



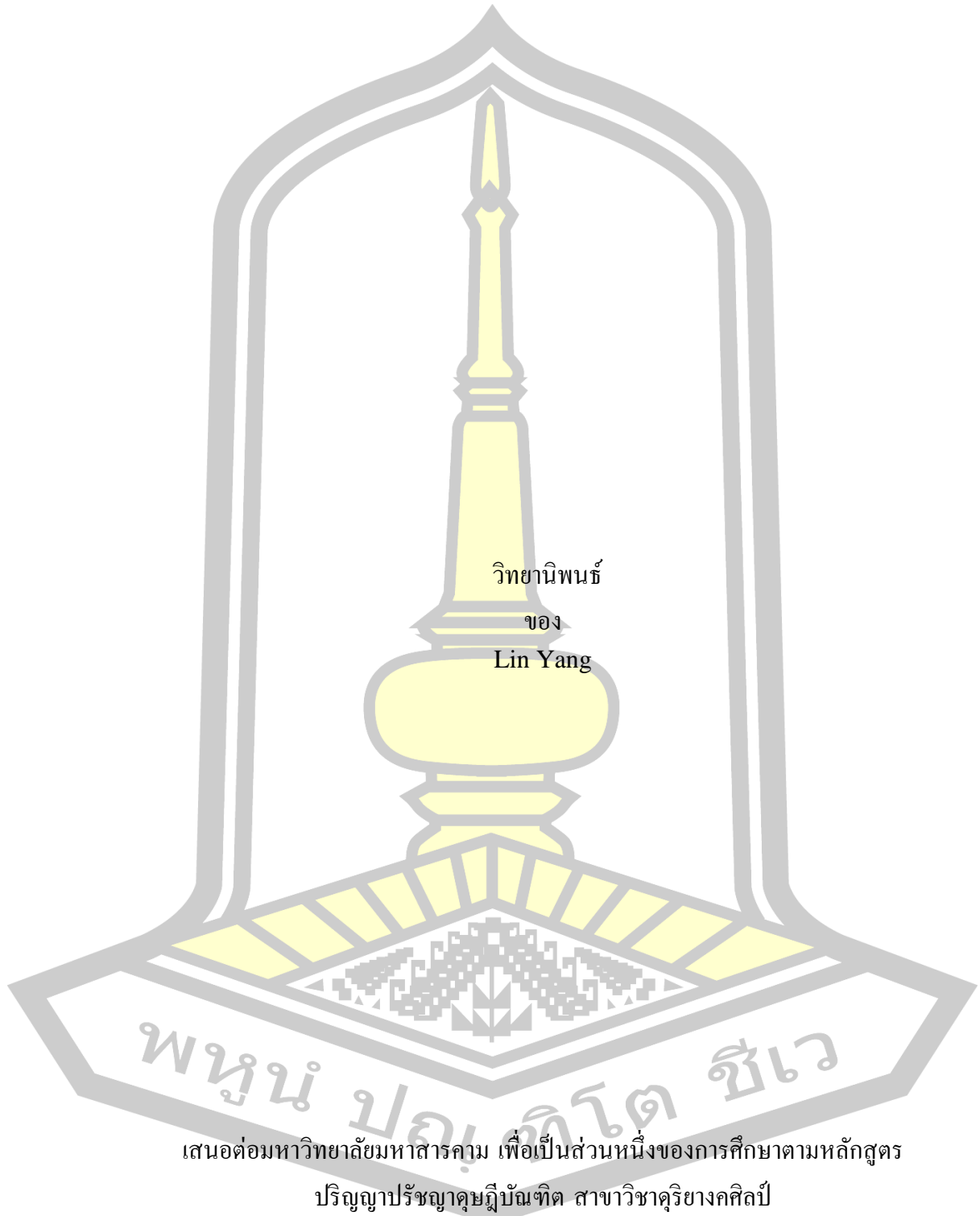
Yi Wedding Ceremony Songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province,  
China

Lin Yang

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music  
March 2025

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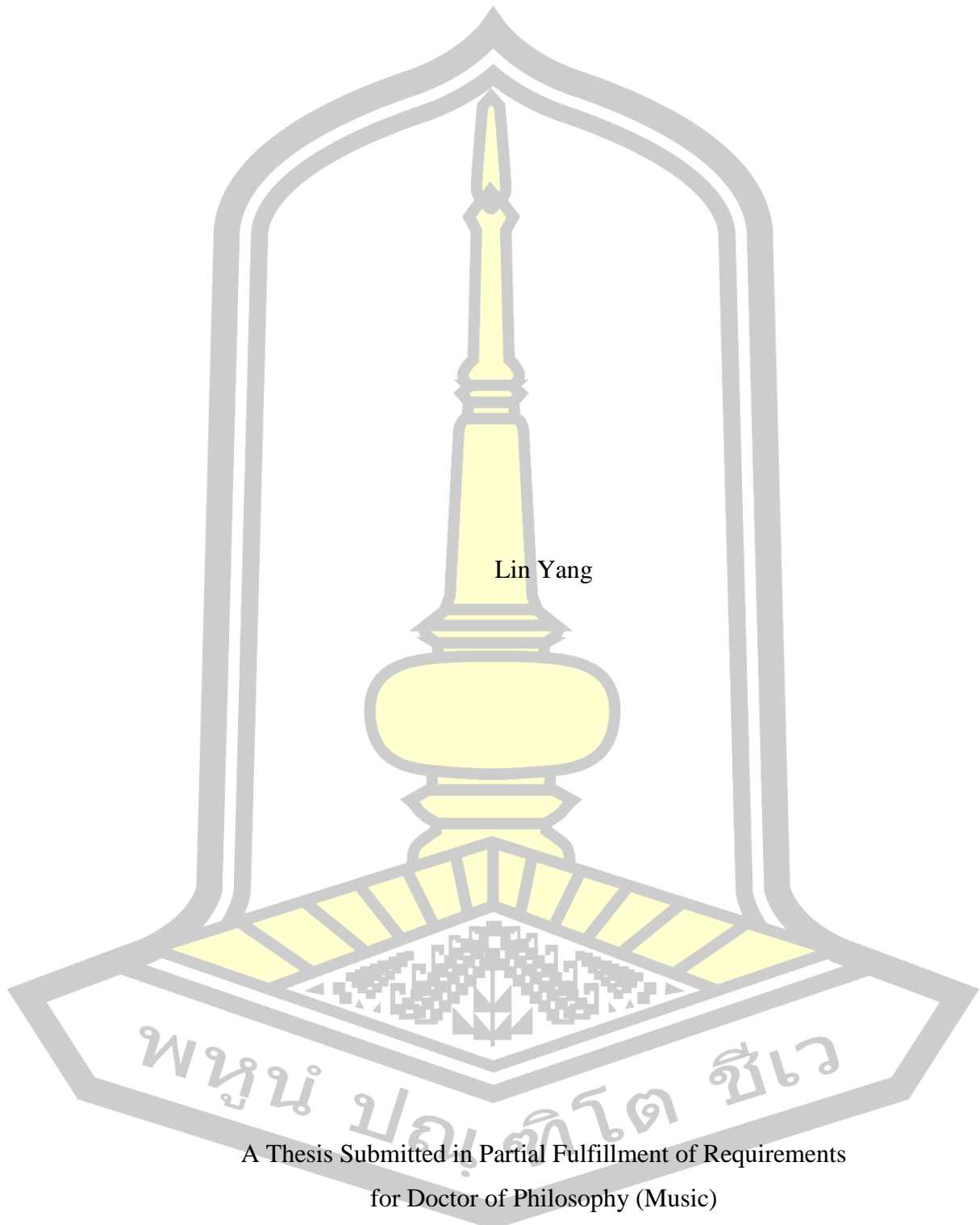


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### ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the wedding songs of the Yi people in Ebian County, Sichuan Province, China. The objectives of this research were to: 1) Investigate the current status of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China. 2) Analyze the characteristics of songs selection in Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China. 3) Propose guidelines for the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China. This research was using qualitative research methodology. Data collection and research were conducted using interview, observation and questionnaire forms as the research tools, which included seven key informants. The research findings are as follows:

1. Result from objective 1: Ebian Yi wedding music, primarily composed of Religious songs and Crying marriage songs, holds significant cultural value. However, due to formalization and the weakening of cultural identity, its transmission is facing challenges, and its usage frequency has been gradually declining.

2. Result from objective 2: All Ebian Yi wedding songs are performed a cappella, featuring diverse melodic and rhythmic structures, and are characterized by pronounced improvisational elements.

3. Result from objective 3: Ebian Yi wedding songs are preserved through government policies, education, and community efforts, and their transmission is promoted through cultural activities, media, and educational innovation, enhancing their value and impact.

**Keyword :** Yi ethnic group, Current Status, Musical Characteristics, Guidelines, Preservation and Transmission

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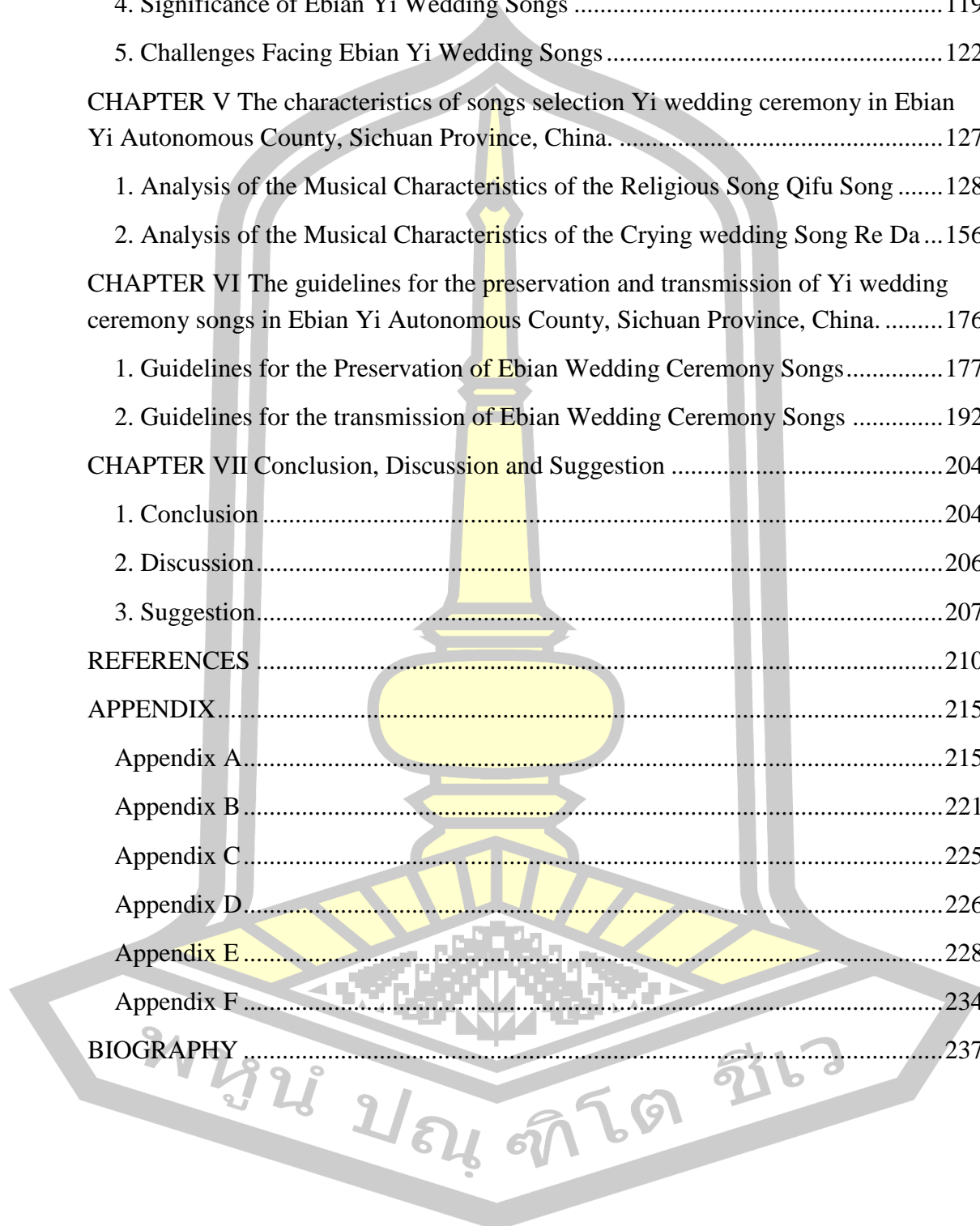
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Lin Yang

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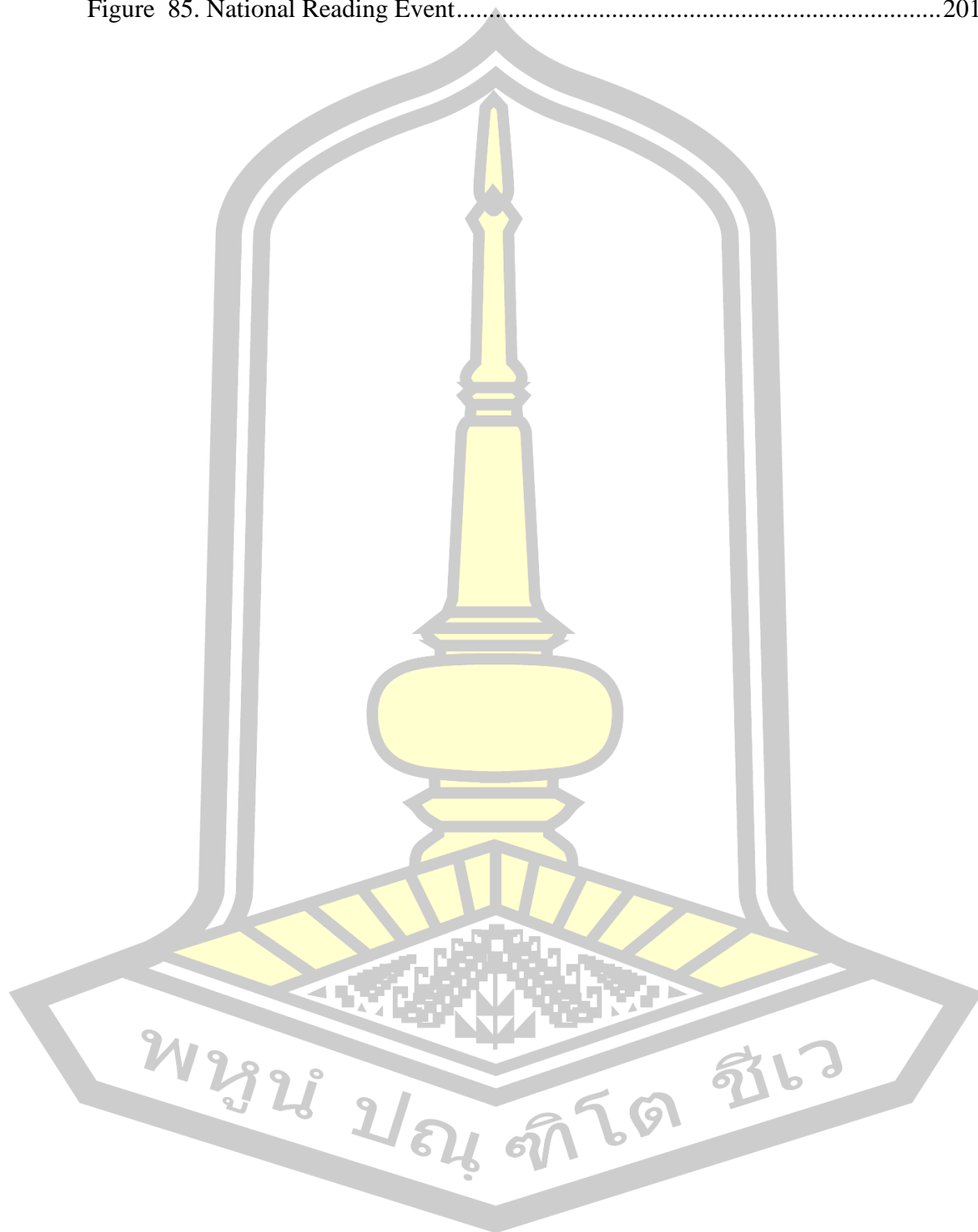
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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

### 1. Research Background

The Yi (彝) ethnic group, one of the most ancient communities in China, possesses a rich cultural heritage, with wedding song traditions holding a particularly significant position within their cultural framework. These wedding songs are not merely background music for ceremonial proceedings but also serve as profound vessels of emotional expression and cultural connotation. The language and culture of the Yi are remarkably diverse, and substantial regional variations exist in wedding customs and musical expressions. Due to differences in geography, historical development, and social practices, communication between regional dialects is often limited, with some dialects being mutually unintelligible. Similarly, there are considerable disparities in cultural manifestations such as songs, dances, and traditional attire across different regions. Consequently, research on Yi culture necessitates a clear delineation of specific regional cultural contexts to ensure a precise understanding and respect for the cultural diversity within the Yi ethnic group. By adopting this approach, scholars can more accurately capture the unique characteristics of Yi wedding songs and their role in preserving the broader cultural identity of the community. Where appropriate, supplementary explanations or annotations may be included to facilitate comprehension of culturally specific terms or concepts.

The traditional weddings of the Yi ethnic group have long attracted academic attention. These ceremonies typically comprise two fundamental components: ceremonial rituals and wedding songs, which are interdependent and collectively form the complete structure of the wedding. Significant advancements in the research of traditional Yi weddings in northwest Guizhou have been achieved through the dedicated efforts of scholars and experts, resulting in the publication of numerous collections of ballads. However, these accomplishments primarily emphasize the compilation and organization of wedding lyrics and melodies, while comprehensive and systematic documentation of wedding rituals remains relatively limited. The

traditional wedding rituals and songs of the Yi people in northwest Guizhou hold value not only as expressions of literary and musical art but also in their broader social functions. These include providing entertainment, fostering social interaction, facilitating the transmission of knowledge, and offering ethical and moral education. As a crucial component of the Yi people's intangible cultural heritage, conducting systematic research and investigation into these traditional wedding rituals and songs is of significant practical importance for the preservation and promotion of this cultural legacy (Yang Juan, 2022).

Wedding songs, also referred to as wedding ceremony songs, are a genre of folk songs performed during traditional wedding ceremonies. These songs are closely associated with marital customs and serve as a musical expression deeply rooted in the cultural practices and ethnic traditions of the Yi people. The wedding procedures of the Yi typically include several stages, such as partner selection, matchmaking, engagement, setting the wedding date, receiving the bride, the wedding ceremony, and the bride's return visit to her natal home. Based on whether singing is incorporated into the respective stages, these procedures can be categorized into two types: non-singing ceremonial procedures and singing ceremonial procedures. Non-singing ceremonial procedures primarily include partner selection, matchmaking, engagement, and the bride's return visit, while singing ceremonial procedures encompass pre-wedding gatherings, bride reception and send-off, and the wedding ceremony itself (Chen Lian, 2011).

Throughout history, as ethnic integration and social environments have evolved, folk songs closely tied to daily life have also undergone significant transformations. Yi music originally encompassed a variety of forms, including mountain songs, love songs, festival songs, wedding songs, and funeral songs. Among these, wedding songs were performed with the greatest frequency, followed by funeral songs, while other types have seen a marked decline in transmission. The widespread preservation of wedding songs can be attributed to their close association with traditional customs and daily life. In contrast, mountain songs, love songs, and festival songs have gradually lost their original cultural grounding as they have become increasingly detached from modern life. Although some mountain songs, love songs, and festival songs have been incorporated into wedding ceremonies, evolving into wedding songs, challenges

remain. The decline in the number of performers, changes in the content of wedding song performances, and the simplification of wedding rituals have collectively contributed to a decrease in the number of people engaging in singing, listening to, and learning these songs. This decline undoubtedly affects the preservation and transmission of wedding songs. These trends underscore the fact that Yi wedding songs are currently facing the critical challenge of gradual decline (Chen Lian, 2008).

During a field research spanning over a year, researchers identified multiple challenges facing the transmission of Ebian Yi wedding songs. First, the younger generation demonstrates a declining interest in wedding songs, accompanied by a weakening cultural identity with traditional music. Additionally, language barriers hinder many young people from comprehending the content of these songs, further reducing their acceptance and appreciation.

Second, the number of Transmitters has been rapidly diminishing. Elderly singers, who are capable of fully performing and transmitting wedding songs, are becoming increasingly rare, while the younger generation shows a significant lack of motivation to learn and carry forward this tradition.

Moreover, the simplification of wedding rituals has adversely affected the preservation of wedding songs. Many traditional elements of the wedding ceremony have been curtailed or omitted, resulting in fewer opportunities for the performance of these songs. Finally, the transmission of wedding songs remains predominantly reliant on oral tradition, lacking systematic educational frameworks and promotional channels. This singular mode of transmission is insufficient to address the demands of preserving cultural heritage in modern society.

In light of these challenges, the researchers further examined the characteristics of Ebian Yi wedding songs, with a focus on analyzing the potential for these songs to be perpetuated through live transmission in contemporary contexts. By investigating their transmission processes and mechanisms, this research aims to propose effective solutions to these challenges while fostering the preservation and sustainable development of wedding songs.

