that it is a Lisu program of their own.

Nujiang. In the bilingual introduction, both of them are labeled as internal materials, and they mainly spread among churches that had participated in the VCD production.<sup>186</sup>

Since I did not find out about these recordings until the last minutes of my stay at Pastor Jesse's house, I did not have enough time to learn more details about these albums from him or to review the songs with him piece by piece. Therefore, I must first make it clear that the following discussion is only a starting point for investigating this interesting topic that requires further exploration. The analysis relies more on musical analysis itself than on the information collected from the songwriter, choreographers, or performers themselves. Moreover, I had no idea about the opinions that the local people had about those *mutgguat ssat* with distinctly ethnic sounds.

One of the VCDs made during the Festival of Thanks holiday in 2002 in Gongshan's Yonggala Church (hereafter this VCD is referred to as T2002) only comprises four songs, mostly because on an incomplete reproduction of the original VCD, and therefore I focus on the other VCD that was made one month later in the Christmas season of 2002 at Xi'an Church in Cikai Township. The purpose of producing this VCD, according to the introductory Track 2, is "to glorify the Lord through singing and dancing, hoping that God will send his only son to the life of each of his children." I was deeply impressed by the highly audible and visible ethnic affiliation within almost every song included in it. Nevertheless, according to Pastor Jesse, they did not aim to create some kind of Lisu-style *mutgguat ssat* for the Christmas celebration. In other words, this VCD's featured musical styles were more likely a result of personal preference and creative ability.

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<sup>186</sup> One involved seven churches and the other four churches.

The VCD is titled “Qimiao Endian” (Amazing Grace) and it is comprised of twenty-six untitled songs mostly accompanied by *daibbit* dance—there are only two pieces, one solo singing and the other group singing without any dance movements. Most of the songs are in strophic form with a minor key, and share some other common features.

First, in terms of the performing form, there are ten songs accompanied by an acoustic guitar and nine by a two-stringed bowed erhu, and the rest are sung without any instrumental accompaniment. Second, female performers are dressed in ethnic costumes most of the time—there are only two performances in which dancers just wear daily outfits. Sometimes dancers are wearing clothes of a particular minority nationality such as the Lisu or Tibetans; however, more often, the clothes they are dressed in belong to different groups—one common combination is the mixture of the traditional clothes of the Lisu, Nu, Dulong, and Tibetans. Third, the unpolished and high-pitched female vocal timbre—similar to that of Lisu female folk singers—is quite distinct from the soft lyrical singing that is commonly heard in the early Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat*.

Close examination shows that three songs contain identifiable Lisu elements. For example, the song in Track 5 draws upon a Lisu *alshuq* (a kind of *yoqyet*) tune popular in Fugong County, which I heard in several versions with completely different lyrics.<sup>187</sup> It starts with a thirty-second intro in which three men and three women stand facing each other performing basic *qailngot* dance movements. Furthermore, the men pretend to hold and play an imagined *qibbe*, whereas all female performers make gestures of blowing the vertical bamboo flute *dilitu*.

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<sup>187</sup> For example, one version is a male-female duet about romantic love. Another one is titled “Fugong Drinking Song.” However, for certain it is a folk tune circulating around Fugong.

Coincidentally, there is one track in T2002 that also features the Lisu folk tune heard on Track 5 as mentioned above. In the video, several large groups of Christians were singing and dancing to this tune outside the church in some courtyard. Within each group, men and women are facing each other, dancing the basic *qailngot* movements with men playing an imaginary *qibbe* and women's hands on their waists.

In addition to Lisu musical elements, a few songs highlight cultural elements of other minority nationalities in Nujiang, reinforcing the VCD's overall ethnic-style atmosphere. Most of all, Tibetan traditional outfits and their household dance gestures are most prominent (Track 20-22). There are nine songs accompanied by the erhu, indicating the Han cultural influence on the songwriter, not to mention the fact that many tunes sound very much like those drawn from the Han Chinese folk music that I have frequently heard elsewhere.

This VCD *Amazing Grace* recording represents a possible direction of *mutgguat ssat* writing: absorbing more musical elements of one or several minority groups and adding highly visible ethnic images in the video. Nevertheless, except for this VCD I have never found any other video albums produced in Nujiang exclusively featuring *mutgguat ssat* songs and dances in this style; however, this does not deny the possibility that these "ethnic-style" *mutgguat ssat* were also briefly in vogue in some other churches.

The soundscape of *mutgguat ssat* performance in Nujiang over the last few years has been dominated by the electric sounds. I came across Lamu, a Tibetan author and reporter currently living in Beijing, in the middle of my fieldwork. She first went to Nujiang in 2003 and saw music scenes very similar to what had been documented in the

VCD T2002. She observed remarkable changes in the Nujiang Christians' musical practices when she returned there with her boy child ten years later.

### 6.3 Musical Interaction on the Frontier: Continuity and Variation

Next, I examine the musical interaction between Lisu Christian musicians in Nujiang and those in Myanmar, focusing on how the music making of the Nujiang Christian Lisu was influenced by their Burmese peers yet developed in ways of their own. Before doing that, it is worth taking time to explain several Lisu terms used to address the person who engages in music making.

The equivalent of the English word “songwriter” or “composer” in Lisu is “*bbosu*,” originally meaning “the person who writes.” Lisu Christians have borrowed it to denote someone who writes lyrics or composes music. Whoever both writes words and composes music is still called “*bbosu*.” The person who pieces lyrics and music together is “*zzaixsu*,” an equivalent to the English word “arranger.” Overall, the Christian Lisu in Nujiang tend to give more credit to the singer (*gguaxsu*) than to the songwriter of a song. It is most likely that they can identify the singer of a Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* the moment they hear it but have no idea who wrote it. If they could identify the songwriter's name correctly, it was because the songwriter and singer happened to be the same person.

A snapshot of the *mutgguat ssat* music scene in Burma/Myanmar

*Vignette 1: A Sunday youth group meeting, Yangon, March 2, 2014*

After the Lisu Sunday worship service (9:10-10:30 AM) in the Immanuel Baptist Church in downtown Yangon, I was invited to attend the youth group meeting, a weekly gathering in which a small group of young Christian Lisu go to Kan Daw Gyi Nature Park each Sunday morning after the worship service, playing games, sharing their faith, and singing songs together. When I arrived at the park near noontime, everyone had been under a large awning-roofed shelter, chatting over lunch. Most attendees of the day were women except for the group leader Ahci, the renowned Lisu singer and songwriter, as mentioned above.

While some people had still not finished eating, a man in his thirties stood up and indicated that it was time for singing. Upon hearing his words, most people stopped to sit in a circle, barefooted on newspapers. Ahci started to play the guitar and the group sang his *mutgguat ssat* while clapping hands. The vigorous sound created a family-like atmosphere full of vitality. I was filming inside the circle. My presence certainly aroused their curiosity. After the singing routine, the pastor Fish Lai kindly asked me to share my personal stories with the young people in order to encourage them. He requested in such a nice manner that I could not refuse. Without any preparation I started my motivational speech in Chinese with the assistance of Stella's translation (see Figure 6.2). Within forty minutes, I told them my own study and life experiences both in China and in the U.S., as well as the reason that got me to Yangon. Instead of trying hard to make them understand the aims and theoretical issues of my dissertation, I only shared with them what I had seen and heard about the Christian Lisu in Nujiang.



Figure 6.2. The author (standing on the right) giving her “motivational speech” at the youth meeting. Kan Daw Gyi Nature Park, Yangon, Myanmar. Next to the author was the translator Stella, a Lisu who also spoke fluent Chinese. Photo taken by Chen Hanyuan, author’s mother, March 2, 2014.

The Sunday youth meeting combines food, music, and informal sermon. Singing *mutgguat ssat* has been not only a central part of the meeting but is also a primary entertaining tool to help everyone keep focused. According to Ahci, this kind of activity can reaffirm the Christian fellowship among those young people growing up in Yangon, a metropolitan city with a flow of people with different ethnic background and from different regions, which is distinguished from the rural Lisu community where their parents used to live.

*Vignette 2: Students at the Lisu Bible School, Lashio, February 26, 2014*

It was the rest time after supper at the Lisu Bible School in the suburb of Lashio. Some students were busy tidying dormitories; some were washing clothes, and a few were playing volleyball. I was attracted to joyful singing from the room next to the

kitchen on my way to the teachers' residence. I walked into the dim room and saw four students singing together. There were two female singers, one sitting on a chair with her legs curled and the other standing behind her. Two males were sitting on the bed by the window and playing the guitar. The more advanced guitar player seemed to be the oldest. He was so concentrated on the playing that he did even notice my presence. Two girls discovered me and waved me towards them. I refused with a smile and stood aside, trying not to disturb them (see Figure 6.3).



Figure 6.3. Students from the Lisu Bible School in Lashio singing and playing *mutgguat ssat* music in their spare time, February 26, 2014.

Within my half-hour observation, they practiced eight *mutgguat ssat*. I had not heard any of the songs before; their musical styles, however, were similar to those of early *mutgguat ssat* repertoire: simple yet evocative melodies in verse-chorus form sung to an acoustic guitar. I asked them about the original songwriters or singers, but they could not recall the names. They told me they had learned the songs from recordings but wrote their own guitar parts.

*Vignette 3: Interview with Marteeyet, Yangon, March 1, 2014*

One of the main purposes of my short trip to Myanmar was to meet one important figure in the Lisu *mutgguat ssat* music scene, Marteeyet. I had heard about him many times from those young and middle-aged Christian Lisu in Nujiang prior to my visit.

During my visit to Myanmar in late February 2014, it was still illegal for foreigners to stay with the local people or in any other places except government-registered guesthouses and hotels. After a forty-minute taxi ride from my hostel, I arrived at Marteeyet's small apartment on the other side of the city.<sup>188</sup> He welcomed me warmly and brought me to his practice room. Marteeyet was extremely polite and modest, entirely different from the impression I had of a pop singer. He was in his middle thirties, married to a beautiful Lisu woman, and they had two children. A few relatives were currently staying with them. "I'm sorry I cannot speak English very well, but I will try to answer your question if I know," he apologized at the very beginning of the interview.

Regardless of the language barrier, he shared his music stories with me. According to Marteeyet, the Lisu Christian pop movement in Myanmar had begun with "Net," a music group founded at the Yangon Church of Christ Bible School by Lazarus in 2003.<sup>189</sup> Later on, the band was renamed "Omega," the last letter of the Greek alphabet, indicating that the group would always follow the "last" (latest) musical trends. The band comprised four male players: Ahpone (drummer), Marteeyet (guitarist), Ssako (bassist), and Ahkin (keyboardist); and four singers Jjani (male), Jenevy (female), Seiseipi (female), and Aivei

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<sup>188</sup> According to Marteeyet, he did not own the apartment. It belonged to his teacher who had left the country and kindly let his family stay there.

<sup>189</sup> Initially, the pastor Lazarus named the band "Fish," but Marteeyet came up with the name "Net," a metaphorical word used in the Bible, symbolizing the way to "catch" men to come to Jesus.

(female).<sup>190</sup> The band had no recording studio of its own, but had been involved in the production of more than fifty albums.<sup>191</sup>

At my request, Marteeyet introduced each of the songs from the albums both named *Lisu Sairpit* (literally, “Sound and Image of Lisu,” or simply, “Lisu VCD,” as translated by the producer), two of band’s three recordings made while still under the name “Net.” There were songs based on Chinese and Korean tunes, love songs, and encouragement songs. He had not appreciated those songs for a long time, so he could not help laughing when he heard his teacher Lazarus sing one of the love songs; as he explained, “He was a respectful pastor but he is singing a love song!”

In the middle of our conversation, Marteeyet started to talk about Aung San Suu Kyi with great respect. He recalled the first time seeing her: “I was invited to play in a Chin party last year [2013] in Naypyidaw. She was also there. What a lovely face, indeed.” Later on, Marteeyet showed me the video of the 2014 Lisu New Year Festival held in Yangon. According to him, several government officials were also invited, and therefore the organizer prepared a love song written in Burmese for them.

Towards the end of the interview, Marteeyet mentioned a forthcoming ten-day youth camp in Putao. He would teach music and encourage young people there, and he asked me to go with him. “I will stay there for two weeks. It would be great if you could come with me,” Marteeyet said. With regret I told him that I had already scheduled something else by that time and I was leaving for Yunnan shortly.

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<sup>190</sup> In 2010, Ahci and *Wudili* joined the group, mainly as guest singers.

<sup>191</sup> According to the pirated recordings that I have collected, the Omega band at least cooperated with the following studios: MLW (*Maiqlatvei*), GBM (Gospel Broadcasting Mission, Chiang Mai), MAX & KZ Studio, VBLL (*Hanbbax Lullul Mutgguat be Sailbbit Xaaggux*), and SMP.

These three vignettes have described several important aspects of *mutgguat ssat* writing and singing among the younger generation of the Burmese Christian Lisu today. Although my description is somewhat one-sided due to the geographical limitation of my fieldwork site, it reflects the survival state of Burmese Christian Lisu living in the capital and their interaction with the Burmese dominant culture from the perspective of music, a distinct aspect that would not be seen in China.