## **2. Research objectives**

2.1 To investigate the current status of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

2.2 To analyze the characteristics of songs selection in Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

2.3 To propose guidelines for the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

## **3. Research Questions**

3.1 What is the current status of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China?

3.2 What are the characteristics of songs selection in Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China?

3.3 What guidelines can be proposed for the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China?

## **4. Research benefits**

2.1 We will investigate the current status of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

2.2 We will examine the characteristics of songs selection in Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

2.3 We will explore the guidelines for the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

## **5. Definition of terms**

5.1 The Ebian Yi people refer to the Yi ethnic group residing in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, located in Leshan City, Sichuan Province, situated in the Xiaoliangshan area of southwest China, adjacent to the sacred Buddhist site of Mount Emei .

5.2 The current state of Yi weddings in Ebian refers to the wedding process, the types of wedding songs, the functions of these songs, the significance of these songs, and the challenges they face.

5.3 The wedding process refers to the detailed sequence of events in the wedding ceremony held between Shuaren Renbu and E'e Ayi in Ebian Yi Autonomous County from January 3rd to 5th, 2023.

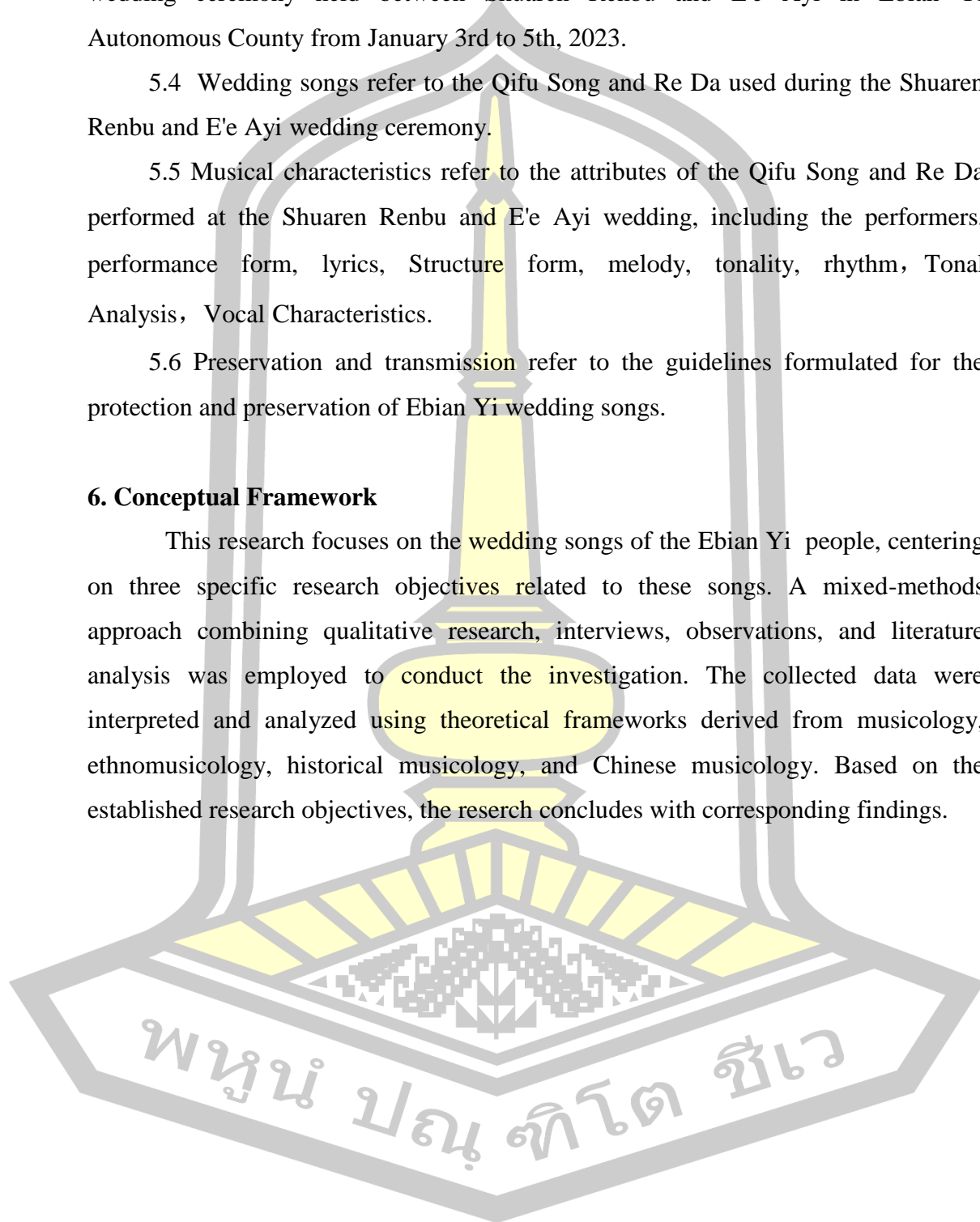
5.4 Wedding songs refer to the Qifu Song and Re Da used during the Shuaren Renbu and E'e Ayi wedding ceremony.

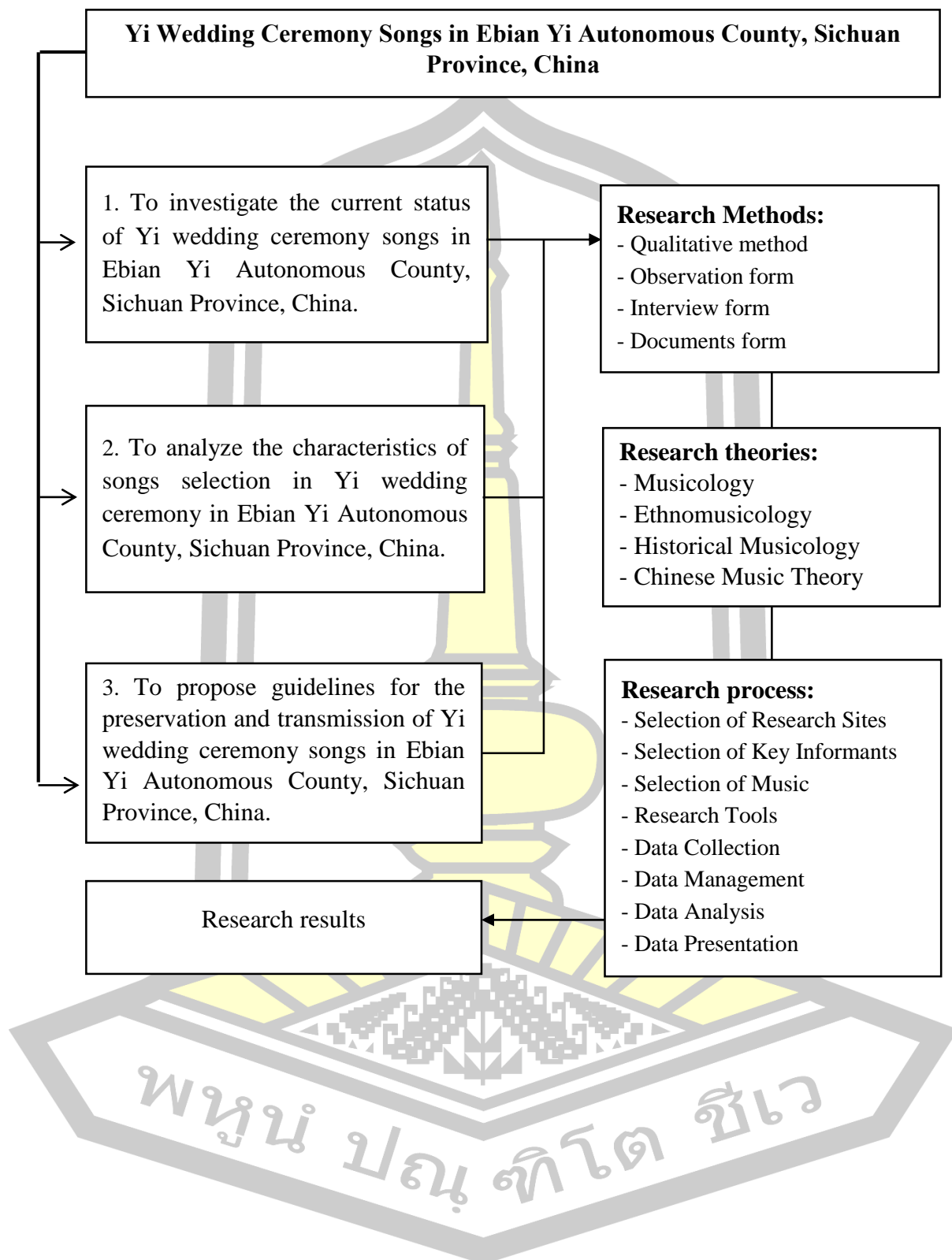
5.5 Musical characteristics refer to the attributes of the Qifu Song and Re Da performed at the Shuaren Renbu and E'e Ayi wedding, including the performers, performance form, lyrics, Structure form, melody, tonality, rhythm, Tonal Analysis, Vocal Characteristics.

5.6 Preservation and transmission refer to the guidelines formulated for the protection and preservation of Ebian Yi wedding songs.

## 6. Conceptual Framework

This research focuses on the wedding songs of the Ebian Yi people, centering on three specific research objectives related to these songs. A mixed-methods approach combining qualitative research, interviews, observations, and literature analysis was employed to conduct the investigation. The collected data were interpreted and analyzed using theoretical frameworks derived from musicology, ethnomusicology, historical musicology, and Chinese musicology. Based on the established research objectives, the research concludes with corresponding findings.





## CHAPTER II

### Literature review

This chapter provides a comprehensive review and synthesis of the literature related to the wedding music of the Ebian Yi people in China. It compiles essential materials and systematically organizes them in alignment with the research's research themes and objectives.

1. General Knowledge of the Yi Ethnic Group in China
2. General Knowledge of the Yi Ethnic Group in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan
3. General Knowledge of Yi Wedding Music in Ebian, Sichuan
4. Historical Evolution of Yi Wedding Music
5. The Theory Used in Research
6. Literature and Related Research

#### **1. General Knowledge of the Yi Ethnic Group in China**

##### 1.1 Origin

The origins of the Yi (彝) people have been subject to diverse theories, including the northern origin theory, the southern origin theory, the eastern origin theory, and the Yunnan indigenous origin theory. Among these, the northern origin theory is widely accepted in academic circles. According to historical records in both Chinese and Yi scripts, the ancestors of the Yi people were closely related to the ancient Qiang people who inhabited China's western regions. The Yi are primarily believed to have descended from the ancient Qiang. Between the 2nd century BCE and the early centuries of the Common Era, the activities of the Yi ancestors were centered in two regions: the Dianchi Basin and Qiongzhusi, the latter corresponding to modern-day southeastern Xichang, Sichuan Province. These areas were home to agricultural and nomadic tribes such as the Qiongzhusi, Kunming, Laojin, Mimo, and Dian. According to Yi historical legends, their ancestors originally lived in the region known as Qiongzhusi. They later migrated southward to the banks of the Nuoyi and Quyi rivers, corresponding to the Jinsha River and the Anning River basins. By

approximately the 3rd century CE, the Yi ancestors had expanded from the Anning River basin, the banks of the Jinsha River, the Dianchi Basin, and the Ailao Mountains to northeastern Yunnan, southern Yunnan, northwestern Guizhou, and northwestern Guangxi. Following their settlement in southwest China, the Yi ancestors engaged in continuous cultural and ethnic integration with other groups, such as the descendants of the ancient Puman people, many of whom became part of the modern Yi. This process is extensively documented in the ancient Yi-language text *The Chronicles of Southwest Yi*, which contains numerous accounts of the transformation of the Puman into the Yi. Additionally, the regions historically inhabited by the Yi were also home to various other tribes speaking languages within the Yi branch. Consequently, the historical nomenclature of the Yi people is exceptionally complex (Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2015).

## 1.2 Geographic Distribution

The Yi people are one of China's most historically significant and culturally rich ethnic groups, with various self-designations, including Nuosu (诺苏), Nasu, Luowu, Misapo, Sani, and Axi. The Yi population is primarily distributed across the provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan, and Guizhou, as well as the northwestern part of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Their settlement pattern is characterized by wide dispersion with localized concentrations, with major residential areas including the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, the Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan, and the Bijie and Liupanshui regions in Guizhou. The Yi people possess a rich history and vibrant culture, distinguished by their unique language, script, and customs. In Yi wedding culture, although specific practices vary widely and exhibit regional distinctiveness, the Yi are renowned as a community adept in song and dance. Their folk dance and musical traditions are exceptionally diverse and flourish across various contexts. Whether during breaks from daily labor or in significant events such as festivals, weddings, or funerals, the Yi people traditionally express their emotions through song and dance. Music and dance are not only integral components of Yi spiritual culture but also vital mediums for emotional exchange and the cultivation of romantic relationships, particularly during festive occasions. These

artistic expressions encapsulate the cultural essence of the Yi people, reinforcing social bonds and preserving their intangible cultural heritage (He Lü, 2017).

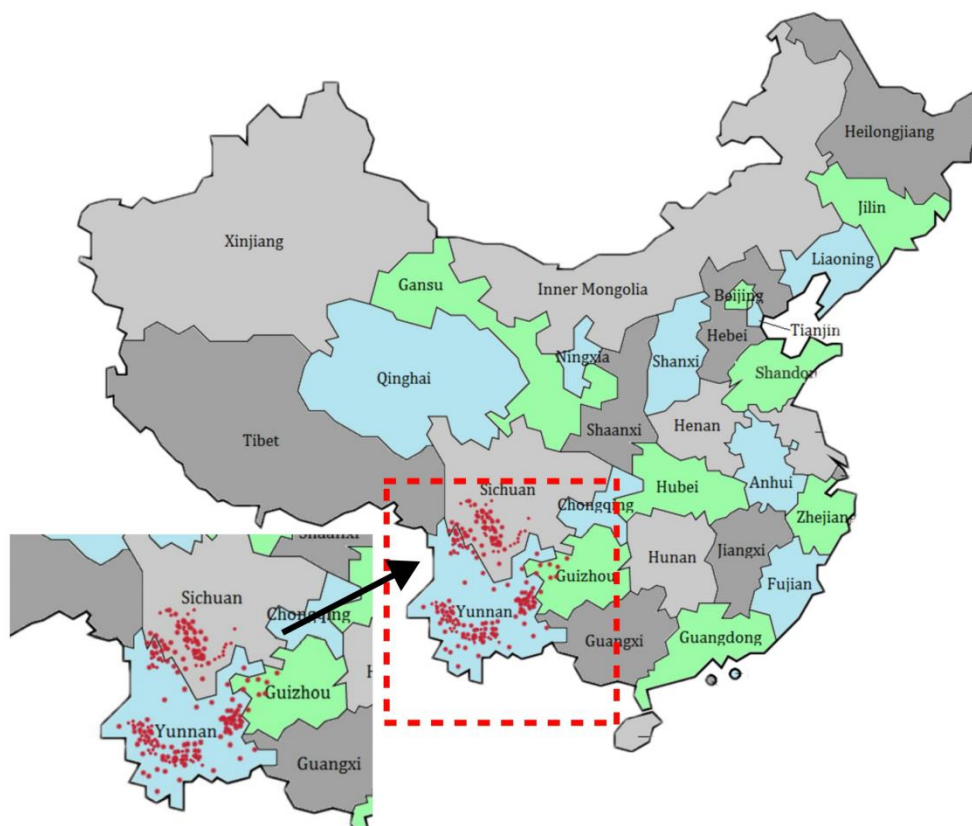


Figure 1. Distribution Map of the Yi Ethnic Group

Source: <https://chinafolio.com/provinces/sichuan-province/>

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of the Yi people across China, with red markings indicating the primary regions of Yi habitation. The Yi are predominantly located in the southwestern part of China, including Sichuan Province (e.g., Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture), Yunnan Province (e.g., Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture), and Guizhou Province (e.g., the Qianxinan region).

The Yi people are the sixth-largest ethnic minority in China, with a population of approximately 9.83 million according to the Seventh National Census conducted in 2021. The Yi population is primarily distributed across the provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou, and Guangxi. Among these, Yunnan hosts the largest Yi population, accounting for about 51.5% of the total. In Yunnan, Yi communities are

predominantly concentrated in Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Honghe Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture, and counties such as Eshan, Ninglang, and Luliang. Sichuan has the second-largest Yi population, with approximately 3.19 million Yi residents. Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture is the region with the highest concentration of Yi people in China, accounting for 22.5% of the total Yi population, or approximately 2.22 million individuals. Additionally, Ebian Yi Autonomous County and Mabian Yi Autonomous County have a combined Yi population of about 140,000. Furthermore, around 1.4 million Yi people reside in scattered communities across the country (China Statistical Yearbook, 2021).

### 1.3 Language and Script

Before the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Yi (彝) people, characterized by numerous subgroups and dialects across different regions, used a variety of both exonyms and autonyms. Common exonyms included terms such as Yi, Black Yi, White Yi, Red Yi, Gan Yi, Huayao, and Micha. Among the prominent autonyms, the Yi in Zhaotong, Wuding, Luquan, Mile, and Shiping in Yunnan Province, as well as those in Greater and Lesser Liangshan in Sichuan Province, referred to themselves as Nuosu, Nasu, or Niesu, accounting for approximately half of the total Yi population. In other areas of Yunnan, such as the Ailao and Wuliang Mountains and regions around Kaiyuan, Wenshan, and Maguan, the Yi people used autonyms such as Misa Po, Lasu Po, Pula po, and Nipu. In Guizhou Province, common autonyms included Nuosu, Na, Nuo, and Nie. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, through the process of ethnic identification and in accordance with the collective preferences of the Yi people, the unified term Yi, derived from the ancient Chinese bronze vessel ding yi, was adopted as the official name for this ethnic group (Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2015).

The Yi (彝) language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family and comprises six major dialects: Northern, Eastern, Southern, Southeastern, Western, and Central. These dialects include five sub-dialects and 25 vernacular varieties. The Northern dialect is spoken in Sichuan and counties

such as Ninglang in Yunnan, the Eastern dialect in Guizhou and northeastern Yunnan, and the Southern dialect in Yunnan and Guangxi. The remaining three dialects are primarily distributed across other parts of Yunnan. The Yi script is a logographic writing system, also referred to as a syllabary. In historical texts, it is known as Cuàn script, Wei script, or Luo script, and is generally referred to as Old Yi Script. This script is estimated to have been developed around the 13th century, with over 10,000 characters currently identified, of which approximately 1,000 are frequently used. Each character represents a specific meaning, lacking radicals or components, and a single character may have multiple writing formats. The script is primarily written from left to right, either vertically or horizontally. The earliest known Yi inscription is found on a bronze bell discovered in Dafang County, Guizhou, which dates to the 21st year of the Chenghua reign (1485) during the Ming Dynasty. Numerous Yi regions preserve manuscripts written in Old Yi Script, including Le er te yi, Ma mu te yi, A mu ni re, and Qi shu su. These texts are categorized into nine types: ritual texts, divinations, calendars, genealogies, poetry, ethics, history, mythology, and translations. The Old Yi Script extensively employs homophonic borrowing. Due to the six dialects of the Yi language and significant regional variations, phonetic substitutions differ by locality, resulting in inconsistencies in the script's characters and pronunciations. To make the Yi script more accessible to the broader community, the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan developed a standardized Yi writing system in 1975. This system is based on the Xide dialect's pronunciation and the Shengzha subdialect, establishing 819 standardized characters. A phonetic system was also designed to facilitate learning. The State Council approved this standard in 1980, and it has since been promoted and utilized in Yi regions of Sichuan (Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2015).

#### 1.4 Marriage Customs

The marriage customs of the Yi ethnic group are characterized by endogamy within the ethnic group, exogamy between clans, endogamy within social ranks, preferential marriage with maternal cousins, and prohibition of marriage with paternal cousins. These traits are most prominently observed in the Liangshan Yi region. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, interethnic marriage was punishable by death or expulsion from the clan according to customary law. Marriage

within the same clan was strictly forbidden, with unions between individuals of the same lineage or surname considered incest and punishable by death. Strict adherence to endogamy within social ranks was also enforced. Marriages between the ruling class (zimo and nuohe) and the subjugated classes (qunuo, ajia, and gaxi) were prohibited, as were extramarital sexual relations, with violators subject to execution. While qunuo and ajia did not intermarry, the restrictions were less severe compared to those between Yi descendants and non-Yi descendants. For example, if a qunuo of Yi descent married or engaged in sexual relations with a non-Yi descendant, punishment varied by region, ranging from execution to demotion in social rank. Traditional Yi marriages also included the custom of widow transmission, whereby a woman of childbearing age whose husband had died and whose children were still minors was required to marry the deceased husband's brother or a close male relative. In the absence of male heirs, clan members had the right to redistribute the deceased's property, a practice known as eating the absolute estate (chi jue ye). Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, restrictions on endogamy within clans and social ranks have been abolished. Today, Yi youth freely choose their partners based on mutual affection, resulting in marriages across ethnic groups, social ranks, and even national borders (Chinese Ethnic Minorities, 2009).

Monogamy is the fundamental form of marriage among the Yi (彝) ethnic group. However, before the establishment of the People's Republic of China, due to uneven social development among different Yi regions, instances of polygamy existed. These included cases where local tusi (chieftains) or nuohe (nobility) practiced polygyny, or where ordinary families engaged in polygamy due to practices such as widow transmission or the need to ensure offspring. In rare instances, remnants of fraternal polyandry and sororal polygyny were also observed. Yi families were traditionally patriarchal, adhering to a patrilineal naming system and the principle of patrilineal transmission. After marriage, sons typically established their own households, with the exception of the youngest son, who remained with his parents. Women held a subordinate position within the family; while they managed household affairs, they had no rights to property distribution or participation in significant social activities. The male head of the household wielded authority over

family property and decisions concerning the marriages of offspring. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, these practices have undergone significant transformation. The status of women has gradually improved, and the concept of gender equality has become increasingly ingrained in Yi family life (Chinese Ethnic Minorities, 2009).