### Burmese influence

Pu Yicai and Hu Chunhua, two Nujiang Lisu songwriters, both confirmed that they had started appreciating Burmese *mutgguat ssat* from tape recordings when they were still kids, although they could not recall the names of the cassettes.<sup>192</sup> Although there had been individual Burmese Lisu singers who were known among the Nujiang Christian Lisu prior to the first Lisu band Omega rose to fame in the early 2000s, it was Omega's core members who became role models of a few Nujiang Christian Lisu and influenced both their music creation and personalities (see Figure 6.4).

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<sup>192</sup> Pu Yicai was born in 1977. According to him, he started to listen to the repertoire when he was still a kid, which means that those recordings should have arrived in Nujiang as early as the mid-1980s. Hu Chunhua's statement can confirm his information. Hu was born in 1978. He said that when he was only eight years old (1986), businessmen from Myanmar brought songs of Bobby Morse (*Silje*) and Melanie Morse to Nujiang.



Figure 6.4. Some of the core members of the Omega band in the souvenir photo taken during their tour performance in Chiang Mai.<sup>193</sup> Marteeyet in the middle of the back row. Three females singers sitting in the front row, left to right: Jenevy, Seiseipi, and Aivei.

2004 was a significant year in the history of musical interaction between Christian Lisu on both sides of the frontier, because the government of Nujiang Prefecture invited a group of Burmese Lisu to make guest performances in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the prefecture (hereafter referred to as 2004 tour). The guest performers were core members of the Omega band and other important Burmese Lisu singers, led by the band's initial organizer, Lazarus Fish. In the local official promotion, the group was given the name "Burmese Lisu Folk Art Troupe" (Miandian Lisuzu Minjian Yishutuan).

The 2004 tour was the first time most Lisu Christians in Nujiang saw Marteeyet and his band members in person. The troupe's novel program included encouragement songs, romantic love songs, and modern street dances, which had rarely appeared on an official

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<sup>193</sup> According to Marteeyet, after the band was renamed Omega, they were invited to perform four times in Chiang Mai (2006, 2008, 2009, and 2010). Jenevy could not recall the exact year when this photo was taken.

stage in Nujiang before, and therefore caused quite a sensation (personal communication with Lisu Christian musicians, studio producers, and sidewalk vendors of pirated recordings). For example, Ahci sang his signature song, “Lisu;” WaNyi Ahwu performed his cover version of “More Than I Can Say;” and one group street dance was choreographed according to “Gudan Balei” (Lonely Ballet), the 2002 hit of the Taiwanese singer Xu Huixin.

It is hard to know the government’s attitudes towards the 2004 tour, but the tour itself did make the Omega band more famous within Nujiang’s Lisu Christian community (personal communication). Their popularity has continued until today: almost every one of my Lisu Christian informants in their twenties and thirties—and a few in their forties—could tell me most of the band members’ names, even in the same order.

The exact sale statistics are impossible to trace. According to many of my informants, CDs and VCDs did not become locally popular until the mid-2000s, followed by pirated recordings in the early 2010s, many of them including Omega’s Christian songs and some oldies sung by WaNyi Ahwu and Bbiat SaMoeYi, who had been known much earlier (personal communication). During my fieldwork there, I found that several songs featured in Omega’s 2008 album *Put’a ma Ssex* (Precious Generation) were still frequently used to accompany *daibbit* dance in church events, and so were a few of Marteeyet’s Christian songs. I personally performed the older *mutgguat ssat* several times in the church events to show my respect for the locals’ religious belief. Surprisingly, many audiences knew those songs and even sang them with me.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Five songs that I most often included were Ahci’s “Lisu” and “Father and Mother,” “Two Guitars” by Cao Rubbi, “*Chidusu Nguaq Yei’a ngo*” (I Want to Be a Man of Integrity) written by Ahci and sung by Marteeyet and Debora (female), and the Lisu-style song C2000 (for review, see Chapter 6.2).

Meanwhile, according to the Lisu Christians that I interviewed in Nujiang, there was frequent small-scale musical exchange between the Lisu musicians of both countries. Pastor Yu Yongguang introduced me JMZ's 2008 album, *Gaqchit diaq ma Hainrni Gua* (Days with Rejoice), which was the result of the group JMZ's first attempt to develop their music career in Nujiang (personal communication).<sup>195</sup> In this album, all background video materials were shot in Nujiang and Marteeyet was invited to play the guitar.

Hu Chunhua also confirmed the presence of the Burmese Lisu in Nujiang; as he put it, "We [Hu and his singing fellows in Dongfanghong church] used to have a lot of interaction with them. Keiqkei [one of the JMZ members] had been to my home several times before the border inspection became more strict." Ci Liheng, a skilled Lisu guitarist and singer from Fugong—he once performed in the U.S., as mentioned in Chapter 6.2—told me that he was also acquainted with Keiqkei and another JMZ member, Jjeissapi, and they once came to Nujiang to sell their music VCDs in 2007 and 2008 (interview with Ci Liheng on July 25, 2014).<sup>196</sup> According to Hu Chunhua and Ci Liheng, several private concerts were held in Nujiang after the 2004 tour, and the most recent ones included WaNyi Ahwu's recital in February 2013 and Jjani's concert in Lazhudi Village.

In addition to the influence that the repertoire and styles of Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* had on ordinary Christians' musical taste and songwriters' music creation in Nujiang, two other important aspects of their influence include instrumental playing and studio production. I will discuss the first one here and explore the other in depth in the next section.

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<sup>195</sup> The group name JMZ was the combination of the three major male singers' initials: two of them performed in the 2004 tour.

<sup>196</sup> The following information provided by Ci Liheng in this chapter is all based on my interview with him on July 25, 2014, unless otherwise specified.

The guitar has been an essential part of Lisu *mutgguat ssat* making since the very beginning. There is no doubt why such a musical preference for guitar playing could quickly influence the young people who were interested in writing *mutgguat ssat* since the late 1990s. Most Christian Lisu songwriters I met in Nujiang were largely self-taught in their guitar playing, but several of them also received short-term training offered by teachers from outside Nujiang. Their learning motivation seemed to result from their desire to sing while playing, just as what they had seen in those Burmese-produced music videos.

For example, Pu Yicai bought a second-hand guitar and learned to play it by himself in 1998. Soon later, many youths in his village (Weidu) all wanted to learn, so they invited a teacher to teach them for ten days. Hu Chunhua started to play the guitar on his own in 1997 and Ci Liheng began even earlier—in 1994 he informally learned from a Burmese Lisu teacher.

Furthermore, several songwriters learned to play the keyboard after their guitar practice. More precisely, they studied how to use a keyboard as a compositional tool. For example, Pu Yicai shared that he once attended a keyboard workshop in Fugong's Shiyueliang Township. "I remember there were more than one hundred participants and the teacher was a South Korean woman," he added, "this year [2014] we paid a Lisu from Pihe Township who was brought to Myanmar and grew up there. He just recently came back to Nujiang." According to Hu Chunhua, he got his first keyboard, a Yamaha PSR-E413, in Baoshan at the price of 4000 yuan (\$645).

I have discussed musical interaction primarily in terms of the influence of the Burmese Lisu on their Nujiang peers, not the other way around. According to Pu Yicai,

his recordings were also brought to Myanmar. The information was difficult to confirm, as I was not able to visit the area where his recordings were most likely sold. For certain, the Omega band members I interviewed had not heard about his songs.

#### Variation in a uniquely Chinese context

Although *mutgguat ssat* writing in Nujiang has been greatly influenced by the practices of the Burmese Lisu, it also has been different from the Burmese music scene in the Chinese context of religious practices and majority-minority relationships. I previously discussed some of the differences in terms of the music sound. Here I view their different situations with a broader lens, from the following interrelated aspects.

The most remarkable difference between the Burmese and Chinese practices of *mutgguat ssat* writing is that there have been several Lisu Christians in Myanmar taking up music writing as a profession whereas none of their Nujiang peers I interviewed was a professional musician.

The experience of Ahci and Marteyet is an example of the lives of Lisu full-time musicians in Myanmar.<sup>197</sup> Ahci was born and grew up in Myanmar's northern Putao area and moved to live in Yangon later and work as an independent producer and songwriter. He mainly wrote Lisu songs and made money by selling his songs to Burmese, Thai, and Chinese—usually one song could sell for \$200 (interview with Ahci on February 28, 2014).<sup>198</sup> Marteyet has been not only a great songwriter and singer but also a skilled

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<sup>197</sup> I hesitate to make any positive conclusion on the career status of other band members whom I did not get a chance to meet at the time.

<sup>198</sup> The interview was conducted on the second floor of the Ice Berry bakery store near Agga Youth Hotel, where I was staying during my visit in Yangon. Ahci did not speak English or Chinese. He brought Ahkin, the keyboard player of the Omega band, to help with translation. The remaining information provided by Ahci was all collected in this interview otherwise specified.

guitarist. Besides recording albums under Omega's name, Marteeyet also played and recorded music with other bands to earn enough money for living.

By contrast, even Pu Yicai and Hu Chunhua, two prolific Nujiang Lisu songwriters, did not compose full time. Hu has been doing business around Nujiang and Pu is largely occupied by farm work. Ci Liheng used to be a skilled guitarist and singer. Between 2005 and 2009, he was invited by different Christian organizations and went abroad three times as one of the performers. The local audiences warmly received his *mutgguat ssat* singing over guitar playing. Later on, he opened a studio between 2010 and 2012; however, he did not eventually become a professional musician.

There are several reasons why there have been almost no professional Christian musicians in Nujiang. First, as previously mentioned the restriction on open evangelism outside the registered church through music or any other media has eliminated the possibility of writing and singing Christian music in public as a professional musician or making Christian music albums in a formal studio (Zhongguo Gongchandang Xinwenwang, n.d.). Instead, it has been economic interests that have driven pirated production and sale despite the risk of receiving a penalty.

Second, since it is not a small expense to buy the instruments and equipment necessary to write music and produce recordings, and only a handful of Lisu Christians can afford them. For an ordinary Christian Lisu who mainly relies on farming for survival in a poor rural region such as Nujiang, it would be impractical for one to spend much time writing unprofitable music, as one's priority should be earning money to support the family. More than one Nujiang Lisu songwriter told me that they thought one important reason why a few Burmese Lisu could write good *mutgguat ssat* for years had been their

relatively better financial condition due to external support. Their opinion—whether too subjective or true—does reflect the fact that the lack of sufficient support has played a large role in dissuading most Nujiang Lisu from professional music making.

Another related difference between the Burmese Lisu musicians and their counterparts in Nujiang has been the different ways in which they were influenced by or interacted with the dominant culture.

Generally speaking, Lisu musicians in Myanmar had more interaction with Burmese pop musicians and absorbed more elements from the mainstream pop culture into their own musical practices. For example, the Omega band was obviously modeled after Myanmar's rock bands such as the Iron Cross.<sup>199</sup> In fact, according to Ahci, he once hired the band to play the music of his signature song "Lisu," which was later included in the Iron Cross's 1991 album. Moreover, the similarity between the pattern of a Lisu recording session and the one prevalent in Myanmar's popular music industry as described by MacLachlan also reflects the Burmese influence (MacLachlan 2011: 15).

In contrast, the Nujiang Christian Lisu have had almost no presence in the contemporary pop music industry in China, not to mention interaction with popular musicians, even though a few of them have appreciated Chinese popular songs as well as those imported from Korea, Japan, Thailand, and North America (personal communications with Hu Chunhua and students from Christian training centers).

In terms of organizing bands, although I saw several times during my fieldwork in Nujiang that young people from the same village would meet and form an informal music group, they largely played together for personal enjoyment or provided accompaniment

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<sup>199</sup> MacLachlan considers a typical Burmese rock band to be a result of Burmese musicians' imitation of British and American superstar pop groups (MacLachlan 2011: 19).

for *daibbit* performance, and lacked regular rehearsals and recording plans. The only named music group composed of fixed members I met was Yot Ddei'lei ma Laigul (Small Twigs), a youth group founded in 2013, which has self-produced two recordings so far.



Figure 6.5. Lisu youth music group, Small Twigs, taking videos for their second music DVD, June 23, 2014. Left to right: Liceifa playing pre-recorded music; Wang Xinyuan shooting the video; and three *daibbit* dancers at the back: Hu Quan, Hu Quan's niece, and Fuceina.

In Myanmar, Ahei told me that he learned jazz style from Burmese songs and he had no problem writing different styles of songs. Marteyet also said the Omega band had experimented with various styles in different language including Rawang, Lisu, Kachin, Chin, Burmese, and English. However, the deep impression I got from Nujiang's Lisu Christian songwriters was that cultivating appropriate feelings rather than trying out different styles played a more significant role in facilitating them to compose music.

In fact, most songwriters in Nujiang I interviewed had neither received much music training nor spent much time on their music writing due to their family or/and church duties, let alone making extra efforts to experiment with new musical styles. Since most

of them had been isolated from Lisu traditional music, it is no surprise that they were largely incapable of fusing Lisu musical elements into their *mutgguat ssat* composition.

This lack of concern for innovation does not mean that the songwriters in Nujiang do not think about what makes a *mutgguat ssat* pleasant to hear. Songwriters, VCD and DVD vendors, and ordinary audience members offered me different answers; however, most of them referred to “sound quality,” and they believed that Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* sound better than those written by the Nujiang Lisu because the Burmese Lisu singers have better singing voices and the musicians play the guitar beautifully.