Yi weddings retain many ancient customs, such as water sprinkling, face blackening, bridal weeping, pre-wedding fasting for the bride, and post-marriage seclusion (*zuo jia*). Before marriage, Yi men and women participate in a formal engagement ceremony. During this ceremony, an auspicious omen is sought to confirm compatibility. Each family slaughters a pig, examining the gallbladder and pancreas. A clear yellow gallbladder and a large, straight, and plump pancreas are considered auspicious, while a curled pancreas is deemed inauspicious, signifying incompatibility. The wedding date is determined based on the zodiac signs of the couple's birth years. Weddings are typically held during the golden period after the autumn harvest, between the eleventh lunar month and the following February. The most auspicious day occurs when six stars align in a straight line with the moon, a phenomenon referred to as *tabo* in Yi culture. The ideal marriage age is 17 or 19 years old. If a woman remains unmarried by the age of 17, she must undergo another coming-of-age ceremony (Chinese Ethnic Minorities, 2009).

Marriage customs encapsulate core elements of a group's religion, beliefs, customary laws, and literary arts, reflecting their influence on various aspects of social life. These customs significantly shape a community's attitudes toward life, gender concepts, and behavioral patterns. The marriage customs of the Yi ethnic group represent a cultural essence accumulated over the course of their long history of survival and development. They constitute an integral part of Yi traditional culture, social production, and daily life. By examining the Yi marriage system, matchmaking and engagement practices, and the process of marriage formation, this research presents an authentic portrayal of the original marriage culture of the Yi people. Adopting a cultural anthropological perspective, it analyzes the socio-cultural context in which Yi marriage customs emerged and evolved. Additionally, it explores the unique values embedded within these customs, including concepts of harmony, morality, and aesthetics. The research further proposes contemporary approaches to

marriage, gender, and the coexistence and mutual prosperity of multi-ethnic cultures in the modern era (Xu Li; Liao Ningyan, 2016).

The Yi (彝) ethnic group is a significant component of China's numerous minority populations, possessing a distinctive traditional cultural system that has given rise to diverse forms of cultural expression, including unique language and artistic styles. Wedding songs are one such unique form of artistic and cultural expression within Yi culture, closely intertwined with the life customs and economic activities of the Yi people. In the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province, wedding songs do not refer to specific compositions but rather to songs created spontaneously according to specific contexts and emotional states. Consequently, they encompass a wide variety of forms. Based on different scenarios and emotions, wedding songs can be further categorized into several major types, such as crying wedding songs, playful songs, and wedding ceremony songs, each of which includes numerous subcategories. The content of Yi wedding songs is typically straightforward yet rich in meaning. Their lyrics vividly reflect Yi customs and culture while serving multiple practical functions, such as facilitating social interaction, providing educational enlightenment, and expressing emotions (Shuai Yuli, 2018).

## **2. General Knowledge of the Yi Ethnic Group in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan**

### **2.1 Origin**

The history of Ebian Yi Autonomous County can be traced back to the Neolithic period, when the ancestors of Yi (彝) tribal groups settled and thrived in this region. During the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), this area was part of the vast Southwestern Yi Territory. The migration of Han populations into the region began during the sixth year of Emperor Yuan's reign in the Western Han Dynasty (135 BCE). In the Tang Dynasty (665 CE), Luomu County (Luomu Xian) was established in the area. Later, in the 13th year of Emperor Jiaqing's reign in the Qing Dynasty (1808 CE), Ebian Hall (Ebian Ting) was formally established. During the Republican era, the hall was converted into a county. In 1950, the county government

was established under the administration of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture. Due to the significant distance from the prefectural seat, administrative oversight was transferred to Leshan Prefecture in 1955. In 1984, with the approval of the State Council, Ebian Yi Autonomous County was officially established and became part of Leshan City in Sichuan Province (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Government, 2023).

Ebian has a long and rich history, characterized by its pristine natural environment and the vibrant cultural traditions of the Yi people, as well as Han influences such as traditional lantern dances and folk songs. These diverse cultural elements have given rise to a dynamic and colorful folk culture. One of the region's oral traditions recounts that beneath Huoshi Mountain (also known as Ma'an Mountain), beautiful women are born, and fine silk abounds along the Yida River. Archaeological discoveries, such as a stone axe from Gonghe and a stone adze from Huohua Village in Dabao Town, along with a bronze willow-leaf sword unearthed in 1977 from Yongle Commune's Xingguang Brigade in what is now Jinhe District, provide evidence that humans inhabited the area as early as the Neolithic period. In 135 BCE, during the sixth year of Emperor Wu of Han's Jianyuan reign, Han forces advanced westward to develop the Southwestern Yi Territory (Xinan Yidi), marking the beginning of Han migration into the region. The area became part of Nan'an County under Jianwei Prefecture (present-day Leshan City). In 111 BCE, during the sixth year of Emperor Wu's Yuanding reign, Ebian was incorporated into Yuexi Prefecture's Linguan Circuit (present-day northeastern Ganluo County). In 665 CE, during the second year of the Tang Dynasty's Linde reign, the imperial court established Luomu County (Luomu Xian) in Shaping, governing the region from Suihecheng (present-day Shaping Town). During the Song Dynasty, the area was administered under Emei County, while in the Yuan Dynasty, it was part of the Xu Hen Division under the Dali Kingdom. In the Ming Dynasty's Zhengde period, a large number of Han settlers migrated to Sichuan, establishing communities in Puxiong Township (present-day Jinhe District) and Pingyi Fort (present-day Dabao Town). In 1512, the seventh year of the Zhengde reign, these communities were incorporated into Emei County, with Puxiong Township renamed Guihua Township. In 1808, during the 13th year of Emperor Jiaqing's reign in the Qing Dynasty, Ebian was separated from Emei County to establish the Ebian Administrative Office for

Managing the Yi People (Ebian Fuyi Ting), with its administrative center in Taiping Fort (present-day Dabao Town). In 1914, during the third year of the Republic of China, the administrative office was renamed Ebian County, which later became part of the Fifth Administrative Supervision District in 1935. On December 19, 1949, the People's Liberation Army's 10th and 16th Armies liberated parts of Ebian, including Shaping, Maoping, and Xinchang. On August 15, 1950, the Ebian County People's Government was formally established and relocated from Dabao to Shaping on August 18, under the jurisdiction of the Leshan Subregion of the Southern Sichuan Administrative Office. On December 13, 1955, administrative oversight was transferred to Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture but remained managed by Leshan Prefecture due to logistical challenges. On April 9, 1984, the State Council approved the dissolution of Ebian County and the establishment of Ebian Yi Autonomous County, under the jurisdiction of the Leshan Administrative Office. The county's formal inauguration ceremony was held on October 5, 1984 (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Annals, 1988–2003).

In Ebian, the Yi and Han ethnic groups have coexisted for generations, forging intricate connections across political, economic, and cultural domains. Strong bonds of friendship have been established between the Han and Yi communities, often formalized through sworn kinship or intermarriage. Mutual learning of each other's languages, exchange of production techniques, collaborative labor, and mutual assistance in overcoming life's challenges are hallmarks of their interaction. During festivals, members of both communities exchange greetings and well-wishes. In shared villages, whenever a family, whether Yi or Han, undertakes significant events such as house construction, weddings, or funerals, other community members pause their own work to assist, easing the burdens of the host family. This assistance is offered selflessly, without expectation of compensation (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Annals, 1988–2003).

### 2.3 Geographic Location and Natural Environment

Ebian Yi Autonomous County is located in the Xiaoliang Mountains in the southwestern part of Sichuan Province and is one of the two ethnic minority counties under the jurisdiction of Leshan City. The county derives its name from its location on the southern bank of the Dadu River, known in Yi as Jiazhi Yida, meaning Silk

River. Renowned for its rich history and picturesque landscapes, Ebian is often referred to as the Land of Bamboo Shoots. The total area of the county is 2,382 square kilometers. According to data from the 2023 Seventh National Census, the permanent population of Ebian Yi Autonomous County is 121,554, of which approximately 53,000, or 38.32%, are Yi people (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Government Website, 2023).

Geographically, Ebian Yi Autonomous County lies in the southwestern part of Leshan City, at the southern foothills of Mount Emei and the northern slopes of the Greater Liangshan Mountains. It is situated at the juncture of Leshan City and Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture. The county is bordered by Emeishan City to the north, Muchuan County to the east, Mabian Yi Autonomous County to the southeast, Meigu County of Liangshan Prefecture to the south, and Ganluo County of Liangshan Prefecture to the west. To the northwest, it shares a boundary with the Jinhe District. The geographical coordinates of Ebian are 102°54' to 103°38'E longitude and 28°39' to 29°19'N latitude. The county spans 56 kilometers from east to west and 73 kilometers from north to south, covering a total area of 2,382 square kilometers (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Annals, 1988–2003).



Figure 2. Map of Sichuan Province

Source: <https://chinafolio.com/provinces/sichuan-province/>

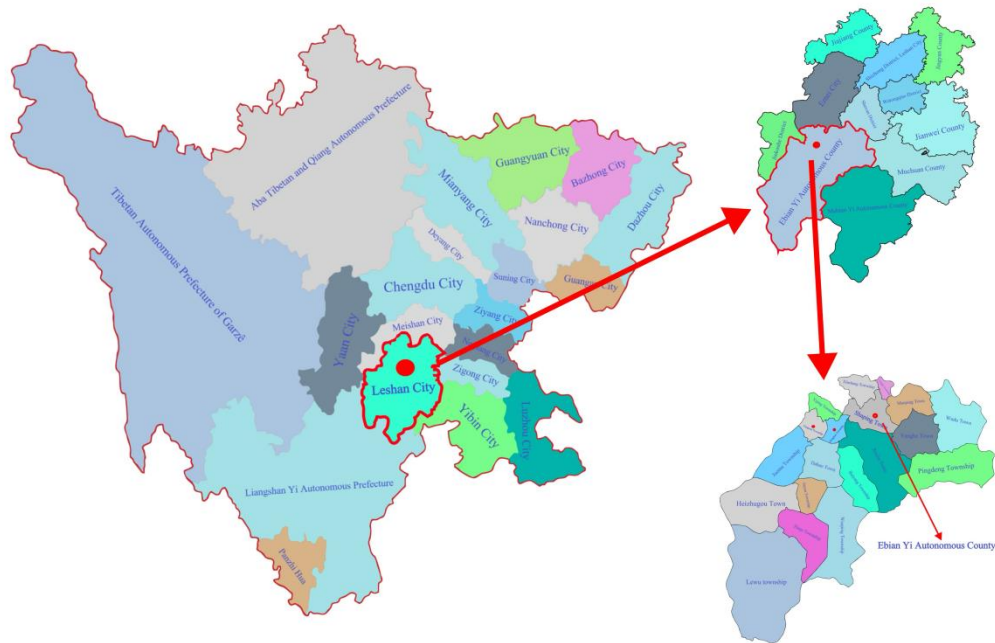


Figure 3. Map of Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan, China

Source: Lin Yang

Ebian Yi Autonomous County is characterized by a subtropical humid monsoon climate. Due to significant variations in topography, temperatures fluctuate with altitude, resulting in distinct vertical climatic differences. This phenomenon gives rise to the unique meteorological landscape of the Xiaoliang Mountains, often described as four seasons on one mountain, different weather every ten miles; snowcaps on the peaks, blooming flowers at the base. The region experiences mild temperatures, abundant rainfall, frequent cloud cover, high humidity, limited sunlight, and a long frost-free period. The agricultural climate is distinctly seasonal, marked by late springs, short summers, early autumns, and extended winters. The average annual temperature is  $16.6^{\circ}\text{C}$ , with an extreme high of  $35.7^{\circ}\text{C}$  and an extreme low of  $-3.2^{\circ}\text{C}$ . July is the warmest month, with an average temperature of  $25.3^{\circ}\text{C}$ , while January is the coldest, averaging  $6.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Annual temperature fluctuations are minimal, with a range of approximately  $1^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The county receives an average of 1,049.3 hours of

sunlight per year, equivalent to about 6 hours per day. Actual sunlight accounts for 24% of the total possible sunlight hours annually. The duration of sunlight varies significantly with changes in altitude (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Annals, 1988–2003).

#### 2.4 Cultural Characteristics

The Ebian Yi Autonomous County Annals and Ebian Yi Records, both published by the government, comprehensively and accurately reflect the local cultural background. These works are the primary references for researchers researching the culture of Ebian Yi Autonomous County, lending their studies greater authority and reliability. The creation epic of the Yi people, *Le' E Te Yi*, widely circulated among Yi communities, describes Ebian in the section *Zizhudi* as follows: *Jiazhi Yida* is a place rich in resources, where the Yi and Han people coexist harmoniously and where ethnic unity prevails. According to legend, the Yi hero *Zige Alu* was shaping the Earth when he received news of his mother's death upon reaching *Yiziya Pass*. Overcome with grief, he threw his mallet toward *Jiazhi Yida*, which subsequently formed a valley. *Jiazhi Yida* is celebrated as the training ground of the hero *Zige Alu*, the homeland of the renowned beauty *Ganmo Aniu*, and a place of natural beauty, ethnic harmony, and abundant resources. The Yi people residing here have preserved and promoted their rich cultural heritage through the simplest and most authentic form of oral transmission across generations. This has resulted in the formation of Ebian Yi culture, characterized by its distinctiveness, uniqueness, and vibrant diversity, making it an integral part of the region's traditional historical culture (Jiyou Agu, 2004).

According to the Ebian Yi Genealogy, the genealogical records of the Yi (彝) people in Ebian begin with *Weizhe* (vo nre), which translates to “Snow Clan” in the Yi language. This reference corresponds to the Twelve Sons of the Snow Clan (*Xuezu Shier Zi*) mentioned in the Yi classic *Le' E Te Yi*. The narrative describes twelve branches of the Snow Clan, six with blood and six without blood, with one branch becoming the progenitor of humanity. The Yi people currently residing in Ebian trace their ancestry to the ancient *Hou* and *Qunie* Yi tribes, who migrated northward from *Zizipu'u* (present-day *Zhaotong*, Yunnan). After settling in Ebian, they established a

society marked by cooperative development between Yi and Han (汉) communities (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Annals, 1988–2003).

The traditional culture of the Yi people in Ebian is both rich and diverse. It includes orally transmitted folklore such as Le' E Te Yi , Le' E A Bu , Le' E A Mo , and Ma Mu Te Yi , which are celebrated as luminous treasures of Yi folk literature. Other notable cultural elements include the Yi folk wisdom encapsulated in Ke Zhi and Er Bi, traditional folk songs such as Ganmo Anyu, A Mo Li Re, and A Re Niu , and the Jiazhi Yida Qiebiela dance performance, which was developed through years of collection, refinement, and standardization. Additionally, the Mu Heluo He remains a widely respected customary practice for resolving civil disputes, reflecting the cultural depth and contemporary relevance of Yi traditions. Together, these elements form a vivid tableau of Yi folklore and traditions in Ebian, enriching the cultural heritage of the region with profound historical depth and practical significance (Ebian Yi Records, 2019).

The traditional Yi (彝) calendar in Ebian employs a twelve-animal cycle, using the zodiac animals—rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig—to mark years, months, days, and hours. Each twelve-animal cycle constitutes a complete unit, leading to the saying, A year has twelve years, a month has twelve months, and a day has twelve days (Ebian Yi Records, 2019).

The Yi people of Ebian divide a year into four seasons, referred to as teji . Each season is associated with three consecutive zodiac months: muni teji, representing spring, consists of the rooster, dog, and pig months; mushen teji , representing summer, consists of the rat, ox, and tiger months; muchu teji, representing autumn, consists of the rabbit, dragon, and snake months; and muchu teji , representing winter, consists of the horse, goat, and monkey months (Ebian Yi Records, 2019).

Another calendar system utilized by the Yi people of Ebian is the Ten-Month Solar Calendar . This calendar organizes the twelve zodiac animals into three-animal cycles, with each cycle representing a month of 36 days. A year is composed of ten months, totaling 360 days. At the end of each year, an additional five days, known as Guonian Mu (Passing the Year Days), are added, commonly referred to as the Ten-

Month Year. The calendar thus comprises 365 days annually, with an additional leap day added every three years to account for a leap year, bringing the total to 366 days (Ebian Yi Records, 2019).

## 2.5 Social Customs

### 2.5.1 Traditional Clothing

The traditional clothing of the Yi (彝) people in Ebian incorporates and elevates elements from the styles of Meigu, Ganluo, and Mabian, collectively known as Yinuo and Shizha attire. It also integrates the essence of Yinuo, Shizha, Suodi, and Adu garments from both the Greater and Lesser Liangshan regions. By adding green to the traditional Yi palette of black, red, and yellow, the Yi people of Ebian have created the distinctive and vibrant Jiazhi Yida clothing style. This unique attire is characterized by its elegance, diversity, and aesthetic richness, serving as a key cultural symbol and reflecting the aesthetic sensibilities of the Yi people (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Annals, 1988–2003).

The traditional clothing for Yi men in Ebian is simple yet distinctive. Boys typically leave a square patch of hair about three inches wide on the top of their heads, known as Tian Pusa. Adult men grow their hair long and wrap it with three to four meters of black cloth. In the past, some men styled the front end of their headscarves into a cylindrical shape resembling a thumb, known as Zi Tie, which Han people referred to as the hero's knot. Yi men value a beardless appearance, often removing their facial hair during leisure time. The left ear is adorned with a string of yellow or red beads, accompanied by red silk threads, lending a strikingly bold appearance. Typically, Yi men wear a fitted black jacket with narrow sleeves and floral trim, fastened on the right side, paired with loose, long trousers. Both men and women historically favored a woolen cape known as Chaerwa, which came in black and white, with black being preferred. Resembling a cloak, it extended below the knees and featured tassels at the hem. During the day, it served as protection against the wind and cold, while at night, it was used as bedding (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Annals, 1988–2003).

The traditional clothing of Yi (彝) women in Ebian is both elegant and practical, serving as a medium for conveying various messages. Young unmarried

girls typically wear their hair in a single braid and cover their heads with a cuoji-shaped headscarf made from a square piece of black cloth. This scarf is inverted and secured with a red ribbon. At the age of 17, during the coming-of-age skirt-changing ceremony or upon marriage, girls switch to wearing two braids. Their headscarves are replaced with a double-layered square black scarf with embroidered edges. The transition to adulthood is also marked by replacing the two-piece childhood skirt with a three-section adult skirt featuring vibrant colors. After giving birth, women wear a layered lotus-shaped octagonal black hat, known as Oluo in Yi. They typically adorn their ears with silver earrings or ear pendants, while their collars are decorated with a silver floral ornament. The upper garment consists of three main styles: a front-closing jacket with wide sleeves, a right-front overlapping jacket with narrow sleeves, and a front-closing vest. These garments are generally wide and short, extending only to the waist. The lower garment is a long pleated skirt with multiple layers of colored fabric sewn at the hem. The skirts are floor-length, creating an elegant, flowing effect, and sway gracefully as the wearer walks (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Annals, 1988–2003).

### 2.5.2 Diet

The Yi (彝) people primarily engage in agriculture and animal husbandry, with a preference for growing a variety of grains, including maize, wheat, buckwheat, and barley as staple foods. The buckwheat cake and corn cake produced by the Ebian Yi are particularly delicious, rich in ethnic characteristics, and are often served as a main dish when hosting distinguished guests or respected elders. In Yi (彝) language, these dishes are called, which refers to a high-quality combination of buckwheat cakes and mutton soup, a delicacy that is truly mouthwatering. Among the most distinctive foods of Ebian are the tuo tuo meat, mutton soup pot), sauerkraut soup, and fermented rice wine (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988-2003).

### 2.5.3 Housing

Before the Liberation, the Yi people had various types of dwellings. One type was the fully wooden chuangsun house, with a tiled roof, tall, spacious, and well-crafted. Another was the earth-wood structure house, with a roof made of tiles or grass. There were also bamboo-wood structures and other types. After the Liberation,

with the improvement of living conditions, bamboo fences were gradually replaced with earth-walled houses with tile roofs. Since the Reform and Opening-up, the majority of the Yi people have constructed brick and tile houses, and some have even built multi-story buildings. Inside these homes, there are separate rooms for the bedroom, living room, kitchen, and bathroom. Piggeries and cattle sheds are built separately. Cooking is done with stoves, dining is at tables, sleeping is on beds, potable water is used, lighting is provided by electricity, and mechanical mills are employed. The furniture found in urban households, including mid-range to high-end items, has also made its way into Yi households. In a survey conducted in Group 5 of Xihe Village, Heizhugou Town, there are 35 households in total, of which 34 have brick-and-tile houses, and 1 has a three-story building. Thirty-two households are using color televisions. In recent years, the Party and government have shown great concern for the Yi people in the mountainous areas, implementing housing construction projects for ethnic minority households in poverty. Along with the construction of new homes, the renovation of toilets, stoves, animal enclosures, and pathways between households has been carried out. This has significantly improved the living conditions of the Yi people. From the main roads to every village, people are busy constructing new brick-and-tile houses. The living conditions of the Yi people have undergone a dramatic transformation, and the era of thatched houses and tile-board houses has become a thing of the past (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988–2003).