The commonly used Lisu word to describe a “good sound” is “*nasa*.” On the one hand, when “*nasa*” is used to compare the different sound qualities of Burmese and Chinese Lisu singers, it can be translated as “polished” or “refined.” In this context, the singing ability is significant in differentiating the Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* music videos from those by the Nujiang Lisu. On the other hand, when “*nasa*” is used to describe a specific *mutgguat ssat*, it is often combined with another word, “*gaqchit*” (literally, “joyful”), and becomes a four-syllable compound indicating that a good *mutgguat ssat* sound is what can make people feel pleasure.

Most songwriters I interviewed could not articulate their writing process step by step. Moreover, they all seemed not to make a distinction between words and music until I brought up the question: “What do you usually write first, text or music?”

According to Hu Chunhua, he has written more than two thousands *mutgguat ssat* and he always wrote down the words first in the notebook. “Music is just in my mind. I do not write it down except marking guitar chords under the words where they need to be played. I also indicate which tempo and rhythm codes I will use on the keyboard,” he

said. Hu was musically trained but still would not write music down, not to mention many others who lacked music literacy

There were various Chinese and Lisu Christian publications on the table of Hu's living room where the interview was being conducted. He especially introduced me to *Sitxai Tot'et Hua Zzirddu* (A Taxonomic Reading of the Bible) published by OMF, the source of his song lyrics; as he put it, "This book is extremely helpful for me to find appropriate scriptures to write lyrics for a special occasion, because locating a proper scripture in the Bible itself has been a time-consuming task." Hu went on to explain how he had written the lyrics of a recent *mutgguat ssat* thus:

For example, the words of this song are based on *Ya'gge Tot'et* (Epistle of James) 1: 2-7; 12-18. I did not simply copy the original scripture but rather rewrote it into a compressed version based on my understanding. You see, this song is supposed to accompany the *daibbit* dance. So I did not put many words in the lines because dancers also sing and lengthy lyrics would distract them from their dancing steps.

#### 6.4 The Production and Distribution of *Mutgguat Ssat* in Nujiang

In this section, I explore the dynamics of *mutgguat ssat* production and distribution in present-day Nujiang. I focus on the role that studio-produced *mutgguat ssat* VCDs and DVDs (hereafter referred to as DVDs, the most widely used format today) have played in circulating the repertoire and then providing the local Christian Lisu with a variety of low-priced audiovisual products for both church and personal use. Before getting into any details of my case study, I will make some observations on the different characteristics of cross-border commercial recording industries in different parts of China's border regions, including main four aspects: degrees of state control, impetus for music production, musical styles, and width of transmission.

Harris and Morcom's research indicates that in the more politically sensitive areas such as in Xinjiang and Tibet, the local private music businesses have been subjected to heavier state control (Harris 2005: 634, 637; Morcom 2008: 261, 278). In contrast, the cross-border exchange of Dai pop songs did not attract the government's attention, at least in the 1990s (Davis 2005: 74-80, 176). In present-day Nujiang, though considered as a kind of religious infiltration, the circulation of Burmese-produced Lisu Christian pop DVDs has not become a threat in the eye of the local government.

In terms of the impetus for music production, in Xinjiang (the Uyghurs), Tibet (the Tibetans), Inner Mongolia (the Mongolians), and Xishuangbanna (the Dai), minority peoples' desire to express a pan-ethnic identity (or to realize a pan-ethnic revival, in the case of the Dai) has been a significant driving force (Baranovitch 2001: 372; Davis 2005: 177; Harris 2005: 628; Morcom 2008: 279); however, the Lisu pop production in Nujiang has been confined within Christian communities, resulting in the affirmation of sense of transnational Lisu Christian solidarity—an agenda unrelated to the non-Christian Lisu.

The next difference lies in the musical style. In Inner Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang, local popular musicians have been attempting to maintain some local musical flavors in pop songs (Baranovitch 2001: 370; Harris 2005: 630, 637, 639; Morcom 2008: 278); this is in stark contrast to the Christian pop music making in Nujiang—there has been no obvious attempt to incorporate Lisu traditional elements, despite the influence from a handful of Lisu-style Christian pop written by the Burmese Lisu.

The breadth of the transmission varies too. Uyghur pop marketed within Xinjiang has a wide audience, crossing the generational and urban-rural divide (Harris 2005: 629). By contrast, in the case of Tibetan pop, Morcom argues that the recording industry is still

far away from grass-roots rural communities due to issues of wealth and social status (Morcom 2005: 277). In Nujiang, the pirated DVDs of Lisu Christian pop have been sold in the local farmers' markets throughout Nujiang's rural areas; however, the music itself is primarily popular among the younger generation, which is also true in Xishuangbanna, where the contemporary Dai pop written in the old Tai Lüe script is "aimed to build the self-esteem of local youth" (Davis 2005: 72).

#### The emerging audio-visual studio industry

The audio-visual studio (*yingyin gongzuoshi*, hereafter referred to as studio) did not emerge in Nujiang until the early 2000s. There were no private studios when Nujiang's first *mutgguat ssat* recording was made in 2000 by a few young Christian Lisu from Chihengdi Village, so they invited one friend working in the Fugong Television Station (Fugong Dianshitai) to help with the audio and video recordings and post-editing (personal communication).<sup>200</sup>

He Zhanzhong, a non-Christian Han Chinese, opened Nujiang's first private studio in Cikai Town in the early 2000s (personal communication). He also had a small store on the main street of the town selling various VCDs and later DVDs of music and movies. It was he who produced some of the early recordings of *mutgguat ssat* music and church events in Gongshan including two VCDs mentioned in the previous section, *Amazing Grace* and *T2002*. According to my incomplete statistics, seven private studios have opened over the last decade throughout Nujiang's rural areas.

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<sup>200</sup> However, according to Hu Chunhua, it was their church (Dongfanghong) that made the earliest *mutgguat ssat* recording in 1997 and two additional VCDs in 1998 and 1999.

The appearance of the producer or studio owner (hereafter uniformly referred to as “producer”) as a new profession in Nujiang since the 2000s has its specific meaning there, where a producer is someone who mainly records Christian music and important church activities but concurrently engages in making non-Christian audio-visual products. Unlike studios in Myanmar run by Christian Lisu songwriters such as Jesse Kolei’s well-known Hanbba Lullul Mutgguat be Sailbbit Xaqqgux (Round Moon Song and Video Studio), a unique situation in Nujiang is that most studio producers have never been musicians: they often offer the for-profit service of recording and do not have to fund a project of music creation and recording.<sup>201</sup>

As a matter of fact, from the very beginning until today, producers in Nujiang have to “specialize” in almost everything necessary for producing a DVD, such as recording engineering, post-editing, graphic design, photographing, and videotaping, although most of them had not been professionally trained before they started the studio business. Even the latest producers today still lack sufficient related training; however, they have been trying to improve their skills in the actual practice.

The basic equipment that most current studios in Nujiang have includes a personal computer with a sound-mixing console and a microphone for audio recording, a DLR camera and a digital video camcorder for filming, and the indispensable audio/video editing software that can be purchased at a low price, or the pirated versions downloaded from the Internet. The following comparative description of several locally known studios is only a snapshot of the current situation of the studio production in Nujiang; however, it still reflects the specifically Nujiang Lisu way of producing *mutgguat ssat*.

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<sup>201</sup> Such a phenomenon in which “the producer is frequently a singer or instrumentalist who has raised money privately in order to fund a recording project” has been very common in Myanmar’s popular music industry (MacLachlan 2011: 15).

Li Xiaohua, the first producer I talked to while attending a new church dedication ceremony in May 2013, is a Nu Christian from Fugong's Zilijia Township who has been running the Guangming Studio since 2010. His studio was first located in a courtyard just off the main road of Zilijia. In 2014, he moved it to a bigger room nearby and added a separate recording room. He told me more than once that running a studio was a win-win career for him as a Christian, as it was not only a way of earning money to support his family but also a way of serving the church.

There is another newly opened studio named Yilaxiong close by, in Jiakedi Township, run by a non-Christian Lisu. The producer was also invited to record the church activity and make a DVD of it; however, he accepted the invitation just for the purpose of earning money rather than for serving the church. Yilaxiong has been equipped with better production software, and therefore a few non-Christian singers from Weixi and Lijiang often go there for its high-quality yet inexpensive service. For example, in the Yilaxiong studio, Nuendo 3.0 is used for recording and Adobe Premiere Pro CS4 for video production whereas Li Xiaohua's studio only uses Cool Edit Pro for audio editing and Corel VideoStudio for video production, which are obviously inferior to those more professional devices used by the former.

He Zhanzhong, the earliest individual producer making *mutgguat ssat* DVDs, is currently doing a diverse range of businesses. On the one hand, he continues to cooperate with the church, though not in such frequent contact as he used to have; on the other hand, he has recorded more ethnic music for the local government and other non-Christian clients. I kept trying to contact him in July 2014 when I was still in Cikai, hoping that I could visit his studio and know more about his producer career; however, he

seemed to be reluctant to let me go there for a closer observation. So I only talked to him once in person at his store and had several informal talks via mobile phone. In contrast, although the discovery of Yilaxiong Studio was totally unexpected, the producer was willing to show me around his studio and answer my questions.

Among all the producers I contacted, Zan Youfa (hereafter referred to as A Fa) is the only one who has not only made original recordings but also reproduced copies of existing ones for profit (personal communication). He started his recording business early in 2005 and made some of the early *mutgguat ssat* recordings such as the third recording of the music group from Chihengdi Village and those of Hu Chunhua's early music. A Fa has never had a recording room or used a microphone, and he only has a small electronic and cell phone repair store opened in 2003. He used to only have a small digital HD video, but now he is using a Sony camcorder worth more than 10,000 yuan (\$1612). Most of his current business focuses on the live videotaping of church events and the post-editing of video materials (personal communication with A Fa on June 25, 2014).

I find it interesting to compare the different learning role models that Christian and non-Christian producers have. Most Christians—including both the Lisu and the Nu—expressed to me their admiration for their counterparts in Myanmar who could afford better equipment and receive training in recording. For example, Li Xiaohua would like to visit studios run by the Christian Lisu in northern Myanmar for close observation and learning from them. In contrast, both of the two non-Christian Lisu producers told me that they would purchase better equipment from Guangzhou and Shenzhen, two coastal cities in China's southern Guangdong Province where the industry of electronic products is well developed.

For example, A Fa said he planned to purchase a complete set of recording equipment from Guangzhou later, and the expense, including remodeling, might cost about 100,000 yuan (personal communication on June 25, 2014). The Yilaxiong's producer had a similar plan for expanding the scale of his business; as he said, "I am also running a barber shop right now but I want to focus on studio production in the future. So I have to learn more professional skills of photography and filming somewhere else" (interview with the producer on June 20, 2014).

The last thing that is important to know here is that production/recording prices are different from producer to producer. Nowadays, it usually costs 10,000-20,000 yuan (\$1613-\$3222) to commission a well-equipped studio to produce a DVD; however, most Christian producers or those who have an acquaintance with Christians only charge them 2,000 yuan (\$320) for both filming and post-production—they even do this as a "favor" and help with the documentation free of charge. According to Hu Chunhua, he once told A Fa that "I do not mind that you pirated my music without sharing any profit; however, you should not charge us the cost of production anymore."

#### Different kinds of production

The basic procedure of producing a music DVD includes music recording, video shooting, and post-editing work in the studio. The Nujiang Christian Lisu have been recording *mutgguat ssat* music for a variety of purposes. Two of the most common of these are the personal recording of a single song in the studio and the making of a souvenir DVD of an important church event commissioned by a relatively affluent church.

There are two main reasons for recording *mutgguat ssat* music: facilitating teaching and accompanying *daibbit* performance in the church activities. Pu Yicai explained these reasons thus:

I would like to record my single songs for the convenience of teaching *daibbit*, because with pre-recorded music I would not need to sing in person and focus on teaching dancers the choreographed routine. Second, our church [Zibo Church] would be often invited to give a performance in other churches' activities. I wanted to sing live while playing. But you know, very often it was inconvenient to carry a keyboard along on the way. So preferably I could have the music prerecorded and only take the recording with me for the performance.

The two recording sessions I observed at Li Xiaohua's Guangming Studio were private recordings of single songs. When I first visited his studio on June 16, 2013, I came across two brothers recording a new song by the younger brother named Kai Guangfu, a twenty-year-old Bible school student I had met several days previously. Kai wrote the basic melody and text whereas his elder brother, Yu Huapo, helped with the arrangement. They told me that the song being recorded would be used in the graduation ceremony to express the younger brother's heartfelt thanks to the teachers and God.

I encountered a similar case when I visited Li's studio for the second time on June 19, 2014. The female pastoral staff member in charge of the women's ministry of Latudi Church and her husband were recording single songs specially written for the forthcoming female-only peixunban during July 1-10 in Lumadeng Township. She was invited to teach music and dance in class—there would be three music lessons a day. “The music to be recorded today, together with my favorite Burmese *mutgguat ssat* singles will be burned into one DVD for use in class,” She said.

According to Li Xiaohua, in addition to making teaching-use recordings individual Christians also have recorded their own songs in his studio. He showed me one recently

commissioned project during my visit on June 19, 2014: Misana, a blind female Christian from Fugong's Qiada Village (Qiada Cun), planned to make a memorial CD of her own original compositions for personal use, and she had already recorded seven of her twelve *mutgguat ssat*. Pu Yicai also had a good cooperative relation with Li Xiaohua. He started to record his *mutgguat ssat* music at Li's studio and continued until now.

Nowadays the most common business that a studio has is producing a memorial DVD of an important church event. For those relatively affluent churches, as long as there is spare money left the church will ask a producer they are acquainted with to videotape the entire activity and produce a DVD of it. Interestingly, in addition to the invited producer, sometimes there would be different people videotaping the event. In the 2014 New Year celebration of Latudi Church, four persons were making recordings during the performance: one was an ordinary villager with a DV; one was a young person from the Fugong Television Station with professional equipment; one was the invited producer; and I was making a fieldwork recording for personal use.

When I was attending the Easter celebration of Yiludi church in Lishadi Township on April 5-8, 2013, I saw that the DVDs were ready for sale on the morning of the departure day—the local church host brought a large number of DVDs of the event to the church and sold them to those who had interest in buying one as a souvenir.

In Nujiang, there also have been music groups self-producing their own music DVDs. As mentioned previously, the all-Christian youth group based in Fugong, Small Twigs, comprised 8 people aging from 18 to 32 who were enthusiastic about producing *mutgguat ssat* DVDs just for fun. Alggel (Hu Quan in Chinese) is the main coordinator and her husband Wang Xinyuan is in charge of recording and videotaping. Yu Youpu,

just in his early twenties, is the main singer and songwriter who wrote most of the songs for groups' first two DVDs. The first one was made in 2013 and the second was being produced in June 2014 when I first got in touch with the group. I spent most of the time with them on the day they went out shooting materials for use as the forthcoming DVD's background video—it was a trip more like an outing than a task.

Last, but not the least, sometimes a producer will also pirate existing recordings produced by others or sell copies of the self-made DVDs without sharing the profit with or even notifying the original songwriter (commissioner). There are many kinds of pirated DVDs on the local farmers' market. The original sources of music include both foreign-produced recordings, such as those made by Chiang Mai's GBM and several others in Myanmar, and local productions. In content, they can include both Christian and non-Christian music such as love songs, ethnic songs and dances, and church sermon videos. In terms of the time scale, from the reproduction of the earliest *mutgguat ssat* recording, *Siljje*, to the latest memorial DVDs, the available pirated DVDs have existed over a large time span.<sup>202</sup> Now I turn to the subject of music piracy and explore the issue in depth in the next section.

### Music piracy

In 1990, the National People's Congress (NPC) promulgated China's first copyright law, laying the groundwork for copyright protection in China. In accordance with international standards, in 2001 the NPC passed amendments to the 1990 Copyright Law, which particularly address challenges caused by new technologies (Priesf 2006: 808-12).

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<sup>202</sup> The reproduction of *Siljje* is entitled *Bobby Morse with Genevieve Morse Opening: 75 Year Jubilee Edition 2008*, and it comprises the slide show of precious photos of the Morse family's missionary life in China using *Siljje* songs as background music.

To that sense, the rampant piracy of audio and video recordings throughout today's China is not caused by a lack of legislation, but more because of the absence of consistent enforcement.

Music piracy has not only emerged in urban cities and towns but has also spread in impoverished minority border regions—in Nujiang, piracy of recordings of both Christian and non-Christian Lisu music has been prevalent since 2010, as just over the past few years the personal computer and disc burner, two basic tools for piracy, have become available to average people, and are used even more by those who want to make money through duplicating existing recordings. Since the depth and breadth of my investigation on this subject was limited due to time constraints, I will just focus on the piracy situation in the Christian domain, with a particular interest in the different forms through which pirated recordings have been circulated on the local market. I also reflect on why there has been a continuous interest in piracy in Nujiang and how the flood of pirated discs has been influencing Lisu Christians' religious practices.

Besides church gatherings and activities, the local farmers' markets throughout Nujiang has been the main place where the pirated recordings are sold. In Nujiang the market day of each of the main townships is scheduled differently to facilitate people traveling back and forth doing business. For example, within Fugong County from Monday to Saturday, the market place schedule has been as follows: Maji (Monday), Lishadi (Tuesday), Lumadeng (Wednesday), Jiakedi (Thursday), Pihe (Friday), and Shangpa (Saturday). There is no market on Sundays, the day Christians are not allowed to work (personal communication).<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Lu Chengren provides another schedule: the market places on Thursday are Pihe and Jiakedi; on Friday it is Zilijia; and on Saturday it is Aludi. According to him, the market is held in

On June 21, 2014, I went to Shangpa's Saturday market hoping to find out more about this piracy business. I first stopped by a registered corner store selling household supplies, kids' toys, DVDs of music albums, drama series, and films. Unlike other sidewalk vendors only selling on the market day, this small store was open daily. I stayed there for one hour. The male owner was very busy; however, he was willing to chat with me—his wife was not so friendly and would not allow me to rummage in the DVD pile.

Surprisingly, without any hesitation the owner told me about the source of the music DVDs he was selling. He got most of the pirated Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* albums directly from pirates, but he could not articulate who they were; as he put it, "All I know is that someone [pirate] from here would go to Myanmar to get the new music DVDs and make copies of them for sale upon return." According to the owner, most pirated DVDs duplicated from the Burmese-produced albums were numbered for the convenience of trading, as the albums' titles were often hard to remember for those non-Lisu businessmen. Thanks to the numbering system, if someone saw a DVD elsewhere and wanted to buy a copy, one only had to remember its number. Similarly, vendors just needed to order the best selling "numbers."

Additionally, not all the sellers would make a direct order from pirates. Instead, they might get pirated DVDs indirectly from other sellers. During my chat with the owner, a young guy came to the store and picked up what the owner had ordered for him from the pirate. The young man told me that he would sell them in the next week's local markets elsewhere.

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Shangpa Town every five days, namely, the 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> of each month. If any of these days is a Sunday, it is rescheduled for one day earlier (Lu Chengren 2014: 222).

The owner continued to explain that pirated DVDs duplicated from the locally produced albums were mainly made in Nujiang's private studios. "Studio producers will make copies of their own albums and directly sell them to average people or to agents like me," he added, "You can go and check one of the sidewalk vendors on the main street. A Fa's wife should be selling their home-made pirated DVDs there."<sup>204</sup>

Among a variety of sidewalk vendors selling vegetables, fruits, and other life necessities I found four vendors selling pirated DVDs. One of the four vendors was located near that corner store. The young man sold two kinds of DVDs: one had a clear cover design and the other had a cover with nothing except the title written with a highlighter pen. I asked him how much each DVD could earn for him. "One yuan (less than \$0.2). But I will never lose money because I can return the leftovers back to them [pirates]," he answered.

On the parallel main street, another three sidewalk vendors were lining up in front of the retail store of Zhongguo Dianxin (China Telecom). A Fa's wife was selling different kinds of DVDs that her husband had made, most of which were duplicates of other famous recordings. She sold WaNyi Ahwu's old love songs and the most popular Christian music albums at the moment including Hu Chunhua's new album *Dongfanghong* (hereafter referred to as *DFH*), two Burmese-produced albums—*Nimoxddu* (Light) and Bbiat SaMoeYi's most recent production *Lolbbix a'ma Lisu* (The Beautiful Lisu)—and various DVDs of non-Christian Lisu neo-folksong.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Later on, I was told that this owner was a pirate himself, but it is still possible that he also bought copies from pirates (personal communication).

<sup>205</sup> Some of the folksong DVD albums include *Xianghui zai Shangrila* (Meet in Shangrila), *Shiyueliang Min'ge* (Stone-moon Folksongs), *Xiangyue Nujiang* (Meet in Nujiang), *Lisuren Zuhe* (Lisu Group), *Yabaha Zuhe* (Stone-Moon Group), and *Sanjiang Zuhe* (Three-River Group).

She was playing *DFH* all along to attract the people walking by; however, her neighbor, a middle-aged male vendor, did not follow her—he was playing *Light*. It was understandable why A Fa and his wife had no concerns about selling albums of secular music, as neither of them was a Christian. This man was a religious person yet still selling secular music DVDs, but he explained, “We could listen to secular songs outside church. I am just doing business. Personally, I do not listen to secular music very often.” He told me that the business was not so good as it used to be because there were more people doing this business than ever before.

When I first walked to the third vendor, the owner was not there, and the player was playing love songs of the Xiongdi Zuhe (Brother Group). Besides music DVDs, there were also dubbed films with Lisu subtitles. The *DFH* sold there had a well-designed cover. When the vendor returned, she told me that her husband was running a studio in Aludi and that some of the DVDs she sold were self-produced.

It is not difficult to find a few common features of these four sidewalk vendors. First, most of their sold pirated DVDs were packaged in simple plastic bags. While some covers had inkjet pictures of featured singers—probably identical to those of the originals—others were blank except for the album titles written in a highlighter pen. Second, each of the vendors owned a DVD player and loudspeaker system for test playing and attracting people.

Third, in addition to the promoted *DFH* on that market day, all vendors actually sold similar pirated DVDs, which to some extent were becoming the weather vane of the average Lisu Christians’ musical choices. For example, the most popular Burmese-produced music album I heard in Nujiang in 2013 was *Light*. It was so widespread partly

because this album's pirated copies were available in the farmers' market for a long period of time (personal communication).

Next, most vendors made the main distinction between the recordings imported from Myanmar and those locally produced. They also distinguished them by content between Christian music, love songs, and folk songs. Most of them told me that two types of DVDs had been selling particularly well. One was the compilation comprising a large number of popular songs from various famous albums; a similar kind can also be found in Myanmar's pirate market (MacLachlan 2011: 126). The other is the memorial DVD of church activities.

The first Lisu *mutgguat ssat* VCD released in Nujiang was sold at a high price of seventy yuan (personal communication). Just over a decade ago, the legitimate copies of Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat* VCDs were sold at twenty yuan each. But today it costs no more than five yuan to buy a pirated copy. Any of the pirated DVDs sold in the farmers' market were cheaper—three discs for ten yuan or four yuan each—than those sold in some tourist sites with a relatively higher quality elsewhere in Nujiang.<sup>206</sup>

The ways in which I collected pirated *mutgguat ssat* recordings can reflect the various media through which the repertoire has been transmitted in present-day Nujiang.

CDs and DVDs have been the most common carriers. I received a handful of original DVDs from songwriters if they happened to have an extra copy of each at the time. More often, I bought pirated copies from either sidewalk vendors or registered storeowners. Meanwhile, *mutgguat ssat* repertoire can be shared through file transferring between computers via a USB flash drive. I copied a large number of songs from my

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<sup>206</sup> One compilation album was more expensive—at least five yuan each.

informants' personal collections. In return, I always shared mine with them if they had interest, which was often the case.

Specifically, in Nujiang there has emerged a unique memory card containing preloaded Scripture readings, sermons, and Christian songs. There are two kinds: one is the SIM card for use in a mobile phone and the other is the SD memory card for the specially designed Bible-reading player (Shengjing dianduji), which has become an alternative tool to play Christian music videos in addition to the more popular DVD player. I once met two sellers of Bible-reading players: one was selling during a church activity and the other in the farmers' market on the main street of Lumadeng Township. I bought an SD card from the former seller at the price of 50 yuan (\$8).<sup>207</sup>

Despite their distinct forms, a pirated DVD and CD memory card have a similar mode of transmission: the source music files are first saved to a personal computer; then, depending on what kind of music player the buyer has, the selected files are copied and transferred into the proper storage medium. The price differs. For example, according to Zan Youfa, he sold a DVD for four yuan whereas he charged five to ten yuan—in accordance with download counts—for transferring songs to one's mobile phone from his personal computer (personal communication on June 25, 2014).

Nowadays, *mutgguat ssat* can also be found on the Internet. By typing in the keyword "Lisu song" or "Lisu gospel song" into the search bar of YouTube, a large majority appearing in the pages of search results are Christian music videos, in which *mutgguat ssat* occupy the main part. Not only are the Omega band's several early music

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<sup>207</sup> Since I only needed the digital files, after I downloaded all the files, I returned the SD card back to the seller. Nevertheless, he felt embarrassed; also, considering that I was the guest of the host church, he eventually gave me the money back.

albums available on YouTube, but also their most recent series of singles have already been uploaded onto the site since April 2015.<sup>208</sup>

Since YouTube is inaccessible in Mainland China, for the Nujiang Christian Lisu, Youku, the Chinese equivalent of YouTube, has been the main network resource for the Lisu-language Christian songs.<sup>209</sup> According to Jin Jie's statistics, as of 2013, there would be about sixty percent of Christian music videos in the search results if one entered the keyword "Lisu-language songs" (Lisuzu gequ) in the location bar (Jin Jie 2013: 178). Nevertheless, the percentage of the available Lisu-language *mutgguat ssat* videos on Youku has decreased since 2013. To take one example alone: videos produced by the Weixi Siqu Zuhe (a Christian group outside Nujiang based in Weixi County) were still those uploaded three or four years ago. More importantly, these Internet resources of *mutgguat ssat* are primarily known among the younger generation. For a majority of middle-aged Christians, they still prefer to buy a pirated DVD or SD memory card and listen to music via a DVD player or Bible-reading player.

Different people have different attitudes towards this piracy issue. The average Christian Lisu I contacted did not consider music piracy to be a problem as long as they did not have to spend much money buying DVDs or SD memory cards. Most of the Nujiang Lisu songwriters I interviewed chose to tolerate the existence of the flood of pirated recordings; as Pu Yicai explained, "For me, the main reason for writing *mutgguat*

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<sup>208</sup> For those interested in listening to the Omega band's most recent *mutgguat ssat*, as a starting point I provide the link for one song, "Mia-Ma-Bei" written by Ahci and performed by all the current band members: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqNuO8JHUqU> (accessed on September 26, 2015).