#### 2.5.4 Festivals and Ceremonies

The Yi people of Ebian celebrate a variety of colorful festivals each year, such as the Yi New Year, which is officially held on October 20th annually; the Yi Children's Day, typically celebrated on the Tiger day of the zodiac cycle, specifically during the Yang Jiao Zhu Ku phase, deemed the most auspicious; the Yi Wool Shearing Festival, held three times a year in spring, summer, and autumn, with specific auspicious dates chosen based on the shearing schedule, which varies each year; the Yi Spring Festival, which is celebrated the night before the Chinese Lunar New Year; and the Yi Du Yan, which corresponds to the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival, a festival also observed by the Yi people (Ebian Yi Chronicle, 2019).

The Yi people of Ebian experience numerous life ceremonies, including birth rituals. Every newborn undergoes a series of ceremonies such as birth rites, outings rites, blessing rites, and visiting rites, all of which serve as celebrations and well-wishes. The coming-of-age ceremony for Yi girls, known as Nuopo Xianpen in Yi, involves the ear-cutting ritual, marking a critical stage in a girl's development. This rite is a symbolic demarcation between childhood and adulthood in Yi society and usually takes place between the ages of 15 and 17, following a girl's first menstruation. The precise timing is determined by the elders, who select an auspicious day. Marriage ceremonies in the Yi community typically consist of three main stages: pre-marriage rites, wedding rites, and post-marriage rites. Each of these stages contains multiple sub-rituals. In terms of funerary rites, the Yi people of Ebian generally practice cremation. The funeral process involves preparing the body, holding funeral proceedings, and the burial or cremation itself, each stage further divided into several specific sub-rituals. Additionally, there are various etiquette rules and taboos observed in Yi culture for different social occasions and interactions (Ebian Yi Chronicle, 2019).

## 2.6 Language and Script

The Yi people are one of the ethnic groups in China with a long history and rich cultural heritage, primarily residing in the southwestern region of the country. Historically, they were referred to as the Yi by various dynasties, but after the Liberation, Mao Zedong officially changed this designation from Yi to Yi, thereby establishing the current term Yi. The Yi people have various self-designations such as Nuosu, Nasu, Luowu, Misa Po, Sani, and Axi, and are mainly distributed across the provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou, and the northwest of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The Yi language belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family, specifically the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Yi language subgroup. Based on the geographical distribution and linguistic features of the Yi people, the language is categorized into six major dialects: Northern Dialect, Eastern Dialect, Southern Dialect, Western Dialect, Southeastern Dialect, and Central Dialect. Ebian Yi language belongs to the Northern Dialect, specifically the Yinuo subdialect (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988–2003).

The Yi script is one of the six most ancient scripts in the world that has remained relatively intact. It is a syllabic alphabet, with the script being phonetic in nature. The Yi script is divided into the ancient Yi script and the modern Yi script. The ancient Yi script contains tens of thousands of characters, while the standardized Liangshan Yi script contains only 819 characters. However, it is mainly used for communication by people in the northern Yi-speaking areas, so it has not been widely implemented in other Yi-speaking regions such as those in Yunnan, Guizhou, and Guangxi (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988–2003).

The Yi people of Ebian, like those in the northern dialect region, self-designate as Nuosu. The northern dialect region is mainly distributed in Sichuan Province, with additional populations in Yunnan Province near the Sichuan border, especially in areas within the Xiao Liangshan region. The northern dialect is further divided into two sub-dialects: the Northern Sub-dialect and the Southern Sub-dialect. The Northern Sub-dialect includes three local variants: Shengzha, Yinuo, and Tianba; the Southern Sub-dialect includes two local variants: Huili and Butuo. The Yinuo variant is mainly spoken in areas such as Ebian, Mabian, Jinkouhe, Leibo, and other counties within the Xiao Liangshan, as well as in the Meigu County of Greater Liangshan and Ninglang County in Yunnan. In terms of clothing, the Yinuo variant is also known as the Big Pant Leg variant. The standard Yi language, based on Shengzha, has 43 consonants, while the Yinuo variant of Ebian and other areas has 44 consonants. The basic word order in Ebian Yi is similar to that of the Yi language in Greater Liangshan, following a Subject + Object + Verb structure (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988–2003).

### 2.7 Social Structure

Prior to entering slave society, the Yi people's social structure was divided into five main ranks: Zi, Mo, Bi, Ge, and Zhuo. Zi referred to the ruler; Mo represented advisors or counselors; Bi referred to the Bimo, who specialized in healing and religious activities; Ge represented those engaged in various professional technical roles; and Zhuo referred to the common people. Social distinctions were not based on rank, but rather on one's occupation, which meant that people were essentially equal and lived harmoniously (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

In the mid-2nd century BCE, during the Western Han Dynasty, the former Zi and Mo ranks merged to form the highest ruling class, known as Zi Mo. From the original Zi, Mo, Bi ranks, the Nuo Huo class, also known as the Black Yi, emerged, while the Ge, Zhuo ranks led to the formation of the Ji Huo class, or the White Yi. This differentiation between the Black Yi and White Yi marked a significant shift in Yi society, signifying the transition to a slave society (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

In the early stages of entering slave society, the Yi social hierarchy underwent an evolution, shifting from a division based on professional roles to one based on bloodline ties. The original five ranks of Zi, Mo, Bi, Ge, and Zhuo began to split, with Zi and Mo merging into the high-ranking Zi Mo class, while the Bi rank retained a relatively high status, some of which were directly held by the noble class. Hence, it is said in Yi folklore, Zi comes, Bi does not rise; Bi rises, Zi cannot endure. The Ge and Zhuo classes became associated with the Qu Nuo rank, emphasizing the purity of bloodlines. Social stratification became heavily based on lineage, dividing the Yi into five distinct hierarchical classes: Zi Mo, Nuo Huo (Black Yi), Qu Huo (White Yi), Wa Jia (Anjia slaves), and Ga Xi (slaves). The boundaries between these ranks were clearly defined and rigidly enforced. Zi Mo did not intermarry with their subordinates; if they did, their offspring would be reduced to the commoner class and could not transmit the Zi Mo bloodline. If Black Yi married White Yi, their children would be classified as White Yi (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

Since the clan and tribal period, the Yi (彝) people have had a clan-based system influenced by kinship ties. With the emergence of new social divisions of labor, members of society were naturally categorized into different social ranks based on their occupations and blood relations. Their rank and status were determined by the importance of their roles and their level of contribution to society. This resulted in the formation of a clan-based slavery system, as reflected in the popular Yi saying: Relying on the clan and tribe, three generations live in peace (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

In December 1949, the People's Liberation Army's 10th and 16th Armies liberated parts of Ebian, including Shaping, Maoping, and Xinchang. In August 1950,

the Ebian County People's Government was officially established, with the county government moving from Dabu to Shaping. However, due to specific circumstances, the Yi areas in the remote mountainous regions were not fully integrated into the administrative structure until the democratic reform work was carried out between April and June 1956. During this period, the privileges of the slave-owning class were abolished, and slaves were liberated. This marked a fundamental change in the social structure of the Yi areas in Ebian. Under the leadership of the Communist Party and the government, Yi society in Ebian made a significant transition from a slave society to a socialist society, entering a new era of social development (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

### 2.8 Beliefs

Nature, on one hand, provides humanity with infinite blessings, offering rich conditions for clothing, food, shelter, and transportation, for which humans are profoundly grateful. On the other hand, nature also poses significant threats to human existence, from natural disasters and man-made calamities to the cycles of life and death and numerous epidemics. Faced with these challenges, humanity was compelled to think critically and, based on its practices and understanding, provide what seemed to be the correct answers under the given circumstances. Over the course of a long history, the ancestors of the Yi people in Ebian gradually developed a unique cosmological worldview, which resulted in distinct beliefs and practices, including nature worship, totemism, ancestor worship, and the veneration of souls. These beliefs were directly reflected in the Yi people's early religious practices, such as the propagation and activities of the Bimo and Suni rituals. These beliefs became deeply embedded in the collective consciousness of the Yi people, forming a set of behavioral norms and intellectual foundations passed down through generations. They directly shaped and influenced the psychological tendencies and behavioral standards of Yi society (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

The term Bimo is a Yi-language transliteration, where Bi means to chant scriptures, and Mo refers to a knowledgeable elder. The Bimo is a religious practitioner who specializes in rituals such as blessings, prayers, and sacrifices. The Bimo is highly respected for their vast knowledge and spiritual power. Their primary roles include conducting religious ceremonies, serving as priests, practicing medicine,

and offering divination. Culturally, the Bimo is responsible for organizing, standardizing, and transmitting Yi writing and literature, including texts on religion, philosophy, history, astronomy, medicine, agriculture, craftsmanship, rituals, and writing. The Bimo plays a central role in the Yi people's lives, including during childbirth, marriage, death, illness, festivals, hunting, and sowing. The Bimo holds both spiritual and administrative authority, acting as an intermediary between the human and divine realms. In the eyes of the Yi people, the Bimo is a scholar of society, a guardian and transmitter of Yi culture (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

As priests of the Yi (彝) people, Bimo are responsible not only for leading sacrificial rituals, composing sacred texts, and treating illnesses, but they also served as household teachers for slave owners (before the 1956 democratic reforms). Bimo were the most respected individuals within the five social classes of the Yi slave society. The Yi people are a multi-faceted group with various forms of worship, which can be broadly categorized into three main types: ancestor worship, nature worship, and household deity worship. Over the course of their long history, the Yi people developed a worldview based on three main beliefs: the three realms (the heavenly realm, the earthly realm, and the underworld), the belief that all things have spirits, and the belief in the vitality of all living things. These deep-rooted understandings and concepts form the core of Yi culture—known as Bimo culture—which has profound cultural significance for the Yi people. In Ebian Yi Autonomous County, the Bimo ritual and its associated myths and legends are still widely passed down through Yi communities (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

According to Yi literature *Le E Te Yi*, it is recorded that the celestial gods dropped spiritual fruit seeds into the lower world. After three years and nine generations, these seeds grew into a giant fir tree, but the tree remained neither fully human nor fully tree-like, unable to become the human ancestor. Only during the reign of Aju Acong, when the mountain gods learned of the situation, did they call upon the Bimo to purify the tree from the three colors of impurity—white, flowered, and black—before it could become the human ancestor. The gods then sent hedgehogs, white rabbits, wild chickens, and spiders as messengers to the upper world

to request the assistance of the Ebisu bird Bimo. After several requests, the Ebisu Bimo agreed to descend to the lower world and perform the sacred rituals. The Ebisu Bimo, in the bamboo forest behind the house, crafted three sacred bamboo rods, turning them into divine signs, law hats, and law fans, which he gave to the three ancestral elders of E'Azi. Accompanying these items was a sacred text called Si mu An Gan, which the elders took to the earthly realm. After performing the rituals to purify the giant fir tree from the three colors of impurity, the ancestors then celebrated with a sacrificial offering of a pig's shoulder. This event marked the creation of the twelve clans of the Xuepeople, one of which eventually became the human ancestor (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

The tools and instruments used by the Bimo in their ritual practices are essential to their connection with the spiritual realm, enabling them to communicate with deities, exorcise evil spirits, avert disasters, and invoke blessings. In the Ebian region, the primary ritual instruments used by Bimo include the ritual fan, ritual hat, ritual bell, divination tube, and sacred texts. Additionally, they carry a ritual net, and use protective tools such as eagle claws, pig tooth collars, and tiger teeth. Temporary ritual instruments may include bamboo tubes that produce sound and water drums. The creation of these ritual instruments typically occurs on the Leopard Star's 14th day of the Le Ke cycle (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

**Jing Shu (Sacred Texts) :** Sacred texts serve as the critical foundation for the Bimo's rituals. The process of chanting scriptures or the content within these texts dictates or directs the unfolding of the ritual activities. These texts are used to guide the various stages of the ritual. The sacred texts are numerous and are generally categorized into three primary types: Li Shu (calendar systems), Zhou Shu (incantations), and Li Suan Zhan Bu (divination and astrology). These categories are further divided into subcategories. According to statistics, there are over 320 distinct types of Bimo sacred texts that have been passed down among the Yi people in the Greater Liangshan and Lesser Liangshan regions, with hundreds of thousands of volumes in total (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).



Figure 4. Bimo Sacred Texts

Source: Lin Yang (2023)

Shen Zhi (Sacred Branches) : In Yi culture, this practice is referred to as Gu or Niu Gu. The choice of tree branches used in these rituals varies based on the type of ritual being performed. Different branches, such as those from willow trees, cherry trees, peach trees, horse-rubbing trees, and fir trees, are selected. These branches are categorized by how they are prepared: some are peeled, some are partially peeled, and others remain unpeeled. They may also differ in terms of whether they have forks, whether they have leaves, and the variety of branches used, with the quantity of branches depending on the ritual. In some cases, as few as ten branches are used, while in others, the number can range into the hundreds or even thousands (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

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Figure 5. Shen Zhi

Source: Lin Yang (2023)

Fa Shan (Ritual Fan) : In the Yi language, the ritual fan is referred to as Qie Ke. It is believed to have been used since the time of the Weileqiong tribe. The fan is typically used in rituals such as soul transference, pig's shoulder sacrifices, and the creation of spirit plaques. It is used to hold offerings, such as wood shavings representing gold and silver, flowers, and rice, to feed ancestors or spirits. The fan is also used to fan the spirits or to sprinkle offerings, symbolizing the grains left by the ancestors to bless their descendants. There are two main types of ritual fans: bamboo fans and copper fans. The bamboo fan is woven from bamboo strips into a fan shape, with a wooden handle inserted at the center. During the weaving process, a circular disk is first created, and a grid pattern is woven into it, with the number of eyes in the pattern being either nine or seven. The handle is crafted from cherry wood in the shape of a snake body and fish tail (symbolizing a dragon), and it is inserted into the disk. The handle is decorated with two wooden birds (representing the legendary divine bird, Apu Yi Qu Bird). The back of the handle is carved with protective symbols, including an eagle, tiger, and evil-exorcising jackal (for example, on the Bimo ritual fans of the Shamaqubi clan, the handle is carved with an eagle, tiger, and frog, with the frog symbolizing wisdom or the medicine god). The handle's grip represents the four directions (East, South, West, North) and the four supporting pillars of the sky. The fan is typically made by a craftsman or the Bimo themselves on an auspicious day. Different ritual fans are used for different types of ceremonies. The nine-eyed fan is used for exorcising the souls of violent or untimely deaths, while the

seven-eyed fan is used for blessing the souls of those who passed peacefully. Copper fans are employed in rituals related to the death of individuals from leprosy or for activities associated with leprosy (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).

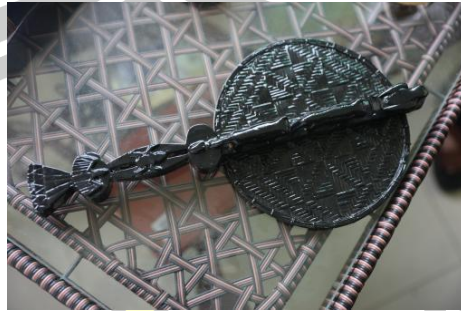


Figure 6. Fa Shan

Source: Lin Yang (2023)

Fa Ling (Ritual Bell) : In the Yi (彝) language, this instrument is called Bi Xiang. It is a tool used by the Bimo in rituals, producing sound through shaking to communicate with deities, exorcise evil spirits, and suppress monsters. The Bimo ritual bell typically made of copper is bell-shaped, with a hole at the top through which a leather cord is threaded. According to the Bimo sacred texts, it is written: When the drum is struck in the world of humans, it sounds like thunder in the realm of spirits; when the bell is rung in the world of humans, it rings clearly in the realm of spirits. This demonstrates that the ritual bell is used by the Bimo to transmit messages between gods, spirits, and humans, thereby enhancing the Bimo's spiritual powers during rituals such as exorcisms. The ritual bell is crafted by artisans, with common versions made from a mixture of copper and tin. There are different types of ritual bells, including Yi bells and Huang bells (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).



Figure 7. Ceremonial Fa ling

Source: Lin Yang (2022)

Fa Li: Known in Yi language as Le Wei, Fa Li serves as the Bimo's protective shield and a talisman against evil. Typically crafted from bamboo strips, it takes the shape of a large conical hat. In some instances, it is covered with a black felt cloth or encased in a pure white woolen cover, referred to as Bi Er La Lue in Yi language, meaning Tiger-Eye Divine Charm. For every Sending Spirits (Song Ling) ceremony performed, an additional layer of woolen felt is added to the Fa Li. The greater the number of layers, the higher the perceived spiritual prowess of the Bimo, as well as the number of individuals who have sought their services. Consequently, it is referred to in Yi language as Shen Qian Bi Huang Huang, meaning The Resplendent Divine Charm. According to legend, ancient Fa Li were red and octagonal in shape. (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Gazetteer, 2019)



Figure 8. Fa li

Source: Lin Yang (2023)

Qian Tong (Divination Tube) : In the Yi language, this ritual tool is called Niao Tu. It is one of the commonly used instruments by the Bimo. It is believed to have the power to subdue demons and evil spirits. The Qian Tong is made of wood, hollow inside, and comes in varying lengths, selected according to the Bimo's physical build and made on an auspicious day. The divination tube is categorized into male, female, and child types. The tip of the tube is cone-shaped and open, which represents the masculine or yang aspect, while the opening in the shape of a half-ellipsoid represents the feminine or yin aspect. The size of the opening corresponds to the Bimo's mouth size; if the opening is too large, it is said to overpower the Bimo and be detrimental to their practice, while if the opening is too small, it indicates insufficient magical power. The divination tube consists of two sections. The front section is called Bai Gong and is made from cypress wood harvested from deep within sacred mountains. The rear section is called Ying Mu and is made from cherry wood, harvested from areas untouched by hunting dogs in the mountains. The length of the divination tube corresponds to the length of the Bimo's forearm (including the fingers); if it is too long, it becomes difficult to grasp and may result in mistakes or cause harm to the practitioner, while if it is too short, it indicates insufficient power. Inside the tube are sacred divination sticks used by the Bimo for fortune-telling, referred to as Luo Niao in burial rituals. There are two types of divination sticks: one with eighteen prongs and the other with eleven prongs. The divination sticks are made from bamboo and come in two forms: the yin forked shape and the yang sharp-edged shape, used for divination. Both ends of the divination tube are secured with leather cords or copper chains, creating a strap that the Bimo wears diagonally across their back during ceremonies or while traveling (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 2019).



Figure 9. Qian Tong

Source: Lin Yang (2023)

Other Bimo Ritual Tools : In addition to the primary ritual tools, the Bimo also carry a range of personal ritual instruments, including the ritual net, protective items, eagle claws, tiger teeth, wild boar tooth necklaces, and other tools that may be temporarily created during rituals, such as bamboo tubes that make sounds and water drums. The ritual net, called Hai Ke in the Yi language, is used by the Bimo to carry sacred texts, ritual tools, and other items. Typically, the Bimo weaves it themselves using two hemp ropes, one twisted clockwise and the other counterclockwise. Eagle claws, referred to as Jiu Xi, are protective items for the Bimo and symbolize their spiritual power. Made from the claws of an eagle, they are usually tied to the ritual bell. The wild boar tooth necklace, called Wei Zhi, is a protective charm worn by the Bimo, believed to have the power to exorcise evil and ward off spirits. It is made from a pair of wild boar teeth strung together to form a necklace, typically worn around the Bimo's neck during rituals. Tiger teeth, known in burial rituals as La Zhi, are another form of protective item used by the Bimo, symbolizing the ability to drive away evil spirits and suppress harmful forces. The teeth are drilled and attached to the ritual bell. The bamboo tube, or Ma Ruo, is a ritual tool used in ceremonies aimed at healing. It is made by splitting bamboo at one end into three, five, seven, or nine segments, which create a sound when shaken. It is used in healing rituals, or when a

newborn child frequently cries at night, the Bimo chants spells and uses the bamboo tube to exorcise evil spirits. The water drum, referred to as Ye Ze, consists of a wooden bowl filled with water, inverted over a smaller bowl, and used with a bamboo stick or tree branch. Items such as onions or radishes are inserted as drumsticks. The drum is used in rituals to redeem souls and exorcise spirits. According to tradition, the Bimo's ritual tools also included gold and silver flutes, gold and silver mouth harps, and gold and silver water drums, although these are now rarely seen (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988–2003).

## 2.9 Wedding Customs

### 2.9.1 Historical Origins

Marriage customs have emerged alongside the development of human society, forming an integral part of the social ritual system. As long as human history has existed, so too has the history of marriage. Marriage customs vary widely, shaped by the distinct characteristics of each ethnic group. Over thousands of years, the Yi (彝) people have developed a unique set of marriage customs, distinct from those of other ethnic groups. Records of Yi marriage ceremonies are scarce in both Chinese historical texts and Yi-language historical documents. The Yi classical texts *Le E Te Yi*, *Gong Shi Chuan*, and *Mu Shi Chuan* recount that, in ancient times, the Yi ancestors lived in a matrilineal society where they only knew their mothers but did not know their fathers. The story of *Shi Er E Te* tells of his arduous journey to find his father. After receiving guidance from the mysterious signs of *Zini Shise*, he married and had children, fulfilling his desire to have children and meet his father. This marked the transition of Yi society from a matrilineal system to a patrilineal system, where men married women. Anthropological and marital history data suggest that, like other ancient ethnic groups, the Yi people transitioned from a primitive and chaotic form of group marriage, to pair marriages, polygyny, and eventually, over a long period, to a monogamous family structure. In the Yi's current marriage customs, many ancient traditions, such as group marriage and bride kidnapping, have been clearly preserved (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Cultural Museum, 2022).

### 2.9.2 Marriage System

The purpose of marriage is generally the same across all ethnic groups, though the specific forms vary greatly, reflecting the unique customs of each culture. Before the democratic reforms, the Yi people of Ebian had a strict marriage system that included in-group marriages, external clan marriages, priority marriages between maternal uncles and nieces, prohibition of marriages between maternal aunts and nephews, and the traditional Yi in-group marriage system. Additionally, arranged marriages were common, and intermarriage with outsiders was forbidden. The marriage age for men was not restricted, but for women, the age for marriage was typically 17, 19, or 21 years, according to their lunar age. Generally, women married at 17. The Yi people practiced monogamy, with a strong belief in having many children to ensure prosperity. However, in some cases, polygyny was practiced, usually when a man with no children or only daughters married a second wife. Some men also took additional wives through various social customs, such as after a change of household. After the democratic reforms, however, the Yi marriage system faced significant challenges. Arranged marriages and transactional unions, lacking romantic affection, often led to conflicts and divorce, with tragic incidents such as women fleeing or committing suicide. Over time, Yi marriage customs have undergone major transformations. Love marriages have become the norm, with freedom to choose one's partner being a mainstream practice. Divorce is now legally protected, and the boundary between marrying outside of one's ethnicity has gradually eroded. Marriages between Yi and Han people are no longer rare, though the traditional customs still dominate the core of Yi marriage practices. To fully understand Yi marriage customs, it is essential to first grasp the Yi marriage system and traditions (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988–2003).

Monogamy is the most common form of marriage among the Yi people of Ebian and is seen as a social contract. In the past, except for the children of slaves, most Yi people were married in childhood. Their parents arranged the marriages, often with the help of matchmakers, and the marriage was decided through divination. After a designated period, the wedding would be held. Following the marriage, children, except for the youngest, would move out and form their own monogamous families. If the husband was still too young after marriage, the bride would return to

her family until the husband reached adulthood and could establish a household. Among the Black Yi and wealthier families, polygyny was sometimes practiced. Each wife usually lived in a separate location, with the first wife holding a higher position within the household, though she did not have the authority to control or manage the other wives. If the husband married a second wife, he was required to obtain the first wife's consent beforehand and to offer a feast for her family as an act of appeasement. Failure to do so could result in harsh criticism or even physical altercations between the families (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988–2003).

Before the liberation, the Yi (彝) people of Ebian strictly prohibited marriage with people from other ethnic groups, particularly within the aristocratic classes. Even for slaves, marriage was regulated according to bloodlines, with distinctions made between those with Yi roots and those with non-Yi roots. People with different bloodlines were generally not permitted to marry (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988–2003).

Before liberation, the Yi people of Ebian lived in a slave society with a rigid system of class-based marriages. Marriage across different social strata was strictly forbidden. In particular, the ruling classes, such as the Tusi and Black Yi, prohibited marriage, romantic relationships, or sexual relations with slaves or commoners, who were considered the lower classes (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988–2003).

This was a common practice in Ebian Yi society, where marriages were arranged with people from outside the family, based on the system of intra-clan marriage. The basis for this practice lay in the awareness of bloodline and ancestral clan concepts, as well as ethical and moral values (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988–2003).

The prohibition of marriage between maternal aunts and nephews is an transmission from the Yi people's matrilineal clan system. In Ebian, this was strictly enforced. Marriages or romantic relationships between maternal aunt's children and their maternal nephews or nieces were considered incestuous and were punishable by death according to customary law. However, marriages between maternal uncle's

children and their nieces or nephews were prioritized. If a daughter from the maternal uncle's family married outside the family, the family was required to inform the maternal uncle and pay him a certain amount of money as part of the arrangement (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle, 1988–2003).

The practice of Zhuan Fang is a marriage custom where, after the death of a husband, his widow is remarried to a brother or male relative within the same lineage, typically within three generations of the deceased. According to tradition, priority is given to the deceased's brother, and if the brother or other male relatives are unavailable or unable to take the widow due to marital commitments or other reasons, the widow may be remarried to another male relative within the same lineage, such as a cousin. If no suitable candidates are available among the peers, the widow may then be remarried to a younger or older relative. It is important to note that marriage alliances between paternal aunts and uncles (i.e., marrying an uncle by a niece) are prohibited. The choice of the new husband is generally made by the deceased's father, brothers, or the head of the lineage, with no consultation of the widow herself. The process typically occurs within the same day or a few days following the cremation of the deceased's body. In cases where the remarried man already has a wife, the widow remains with her original family, and both families maintain separate households, with the remarried man visiting the widow's home (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicles, 1988-2003).

Divorce: The Yi (彝) people have a proverb stating, A bad horse can be returned, a bad cow can be returned, but a bad wife cannot be returned, indicating the gravity with which divorce is regarded. Divorce is considered a significant matter, as it may lead to conflicts or even violent disputes between families. In general, Yi marriages, which typically involve the alliance of two lineages, are regarded as strong, and both parties approach the issue of divorce with caution, rarely divorcing hastily. In terms of property division, if the divorce is initiated by the husband, he is required to compensate the bride price, and upon separation, the husband must provide the wife with financial support, including payment for gold, silver, and horses, and return her to her family. If the wife is dissatisfied with her husband's family, she may refuse to return home on her first visit, using this as an excuse to find

a mediator from her family or through a relative to clarify the situation. Even in cases where the wife leaves, the husband is expected to return multiples of the bride price and other marriage-related expenses. Once both parties agree to divorce, the woman returns to her family, and the marriage relationship is officially dissolved. The entire process is notably simple and straightforward (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicles, 1988-2003).

### 2.9.3 Marriage Formation

In 2009, the Yi marriage customs were included in the second batch of the Sichuan Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage List. These customs profoundly reflect the Yi people's views on survival, reproduction, and their cultural history. The formation of Yi marriages is not only an individual act within the family but also a collective activity involving the family, in-laws, and neighbors. A key feature of these customs is that the groom relies on the support of his kin to marry the bride, and the bride similarly depends on her kin for her marriage. According to tradition, the age at which a Yi woman marries is typically an odd number, with 17 being the most common age. There is no specific age limit for men. The wedding ceremony usually takes place between late autumn and early spring, with winter being the preferred season, and is typically held in odd-numbered months. Yi wedding ceremonies are complex and varied, usually lasting about a week and encompassing various stages, including matchmaking, engagement, the bride's departure, wedding, the return of the bride, and the completion of the marriage. The customs involved are rich and unique, featuring elements such as marriage selection, wedding teasing, water splashing, bride carrying, and the crying marriage song. These customs are widely influential and hold unique value. Yi marriage customs are not only family matters but also processes of cultural transmission and preservation. As a microcosm of Yi culture, the wedding ceremony includes oral recitations such as Kes, Kezhi, and Zuo, as well as the crying marriage song, which expresses the sorrow of separation. Additionally, the customs such as water splashing, wrestling, welcoming the bride, and the ceremony of entering the house and cutting the line all carry rich historical and cultural connotations, reflecting unique folk interests and holding multiple cultural values (Ebian Yi Autonomous County Government, 2017).

In Yi culture, marriages are often arranged through the traditional process of parental orders and matchmaker's words. When a man reaches a certain age, he hires a matchmaker, known as Fu Ga in Yi, who acts as an intermediary for the marriage. For a marriage to take place, two matchmakers are required. Moreover, matchmakers are not fixed individuals but are generally chosen from among upright, socially skilled, and knowledgeable middle-aged or older men familiar with the marriage customs. The image of matchmakers is not seen negatively by society, though brides who have been arranged in such marriages may feel resentment towards the matchmaker. This sentiment is expressed in the Yi lyrical epic *Amo Ni Re*, which describes the bride's feelings. The matchmaker takes on the role voluntarily, working at the request of one of the families. Following successful mediation, the matchmaker receives a fee, known as *Fu Ga Zhe*, which translates to matchmaker's fee. When two families form an alliance through marriage, an astrologer is consulted to determine whether the zodiac signs of the bride and groom are compatible, as well as whether the signs of the bride's and groom's mothers align. If the astrological analysis reveals that the signs are incompatible, the marriage arrangement is abandoned (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

Following the matchmaking process, the matchmaker negotiates the bride price between the two families. Once an agreement is reached, the groom's family selects an auspicious date and proceeds to the bride's family with gifts, including white wine, candies, and a flock of sheep, to formally establish the engagement. This ceremony signifies the official pre-marital relationship, awaiting the chosen date for the wedding. The engagement ceremony is a lively occasion, typically held at the bride's home, where the groom's family sends a group of individuals—usually an odd number, such as 5, 7, or 9 people—to participate. During the ceremony, the groom's family also presents a small amount of money as part of the betrothal gift, referred to in Yi as *Fu Tu Zhe*. The bride's family then slaughters pigs and sheep, preparing wine and meat to entertain the guests. Villagers and neighbors often come to help, celebrating the event. It is customary for the host and guests to engage in a song contest, competing in knowledge and skill. The young women of the bride's family, in a playful tradition, splash water on the guests, often catching them off guard and drenching them. A significant aspect of the engagement ritual is the examination of

the pig's gallbladder and spleen. A boar is slaughtered, and the gallbladder and spleen are examined for auspicious signs. If the organs appear unfit, the ritual requires the slaughter of another pig, repeating the examination. If the organs continue to show unfavorable signs, the marriage agreement may be annulled. However, in most cases, the results are favorable. Following the engagement, Yi custom dictates that the agreement should not be easily broken. If the groom breaks the agreement after paying the bride price, the payment is non-refundable. If the bride breaks the agreement after receiving the bride price, she must compensate the groom with double the amount (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

Yi women typically marry at an odd age, with 17 being considered the ideal age for marriage. Weddings are generally held between late autumn and early spring, with winter being the most common season, and must occur in odd-numbered months. Once the groom has paid the bride price, he is free to determine the wedding date, which is proposed by the groom's family and agreed upon with the bride's family. The wedding must take place on an auspicious day. The bride's family is responsible for preparing the dowry, particularly the clothing that the bride will wear on her wedding day. They also notify her friends and relatives to join the procession. A special escort, usually a male cousin or uncle, is chosen to accompany the bride; this person is referred to as Xi Nai in Yi, meaning escort. Additionally, the bride's family prepares wine and pigs for the celebration. The tailoring of the bride's wedding garments is performed on an auspicious day, referred to as Ye Que in Yi, meaning cutting the wedding clothes. The groom's family, in turn, must ensure the provision of a generous feast and all necessary items. They also invite renowned singers and wrestlers to participate in the celebration. About 15 days before the wedding, the bride's family informs the neighbors of the wedding date. Young women from the village may offer grain to brew ceremonial wine for the bride's family. The village youths gather each evening at the home of the bride's family to drink the wedding wine, sing wedding songs, engage in Ke Zhi competitions, and dance wedding dances, often staying up all night (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

The Yi people of Ebian County still maintain the traditional custom of fasting and abstaining from water before the bride's marriage. This ritual, known as Za Guo, where Za refers to food and Guo means abstinence, signifies a period of self-

discipline and respect for the marriage process. Historically, the longer the fasting period, the greater the bride's perceived adherence to social norms and her determination. Today, this custom has evolved into a symbolic ritual, rather than a strict practice (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

Yi weddings generally take place in the autumn or winter. The bride's parents hold a formal ceremony for their daughter's departure, while the groom's family sends representatives to announce their arrival and formally initiate the wedding procession. Depending on the distance, the groom's family will send a group of young men from their lineage, referred to as Xianmu, who are responsible for escorting the bride. The procession typically consists of an odd number of individuals—such as 5, 7, 9, or 11—who carry gifts like wine, meat, buckwheat noodles, eggs, and candy to present to the bride's family. As the bride's family and neighbors gather to celebrate, the most exciting and lively moments of the ceremony include the water-splashing and the "pot-smoke" ritual. After dinner, people gather to engage in competitions, singing, dancing, and celebrating in high spirits until the early hours of the morning. As dawn breaks, the groom's party, with wine in hand, arrives at the bride's home to assist with her grooming. The bride's final preparations take place under a symbolic fruit tree, known for its association with fertility and prosperity. During this time, the bride's procession is accompanied by the crying marriage song, which expresses the emotional farewell. Once the song is completed, the groom's escort, Xian Mu, rushes into the group of bridesmaids to carry the bride away (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

The wedding reception, referred to as Xi Ma Xi in Yi, marks the formal commencement of the wedding ceremony. This stage involves several rituals, including the announcement of the joyful news, the ear-cutting ritual in the bridal tent, the braiding of the bride's hair, the dog food competition, wrestling, and the distribution of wedding gifts. As the wedding procession approaches the groom's home, a few young men from the bride's party, known as Ni Huo Bi, are sent ahead to announce the bride's imminent arrival. This announcement serves as a reminder to the groom's family to prepare for the wedding and to send a welcoming party to meet the procession. Upon their arrival, the groom's family hosts the bride's messengers with

wine and meat, and also provides a wedding gift, referred to as Ni Huo Bi Zhe, which is a token of appreciation (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

Before the bride's arrival, an elder from the groom's family or a respected elder from the same village serves as the officiant of the wedding ceremony. A temporary wedding house, known as Ye Re, is constructed near the residence. Ye Re refers to a new home, symbolizing good fortune for the couple, as ancestral homes are considered to be the residences of the elder generation. The wedding tent is typically built using newly-cut bamboo or pine branches, with pine needles or dried wheat stalks as the interior padding, and a bamboo mat as the roof, surrounded by bamboo fences. When the bride is carried to the wedding tent by the groom's family members, she wears a conical hat, and a ritual occurs where both families compete to seize the hat. If the hat falls in front, it is considered auspicious for the groom's family, while if it falls behind, it is considered auspicious for the bride's family. After entering the wedding tent, the bride takes her seat, with the bridesmaids sitting beside her. The (cutting the line) ritual then takes place, where an elder woman breaks the red headband worn by the bride, symbolizing the severing of ties with inauspicious influences. During the grooming process, the bride's hair is anointed with pig fat from the New Year's pig, and combed three times, after which her single braid is divided into two to mark the end of her girlhood. After the grooming, the young men of the groom's family, as part of the ceremony, snatch the headscarf or veil of the one who styled the bride's hair, demanding a ransom in wine for its return. This is a mandatory and playful part of the wedding ritual. Finally, the bride is offered a meal, which typically consists of a bowl of fragrant fried rice and egg soup. This is followed by a competitive eating activity, where guests try to grab the fried rice and egg soup. Once the hair-combing ritual is complete, the groom's younger brother carries the bride back into the house (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

The return ceremony, called Yue La Gu in Yi, occurs either on the wedding day or after the couple has spent a few days together, usually between three and seven days. The groom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, brings one or two sheep and wine as offerings to the bride's family, where they are welcomed with a celebration. The bride's family, especially the young women, will splash water on the groom's procession, drenching them in a playful manner. During this time, the

bride's father invites neighbors and friends to drink and slaughter sheep, providing a meal and a certain amount of wedding gift money for the bride's procession. After the ceremony, the groom and his family return home, while the bride remains at her parental home, visiting the groom's family only during holidays or special occasions. The first time the bride is taken back to the groom's house, a family-wide religious ceremony is held to signify her formal integration into the groom's family. In the past, this process could take several years to complete—sometimes as long as three to five years, or as short as one to two years. However, this custom has since undergone many changes. It is important to note that the wedding ceremony itself signifies the establishment of the marriage relationship, but it does not imply the consummation of the marriage (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).



Figure 10. The 1986 Ebian Yi Wedding Ceremony  
Source: Ebian Cultural Center, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 10 presents a photograph of a Yi (彝) wedding ceremony taken in 1986 at Zhangjia Village, Yanghe Township, Ebian Yi Autonomous County, by photographer Wang Yu. The image depicts Yi men and women participating in the wedding, wearing traditional Yi attire. Many individuals are adorned with colorful headpieces, reflecting the lively and grand nature of the wedding celebration.

### 3. General Knowledge of Yi Wedding Music in Ebian, Sichuan

The Ebian Yi people have cultivated the land and lived here for generations. At weddings and joyous festivals, they engage in singing and dancing to express their emotions, thereby creating a rich and diverse cultural art unique to their county. Over the long course of historical development, the Ebian Yi have crafted vibrant artistic

expressions, with their music forms being diverse, including folk songs, dances, instrumental music, and oral traditions, among others. These musical forms are abundant, rich in content, and characterized by simplicity and a close connection to the people's economic life and customs (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

In March 2010, China's CCTV Music Channel featured the Ebian Yi Autonomous County in the "Folk Songs China" segment of its "Folk Song Map." The program used the scenic spot of Heizhugou as a backdrop to introduce the folk songs and historical legends of the Ebian Yi. It recorded some original folk songs, such as wedding songs like A Nong Ga Ga, Da Yan, Bo Su Bo La Ha, Er Tuo Ge Bu, and Ai Niu Niu, as well as love songs like A Re Niu and narrative songs like Ganmo Aiu . Ebian Yi folk songs have developed their own distinct, strong ethnic style in terms of lyrics, melodies, and vocal techniques. Their defining feature is that different types of folk songs, with varying themes and contents, can only be performed in specific contexts. Ebian Yi folk songs can generally be categorized into eight types: ancient songs, wedding songs, funeral songs, labor songs, contemporary songs, mountain songs, Bimo songs, and children's songs (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

Wedding songs hold an important place in the folk music of the Ebian Yi . The unique marriage customs of the Ebian Yi include numerous rituals such as Xi Nai Re (a gathering of young women), bride welcoming, bride kidnapping, blackening the bride's face, carrying the bride, throwing the bride on the road, singing contests, drinking contests, meat contests, and rice contests, among others. Due to the large number of rituals, the content of the songs is also diverse, and the lyrics are generally arranged in sets. Although wedding songs are the most common in the Ebian Yi culture, only a few individuals are capable of performing them at weddings. Elder singers not only sing the original lyrics in their entirety but also improvise embellishments during their performances, showcasing their profound knowledge and extraordinary skills. Yi wedding songs can be broadly divided into three types: crying songs (Kujia Ge), playful songs (Wanshua Ge), and wedding songs (Hunjia Ge) (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

Crying songs, known in the Ebian Yi language as Li Re Er (里惹尔), are sung by women during the wedding period. These songs are closely related to the marriage

ceremony, often expressing the bride's reflections on her past life, her attachment to her family, and her concerns about her future married life. These songs are typically performed during the pre-wedding gathering a week or so before the wedding. There are two common forms of crying songs: crying while singing and singing without crying. The former involves the singer crying while performing, creating a combination of tears and song, resulting in a deeply emotional and sorrowful performance. The latter, known as singing as crying, refers to the performance of a song with a melancholic tone but without actual crying. This style, which can evoke a deeper emotional response than loud weeping, is more likely to resonate with the audience. In Ebian Yi wedding ceremonies, which are generally joyful occasions for the family, the primary purpose of relatives and friends gathering is to create a festive atmosphere. Thus, except for the moment when the bride bids farewell to her family, when the bridesmaids sing Re Da (Re Da), a type of crying song, the later stages of the wedding predominantly feature the singing without crying format. Crying songs often reflect various themes, such as the tragic lives of women under a slave system, the criticism of arranged and transactional marriages, expressions of a daughter's growth and gratitude toward her parents, and reluctance to leave behind a youthful life. Common crying songs include Ma Ma De Nv Er, Re Da, Marriage Should Be My Own Choice, A Nong Ma Ma Pu, Thinking of A Guo, Blaming the In-laws, Swan, A Daughter Has No Choice But to Leave, Uncle's Gift is the Most Precious, Missing Mom, and I Love My Mother (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

Playful songs, referred to as Huo Ge in the Ebian Yi language, are songs sung during the playful activities that take place during the wedding period. Both men and women participate in singing these songs, which are not directly related to the wedding itself but instead address social phenomena, historical legends, and everyday life experiences. These songs can be performed during both the gathering period and the wedding festivities. Common examples of playful songs include Jinjiezhi He Yingzhuozi, Gan Ma A Niu, Hanluo Mugan, Qukan Shanming, Yiqi Youwan, Zai Nage Lukou Xiangyu, Ju Hui Ge, Bu Gu Niao, Ayin Zhuyu, and Xun Zhao (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

The bride's song, known as Ou Zuo Chu in the Ebian Yi language, is sung by the bride's family during the marriage ceremony. This song is directly related to the

act of giving away a daughter in marriage. On the day before the wedding, when the groom's party arrives at the bride's house, the bride's family selects two female singers to perform a sung exchange with the groom's male singers, marking the beginning of the wedding ceremony. These songs are narrative in nature, with melodies that are relatively simple and rhythms that remain steady, often featuring the repetition of a single melody with different lyrics. The singer's delivery can be improvised based on the tonal direction and the stress of the words. The performance of the bride's song by two female singers is a fixed part of the wedding ceremony, and only after this can the male singers begin their part with the grooming song (Quqin Ge). This is a mandatory ritual step. Even in the change of group ceremony (a type of ritual involving young women), the singing of the bride's song remains an important ceremonial procedure (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

The Grooming Song in the Ebian Yi culture is sung by the groom's party during the wedding. Known as Zuo in the Ebian Yi language, these songs cover a wide range of topics, from astronomy to geography, encompassing various aspects of life. Based on the structure of the performance, the song can be divided into two main stages. The first involves the singing of courteous phrases, where both the bride's and groom's sides exchange greetings and pleasantries. For example, the bride's side sings Wen Hou Ge, while the groom's side responds with Da Xie Ge (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

Bimo Songs, also known as Bimo Bi in the Ebian Yi language, are sacred songs sung by the Bimo, a type of priest, during various ceremonies including weddings, funerals, ancestral worship, disaster prevention, healing rituals, fortune-telling, and other auspicious events. These songs are integral to Yi (彝) religious and cultural practices, and their melodies vary widely. Some songs are highly melodic and song-like, while others have a broad vocal range with pitches fluctuating dramatically, sometimes rising or falling sharply. Some have a narrower vocal range, with less fluctuation, but possess strong chant-like qualities. The songs are primarily categorized according to the occasion and can include songs for blessings, soul summoning, exorcising spirits, fortune-telling, honoring deities, opening paths, soothing souls, and even curses. The melodies of Bimo songs can differ for the same

song depending on the performance, but generally, the pitch range is narrower, and the rhythm is more pronounced. Occasionally, the pace may change, speeding up or slowing down, sometimes doubling in speed, and the dynamics vary according to the lyrical content (Ebian Yi Chronicles, 2019).