<sup>209</sup> The government's relevant religious policy on the circulation of Christian audio-visual products outside registered church sites seems to have become void in the Internet domain. Without more examination, here I will not make any further observation on this issue, but it is definitely a worthwhile topic for future research.

*ssat* has always been to encourage more people to believe in Jesus, not to make money, and this should be other Christian songwriters' original intention as well. Although there are many pirated DVDs out there, I am okay with that. All I care is that more and more people can hear my songs. The pirated DVDs can do me a favor on this point.”

Producers tended to ignore this problem, and they did not have a good solution, either; however, they did not turn away from the studio business, mostly because the income they earned from making memorial DVDs of church events was already sufficient to support their daily operations, not to mention that few producers were pirates themselves. Only the producer of the Yilaxiong Studio was critical of piracy; as he put it is:

This is my production. I made it. Any pirates should be responsible for what they did. A Fa, do you know him, the owner of the A Fa Studio? He made many pirated DVDs. I once persuaded him not to do this anymore. It is perhaps okay if he just pirates my albums; after all, we know each other and I consider him as my brother [xiongdi]. But if he pirates those of others, he might get sued. (Personal communication with the producer on June 20, 2014)

During my fieldwork in Yangon, I learned from Marteeyet that the members of the Lisu Musicians Association Group (all Lisu and all Christians) were striving to be protected by the copyright laws that had previously only applied to Burmese musicians. However, in Nujiang the government never strictly prohibited the local production of pirated discs. The documented laws regarding the protection of intellectual property have not really been enforced in the area. As far as I know, the only practical action of the local government has been a regular spot check on the peasants' markets in Fugong (personal communication with sidewalk vendors on June 21, 2014; see Figure 6.6).



Figure 6.6. Officials from the Fugong Comprehensive Law Enforcement Brigade for the Cultural Market (Fugong Wenhua Shichang Zonghe Zhifa Dadui) confiscating pirated DVDs sold by A Fa's wife. Shangpa Town, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014. There were 192 pirated copies (not all that she had brought to sell of the day) confiscated. No penalties were imposed.

Bbiat SaMoeYi's recent album *The Beautiful Lisu* was sold in Nujiang this year in two different ways, which can briefly summarize the present status of the music piracy in the region. On the one hand, SaMoeYi sold his albums directly via the church network. In this way, they were often sold for ten yuan each at the end of a particular church event. On the other hand, the pirated DVDs were available in the farmers' market (labeled as 166) soon after the original copy was first brought to Nujiang, and a pirated DVD only sold four yuan. The fact that many Christian Lisu in Nujiang cannot afford a legitimate DVD has made the piracy issue become a moral dilemma for those people whose rights have been limited because of it. Meanwhile, within the Christian domain, most songwriters chose to tolerate the existence of pirated recordings because these recordings actually facilitated the transmission of their music.

Closing remarks: Impact of technological progress

First of all, technological progress has made reproduction easier. As Kevin Douglas put it, “[In Myanmar] most income from a recording comes from the reproduction of the physical medium rather than through royalty collection by a performing rights organization” (Douglas 2010: 152-53). According to Ahci, the pirated CDs are not just popular among the Burmese Lisu. Most ethnic groups in Myanmar do the same thing. “The original recording usually sells for 2000 MMK, whereas a pirated one only sells for 500 MMK. So musicians have lost a lot of money,” Ahci explained to me during my interview with him.

A similar situation has certainly existed in Nujiang over the last decade. Income from a recording is mostly gained through reproduction. Though considered illegal, pirated DVDs of *mutgguat ssat* music in varied styles are prevalent on the local farmers’ market. No copyright control has ever been maintained in the region.

Second, technical advances also have resulted in a greater range of acceptance compared with the traditional oral transmission. From the 1980s to 1990s, early tape recordings were the primary tool for the Nujiang Christian Lisu to appreciate and learn Burmese-produced *mutgguat ssat*, although not many families could afford a tape recorder or Walkman at the time. Starting from the early 2000s, *mutgguat ssat* music has been not only available on pirated VCDs and DVDs primarily sold in Fugong’s six different farmer’s markets but also can be downloaded from the Internet and played through MP3 players, smartphones, and multi-function radios.

The gradual popularity of the Internet and mobile phones accelerated the transmission of *mutgguat ssat* at an unprecedented rate in Nujiang. Today, like the rest of

the country, Nujiang has a high mobile phone growth rate. In the main street of Shangpa Town, the county town of Fugong County, you can find large retail stores of China's three major mobile phone service providers (China Telecom, China Unicom, and China Mobile) selling cheap smartphones with low-rate call and data packages.

In 2008, there were only 4,671 cellphone and 7,475 Internet subscribers in Nujiang, which, respectively, represented 0.9 percent and 1.47 percent of the prefecture's overall permanent residents (Nujiangzhou Tongjiju 2009).<sup>210</sup> However, by the end of 2014 the subscriber figures have added up to 305,000 (mobile phone) and 55,000 (Internet)—the former was more than half of Nujiang's residents (Nujiangzhou Tongjiju 2015).

The mobile phone has become another important music player for an ordinary Christian Lisu. It only takes minutes to download a couple of *mutgguat ssat* songs onto a SIM card and conveniently appreciate them on one's mobile phone at any time. It is not uncommon to see ordinary Lisu Christians using cell phones and other devices with a recording function for taking pictures and videotaping during church activities. In most cases, they will enjoy the recordings afterwards and share them with the people in their own villages.

In stark contrast, the communications industry has been undergoing a very slow development in Myanmar. According to the statistics of the United Nations (UN), in 2008 only 0.72 percent of the population were mobile-cellular subscribers, and the percentage rose up to 12.83 by 2013 (UN Statistics Division). Agence France Presse reports that until the first half of 2014, a SIM card cost about \$200 and had even reached as high as \$1,500 under former junta rule. Such a situation did not change until August 2,

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<sup>210</sup> This statistical figure also includes the users of xiaolingtong, an earlier form of personal hand phone system, mainly used in the local range and relying on the fixed-line telephone network.

2014, when the Qatari telecom firm Ooredoo began selling low-cost SIM cards there at the low price of \$1.5 (Agence France Presse 2014).

By the time I was visiting Myanmar in March 2014, although all the Omega band members that I met (Marteeyet, Ahci, Jenevy, and Ahkin) owned cell phones, so did Lisu church pastoral staff members and pastors. Since I stayed just in Lashio and Yangon for a very limited time, it is somewhat difficult to assess the situation of *mutgguat ssat* circulation in Myanmar; however, the fact that many ordinary Lisu Christians there still had not used mobile phones can demonstrate the tiny part that the mobile phone played in the transmission of Christian music there (personal communication).

#### 6.5 Roles of *Mutgguat Ssat* Performance in the Nujiang Lisu church

##### Transforming the religious practice of the Nujiang Christian Lisu

From an overall perspective, just through comparing the recordings of church events made a decade ago with those recently produced ones, one can easily find that *mutgguat ssat* performance has served a more significant religious function in today's church activities—from worship services to festivities—not only because it is taking much more time in each of the gatherings than ever before but also because it can push the atmosphere to a climax and heighten the enthusiasm of the congregation.

Just to recap the previous example discussed in Chapter 4.3, a regular dedication ceremony nowadays lasts three to four hours, depending on the length of the *mutgguat ssat* performance. As a means of expressing congratulations on the founding of a new church, the performance always takes more than half the time of the overall ceremony. The more guests who are invited, the lengthier the performance will be. However, the

Christian Lisu gave more time to the traditional four-part hymn singing just seven or eight year ago (personal communication).

I have been staying in contact with a few Christian Lisu after my formal fieldwork in Nujiang, mostly through WeChat. The fact that they have continued to upload short videos of *mutgguat ssat* performance to their own circle of friends also reflects the genre's increasingly important role in the contemporary religious practices of the Nujiang Lisu.

Another significant role of *mutgguat ssat* performance in changing contemporary religious practices is in how it has offered the younger generation an alternative spiritual experience. *Mutgguat ssat* is essentially a youth-oriented genre, which is not difficult to understand. As previously discussed, technological progress has greatly facilitated the production and transmission of *mutgguat ssat* music. Young people not only are more receptive to new technologies but also often learn to use them much faster than the older generation. Moreover, *mutgguat ssat* are more attractive to the youth due to their diverse nature, compared with the unchanging and standardized four-part hymn repertoire.

In recent years, *mutgguat ssat* writing and singing have become an indispensable part of daily lives of a few Christian Lisu, such as in a group outing for taking photos and videotaping, a private gathering for guitar playing, or young women practicing new *daibbit* choreography after their daily housework routine. In the above case, different groups of young people seem to use *mutgguat ssat* to coordinate their leisure activities with religious beliefs.

From the perspective of gender norms, Lisu *mutgguat ssat* is largely a male-dominated tradition. Men have primarily worked as songwriters, arrangers, and

producers, and most instrumentalists are also men. In the Burmese music scene, there have been women working independently as singers, whereas in Nujiang women are more visible as *daibbit* dancers (see Figure 6.7). In today's Nujiang Lisu church, for one thing, there exists a remarkable gender divide, especially in *mutgguat ssat* performance; for another, the inseparability of *mutgguat ssat* singing from *daibbit* dance encourages more women to participate in the church activities.



Figure 6.7. Attendees of Lumadeng Township Women Church Ministry Peixunban (July 1-10, 2014) rehearsing for the graduation performance, July 8. Shuang Fuzhen is in the front row on the right.

Throughout my fieldwork in Nujiang, I heard about one female songwriter and singer and one women guitarist, but I did not get to meet either of them. The only other female songwriter I met was Shuang Fuzhen (see Figure 6.7). She is currently serving in Latudi Church, responsible for women's ministry. She has written many *mutgguat ssat*, but the primary purpose of her writing is to provide background music for *daibbit* dance.

There are a few conservative churches with the greatest concentration in Pihe Township, Shangpa Town, and Maji Township, where *mutgguat ssat* performance is still

not allowed in the worship services because of the older pastoral staff members' disapproval of this alternative way to express Christian beliefs. Meanwhile, *mutgguat ssat* is seldom performed in the remote churches located in the deep mountain because few people there are able to sing or dance to *mutgguat ssat* due to the sparse communication they have with the outside world (personal communication).

Although it is still less favored and admired by the older generation, many pastoral staff members have realized the importance of *mutgguat ssat* to encourage the young Christians to express and hold their Christian beliefs. Some churches have organized informal youth camps during school holidays in which teenage students of the same village are gathered together, learning to sing and dance to *mutgguat ssat* with educational lyrics.

#### Shared *mutgguat ssat* repertoire as a unifying factor for the Christian Lisu

At the beginning of this chapter, I traced the general transnational contact between the Nujiang Lisu and those in Myanmar in the twentieth century mainly due to the spread of Christianity. In the rest of the chapter, I focused on the more recent cross-border contact since the late 1980s through investigating how, on the “backstage,” the Nujiang Lisu have been using some of the most updated technologies to produce Christian pop in their own language under the influence of their Burmese peers. The distinct ways of producing *mutgguat ssat* in Nujiang have been a direct result of the norms of cultural production and representation in China. An anecdote related to the foregoing example from the 2004 tour, the first official Burmese Lisu performance in Nujiang, under the

name “Burmese Lisu Folk Art Troupe,” can offer us valuable perspectives on an aspect of the essential features of a uniquely Chinese context.

The encouragement song “One Mind, Same Root” was the core song of the entire guest performance of the Burmese Lisu. The lyrics repeatedly listed various major Lisu family names and emphasized how the Lisu are good people with a heart full of wisdom and how the Lisu around the world should join together, striving hard for a bright future. The theme of emphasizing Lisu unity was also reflected in the performance style, in which all thirteen singers stood in line, shoulder-by-shoulder and waving their arms. However, according to Hu Chunhua, the local government was not quite happy with this song because its lyrics did not mention the Han Chinese or other ethnic groups at all. “The prefecture anniversary celebration was not just about the Lisu, because it is not just our Lisu living in Nujiang,” he explained.

It is difficult to confirm the reliability of his words; however, it does reflect an ordinary Lisu Christian’s familiarity with the local cultural politics of representing minority nationalities. The state’s ethnic policy encourages each of the national minorities to develop their own distinct art forms—which, however, exclude Christian cultural forms. As described in Chapter 5, the Christian-derived farmer chorus tradition developed in Nujiang’s recent tourism boom has been presented to outsiders as an ethnic tradition rather than a religious one.

Based on my numerous informal chats with ordinary Christian Lisu in the course of my fieldwork there, they seemed to have little sense of the state version of ethnic identity—especially the versions presented in officially promoted front-stage Lisu ethnic culture—that had been introduced through the school educational system and in other

media for years, but many of them did realize the Chinese-minority distinction and a few also were concerned about their gradual assimilation into the Han Chinese in terms of language and living styles.

In stark contrast, starting from the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially over the last decade, the Burmese-produced Lisu Christian pop *mutgguat ssat* have quickly attracted the interest of the local Christian Lisu. The frequent music exchange of *mutgguat ssat* repertoire has played an important part in creating a deep emotional connection for those Christian Lisu in Nujiang with their Burmese peers in the entire Lisu transnational religious-social network, especially among the younger generations. Meanwhile, a few Lisu songwriters not only have presented a self-conscious religious and cultural identification with their Burmese peers through imitating the Burmese Lisu way of making *mutgguat ssat* music but have also found ways to engage in their own Christian music production without confronting the state religious control.