#### **4. Historical Evolution of Yi Wedding Music**

The Yi (彝) Crying Wedding tradition is a remnant of the historical custom of bride kidnapping, and in a certain sense, it represents the history of female suffering under the patriarchal system. However, through its long historical evolution, the Crying Wedding has shed its original connotation of lamenting unfair marriages. Instead, it now symbolizes the complex emotional state of the bride at this pivotal moment in her life. In modern times, the Crying Wedding has undergone an artistic transformation, evolving into a lyrical medium for expressing emotions (Yang Fuwang, 2009).

Through cultural exchanges with other regions and societies both domestically and internationally, the wedding music of the Liangshan Yi has gained increasing attention and recognition. This has provided more opportunities and platforms for performances, further enhancing its influence across China. In terms of social change, the rapid pace of modernization has led to significant changes in the social structure of the Liangshan Yi. On the one hand, modernization has facilitated the better protection and preservation of Yi culture, allowing Yi wedding music to continue and develop. On the other hand, the encroachment of modernization on traditional customs has led to the loss of certain wedding rituals, resulting in the loss of original meaning in some aspects of Liangshan Yi wedding music. In the field of technology, Liangshan Yi wedding music traditions have adopted new forms. The incorporation of electronic synthesizers, digital recording, television, and other technologies has diversified and modernized the performance of Liangshan Yi wedding music. Although the integration of new composition techniques with traditional music has yielded significant results, including the emergence of Yi singers, the purity and authenticity of Liangshan Yi wedding music face the risk of being undermined (Jun Qun, 2023).

Amo Nire has undergone a major transformation from its traditional original to modern adaptations. Historically, this song was primarily sung by Yi brides during weddings, and its transmission relied on oral tradition. The emotional expression within the song was closely tied to the social context of the time, with the sliding tones naturally forming part of the vocal style. However, with the passage of time, Amo Nire has gradually moved away from its original context within the wedding ceremony and has been reinterpreted and reimagined. In modern society, particularly on new media platforms, the song is spread in the form of musical clips, with its distinctive sliding tones becoming a symbol of ethnic music. Additionally, the song has been published in written form, reflecting the diversification and modernization of its transmission (Song Aimu, 2023).

Yi culture exhibits significant regional characteristics, where dialects, clothing, and customs have had a profound impact on the content of marriage songs in different areas. In Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, the traditional marriage customs of the Yi people include a unique singing ceremony. In these ceremonies, simple and unadorned language is used to express the anticipation and longing for marriage. The wedding songs of the Liangshan Yi are not only closely tied to the daily lives of the local people but also constitute an essential part of the wedding activities. These songs are not merely a vital manifestation of the material and spiritual culture of the local Yi people but also serve as a precious treasure of Chinese folk music and folklore. They are an important part of intangible cultural heritage. However, with the development of society and the influence of multiculturalism, the wedding songs of the Liangshan Yi are now at risk of disappearing and becoming extinct (Ji Shiwa Ge, 2020).

## **5. The Theory Used in Research**

This research aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the wedding songs of the Ebian Yi in Sichuan, utilizing theoretical frameworks from historical ethnomusicology, ethnomusicology, musicology, and Chinese theory. The research will explore the development process of these songs. The research includes an analysis of the musical characteristics of Ebian Yi wedding songs and their transmission

methods, as well as interviews and summaries on the subject, proposing suggestions for their preservation and promotion.

### 5.1 Historical Ethnomusicology

Ethnomusicologists, influenced by the principles of historical anthropology, have begun to incorporate a historical perspective into ethnomusicological research. This approach focuses on the collection and organization of both oral history texts and written historical documents, emphasizing the connection between fieldwork and literature. In other words, while maintaining its own research characteristics, ethnomusicology has begun to prioritize the investigation and examination of the historical composition of its subject matter. This involves tracing the modern historical outcomes behind the apparent traditional musical performance activities, and researching the "historicity" of ethnomusicology (Zhao Shufeng, 2023).

The researcher applies a historical context analysis to both the folk and official literature of the Ebian Yi Autonomous Region, carefully organizing and categorizing historical records and cultural characteristics of Ebian Yi marriage customs. Through extensive and in-depth fieldwork, combined with literature research, the research places Ebian Yi wedding music within the social and historical development context, deeply exploring Yi traditional literature and oral texts. The focus is primarily on the modern form of Ebian Yi wedding music, while also integrating historical and contemporary perspectives to investigate the process of cultural integration and internalization. The goal is to establish connections and integration between historical documents, oral texts, and fieldwork data. Additionally, by examining the ethnographic field data of Ebian Yi marriage songs within the historical context of Yi development, the researcher deepens the understanding of Ebian wedding songs, accurately identifying their core characteristics, clarifying their internal relationships, and predicting future development trends.

### 5.2 Ethnomusicology

Ethnomusicology is a subfield of musicology that studies the traditional music of various world cultures and their developmental types. Fieldwork is the primary method for obtaining research materials in this discipline. The key characteristic of ethnomusicology is that it treats the music being studied as a musical phenomenon, advocating for the placement of existing traditional music and its developmental types

within the specific natural and socio-cultural environment of the ethnic group being studied. Through examining how members of a particular ethnic group (whether individuals or communities) construct, use, disseminate, and develop these musical forms based on their own cultural traditions, ethnomusicology seeks to describe the fundamental features, evolutionary patterns, and cultural traits of these music types (Wu Guodong, 2012).

The researcher will conduct fieldwork in Ebian Yi Autonomous County to collect firsthand data and directly observe the wedding songs of the Ebian Yi. Based on this fieldwork, the research will treat the wedding songs as a musical phenomenon and explore their existence and development within the specific natural and socio-cultural context. Using cultural background analysis, the research will investigate the socio-cultural environment of the Ebian Yi, examining how religious beliefs, social customs, and cultural values influence the form and expression of wedding songs. Through an exploration of the social function of music, the research will analyze the role of wedding songs in Ebian Yi society and reveal the specific cultural and social messages conveyed through these songs during the wedding ceremonies.

### 5.3 Musicology

Musicology is the academic discipline that studies all aspects of music. It involves the research of all musical products and behaviors throughout human history and in the present day. Its primary focus is on the music created by humans from ancient times to the present. Much of this music, being a temporal art, has been lost over the ages; thus, what musicology can research today are only those pieces that have been preserved in various ways. Some of this music has been preserved in written forms, such as musical scores, textual records, physical artifacts, and images, while much more has been transmitted orally in folk traditions. The primary task of musicology is to excavate, collect, preserve, organize, analyze, and research all of this music. This work spans various sub-disciplines, including music history, music archaeology, historical musicology, music iconography, acoustics, ethnomusicology, music folklore, organology, and more. Additionally, it draws from theories, methods, and findings in the natural and human sciences. The goal of researching musical products is to answer questions about the characteristics and basic laws of music in different eras and among different ethnic groups. Furthermore, musicology also seeks

to research the musical behaviors of all peoples and individuals, both historically and in the present day. These behaviors include physiological, creative, performance, reception, aesthetic, and learning behaviors (Yu Renhao, 2006).

The theories and methods of musicology provide a comprehensive framework for researching various musical forms within different cultural contexts. When the research focuses on the wedding songs of the Ebian Yi in Sichuan, the researcher begins with an extensive literature review, deeply examining the musical forms of Ebian Yi songs and related musicological theories. This phase of research can include musical scores, historical documents, academic studies, and theories from disciplines such as music folklore, ethnomusicology, and music history. Subsequently, through fieldwork, the researcher directly observes wedding song performances, conducting interviews with musicians, wedding participants, and cultural elders to collect oral traditions and personal experiences related to the music. These primary materials provide invaluable perspectives and information, aiding in a deeper understanding of the true nature of Ebian Yi wedding songs. Furthermore, it is crucial to conduct a systematic analysis and interpretation of the song selection in Ebian Yi wedding music. By researching elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, and timbre, the researcher can delve into the structure, form, and style of the works. This analysis may include structural, formal, harmonic, and rhythmic analysis to fully understand their musical expression and socio-cultural significance. Considering the impact of modernization and globalization, the protection and transmission of Ebian Yi wedding songs is an important component of the research. The research's objective is not only to describe the musical characteristics but also to explore effective methods for preserving this cultural heritage.

#### 5.4 Chinese Music Theory

Chinese music theory is a system of musicology deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture. It integrates fundamental knowledge, technical principles, and philosophical connotations, showcasing unique Chinese characteristics. In Mandarin, the term (yueli) can be interpreted as the principles of music, the theory of music, or the fundamentals of music. Its historical origins can be traced back to ancient times, with music-related thoughts and theories recorded in classical texts such as Yuejing (The Classic of Music), Yueji (The Record of Music), and Yuelun (The Discourse on

Music). From a content perspective, Chinese music theory can be categorized into three levels: 1. Fundamentals of Music Theory: This encompasses the foundational knowledge of music, such as notation, intervals, scales, modes, chords, rhythm, and tempo. These elements are often referred to as basic music theory or fundamentals of music theory. 2. Technical Theory of Music: This involves advanced compositional techniques, including harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, and musical forms. It emphasizes both professionalism and practical application, aligning closely with the concept of musical theory. 3. Musicological Theory: This domain explores broader interdisciplinary topics, such as the relationship between music and philosophy, aesthetics, and anthropology. It falls under the field of musicology, addressing deeper academic inquiries. In its narrow sense, it primarily refers to the foundational knowledge of music. However, technical theories and musicology are often treated as distinct disciplines in music education and research. This framework not only highlights the scientific rigor of Chinese music theory but also reflects its profound cultural and philosophical depth. (Du Yaxiong & Qin Dexiang, 2007)

This research will adopt the analytical methods of Chinese music theory, such as the research of origins, composition, artistic characteristics, and development, and apply them systematically to the research of the Ebian Yi wedding songs. Using this theoretical framework, the research aims to comprehensively reveal the uniqueness and cultural significance of Yi wedding music, and where appropriate, to compare it with Western music to demonstrate its value and position in a multicultural context. First, from the perspective of the origins and composition of music, this research will explore the historical roots and tonal systems of Ebian Yi wedding songs, particularly the use of the pentatonic scale and its structural features. Through analyzing the melodies and rhythmic patterns of the crying wedding songs and blessing songs performed during weddings, the research will explain the functions of these musical forms within the wedding ceremony, revealing how they convey emotions, create atmosphere, and fulfill ritual needs through musical language. Second, from the technical theory perspective, the research will focus on analyzing the vocal forms and structures of Yi wedding music. Specific topics will include the coordination in performance, improvisational abilities, emotional expression through melodic lines, and how these techniques shape the overall atmosphere of the wedding ceremony.

Additionally, the research will categorize and summarize the musical techniques used in different wedding scenarios, highlighting the diversity and complexity of Yi wedding music in terms of both expression and technical aspects. Finally, from the cultural connotation perspective, the research will delve into the philosophical, ethnological, and aesthetic meanings embedded in the wedding music, in the context of the Yi social and cultural background. The research will focus on how the wedding music communicates the core values of the Yi people regarding marriage, family, and social relationships, and its role in cultural transmission and ethnic identity. By analyzing the vocal expressiveness and unique accompaniment forms in the wedding music, the research will further reveal its artistic value and cultural depth. Through this systematic analysis at three levels, the research not only provides a theoretical basis for the protection and transmission of Yi wedding music but also introduces new academic perspectives and practical strategies to promote its preservation and development in a multicultural context.

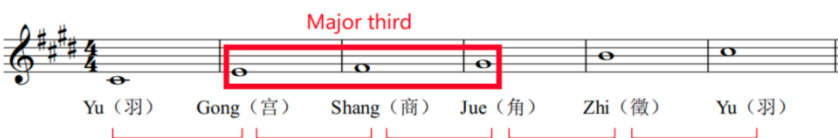
Before conducting a modal analysis, it is necessary to provide a detailed explanation of the pentatonic scale to better understand the characteristics of Chinese pentatonic modes.

The pentatonic scale is a fundamental mode in traditional Chinese music, consisting of five notes: Gong, Shang, Jue, Zhi, and Yu. The intervals between these five notes are as follows: Gong → major second → Shang, Shang → major second → Jue, Jue → minor third → Zhi, Zhi → major second → Yu, Yu → returns to → Gong, forming a complete modal scale.

In the pentatonic system, two key concepts need special attention: the Gong tone and the tonic. The Gong tone determines the key signature of the mode, while the tonic determines the name of the mode. For example, a C Gong pentatonic scale would be C-D-E-G-A-C, indicating that the Gong tone is C. On the other hand, an F Shang pentatonic scale would be F-G-A-C-E-F, indicating that the tonic is F. This modal structure is widely applied in traditional Chinese music, not only showcasing its unique tonal characteristics but also carrying deep cultural significance. Each pitch in the pentatonic scale can serve as a tonic, creating five distinctly different modal variations.

In the wedding songs of the Ebian Yi, several pentatonic modes are predominantly used, including C# Yu pentatonic, D Yu pentatonic, C Zhi pentatonic, E Shang pentatonic, and G Shang pentatonic. Detailed modal characteristics can be found in the table below:

(1) C# Yu pentatonic scale




Interval Relationships:	Minor third	Major second	Major second	Minor third	Major second	
Phonetic name:	A	C	D	E	G	A
Roll-call:	la	do	re	mi	sol	la

Figure 11. C# Yu pentatonic scale.

Make: Lin Yang (2024)

Figure 11 illustrates the interval relationships and characteristics of the C# Yu mode pentatonic scale, analyzed in conjunction with modern music theory. This pentatonic scale comprises the pitches Yu (A), Gong (C), Shang (D), Jue (E), Zhi (G), corresponding to the Western note names A, C, D, E, G. In terms of intervallic relationships, Gong to Shang, Shang to Jue, and Zhi to Yu are major seconds, while Jue to Zhi and Yu to Gong are minor thirds. The interval between Gong and Jue, specifically marked as a major third, highlights its structural significance within the scale. The phonetic sequence is rendered as la, do, re, mi, sol, reflecting the integration of traditional Chinese musical concepts with Western music theory. This analysis provides critical theoretical insights into the intervallic structure and musical framework of the C# Yu mode, offering a valuable perspective on its cultural and melodic characteristics.

(2) D Yu pentatonic scale




Interval Relationships:	Minor third	Major second	Major second	Minor third	Major second	
Phonetic name:	A	C	D	E	G	A
Roll-call:	la	do	re	mi	sol	la

Figure 12. D Yu pentatonic scale.

Make: Lin Yang (2024)

Figure 12 illustrates the interval relationships and characteristics of the D Yu pentatonic scale in traditional Chinese music, analyzed in conjunction with modern music theory. The scale consists of the pitches Yu, Gong, Shang, Jue, Zhi, corresponding to the Western note names A, C, D, E, G. In terms of intervallic relationships, Yu to Gong is a minor third, Gong to Shang and Shang to Jue are major seconds, Jue to Zhi is a minor third, and Zhi to Yu is a major second. Notably, the interval between Gong and Jue is highlighted as a major third, underscoring its critical role in the structural integrity of the scale. The pitch sequence is phonetically rendered as la, do, re, mi, sol, showcasing the distinctive intervallic properties and melodic characteristics of the D Yu mode. This analysis demonstrates the integration of traditional Chinese music and Western music theory, providing significant theoretical insights into the scale's intervallic structure and musical framework.

## (3) C Zhi pentatonic scale



Interval Relationships:	Major second	Minor third	Major second	Major second	Minor third	
Phonetic name:	G	A	C	D	E	G
Roll-call:	sol	la	do	re	mi	sol

Figure 13. C Zhi pentatonic scale.

Make: Lin Yang (2024)

Figure 13 presents the interval relationships and characteristics of the C Zhi mode pentatonic scale in traditional Chinese music, analyzed in conjunction with modern music theory. The scale consists of the pitches Zhi, Yu, Gong, Shang, Jue, corresponding to the Western note names G, A, C, D, E. In terms of intervallic relationships, Zhi to Yu is a major second, Yu to Gong is a minor third, Gong to Shang and Shang to Jue are major seconds, and Jue to Zhi is a minor third. Notably, the interval from Gong to Jue is highlighted as a major third, emphasizing its structural significance within the scale. The sequence of pitches is phonetically rendered as sol, la, do, re, mi, reflecting the unique intervallic properties and melodic characteristics of the Zhi mode. This analysis underscores the integration of traditional Chinese musical theory with modern Western musicology, offering valuable insights into the intervallic structure and tonal framework of this pentatonic scale.

(4) E Shang pentatonic scale

Interval Relationships:	Major second	Minor third	Major second	Minor third	Major second	
Phonetic name:	D	E	G	A	C	D
roll-call:	re	mi	sol	la	do	re

Figure 14. E Shang pentatonic scale

Make: Lin Yang (2024)

Figure 14 illustrates the interval relationships and characteristics of the E Shang mode pentatonic scale in traditional Chinese music, analyzed in conjunction with modern music theory. The scale consists of the pitches Shang, Jue, Zhi, Yu, Gong, corresponding to the Western note names D, E, G, A, C. In terms of intervallic relationships, Shang to Jue is a major second, Jue to Zhi is a minor third, Zhi to Yu is a major second, Yu to Gong is a minor third, and Gong to Shang is a major second.

Notably, the interval from Shang to Zhi is highlighted as a major third, emphasizing its structural significance within the scale. The sequence of pitches is phonetically rendered as re, mi, sol, la, do, reflecting the distinctive intervallic properties and melodic characteristics of the Shang mode. This analysis underscores the integration of traditional Chinese music with Western music theory, providing critical insights into the intervallic structure and tonal framework of this pentatonic scale.

(5) G Shang pentatonic scale

Interval Relationships:	Major second	Minor third	Major second	Minor third	Major second	
Phonetic name:	D	E	G	A	C	D
roll-call:	re	mi	sol	la	do	re

Figure 15. G Shang pentatonic scale

Make: Lin Yang (2024)

Figure 15 illustrates the interval relationships and characteristics of the G Shang mode pentatonic scale in traditional Chinese music, analyzed in conjunction with modern music theory. The scale consists of the pitches Shang, Jue, Zhi, Yu, Gong, corresponding to the Western note names D, E, G, A, C. In terms of intervallic relationships, Shang to Jue is a major second, Jue to Zhi is a minor third, Zhi to Yu is a major second, Yu to Gong is a minor third, and Gong to Shang is a major second. Notably, the interval between Shang and Zhi is highlighted as a major third, emphasizing its structural significance within the scale. The sequence of pitches is phonetically rendered as re, mi, sol, la, do, showcasing the distinctive intervallic properties and melodic aesthetics of the Shang mode. This analysis highlights the integration of traditional Chinese musical theory with modern Western musicology, providing critical insights into the intervallic structure and tonal framework of this pentatonic scale.

## 5.5 Comparison of the Western Tonal System and the Chinese Pentatonic Mode

Prior to conducting modal analysis, it is necessary to provide a detailed exposition of the Western tonal system and the Chinese pentatonic modal system to establish a clear theoretical foundation. This not only facilitates a deeper understanding of their fundamental differences in scale structure, key signature function, and tonic determination, but also enables a more precise analysis of the adaptive modifications required when transcribing pentatonic modes using Western staff notation.

### 5.5.1 Western Key Signature System

The key signature serves as a dual-positioning marker for both tonality and tonic determination:

- (1) Structural Binding: The key signature strictly defines the tonic position (e.g., C major enforces C as the tonic) and the scalar framework (e.g., inclusion of F and B natural).
- (2) Validation Mechanism: Tonic stability must be confirmed through cadential resolution (e.g., V7-I) and harmonic functional cycles (T-S-D-T).

### 5.5.2 Chinese Pentatonic Mode Key Signature System

The key signature functions merely as a pitch coordinate for Gong (the modal nucleus):

- (1) Systemic Flexibility: A single Gong position can generate five distinct modal structures (Gong, Shang, Jue, Zhi, Yu), with the tonal center dynamically determined by melodic syntax.

#### (2) Diagnostic Criteria:

**Terminal Pitch Distribution:** The tonic must constitute >50% of phrase-final notes.

**Core Interval Weighting:** Modal-specific prominence, e.g., Gong-Zhi fourths in Zhi mode.

**Scale Degree Directionality:** E.g., Jue tones exhibit strong tendencies towards Zhi.

### 5.5.3 Comparative Functional Framework

Dimension	Western Tonal System	Chinese Pentatonic System
Key Signature Role	Tonic + scale structure binding	Gong positioning marker
Scalar Configuration	Heptatonic (mandatory semitones)	Pentatonic (no fixed semitones, optional deviations)
Tonal Center Mobility	Fixed (key signature enforces)	Fluid (five potential centers within one Gong system)
Analytical Focus	Harmonic functional cycles	Melodic syntax + interval topology

Source : Lin Yang

### 5.5.4 Underlying Civilizational Divergence

This dichotomy originates from contrasting paradigms in musical cognition:

- (1) Western tonal music prioritizes structural control, utilizing key signatures to encapsulate pitch organization.
- (2) Chinese pentatonic modal practice embraces fluid expressivity, where Gong serves as an anchor while the tonic shifts according to contextual cues.

## 6. Literature and Related Research

Chen Lian (2010) in his article *The Categories and Functions of Wedding Songs in Ebian, Sichuan* points out that the practical function of wedding songs is manifested during the wedding ceremonies. The music does not function independently but is closely integrated with the various activities of the wedding ceremony to achieve its practical purpose. Looking at the history of the Ebian Yi, the Yi people were still in the slave system stage before the liberation. The marriage forms, customs, religious beliefs, and cultural ideologies that had been formed over a long period by the Yi people were not completely altered even though the social

system underwent changes. Therefore, while the traditional wedding songs of the Ebian Yi display their unique and simple style, they also profoundly reflect the strong historical and social characteristics of the community.

Chen Lian (2010) also states that wedding songs, as an important part of folk songs associated with customs, are numerous, rich in content, and simple in style, and they are closely related to the economic life, customs, and practices of the people. These songs continue to play an important role in the traditional wedding customs of the Ebian Yi people in Sichuan. Despite this, few scholars have conducted comprehensive studies on the wedding songs of the region. Based on the performance characteristics, content, social functions, and the groups who sing these songs, the author categorizes them into: Crying Wedding Songs, Playful Songs, and Wedding Songs. According to the practical functions of Yi wedding songs, their functions can be summarized as: social function, educational function, and cathartic function.

Chen Lian (2010) points out in his article *The Categories and Functions of Wedding Songs in Ebian, Sichuan* that with the decreasing number of singers, changes in the performance content of wedding songs, and the simplification of wedding ceremonies, fewer people are singing, listening to, or learning wedding songs at wedding events. This has inevitably impacted the transmission of wedding song singers. From the analysis above, it is evident that the wedding songs of the Ebian Yi are in a state of gradual decline (Chen Lian, 2010).

Chen Lian (2011), in his article *The Performance Process and Artistic Characteristics of Ebian Yi Wedding Songs*, mentions that Ebian Yi wedding songs are based on the pentatonic scale. The modal types are quite diverse, but the Yu mode is far more prevalent than other modes. Referring to Zeng Lingshi's article *The Artistic Forms of Liangshan Yi Folk Songs*, he discusses the "modes" and, through archaeological findings and the fundamental pitch collections and overtone melodies of instruments such as the mouth harp and Hulusi (a type of wind instrument), argues that the Yu mode is one of the oldest musical modes among the Yi people of Liangshan. In addition, a comprehensive analysis of the modes of wedding songs suggests that the Yu mode is the most common and typical mode in Ebian Yi traditional folk songs, reflecting the ancient style of Yi folk music.

The 2020 Intangible Cultural Heritage Application Report by the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Cultural Center states that Bimo blessing music is jointly created and transmitted by Bimo priests and the Yi people. Centered around Bimo priests, and utilizing scriptures, ritual tools, and ceremonies, this music is rooted in ancestor worship and belief in spirits. It is primarily expressed through the chanting of scriptures, with sacrificial offerings as mediators. This religious blessing activity encompasses Yi philosophy, social history, educational ethics, astronomy, literature, customs, medicine, and health, serving as an important testimony to the development and historical memory of the Yi ethnic group. Bimo blessing music holds significant value in carrying the rich history of Yi ancient civilization.

Chen Lian (2012) points out in his Survey Report on Folk Songs of the Ebian Yi People in Sichuan that the folk songs of the Ebian Yi, as an important component of Yi culture in China, possess a rich array of themes and unique musical characteristics. The research provides an in-depth analysis of how these folk songs reflect the long history and profound cultural heritage of the Ebian Yi. At the same time, the author highlights the challenges facing these folk songs, particularly their evolving forms and the gradual decline they are experiencing, revealing how traditional Chinese music is adapting and transforming in the context of modern society. Through this research, the author offers valuable insights and suggestions for the protection and transmission of Ebian Yi folk songs.

Zhu Yuxing (2022), in his doctoral thesis *An Analysis of Ebian Yi People's Folk Songs Singing Based on Transmitted Cultural Symbols*, states that the purpose of this research is to examine the performance of Ebian Yi folk songs within the context of Ebian Yi regional culture. Using the regional culture of Ebian Yi as a symbolic background, the research employs a variety of methods, including literature review, field research, and interviews. The research finds that Ebian Yi folk songs have distinct regional characteristics and vividly reflect the local culture. These folk songs have been passed down through generations and are closely connected to the daily lives of the local people. Ebian Yi folk songs are essentially regional symbols, with a specific system of signifiers and symbolized cultural meanings. The folk songs not only exhibit distinct ethnic styles and local features but also form a unique symbolic

system in terms of timbre, phonetics, singing techniques, costumes, and performance styles. These symbolized behaviors convey deep cultural connotations through music.

Lu Jufang (2013) in *Reflections on the Dance of Ebian Yi Autonomous County* points out that Ebian, a remote Yi (彝) autonomous county located at the foot of the Xiaoliangshan Mountains in Sichuan, is a region where the local government places great importance on the transmission and development of traditional music and culture. Based on Yi traditional dance and daily life customs, the local government created the county dance of Ebian Yi Autonomous County—Jiazhi Yida Qiebela. With the support of government policies, this county dance has been widely spread throughout the villages of the Ebian Yi. Although it may eventually be considered a traditional Yi music and dance form, it has lost the spontaneity and inherent characteristics of traditional music due to its background and method of transmission. As a result, even though it may endure for thousands of years, it remains a manufactured tradition. This phenomenon raises further questions about the definition and essence of traditional music.

Yang Juan (2022) in *The Value and Function of Traditional Wedding Ceremonies and Wedding Songs of the Yi People in Northwest Guizhou* points out that in the in-depth research of the wedding song culture of the Yi people in northwest Guizhou, the author focuses on the evolution of this traditional culture and its status in modern society. As one of the three major ceremonial songs of the Yi people, wedding songs have historically relied on the existence of Yi traditional wedding customs. However, with the rapid social changes in modern times, especially since the reform and opening-up period, this cultural heritage faces unprecedented challenges. The research indicates that the loss of the Yi language, the impact of foreign cultures, and the influence of modern culture have led to significant changes in the cultural ecology of wedding songs in northwest Guizhou. Traditional weddings have gradually been replaced by modern weddings, causing wedding songs to lose their original social foundation and transmission environment, thus facing an endangered status. The author conducts an in-depth analysis of the impact of cultural decline and the dominance of modern culture on this cultural heritage. In response to these challenges, the research proposes a series of strategies for the protection and

transmission of Yi wedding songs, including government departments conducting surveys and recognition of Yi wedding song culture, establishing archives, applying for inclusion in the intangible cultural heritage representative list, and identifying Transmitters. The research also suggests strengthening supervision and financial support, planning and constructing cultural ecological zones, cultural ecological towns, and cultural ecological villages, while integrating these efforts with the rural cultural revitalization strategy, using multiple measures to jointly promote the effective transmission and protection of the Yi wedding song culture in northwest Guizhou. Through this research, the author not only reveals the difficulties traditional culture faces in modern society but also proposes specific solutions, providing valuable references for the protection and transmission of this precious cultural heritage.

He Qian (2022) in *The Philosophical Interpretation of A Beautiful Life in the Yi People's Crying Wedding Songs in Southwest Sichuan* explores a key component of Yi (彝) culture—the Crying Wedding Song. This research focuses on the cultural origins, content, and the profound meanings embedded in these songs. Crying Wedding Songs are not only an important cultural tradition in Yi wedding customs but also reflect Yi women's attitudes toward the traditional patriarchal system and their yearning for a better life. The author begins by analyzing the cultural origins and content of Crying Wedding Songs, revealing their significance in Yi culture. The research points out that these songs express both the pain of Yi women, who have no say in their marriages, and their sense of female subjectivity. Through a philosophical reflection on the concept of a beautiful life in the Crying Wedding Songs from the southwestern Yi communities, the author delves into the profound life philosophy conveyed through these songs, as well as the deep aspirations for life they express. Additionally, the research emphasizes the educational value of Crying Wedding Songs. These songs not only present the human emotions rooted in the authenticity of life but also reflect the Yi culture's perspective on harmony with nature and inclusivity. Through this research, the author aims to raise awareness of the academic value and cultural significance of Crying Wedding Songs and explore their educational potential in modern society.

Fan Jiaqin (2022), in her master's thesis *A research on the Traditional Wedding Music Culture of the Yi People in the Small Liangshan Area of Yunnan*, provides a comprehensive exploration of the traditional wedding music culture of the Yi people in the Small Liangshan region of Yunnan. The research focuses on the status, development, and artistic characteristics of music culture within Yi communities. Through field research and textual analysis, the author conducts in-depth documentation and analysis of various aspects of this culture. The core of the research lies in the systematic academic review and analysis of the traditional wedding music culture of the Yi people in the Small Liangshan area. First, the author studies the ecological cultural space of the music culture, revealing the natural and human contexts behind the music. Through oral interviews, personal stories and experiences related to wedding music were collected, further uncovering the evolution of this culture amid social changes. Additionally, the author provides an in-depth analysis of the artistic essence of Yi wedding music, exploring its literary, artistic characteristics, and musical forms. Finally, the research examines the social functions of this musical culture and its transmission in contemporary society. Overall, the research presents the unique value and artistic charm of the traditional wedding music culture of the Yi people in Small Liangshan, offering important references for a comprehensive understanding of this culture.

Ma Xuemei (2021), in her master's thesis *The transmission Status and Protection of the Crying Wedding Culture of the Yi People in Liangshan—A Case research of Xide County*, deeply explores the Crying Wedding culture of the Yi (彝) people, a wedding custom that originated with the traditional marriage system. The research focuses on the historical background, cultural connotations, and functions of the Yi people's Crying Wedding culture, and analyzes its transmission and developmental value in modern society. The core of the research is based on in-depth fieldwork in Xide County, Liangshan, combining theories from ethnology, folklore studies, anthropology, and sociology. The author first introduces the living environment and cultural background of the fieldwork site, laying a comprehensive foundation for understanding the Crying Wedding culture. Subsequently, the research analyzes in detail the historical origins of the "Crying Wedding" custom, the content

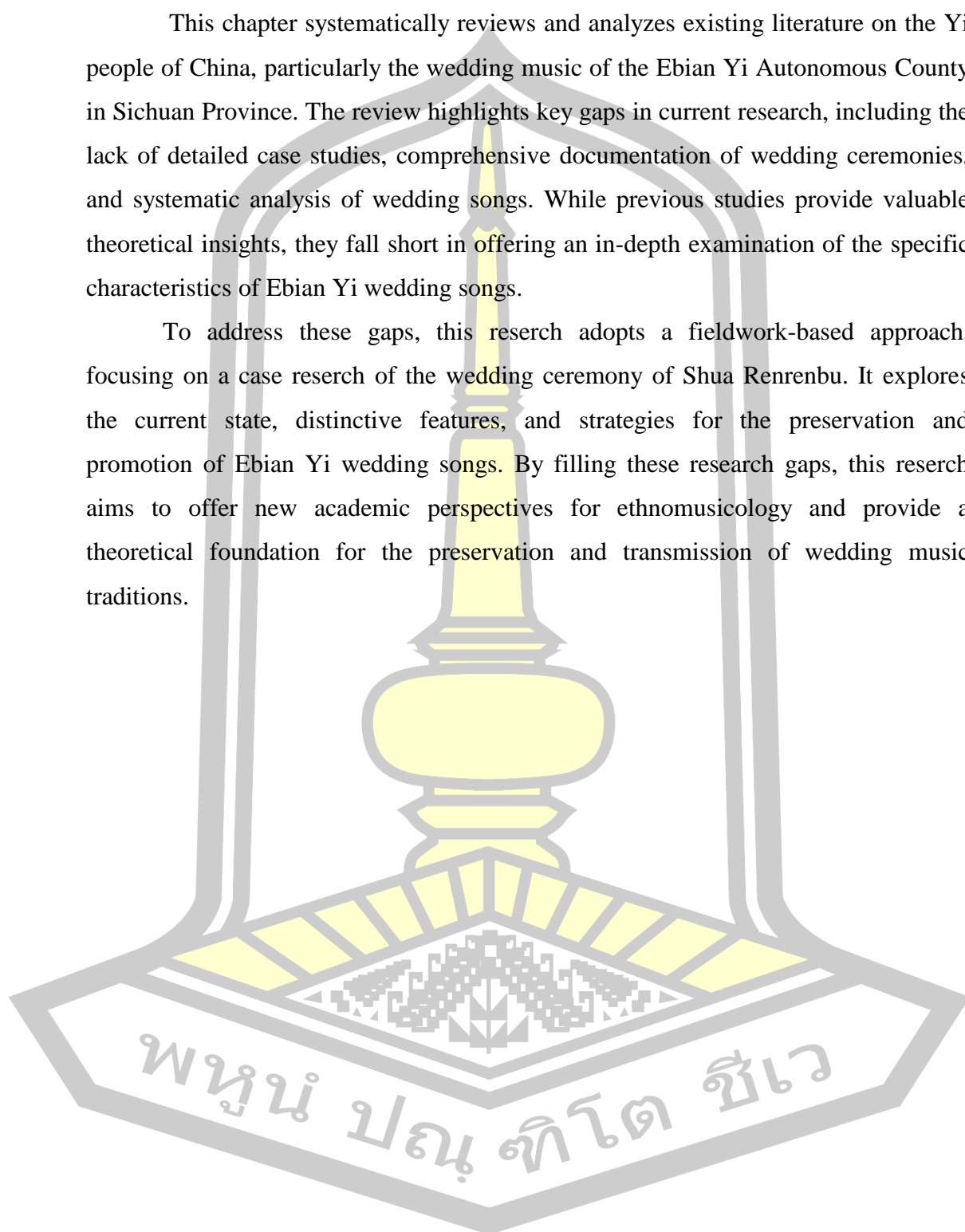
categories of the Crying Wedding Song, the ritual procedures, and the multiple functions of the Crying Wedding culture. Additionally, the author explores the current state of transmission in Xide County and clarifies its sustainable development value in modern society. Finally, the research summarizes the challenges faced by the transmission of the Crying Wedding culture and proposes specific protection and development strategies. Through this research, the author aims to deepen the understanding of the Crying Wedding culture of the Yi people in Liangshan and provide effective strategies and insights for its transmission and development.

Huang Rong (2020), in her master's thesis *A research on the transmission of Mabian Yi People's Bimo Music Culture from the Perspective of Educational Anthropology*, explores the Bimo music culture of the Yi (彝) people in the Mabian Yi Autonomous County in the Small Liangshan region of Sichuan. As an essential component of Yi culture, Bimo music plays a central role in ethnic rituals and has a profound educational function. Through fieldwork, the research objectively presents the current status of the transmission of Bimo music culture and provides an in-depth interpretation of its explicit and implicit educational functions. The author first describes the natural, social, and spiritual environment of the Mabian Yi people, using this context to analyze the ecological survival of Bimo music. Next, through field investigations, the research analyzes the position of Bimo music in Yi society, particularly its role and significance in folk activities. The research further explores the transmission model and current state of Bimo music culture and, within the framework of core-periphery theory, examines the influence of cultural awareness and cultural protection on the transmission of Bimo music. Furthermore, the research analyzes the educational function of Bimo music, revealing its impact on the Yi people's way of life, character development, and cultural identity. Finally, the author proposes specific recommendations for the transmission of Bimo music culture, covering the Transmitters, content, and methods of transmission. Overall, the research offers a new perspective on understanding Bimo music culture from the viewpoint of educational anthropology and proposes practical solutions for addressing the transmission challenges.

### Summary

This chapter systematically reviews and analyzes existing literature on the Yi people of China, particularly the wedding music of the Ebian Yi Autonomous County in Sichuan Province. The review highlights key gaps in current research, including the lack of detailed case studies, comprehensive documentation of wedding ceremonies, and systematic analysis of wedding songs. While previous studies provide valuable theoretical insights, they fall short in offering an in-depth examination of the specific characteristics of Ebian Yi wedding songs.

To address these gaps, this research adopts a fieldwork-based approach, focusing on a case study of the wedding ceremony of Shua Renrenbu. It explores the current state, distinctive features, and strategies for the preservation and promotion of Ebian Yi wedding songs. By filling these research gaps, this research aims to offer new academic perspectives for ethnomusicology and provide a theoretical foundation for the preservation and transmission of wedding music traditions.



## CHAPTER III

### Research Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative research approach. This chapter outlines the scope and methodology, including the research topic, timeframe, and the foundational framework for data collection and analysis, providing a clear roadmap for the research implementation.

1. Research scope
  - 1.1 Scope of content
  - 1.2 Scope of time
2. Research Process
  - 2.1 Selection of the research site
  - 2.2 Selection of the informants
  - 2.3 Selection of the songs
  - 2.4 Research tools
  - 2.5 Data Collecting
  - 2.6 Data Management
  - 2.7 Data analysis
  - 2.8 Data Presenting

#### **1. Research Scope**

##### 1.1 Scope of content

This research focuses on the Yi wedding songs of Ebian Yi Autonomous County in Sichuan Province, China, and encompasses the following key areas:

First, by participating in local Yi weddings, a comprehensive analysis was conducted on the wedding process, song types, functions, values, and the challenges they face.

Second, building on this foundation, the research delves deeply into the musical elements observed during the fieldwork, including the performers and their identities, singing styles, lyrical content, musical structures, melodic characteristics, modal systems, and rhythmic patterns, to reveal the uniqueness and artistic value of Yi wedding songs in Ebian.

Finally, based on the research findings, specific guidelines for the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding songs in Ebian are proposed, aiming to provide both

theoretical support and practical recommendations for the transmission and preservation of this cultural heritage.

### 1.2 Scope of time

The timeframe for this research spans from April 2022 to June 2024, encompassing approximately 14 months. The research process includes fieldwork, data analysis, and the writing of the final dissertation.

## 2. Research Process

### 2.1 Selection of the research site

Research Location: Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China

The selection of Ebian Yi Autonomous County as the research site was based on the following considerations:

First, the county is rich in traditional Yi culture, which sparked significant interest from the researcher.

Second, its proximity to Chengdu offers convenient access for fieldwork.

Finally, a review of the literature revealed substantial opportunities for further exploration of Ebian's Yi musical culture, reinforcing the decision to choose this location as the focus of the research.

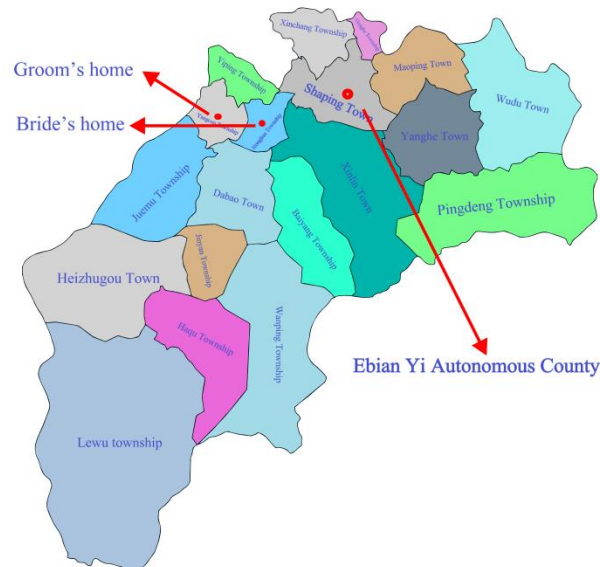


Figure 16. Map of Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China

Source: Lin yang

## 2.2 Selection of the informants

### 2.2.1 The criteria for selecting scholar informants are:

(1) The respondent should be a local resident who has lived in Ebian Yi Autonomous County for over 30 years. They must be familiar with the local social customs, cultural traditions, and musical practices, providing a solid regional background and cultural perspective for the research.

(2) The respondent should possess comprehensive knowledge of the history, current forms, and practical applications of Ebian Yi wedding songs, offering critical insights into the evolution and practice of these songs.

(3) The respondent should have made significant contributions to the local musical culture, particularly in the preservation and promotion of wedding music. They should possess practical experience that can provide valuable insights and guidance for the research.

(4) The respondent must demonstrate profound analytical abilities and unique perspectives, enabling them to conduct in-depth analysis of Ebian Yi wedding songs. They should provide distinctive viewpoints that help reveal the cultural significance and musical characteristics of these songs.

(5) The respondent should have at least 20 years of practical experience in the fields of wedding music, cultural preservation, or related areas, with extensive professional knowledge. They should play a key role in the protection and promotion of wedding music and be capable of providing reliable first-hand data and invaluable guidance for the research.

In accordance with the aforementioned criteria, two key respondents have been selected for this research: Luo Yaxi and Jiashi Shuaibo.