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

### 7.1 Current Findings

The primary question that prompted me to initiate this dissertation project is why the pre-Christian indigenous Lisu culture has been frequently displayed in the public view, whereas their remarkable Christian culture has been less officially publicized—ironically, it was this behind-the-scene religious phenomenon that first drew my attention to this little-known minority group. Shortly after I started my investigation, I realized that the government had not only downplayed the practices of minority Christianity but also played an important role in intervening in Lisu Christians' religious/musical practices.

At the very beginning of my research, I proposed to study Christian Lisu music making through a basic theoretical perspective: the indigenization of foreign Christian music in the local context. After reading many ethnomusicological case studies of world Christianities pertaining to the creation of indigenous-style Christian music in relation to identity construction, one of the major aims I originally set up for this dissertation was to examine how the Nujiang Lisu have accommodated Western Christian songs to suit the Lisu musical tastes, and especially how they might have articulated their ethnic/religious identities through writing Lisu-style music.

This goal seemed to have limited my perspective in the early stage of my fieldwork, because although I found it very difficult to find Lisu-style Christian songs, I still believed that there should be more than I had heard. I then continued to ask everyone I had met in Nujiang who might be capable of understanding my question: Why is it that there have been so few Lisu Christian songs (*mutgguat*) fused with more traditional music elements? However, I never received any informative answers except for

affirmations of the distinction between Christian and non-Christian music that they had drawn. Eventually I only have collected a handful of indigenous-style compositions. The representative examples I have analyzed in Chapter 4.2 and 6.2 show that the compositional strategies of the Christian Lisu were simple adoption of some identifiable traditional instrumental or vocal melodies, and lacked a certain degree of creativity.

Why has there never been an obvious attempt to advocate indigenous musical expression over translated foreign hymnody in the indigenous hymn composition in the Nujiang church? Even now, I still only have tentative answers to this anomaly in the musical indigenization of Christianity.

The first important reason, as I have suggested in Chapter 2.4, is that the CIM missionaries and their Lisu evangelist successors largely discouraged the Christian Lisu from practicing their traditional music from the very beginning. After many years of conversion to Christianity, the following generations have already become incapable of performing Lisu traditional music, not to mention being able to adopt traditional musical elements to write Christian songs. Another reason I would suggest also relates to the lack of opportunities for the Christian Lisu to study their traditional musical culture in present-day Nujiang. Instead, they just chose to imitate various styles that are easily available to them or those familiar styles to which they are attached.

In addition to the influence of missionaries, I believe that the lack of indigenous-style Christian songs probably also resulted from the other two major social and cultural forces that have taken an active part in shaping the religious practices of the Christian Lisu in Nujiang: one has been the state's involvement in restricting and representing minorities' Christian culture since the 1950s; the other has been the music making of the

Burmese Christian Lisu since the late 1980s and early 1990s. Apparently, neither of these two forces was an ardent advocate of Lisu-style Christian songs, as analyzed below.

In Chapter 3.2, I have focused on church-state interactions and found that there are provisions in the state religious policy that restrict the publication of minority-language hymnbooks and Christian audio-visual products outside the registered church, which have dissuaded the Christian Lisu from music making in the first place. In Chapter 5, I have discussed the impact of state involvement in the creation of the Christian-based farmer chorus tradition. The government's recognition of Lisu four-part choral singing and its promotion of several Lisu hymns deriving from world-renowned music in the tourist performances have further enhanced Christian Lisu people's sense of pride in their classic hymn repertoire inherited from the missionary age.

In Chapter 6, besides analyzing the impact of government policy on Christian Lisu music production, I have investigated how the Burmese-produced Lisu *mutgguat ssat* were recognized and affirmed by the young Christian Lisu in Nujiang. The musical practices of the Burmese Lisu have been mainly under the effect of Western-influenced Burmese mainstream popular music, and this has indirectly determined the basic musical styles of the majority of *mutgguat ssat* written by the Nujiang Lisu. The Burmese Lisu musicians have composed a small number of Lisu-style songs; however, their Chinese peers seemed to have more interest in learning other aspects of their musical practices, especially the guitar playing, music video making, and studio production.

As proposed in Chapter 1.3, my analysis of the Christian music repertoires of the Nujiang Lisu focuses on the development of two genres and their variants. Eventually I have found that musically the Christian Lisu express their religious beliefs using two

contrasting musical forms based on these two categories: the exclusively vocal four-part hymns (*ddoqmuq mutgguat* and *xelgget mutgguat*) collectively sung by a congregation or choir and the Christian pop songs (*mutgguat ssat*), with instrumental accompaniment and women's *daibbit* dance preferred by the young people.

In Chapter 4, I not only have compared differences between these two major kinds of music repertoires (Chapter 4.2) but also looked into how they are used side-by-side on the same occasion (Chapter 4.3). In the musical profession of religious faith, the solemn singing of traditional four-part songs coexists with the joyful *daibbit* dancing to the *mutgguat ssat* music that are either performed live or pre-recorded on DVDs. The Lisu do not seem to be bothered by this combination, despite the severe conflict in both audio and emotional atmosphere that their juxtaposition creates in the same time and space.

Last, but not the least, I have found that despite all the musical and social changes the Christian Lisu have undergone and the new practices they have developed over the years, one thing remains the same: the role of music in facilitating collective activities and binding the community together. Aminta Arrington, who conducted fieldwork in Nujiang at the same time I did, observed an obvious principle of “togetherness” in Lisu society in general and in Christian practices in particular (Arrington 2014: 164-68).

My similar observation of the non-solitary Christian Lisu was confirmed by everyone's common appraisal for me: “What a strong and brave girl you are. I dare not to act alone or travel so far away. *Atkelddax* [You are quite competent!]” More importantly, I have found that there is no obvious exclusiveness in the cultivation of such togetherness in terms of ethnic or religious affiliation. For example, on the one hand, in the Nujiang Lisu church, the boundaries between the Lisu, the Nu, and the Dulong Christians have

been blurred; on the other hand, in religion the Christian Lisu have been continuing to preach Christianity to their non-Christian Lisu neighbors rather than drawing a line separating them, despite the existence of opposition in the music domain.

In Chapter 3.2, I have analyzed multiple aspects of Lisu church networks within Nuijiang, and these are the foundation for the Christian Lisu people's communal life and various participatory religious activities. In Chapter 4.3, I focused on the sense of togetherness in their musical practices, which in most situations are collective performances of shared repertoires in a uniform form. I have discovered that despite variety of musical styles, different categories of Christian music function to reinforce collective activities, whether in a large number of churchgoers solemnly singing a *ddoqmuq mutgguat* prior to the sermon or in a smaller group of young people rehearsing *mutgguat ssat* and *daibbit* dance for the incoming performance. In Chapter 6, I demonstrated how a spirit of togetherness has been created along with the emergence of a religious transnational network through music exchange in a time of great technological advancements.

This self-identification with the church through participating in collective music activities and performing shared repertoires is not unique to the Christian Lisu; however, unlike several other recognized minorities (such as the Uyghurs and Tibetans)—whose identification with their own ethnic religions has usually been intertwined with their political struggles with the state power—the Christian practices of the Nuijiang Lisu seemed to have benefited from their compliance, not confrontation, with the government, as reflected in the music domain. Starting from the late 1990s, the Christian Lisu not only have cooperated with the government's reinvention of their *ddoqmuq mutgguat* for the

farmer chorus tradition but also have tolerated the official ambiguous representation of this Christian-based tradition and the government's imposition of secular red-song singing within the church; In the same time period, a few young Lisu songwriters have been engaging in their own Christian *mutgguat ssat* production without confronting the state religious control.

## 7.2 Suggestions for Further Research

First of all, this dissertation focuses in particular on the religious practices of the Christian Lisu in Nujiang, which has the largest concentration of the Chinese Lisu and is also one of the poorest and least-known parts of China. There are still many Lisu Christian communities outside Nujiang in other parts of Yunnan where the situation of musical indigenization of Christianity might be distinct from that in Nujiang. The ways in which those Christian Lisu living outside Nujiang—especially in the Han-dominated areas—interact with the surrounding non-Christian society, and how such interaction has influenced the music making of the local Christian Lisu, deserve further examination through the comparative studies.

Similarly, from another comparative perspective Jin Jie raises one important question in his dissertation: why have the individual Christian Lisu made a large number of Lisu music DVDs, whereas non-Christian Lisu have had little interest in this field? Instead, it is the government's cultural department that has been in charge of making non-religious Lisu DVDs (Jin Jie 2013: 182). I would have wished to spend more time talking to non-Christian Lisu musicians and relevant informants and interviewing government officials, so that I could give more satisfactory answers to this thoughtful question.

Furthermore, a worthwhile long-term research project can be the comparative study of the Christian musical practices of major minority nationalities outside Nujiang that contain a considerable number of Protestant Christians—such as the Miao, the Lahu, and the Jingpo—in order to investigate whether the government has a coherent policy on minority Christians’ religious/musical practices and whether it has played a similar role in the musical indigenization of imported Protestant Christianity among the Christian communities of different minority nationalities.

Next, although I have proposed to study the Christian music of the Nujiang Lisu in the context of the Lisu transnational religious networks, I did not spend sufficient time in collecting more first-hand ethnographic data regarding the religious/musical practices on the Burmese side of the network—I was not even able to visit northern Myanmar, which has the largest concentration of Burmese Christian Lisu. Meanwhile, I would have wished to stay in Yangon for a longer time to investigate more details about Lisu musicians’ involvement in the studio production of *mutgguat ssat* music. Any further studies regarding the transnational musical interaction should include a considerable period of fieldwork in Myanmar.

Moreover, in her research on the Burmese popular music industry, Sarah MacLachlan notices a similar phenomenon: that while “Christians constitute only four or five percent of the total population of Burma, this overrepresentation of Christians in the pop music industry is startling” (MacLachlan 2011: 21). Therefore, the Lisu musicians’ interactions with the Burmese singers and producers should be an interesting subject of further inquiry for those who have interest in exploring the role of minority Christians’ music activities in the Burmese mainstream pop music industry.

One thing I will continue to do without engaging in more fieldwork during my post-doctoral project is to take more time analyzing the pirated *mutgguat ssat* recordings collected so far and seeking more available Internet resources in order to acquire a more complete understanding of the soundscape of Lisu Christian pop music. The current research on musical interaction between the Christian Lisu in Nujiang and those in Myanmar in terms of *mutgguat ssat* writing and production is mainly a one-way study. Research looking in the other direction, the influence of the Nujiang Lisu on the Burmese Lisu, should hold an equally important position, but is impossible to examine this theme without further fieldwork among the Christian Lisu concentrated in Myanmar.

## Glossary A: Glossary of Important Old Lisu

This glossary is divided into five sections: personal names, musical terms, Lisu Bible and hymnbooks, terms regarding Lisu Christianity, and other important terms. It is arranged according to the alphabetic order of Lisu Pinyin. Each term is given in Lisu Pinyin and the Fraser script with brief English translation.

### Personal Names

Alkix (Ahkin) A.-X I . ,  
Alnax A.-N . ,  
Aivei A I -WE  
Alci (Ahci) A.-J I  
Aleibbo (Robert Fish) A-LE-B O  
Alggel (Hu Quan in Chinese, 胡泉) A.-G 7 .  
Bbiat SaMoeYi BY: S-MU-YE  
Cao Rubbi CAO RU-B I  
Jenevy J 0 . , -N I , -WE . .  
Jesse Kolei YE-X I -X O -LE  
Jjani J-N I  
Jjeissapi JY-R-R-I  
Keiqkei KE , -KE  
Lasarus L-S-RU  
Marteeyet M-T I -Y  
Ma'nasi M-N-S I  
Nimoxddu'nax NYI-MO . , -DU-N . ,  
Seiseipi S I -S I -JYU  
Ssako R-X O  
Wa'nyi Ahwu W-NY-A-WU  
Wudili WU-D I -LE

### Genres, Instruments, and Musical Terms

*bbaishit* (one type of Lisu folk song) B V X 0 :  
*bbosu* (songwriter) B O S U  
*coga'la mutgguat* (vulgar song) J O K L MU: GW:  
*daibbit* (a type of Christian dance that uses body gestures to interpret song lyrics)  
T V BYE:  
*ddoqmuq mutgguat* (hymns of praise) D O , MU , MU: GW:  
*ddu-di-li* (chorus/refrain) D U-T I -LE  
*dilitu* (Lisu four-holed vertical end-blown bamboo flute) D E L I J U  
*gguaxsu* (singer) G W . , S U  
*gguaxzzux* (choir) G W . , Z U . ,  
*guakiq* (a type of Lisu folk dance) K W X I ,  
*han'lei mutgguat* (religious music) V . . L E . . MU: GW:  
*hinxaq mutgguat* (song of house-building) V I X Y , MU: GW:

*jjitlit* (Lisu transverse bamboo flute) JI : LI :  
*ko'ru mutgguat* (welcomd song) XO RU. , MU: GW:  
*maiqpiat* (Lisu leaf whistle) Mǂ, ɔY:  
*mutgguat* (music; a kind of Lisu traditional song form; hymn) MU: GW:  
*mutgguat ddatmat* (more complicated choral work in DM) MU: GW: D: M:  
*mutgguat lil sair* (bass) MU: GW: LI Sǂ;  
*mutgguat mex shit* (instrument) MU: GW: Mɿ. , Xŋ:  
*mutgguat nit sair* (alto) MU: GW: NYI Sǂ;  
*mutgguat sa sair* (tenor) MU: GW: S Sǂ;  
*(mutgguat) sair bbo lir* (score) (MU: GW:) Sǂ; BO LI;  
*mutgguat ssat* (Lisu Christian pop songs) MU: GW: ʎ:  
*mutgguat tit sair* (soprano) MU: GW: ɿI: Sǂ;  
*mutgguat zeil* (key signature) MU: GW: FE.  
*nasa sair* (beautiful sound) N S Sǂ;  
*ni sair sa sair mutgguat* (multipart song) NYI Sǂ; S Sǂ; MU: GW:  
*nu niq mutgguat* (love song) Nŋ NI , MU: GW:  
*put moq leir ddu* (time signature) ɔŋ: MO, Lǂ; DU  
*qailngot* (a type of Lisu folk dance) ɔǂ. ʌO:  
*qibbe* (Lisu four-stringed plucked lute) ɔI Bɿ  
*sair* (sound; tone; part) Sǂ;  
*ti-ni-sa mutgguat sair* (Lisu cipher notation) ɿI-NYI-S MU: GW: Sǂ;  
*(tit) cei* (a quarter note) (ɿI:) ɿE..  
*(tit) mol* (a quaver) (ɿI:) MO.  
*(tit) beil* (a semiquaver) (ɿI:) Pǂ.  
*Wusa han'lei mutgguat* (Christian music) WU-S V.. LE.. MU: GW:  
*xelgget mutgguat* (hymn of praise) Xǂ. Gɿ: MU: GW:  
*yoqyet* (one kind of Lisu folk songs) YO, Yɔ:  
*zzeirsu* (arranger) Zǂ; SU

### Lisu Bible and Hymnbooks

*Ma-I-Mi Tot'et* (Lisu Catechism) M-I-MI ɿO: ɿ:  
*Sipat dail Ddoqmuq du Mutgguat* (Hymns of Praise, known as DM) SI ɔ: Tǂ DO,  
 MU, DU MU: GW:  
*Sipat dail Ddoqmuq du bbei Vulddut Teirma Mutgguat* (Hymns of Praise and Worship,  
 known as DX) SI ɔ: Tǂ DO, MU DU BE WU. Dŋ ɿE; M MU: GW:  
*Wusa dail Xelgget du Mutgguat* (Hymns in Praise of God, referred to as XG) WU-S Tǂ  
 Xǂ. Gɿ: DU MU: GW:  
*Wusa Sit'xai Tot'et* (Lisu Bible) WU-S SI: XY ɿO ɿ  
*Yox diaq ma Nimoxddu* (The Sheep in the Light, referred to as NMD) RO. , TY M NYI  
 MO. , DU

### Terms Pertaining to Lisu Christianity and Church

*atrritsu titlei watku lai* (congregational prayer) A: Jŋ: SU ɿI: LE W: XU Lǂ  
*colail hot'su* (youth group leader) ɿO Lǂ. HO: SU  
*dilggergu* (donation box) TI. Gɿ; GU

*ggoxddeit diq* (baptism) **GO DƏ TI ,**  
*han'leisu* (Christian, believer) **V LƏ SU**  
*hinshir ddubair* (Dedication of the new church) **VI . XŃ; DŃ PAI**  
*huat ggoxddeit* (flesh) **HW: GO. , DƏ:**  
*kuzzirco* (church) **XU ZI ; ƆO**  
*lairbbo delddu* (crucifix) **LƆ; BO TŦ DU**  
*loqyei watku* (closing prayer) **LO, YE W: XU**  
*malmıtja* (sermon) **M. MI: C**  
*malmıt jiasu* (preacher) **M. MI: C SU**  
*malpat* (teacher, evangelist) **M. d:**  
*malpat ddatma* (pastor) **M. d: D: M. ,**  
*mitlolpat* (elder) **MYƏ: LO. d:**  
*mitmaisı* (pastoral staff members) **MYƏ: MƆ SU**  
*mitrrıpat* (deacon) **MYƏ: JŃ: d:**  
*mutgguat hot'su* (song leader) **MU: GW: HO: SU**  
*put'et'rrıt* (financial Secretary) **dŃ: Ʀ; JŃ:**  
*reitqeit* (grace) **RƏ: ƆE:**  
*rriqhot'su* (presider) **JŃ, HO: SU**  
*sala rritsu* (Chairman) **S L JŃ: SU**  
*Sairyirla Bair* (Easter) **SƆ. YI; L PAI;**  
*Sayo Titggoxddeit Xelggetddu* (Doxology) **S RO ƭI: GO DƏ: XƏ. GŦ: DU**  
*Sıpat* (Lord) **SI d:**  
*Sıpat Baba* (Holy Communion) **SI. d: P P**  
*sıpat hainrni morlo watku zzırddu* (Sunday noon worship service) **SI d VY; NYI MO**  
**LO ZI; DU**  
*sıpat hainrni sozzırddu* (Sunday School) **SI d VY; NYI SO ZI DU**  
*Sıpat Yesu Loqyi a ma Metker Zzax'zzat ma* (Last Supper) **SI d: YE-SU LO, YI\_M**  
**MŦ: XŦ; Z. , Z:\_M**  
*Si'ssat* (Christian) **SI. . Ɔ:**  
*sozzırddu* (the gathering for study) **SO ZI; DU**  
*Tei'lei pitlazi* (Amen) **ƭE LE dYƏ L FI**  
*Tot'et sohin* (the place to study the Bible) **ƭO: Ʀ: SO VI**  
*Turwat Cijjeit* (Ten Commandments) **ƭŃ; W; ƆI JE:**  
*Xalmo Bair* (Festival of Thanks) **X. MO PAI;**  
*xelgget rriq* (a section in the worship for musical profession of faith) **XƏ. GŦ: JŃ,**  
*wat'hotpat* (worship leader) **W: HO: d:**  
*watku* (pray) **W: XU.**  
*watkuhin* (a building where Christian go to worship) **W: XU VI**  
*watkusu* (prayer) **W: XU SU**  
*watku zzırddu* (worship, assembly for worship) **W XU ZI. , DU**  
*wulddu watku* (opening prayer) **WU. DU W: XU**  
*Wusa* (God) **WU-S**  
*Yesu Heinbair* (Christmas) **YE-SU VŃ PAI;**

### Other Important Terms

*Altat Ddait, Aldol Yairjjei* (Climbing up the Hill of Knives, Jumping into the Sea of Fire)

A. 1: DV-. A. TO. YV; JE. ,

*bbiat* (bee) BY:

*ggutzul* (fireplace) GU: FU.

*Hanbba Lullul Mutgguat be Sailbbit Xaqqgux* (Round Moon Song and Video Studio) V. ,

B. , LU. LU. MU: GW:\_BE SV; BYE: XY, GU. ,

*het* (Han Chinese) HT:

*korshir* (the Lisu New Year) X0; XN;

*kotxa* (corn) X0: X

*lil* (two) LI .

*Loxwul* (the Northern Lisu) LO. , -WU.

*Luqshi* (the Southern Lisu) LU, -XN. .

*misit nit* (the god of mountains) MI SI NI :

*Mulashiddei* (a small village in northern Myanmar) MU-L-XN-DE

*nguat* (five) AW:

*nit* (spirit, god, ghost; two) NI :

*nitgguxpat* (shaman) NI: GU. , d:

*nitggux siggux* (spirit worship) NI: GU. , SI GU. ,

*nitpat* (Lisu senior shaman) NI: d:

*qor* (six) JO;

*sa* (three) S

*shit* (seven) XN:

*siqvei* (flower) SI , WE

*tit* (one) LI :

*tot'et ngot* (the book language) 10: 7: A0:

*Xaixai* (the Central Lisu) XY. . -XY. .

## Glossary B: Glossary of Important Chinese Characters

This glossary is divided into six sections: ethnic groups; place names; personal names; names of genres, instrument, musical terms, and hymnals; names of institutions, organizations, and government departments; and other important terms. It is arranged according to the alphabetic order of single Chinese characters. Each term is given in both Chinese Pinyin and Chinese characters with brief English explanation.

### Ethnic Groups

Bai 白  
Dai 傣  
Di-Qiang 氏—羌  
Dulong 独龙  
Han 汉  
Jingpo 景颇  
Lahu 拉祜  
Lisu 傈僳  
Menggu (Mongolian) 蒙古  
Miao 苗  
Naxi 纳西  
Nu 怒  
Pumi 普米  
Yi 彝  
Zang (Tibetan) 藏

### Place Names

Aludi Cun 阿路底村  
Baihualing Cun 百花岭村  
Baoshan Shi 保山市  
Bijiang Xian 碧江县  
Biluo Xueshan 碧罗雪山  
Bingzhongluo Xiang 丙中洛乡  
Chayu Xian 察隅县  
Chengga Xiang 称嘎乡  
Chuxiong Yizu Zizhi Zhou 楚雄彝族自治州  
Cikai Zhen 茨开镇  
Dali Baizu Zizhi Zhou 大理白族自治州  
Da'nanmao Cun 大南茂村  
Danzhu Cun 丹珠村  
Dechang 德昌  
Denggeng Cun 登埂村  
Denglongba Cun 灯笼坝村

Diqing Zangzu Zizhi Zhou 迪庆藏族自治州  
Dongfanghong Cun 东方红村  
Dulong Jiang 独龙江  
Dulongjiang Xiang 独龙江乡  
Fugong Xian 福贡县  
Fuyinshan 福音山  
Gansu Sheng 甘肃省  
Gaoligong Shan 高黎贡山  
Gengma Xian 耿马县  
Gongshan Dulongzu Nuzu Zizhi Xian 贡山独龙族怒族自治县  
Guangdong Sheng 广东省  
Guangzhou Shi 广州市  
Gudeng Xiang 古登乡  
Guquan Wangzi Cun 古泉王子村  
He'nan Sheng 河南省  
Henghe Cun 横河村  
Huanglianhe Cun 黄连河村  
Hu'nan Sheng 湖南省  
Jiakedi Xiang 架科底乡  
Jianchuan 剑川  
Jinji Si 金鸡寺  
Jinjiang 金江  
Jinsha Jiang 金沙江  
Kunming 昆明  
Lancang Jiang 澜沧江  
Lanping Baizu Pumizu Zizhi Xian 兰坪白族普米族自治县  
Laomudeng Cun 老母登村  
Lazao Cun 腊早村  
Lazhudi Cun 腊竹底村  
Lijiang Shi 丽江市  
Lincang Shi 临沧市  
Lingshan Si 灵山寺  
Lishadi Cun 利沙底村  
Liuku Zhen 六库镇  
Liwudi Cun 里吾底村  
Longling Xian 龙陵县  
Longyang Qu 隆阳区  
Lumadeng Xiang 鹿马登乡  
Luobenzhuo Baizu Xiang 洛本卓白族乡  
Luquan Xian 禄劝县  
Lushui Xian 泸水县

Luxi Shi 潞西市  
Luzhang Zhen 鲁掌镇  
Mabu He 麻布河  
Maji Xiang 马吉乡  
Muchengpo 木城坡  
Mu'nima Cun 木尼玛村  
Neimenggu (Inner Mongolia) 内蒙古  
Ningxia Sheng 宁夏省  
Nuijiang Daxiagu 怒江大峡谷  
Nuijiang Lisuzu Zizhi Qu 怒江傈僳族自治区  
Nuijiang Lisuzu Zizhi Zhou 怒江傈僳族自治州  
Pi'he Xiang 匹河乡  
Puhua Si 普化寺  
Qiada Cun 恰打村  
Qinghai Sheng 青海省  
Sanjiang Bingliu 三江并流  
Sede Township 色德乡  
Shangjiang Xiang 上江乡  
Shangpa Zhen 上帕镇  
Shenzhen Shi 深圳市  
Shidonghe Cun 石洞河村  
Shiyueliang Xiang 石月亮乡  
Shuangmidi Cun 双米底村  
Sichuan Sheng 四川省  
Sudian Lisuzu Xiang 苏典傈僳族乡  
Tengchong Shi 腾冲市  
Tongle Cun 同乐村  
Wadi Cun 娃底村  
Weidu Cun 唯独村  
Weixi Lisuzu Zizhi Xian 维西傈僳族自治县  
Wuding Xian 武定县  
Xi'an Tang 锡安堂  
Xiangyang Qiao 向阳桥  
Xiaoshuijing Cun 小水井村  
Xin Cun 新村  
Xingfu Cun 幸福村  
Xinjian Cun 新建村  
Xinjiang 新疆  
Yezhi Zhen 叶枝镇  
Yiludi Cun 以路底村  
Yingjiang Xian 盈江县

Yonggala Cun 永嘎拉村  
Yongsheng Xian 永胜县  
Yunnan Sheng 云南省  
Zang-Yi Zoulang 藏彝走廊  
Zhiziluo Cun 知子罗村  
Zhuangfang Cun 庄房村  
Zhu'en Tang 主恩堂  
Zibo Cun 自博村  
Zilijia Xiang 子里甲乡  
Zileng He 子楞河

**Personal Names**

An Nanyi 安南益  
Apusasa 阿普萨萨  
Cha Ying 茶英  
Che Sihuan 车四桓  
Chu Bide 褚彼得  
Chu Yongping 褚永平  
Ci Liheng 此里恒  
Ci Luheng 此路恒  
Cui Yongyuan 崔永元  
Ding Jianhua 丁建华  
Du Peiliang 杜佩良  
Fan Jianwen 范建文  
Fan Jinliang 范进良  
Fei Xiaotong 费孝通  
Feng Rongxin 丰荣新  
Feng Zhanhai 封战海  
Ge Sanhua 格三华  
He Guizhi 何贵志  
He Zhanzhong 贺占忠  
Heng Kaiyan 恒开言  
Hu Chunhua 胡春华  
Hu Dawei 胡大卫  
Hu Wanfa 胡万发  
Hu Xuecai 胡学才  
Huang Yihe 黄一鹤  
Ji Yuzhen 姬玉珍  
Jia Yunfeng 贾云峰  
Lamu 拉姆  
Li Xiaohua 李小华

Li Xuehua 李学华  
Li Zhongwen 李忠文  
Pu Jianxiong 普建雄  
Pu Sijia 普四加  
Pu Yicai 普义才  
Qiao Zhen 乔榛  
Ren Anshou 任安守  
Rongbaxinna 茸芭莘那  
Shi Yongshe 仕永社  
Shuang Fuzhen 霜福珍  
Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan) 孙中山  
Wang Renbo 汪忍波  
Wang Xinyuan 王鑫源  
Xiong Wenhua 熊文华  
Xiong Yuhua 熊玉华  
Xu Huixin 许慧欣  
Yage 雅各  
You Fuduo (Christian name: Ralafa) 友付多  
Yu Jinhua 余进华  
Yu Wenliang 余文良  
Yu Xiaolan 余晓兰  
Yu Yongguang 余咏光  
Yu Youpu 余友普  
Yuexiu 约秀  
Zan Youfa 咱有发  
Zhang Yaowu 张耀武  
Zhao Ke 赵科  
Zhao Yunsheng 赵云生  
Zhu Falin 朱发林  
Zou Jun 邹俊

### **Genres, Instruments, Musical Terms, and Chinese Hymnals**

baishi (one type of Lisu folk songs) 摆时  
dabiya (a type of four-stringed plucked lute of the Nu people) 达比亚  
datiao (dancing) 打跳  
dizi (Han transverse bamboo flute) 笛子  
duichang/duige (antiphonal singing) 对歌  
erhu (Han two-stringed bowed lute) 二胡  
geming gequ (revolutionary songs) 革命歌曲  
gewu (song and dance) 歌舞  
guangchangwu (square dance) 广场舞

hongge (red song/revolutionary songs) 红歌  
 hua'er (folk songs sung by ethnic groups in China's northwestern provinces) 花儿  
 hulusheng (gourd mouth organ) 葫芦笙  
 jiahua ("add flowers," ornamentation) 加花  
*Jia'nan Shixuan* (Collection of Poems from Canaan) 迦南诗选  
 jianpu (Chinese cipher notation, in which Arabic numerals represent scale degrees) 简谱  
 kouxian (mouth bow) 口弦  
 lusheng (mouth organ) 芦笙  
 meisheng changfa (bel canto) 美声唱法  
 nengge shanwu (can sing and are good at dancing) 能歌善舞  
 min'ge (folk songs) 民歌  
 minjian yiren (folk artist) 民间艺人  
 Minzu Batao Guifanhua Wudao (Eight Sets of Standardized Ethnic Dance) 民族八套规范化舞蹈  
 ruandiao (soft tune) 软调  
 sandadiao (three forms of Lisu folk songs) 三大调  
 sanxian (three-stringed plucked lute) 三弦  
 shengwu (sacred dance) 圣舞  
 shijie mingqu (world-famous music) 世界名曲  
 tantiao (playing while dancing) 弹跳  
 wangluo qingge (Love songs popular on the Internet) 网络情歌  
 xin min'ge (new folk songs) 新民歌  
 xuetang yuege (school songs) 学堂乐歌  
 yingdiao (hard tune) 硬调  
 yingyin gongzuoshi (audio-visual studio) 影音工作室  
*Zanmei zhi Quan* (Spring of Praise) 赞美之泉  
*Zanmeishi Xinbian* (New Chinese Hymnal) 赞美诗新编

### **Groups, Institutions, Organizations, and Government Departments**

changweihui (standing committee) 常委会  
 chuanxisuo (transmission-and-learning institute) 传习所  
 cunmin xiaozu (groups of villagers) 村民小组  
 Dehong Chubanshe (Dehong Publishing House) 德宏出版社  
 Fugong Dianshitai (Fugong Television) 福贡电视台  
 Guowuyuan (National Council of the PRC) 国务院  
 Hongxia Yuedui (Hongxia Ensemble) 红霞乐队  
 Jidujiao lianghui (two Christian organizations in China: the committee of Three-Self patriotic movement of Protestant churches and Christian council) 基督教两会  
 Kunming Shehui Zhuyi Xueyuan (Kunming Socialist College) 昆明社会主义学院  
 Lufeng Yishutuan (Lufeng Art Troupe) 泸峰艺术团

Maoyuan Minjian Minzu Yishutuan (Maoyuan Folk and Ethnic Art Troupe) 茂源民间民族艺术团  
 Miandian Lisuzu Minjian Yishutuan (Burmese Lisu Folk Art Troupe) 缅甸傈僳族民间艺术团  
 minzhengbu (ministry of civil affairs) 民政部  
 minzu shiwu weiyuanhui (the ethnic affairs commission) 民族事务委员会  
 Nanjing Aide Yinshua Youxian Gongsì (Nanjing Aide Printing Ltd) 南京爱德印刷有限公司  
 nongcun xinyongshe (rural credit cooperative) 农村信用社  
 Nujiang Lisuzu nongmin hechangtuan (Nujiang Lisu farmer Chorus) 怒江傈僳族农民合唱团  
 Nujiang Lisuzu Zizhi Zhou Minzu Gewutuan (Nujiang Prefecture Song and Dance Troupe) 怒江傈僳族自治州民族歌舞团  
 Nujiangzhou Dangwei (Nujiang Prefecture Communist Party Committee) 怒江州党委  
 Nujiangzhou Jiaowei (Nujiang Prefecture Board of Education) 怒江州教委  
 Nujiangzhou Minzuyu Dianying Yizhi Zhongxin (Nujiang National Languages Film Translation and Dubbing Center) 怒江州民族语电影译制中心  
 Nujiangzhou Renmin Zhengzhi Xieshang Huiyi (Nujiang Prefecture Peoples' Political Consultative Conference) 怒江州人民政治协商会议  
 sanzì jiàohuì (state-registered churches under the unified management of the two Christian organizations) 三自教会  
 shengchan dadui (production brigade) 生产大队  
 shetuan dengji guanli jiguan (the society registration administration organ) 社团登记管理机构  
 shezhiju (governing council) 设治局  
 Shiyueliang Yishutuan (Stone Moon Art Troupe) 石月亮艺术团  
 tongzhanbu (front work department) 统战部  
 wengongtuan (cultural troupe) 文工团  
 wenyi xuanchuandui (advocacy of literature and art) 文艺宣传队  
 xingzheng weiyuan gongshu (administrative committee offices) 行政委员公署  
 Yunnan Jidujiao Shenxueyuan (Yunnan Christian Seminary) 云南基督教神学院  
 Zhonggong Zhongyang Tongyi Zhanxian Gongzuobu (The United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee) 中共中央统一战线工作部  
 Zhongguo Dianxin 中国电信 (China Telecom)  
 Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) 中国社会科学院  
 Zhongguo Yinyue Yanjiusuo (Institute of Chinese Music Research) 中国音乐研究所  
 Zhongyang Dianshitai (China Central Television) 中央电视台  
 zhongyang fangwentuan (the delegation of the central government) 中央访问团  
 Zhongyang Guangbo Hechangtuan (Central Radio Chorus) 中央广播合唱团  
 zongjiao shiwuju (administration for religious affairs) 宗教事务局

Zongzheng Gewutuan (General Political Department Song and Dance Troupe of the Chinese People's Liberation Army) 总政歌舞团

### **Other Important Social and Cultural Terms**

anju gongcheng (government-sponsored housing project for low-income residents) 安居工程

Bajie Sanzhong Quanhui (the Third Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee) 八届三中全会

baojiazhi (a regime for household registration management since the Song Dynasty) 保甲制

baozhang (the administrator of a "bao" unit) 保长

bianmin (people living on the frontier) 边民

Chama Gudao (the Ancient Tea-Trading Route) 茶马古道

chuandaoyuan (evangelist) 传道人

chunjie (Spring Festival, Chinese New Year) 春节

chunlian (a type of couplet used during the Chinese New Year as part of its celebration) 春联

di'dao (authentic) 地道

Dong Lisuwen (Eastern Lisuwen) 东傣傣文

feiwuzhi wenhua yichan chuanchengren (the bearers of intangible cultural heritage) 非物质文化遗产传承人

fengjian mixin (feudalistic superstition) 封建迷信

fupin anju (poverty alleviation and relocation) 扶贫安居

Gaige Kaifang (Reform and Opening-up) 改革开放

gaitu guiliu (replacing the tusi system with local officials sent by the central government) 改土归流

Guomindang (Chinese Nationalist Party, KMT) 中国国民党

Guoqing Jie (National Day) 国庆节

Hanyu Pinyin (Chinese phonetic system) 汉语拼音

huangjinzhou (golden-week holiday) 黄金周

huotang (fireplace) 火塘

jianshe shehui zhuyi xin nongcun (constructing a new socialist countryside) 建设社会主义新农村

Jiaoqian de Deng, Lushang de Guang (A Lamp to My Feet; a Light for My Path) 脚前的灯，路上的光

jiazhang (the administrator of a "jia" unit) 甲长

jiceng (grassroots) 基层

Jinji Baihua Dianyingjie (Golden Rooster and Hundred Flowers Film Festival) 金鸡百花电影节

jiuping zhuang xinjiu (to put new wine in old bottles) 旧瓶装新酒

Kuoshi Jie (Lisu New Year) 阔时节

Lao Lisuwen (Old Lisu) 老傣傣文

laobaixing (the commoners) 老百姓  
 lingdui (the group leader) 领队  
 liusuo (sliding along steel wire) 溜索  
 luohou (backwardness) 落后  
 minban (people-run) 民办  
 minsu (folklore) 民俗  
 minzu shibie (ethnic identifications) 民族识别  
 Nanzhao (an ancient kingdom between the eighth and tenth centuries in Southwestern China) 南诏  
 nituizi (muddy legs) 泥腿子  
 peixunban (training classes) 培训班  
 Qikai Yunnan, lüyou tiantang (Colorful Yunnan of China, tourism paradise of the world) 七彩云南, 旅游天堂  
 Qingming (one of the twenty-four Chinese solar terms) 清明  
 Sanzi (Three-Self: self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation) 三自  
 shangshan xiexiang (going up to the mountainous areas and down to the countryside) 上山下乡  
 shaoshu minzu (minority nationalities) 少数民族  
 Shiyijie Sanzhong Quanhui (the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee) 十一届三中全会  
 siguan jiaotang (Buddhist and Taoist temples, mosques and churches) 寺观教堂  
 song wenhua xiexiang (sending culture to the countryside) 送文化下乡  
 Putonghua (Standard Chinese) 普通话  
 tangdian (Christian gathering point) 堂点  
 tusi zhidu (native ruling system) 土司制度  
 Shang Daoshan, Xia Huohai (Climbing up the Hill of Knives; Jumping into the Sea of Fire) 上刀山, 下火海  
 “Shi’erwu” Guihua (“Twelfth Five-Year” Plan) “十二五”规划  
 “Shiwu” Guihua (“Tenth Five-Year” Plan) “十五”规划  
 Siqun (Four Masses, including the mass view, mass route, mass benefit, and mass work) 四群  
 Wenhua Dage’ming (Cultural Revolution) 文化大革命  
 “Wenhua datai, jingji changxi” (Culture setting up the stage, on which economy sings) 文化搭台, 经济唱戏  
 wenhua zhaopai (cultural brand) 文化招牌  
 wenhuazhan (cultural station) 文化站  
 wenmang (illiteracy) 文盲  
 wentihui (art and sport meeting) 文体会  
 wenzi gongzuozhe (literary and art workers) 文字工作者  
 xiaolingtong (an earlier form of personal hand phone system) 小灵通  
 Xibu Dakaiifa (Open-up the West) 西部大开发  
 Xin Lisuwen (New Lisu) 新傈僳文

Xinhai Geming (the Revolution of 1911) 辛亥革命  
yi'min (barbarian people) 夷民  
yuan (the monetary unit of China) 元 (人民币)  
yuanzhi yuanwei (original taste and flavor) 原汁原味  
Yunnan Minzucun (Yunnan Nationalities Village) 云南民族村  
Zaotanghui (Spring Bathing Gathering) 澡塘会  
zhibiandui (frontier troop) 殖边队  
zifei liuxue guiguo jiaomu renyuan (pastoral staff members returning from self-support  
studying abroad) 自费留学归国教牧人员  
zizhi (autonomy) 自治  
zongjiao shentou (religious infiltration) 宗教渗透

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