(1) Luo Yaxi, female, Han nationality, 54 years old, director of Cultural Center of Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Vice chairman of Leshan City Dancers Association and chairman of Ebian Music Dancers Association. Luo Yaxian has been engaged in public cultural work for over 30 years, primarily focusing on the fields of intangible cultural heritage, dance, and fine arts, achieving remarkable results. Her

choreographed dance works include Yi People, Yi Songs, Re Da, Ni Ma Zha Se, Mother's Silver Bracelet, Joyful Songs for You, and Nuo Bo Po. Among these, Ni Ma Zha Se and Nuo Bo Po won first and third prizes, respectively, at the Sichuan Province Minority Art Festival. Additionally, she participated in the planning and creation of songs such as Back to Jia Zhi Yi Da, Brother's Love, Sister's Strings, The Discovery Journey, and Singing to Brother. She also organized the creation of scenario plays and rap-style programs such as The First Secretary and the Five Flowers, Niu Niu's Father, The Sound of the Handbells Singing New Songs, Touched by Ebian, Grateful for You, and New Winds Fill the Dance Village. Furthermore, Luo Yaxian planned and edited the cultural journal Gan Ma An Niu of the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Cultural Center and organized and choreographed various cultural activities such as the immersive performance Memory of Ebian's Image Culture and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Corridor. Luo Yaxian has received numerous honors, including the title of Advanced Individual in Intangible Cultural Heritage Work in Sichuan Province, Advanced Individual in Poverty Alleviation in Leshan City, and Annual Person of the Year for Ebian Yi Autonomous County's Touching Figures. She has made significant contributions to the development of Ebian Yi music culture, actively promoting the preservation and transmission of Yi traditional music. Through cultural activities, she has also strengthened the local community's sense of identity with the music.



Figure 17. Luo Yaxi

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2023

(2) Jiashi Shuaibo, male, 47 years old, of Yi ethnicity, serves as the Vice President of the Xiaoliangshan Ji Le Dance Association, a provincial-level intangible cultural heritage Transmitter in Sichuan, and a board member of the Leshan Qilejia Association. With over 20 years of experience in cultural work, Jia is an Transmitter of Yi cultural heritage, specifically the Ganmo Aniu legend, and the playing technique of the Yi moon guitar. In 2003, he released his first album, *My Hometown*, followed by his second album, *Pursuing Ganmo Aniu*, in 2007. Additionally, Jia directed the 1999 online film *Pursuing Ganmo Aniu*, which won the second prize for intangible cultural heritage-themed films in the Xiaoliangshan region. He also played the role of the main antagonist, Zhi Da, in *Ganmo Aniu*, earning the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Award. Jia has made significant contributions to the protection, transmission, and promotion of Yi culture and music, establishing himself as a key figure in local cultural preservation.



Figure 18. Jiashi Shuibo

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024.

#### 2.2.2 The criteria for selecting general informants are:

- (1) The respondent should be a local resident who has lived in Ebian Yi Autonomous County for over 30 years. They must be well-versed in the local social

customs, cultural traditions, and musical practices, providing a solid regional background and cultural perspective for the research.

(2) The respondent must possess comprehensive knowledge of the history, current forms, and practical applications of Ebian Yi wedding songs. They should be able to offer key insights into the evolution and practice of these songs, contributing essential information to the research.

(3) The respondent should have made significant contributions to the local music culture, particularly in the preservation and promotion of wedding music. They must possess practical experience that provides valuable insights and guidance for the research.

(4) The respondent must demonstrate profound analytical abilities and unique perspectives, enabling them to conduct in-depth analysis of Ebian Yi wedding songs. They should offer distinctive viewpoints that help reveal the cultural and musical characteristics of these songs.

(5) The respondent should have at least 20 years of practical experience in wedding music, cultural preservation, or related fields. They must possess extensive professional knowledge and play a central role in the protection and promotion of wedding music, providing reliable first-hand data and invaluable guidance for the research.

In accordance with the aforementioned criteria, three key respondents have been selected for this research: Qubie Geha, Muse Wangti, and Jie'er Ayi.

(1) Qubie Geha, a 55-year-old male member of the Yi ethnic group, is a resident of Ebian Yi Autonomous County. He currently serves as a representative Transmitter of the municipal-level intangible cultural heritage project "Bimo Blessing." Qubie Geha is a Bimo (priest) and a practitioner of the Yi ethnic group's traditional rituals, an expert in playing the moon guitar, and a performer of Kes duet singing. According to Mr. Qu's description, every household in the Ebian Yi Autonomous County performs multiple small and large ritual blessings annually, with a major blessing ceremony held every three years. He personally presides over

hundreds of different-scale blessing ceremonies each year, playing a significant role in these events. With years of participation experience, he has an in-depth understanding of the culture and development of the Ebian Yi community.



Figure 19. Qubie Geha

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2023

(2) Muse Wangti, a 56-year-old male member of the Yi ethnic group, is a resident of Ebian Yi Autonomous County. He currently serves as a representative Transmitter of the municipal-level intangible cultural heritage project Kes. Muse Wangti is a traditional music practitioner of Kes culture. He is the 20th-generation member of the Mose family, a lineage that has long emphasized the transmission of Kes culture, with all family members having an in-depth understanding of it. Growing up, Muse Wangti was exposed to Kes culture through the influence of his family, sparking his strong interest in it. His father, Mose Jieri, and grandfather, Mose Huoda, both conducted thorough studies of Kes and were able to accurately and completely perform its various parts, flexibly improvising and adapting their performances to suit different contexts. Under the careful guidance of his elders, Muse Wangti systematically studied Kes and became proficient in its three components: greetings, Keze, and Zici Moci . He is frequently invited to perform these parts at weddings, making him a key practitioner of Yi wedding music culture in Ebian Yi Autonomous County.



Figure 20. Muse Wangti

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2023

(3) Jie'er Ayi, a 48-year-old male from Yang Village in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, has been researching Bimo blessing since the age of 19. To date, Jie'er Ayi has accumulated 27 years of experience in Bimo blessing ceremonies. He participates in Bimo activities for more than 20 days each month and presides over 40 to 50 wedding Bimo ceremonies each year.



Figure 21. Jie'er Ayi

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2023

### 2.2.3 The criteria for selecting casual informant is:

(1) The respondent should be a Yi ethnic resident who has lived in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, for an extended period, possessing a deep understanding of the local cultural background and customs, and offering a solid regional cultural perspective.

(2) The respondent should be an actor, singer, or intangible cultural heritage Transmitter affiliated with the local cultural center.

(3) The respondent should have firsthand experience participating in or closely observing Yi wedding ceremonies, with familiarity in the specific application and performance of wedding songs, thus providing firsthand practical data for the research.

(4) The respondent must be fluent in both Yi and Chinese, ensuring the ability to understand and accurately express the cultural significance and functional roles of wedding music in both languages.

(5) The respondent should have at least 10 years of experience in relevant fields, particularly in frontline roles within cultural centers or artistic performances. They should possess substantial practical experience and professional knowledge, offering unique insights into wedding music and contributing actively to cultural preservation and promotion efforts.

In accordance with the aforementioned criteria, two key respondents have been selected for this research: Azu Ouluo and Ao Jia.

(1) Azu Ouluo, a male from the Yi ethnic group, currently works as an arts worker at the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Cultural Center and serves as the Transmitter of the Are Niu Yi intangible cultural heritage. As a young singer and actor, Azu Ouluo possesses extensive singing experience and a profound understanding of Yi culture, with a strong ethnic cultural background.



Figure 22. Azu Ouluo

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

(2) Ao Jia, a male from the Yi ethnic group, currently works as an arts worker at the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Cultural Center and serves as the Deputy Secretary-General of the Leshan Musicians Association. He is a well-known Yi musician. Ao Jia has received numerous prestigious awards, including the Excellence Award at the 13th CCTV Youth Singing Contest, Runner-Up and Best Media Attention Award at CCTV's I Love Singing Military Songs, Annual Champion at CCTV's I Want to Sing on Spring Festival Gala, and Weekly Champion on CCTV's Star Avenue. Ao Jia has a deep understanding of Yi music culture and has made significant contributions to the transmission and innovation of ethnic music.



Figure 23. Ao Jia

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

### 2.3 Selection of the songs

In the fieldwork conducted in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, the researcher collected and recorded songs from 8 wedding ceremonies, totaling 16 songs. Based on the following criteria, songs from the wedding ceremony held between January 3rd and 5th, 2024, were selected as the research focus for detailed analysis.

(1) The selected songs accurately reflect the musical style and cultural significance of the wedding ceremony, demonstrating strong representativeness and highlighting the main characteristics of the music in the ceremony.

(2) The chosen songs are common musical forms in traditional local wedding ceremonies, carrying profound cultural content and historical value, thus representing the tradition and evolution of wedding music in the region.

(3) The selected songs are key pieces in the wedding ceremony, representing both the religious and crying bride segments, and serve significant ritual and symbolic functions.

(4) The songs selected were actually performed during a single wedding ceremony, ensuring high relevance and reliability of the data collected.

(5) The selected songs allow for comparative analysis in terms of musical structure, emotional expression, and cultural content, aligning with the research objectives of exploring the functions and values of wedding music.

To ensure the representativeness of the study, the researcher attended eight Yi wedding ceremonies and, after a comprehensive comparison of the musical practices observed, selected one typical wedding as a case study for in-depth analysis. Qifu Song and Re Da were chosen as the primary research subjects to examine their specific roles and cultural significance within the wedding ceremony.

(1) The Qifu Song is an essential piece in the Ebian Yi wedding blessing ceremony, consisting of two sections: Bichang Shi and Bisong Shi, each with distinct musical features and cultural significance. The Qifu Song demonstrates rich diversity in terms of mode, tonality, rhythm, and melody, showcasing its unique musical style.

Composed of diverse musical elements, the song reflects the distinct characteristics of Bimo songs from different factions. This diversity highlights the complexity of Bimo culture in musical expression, as well as the regional differences that exist within it. Furthermore, the Qifu Song serves as an important testament to the development and historical memory of the Yi people, bearing witness to the long and rich history of Yi ancient civilization. It holds significant value in the transmission and development of Yi culture.

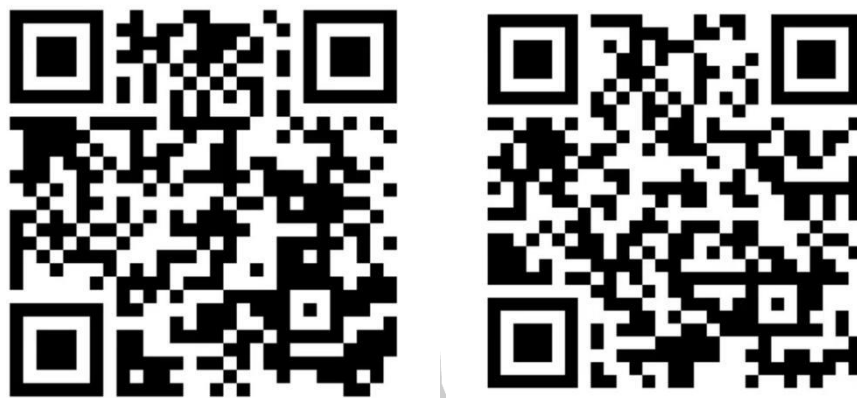


Figure 24. Qifu Song Bichang Shi and Bisong Shi QR Code  
Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

(3) Re Da is an indispensable crying bride song in the Ebian Yi wedding ceremony, exhibiting significant diversity in terms of mode, tonality, rhythm, and melody across different regions. This diversity not only reflects the cultural differences among regions but also embodies the Yi people's unique understanding of marriage and family. Originally, the song Re Da served as a protest against arranged and transactional marriages, highlighting the tragic circumstances of Yi women under the slave system. As society and culture have evolved, both the content and form of the song have undergone changes. Today, Re Da is more commonly used to express emotions of separation and blessing for the bride, reflecting the progress in social systems and the transformation of marriage customs. It also underscores the changing roles and status of Yi women in modern society. This shift not only reflects social progress but also demonstrates the unique value of Yi culture in adapting to the

process of modernization, further promoting the transmission and innovation of Yi cultural traditions.



Figure 25. Re Da QR Code

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

#### 2.4 Research tools

To achieve the three research objectives, this research systematically collects and analyzes data through the following research tools:

Objective 1: The current status of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Field Surveys: Through on-site observation of wedding ceremonies, the researcher collected data on the existing forms, performance methods, and practical applications of Yi wedding songs in Ebian. Special attention was given to the selection and performance characteristics of the songs in different weddings, assessing their usage and cultural impact in contemporary ceremonies.

(2) Interviews: Interviews with wedding participants, cultural bearers, and cultural experts were conducted to gather information on the cultural background, performance techniques, frequency of song use, and social perception of Yi wedding songs.

(3) Questionnaire Surveys: Questionnaires were designed to survey local residents, wedding participants, and cultural workers to collect data on their

perceptions and attitudes toward the current status, functions, and cultural values of Yi wedding songs. This helped quantify the usage and cultural influence of these songs in the local society.

Objective 2: The characteristics of song selection Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Audio/Video Recordings: The researcher recorded the performance of wedding songs during ceremonies, capturing original audio and video data. Analysis of these recordings focused on the musical characteristics, such as melody, rhythm, and tonality, to explore the features of the selected songs. The audio and video materials not only revealed the musical forms but also provided strong support for subsequent analysis.

(2) Music Analysis Tools: Using music analysis tools, the researcher conducted a detailed analysis of the recorded audio data, examining the structure of the melody, rhythm patterns, harmonies, and other musical elements to identify the functions and significance of these features within the wedding ceremony.

(3) Interviews: Interviews with local music experts and cultural bearers provided further insights into the musical style of song selection, preferences, and the relationship between song choice and the ceremonial function, aiding the in-depth analysis of the musical characteristics.

Objective 3: The guidelines for the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Literature Review: Through reviewing relevant literature, the researcher examined the historical background, musical traditions, and evolution of Yi wedding songs in Ebian, evaluating the effectiveness of existing protection and promotion policies. This provided theoretical support and contextual background for the research.

(2) Case Analysis: Successful cases of the protection and promotion of Yi wedding songs in Ebian and other regions were analyzed to assess their implementation effectiveness, identify successful strategies, and pinpoint areas for improvement. These findings served as practical references for the protection and transmission of Yi wedding songs.

(3) Interviews with Cultural Center Staff: Through discussions with local cultural center staff, the researcher explored the official protection measures, cultural

transmission programs, and promotional activities for Yi wedding songs, obtaining policy-level data and evaluating the effectiveness of these measures.

### 2.5 Data Collecting

To comprehensively achieve the research objectives, this research employs various data collection methods, as outlined below:

Objective 1: The current status of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Literature Review: The researcher reviews relevant literature from libraries and cultural centers, utilizing online platforms such as CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) and JSTOR to gather data on Yi wedding songs in Ebian. This in-depth analysis of existing literature helps understand the historical background, current status, and evolution of Yi wedding songs.

(2) Field Survey: The researcher conducted fieldwork in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, observing wedding ceremonies firsthand and collecting data on the frequency of song usage and performance styles, thus examining the practical application of songs in different wedding contexts.

(3) Interviews: Interviews were conducted with wedding participants and cultural bearers to gain insights into the cultural background, performance techniques, and the role of wedding songs in the ceremony. First-hand data were collected to enrich the understanding of Yi wedding songs.

Objective 2: The characteristics of song selection Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Audio Recording: The researcher used professional recording equipment to capture the audio data of wedding songs during the ceremony, ensuring the collection of original musical material. This data was analyzed for its melody, rhythm, tonality, and other musical features.

(2) Video Recording: During the field survey, video equipment was used to record the music performances at the wedding site, capturing both musical elements and visual expressions, providing essential support for the subsequent musical analysis.

(3) Music Analysis Tools: Using the collected audio data, the researcher conducted detailed music analysis, researching the structure of melodies, rhythmic

patterns, harmonies, and other musical characteristics. This analysis was aimed at exploring the functions and cultural connotations of the songs in the wedding ceremony.

Objective 3: The guidelines for the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Interviews: Interviews were conducted with cultural center staff, cultural bearers, and relevant field experts to understand the current status of the protection, transmission, and promotion of Yi wedding songs, as well as to gather policy-level data.

(2) Literature Review: The researcher reviewed relevant literature to understand the cultural preservation measures and transmission strategies for Yi wedding songs. The analysis focused on existing protection and promotion methods and their effectiveness.

(3) Case Analysis: The researcher analyzed successful cases of the protection and promotion of Yi wedding songs in Ebian and other regions, assessing their implementation processes and outcomes. Based on these findings, recommendations were made for the protection and promotion of Yi wedding songs in the Ebian area.

## 2.6 Data Management

To ensure the scientific and systematic management of data, the following data management methods will be employed for the three research objectives:

Objective 1: The current status of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Interview Recordings: Interview recordings with informants and relevant participants will be categorized and stored. Key interview content will be labeled and archived for subsequent analysis. The interview content will be organized based on the background of the interviewees and the topics discussed, ensuring a multidimensional understanding of the current status of wedding songs.

(2) Music Recordings: Audio recordings of wedding music performances will be categorized and tagged for easy access and analysis, ensuring that different types of songs (e.g., religious songs, crying bride songs) can be conveniently retrieved.

(3) Data Transcription and Categorization: All audio materials will be transcribed to extract key information. These transcriptions will be categorized

according to the research objectives of Objective 1, ensuring data completeness and usability.

Objective 2: The characteristics of song selection Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Categorization and Transcription: Wedding music recordings will be categorized based on their social functions (e.g., religious music, crying bride folk songs). Each category will be transcribed into sheet music, and its musical structure, rhythm, melody, and other characteristics will be documented.

(2) Data Storage and Analysis: Music recordings and sheet music will be stored separately for detailed music analysis. The music data will help researchers explore the musical features of the selected songs and analyze their cultural functions and expressions in the wedding ceremony.

(3) Video Data for Supplementary Analysis: Video data (e.g., recordings of live performances) will provide visual support, assisting in the analysis of how music is performed in the wedding ceremony and highlighting its musical characteristics.

Objective 3: The guidelines for the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Field Survey Video Recordings: Field survey video recordings will capture the music performances and ritual processes during weddings. These recordings will be categorized and stored to ensure the authenticity and on-site feeling of the research.

(2) Interview Video Recordings: Interview videos will specifically document interviews with cultural bearers and cultural center staff, providing detailed information on the protection and transmission of wedding songs. These data will help understand the social recognition and cultural value of wedding songs.

(3) Data Categorization and Organization: Video data will be categorized based on its content (e.g., field surveys, informant interviews, live performances) and stored in a structured manner to facilitate easy analysis.

(4) Categorization and Analysis: By reviewing relevant literature and monographs, the researcher will analyze the historical background, protection policies, and cultural implications of Yi wedding songs. These documents will serve as theoretical foundations to help understand the current state of protection and promotion of wedding songs.

(5) Image Data Storage: Image data collected from field surveys, cultural centers, and literature will be categorized based on content (e.g., local customs, geographical features, live performances). These visual materials will provide intuitive support for the research and help analyze the cultural transmission and social impact of Yi wedding songs.

## 2.7 Data analysis

To achieve the three research objectives, this research will employ various data analysis methods based on the previously mentioned data collection methods, as outlined below:

Objective 1: The current status of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Literature Review: By reviewing relevant literature, the researcher will analyze the historical background and the evolution of Yi wedding songs in Ebian. Combining the descriptions and research findings in the literature, the researcher will identify the contributions and shortcomings of existing studies on Yi wedding songs, further understanding their social background and cultural significance.

(2) Field Survey: Through on-site observation of wedding ceremonies, the researcher will document the usage of songs in weddings, including the performance methods, song preferences, and their application in different wedding contexts. The field data will be used to depict the actual performance forms of wedding songs.

(3) Instrumental Research: By analyzing music data collected during field surveys, the researcher will evaluate the performance styles and instrument usage in wedding songs, assessing their social functions and cultural expressions in different ceremonies. This process will contribute to understanding the current state of wedding songs and their transmission within the community.

Objective 2: The characteristics of song selection Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Field Recording and Video Analysis: By recording audio and video of the wedding ceremony, the researcher will collect song performance data from representative cases. The collected audio data will be transcribed, and in conjunction with video performances, the researcher will analyze the melodies, rhythms, harmonies, and other musical features of the songs.

(2) Western Music Analysis Methods: Using Western music analysis methods, the researcher will examine the melodic structure, tonality, harmonies, and other musical elements in Yi wedding songs, revealing their musical characteristics.

(3) Chinese Ethnic Tonality Analysis: Incorporating the tonal analysis methods from Chinese ethnic music theory, the researcher will analyze the pitch, intervals, and tonality types in Yi wedding songs, exploring their expressive forms and sonic effects in traditional culture.

(4) In-Depth Analysis of Representative Cases: By selecting representative wedding songs, the researcher will conduct in-depth analysis using the aforementioned music analysis methods, exploring the musical style and cultural symbols of Yi wedding songs, and uncovering their functions and symbolic meanings within the wedding ceremony.

Objective 3: The guidelines for the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(1) Interviews and Literature Review: Through interviews with cultural bearers, cultural center staff, and relevant experts, the researcher will gather specific information on the protection, transmission, and promotion of Yi wedding songs. Simultaneously, the researcher will review related literature and research findings to summarize the existing protection and promotion strategies.

(2) Descriptive Analysis: Using descriptive analysis methods, the researcher will summarize and evaluate the current state of protection and promotion policies for Yi wedding songs, assess their effectiveness, and propose further suggestions for their protection and promotion. Through qualitative analysis, the researcher will explore how to effectively transmit and promote this cultural heritage in modern society.

## 2.8 Data Presenting

In this reserch, the thesis will be presented in the following seven chapters:

(1) Chapter I: Introduction

(2) Chapter II: Literature Review

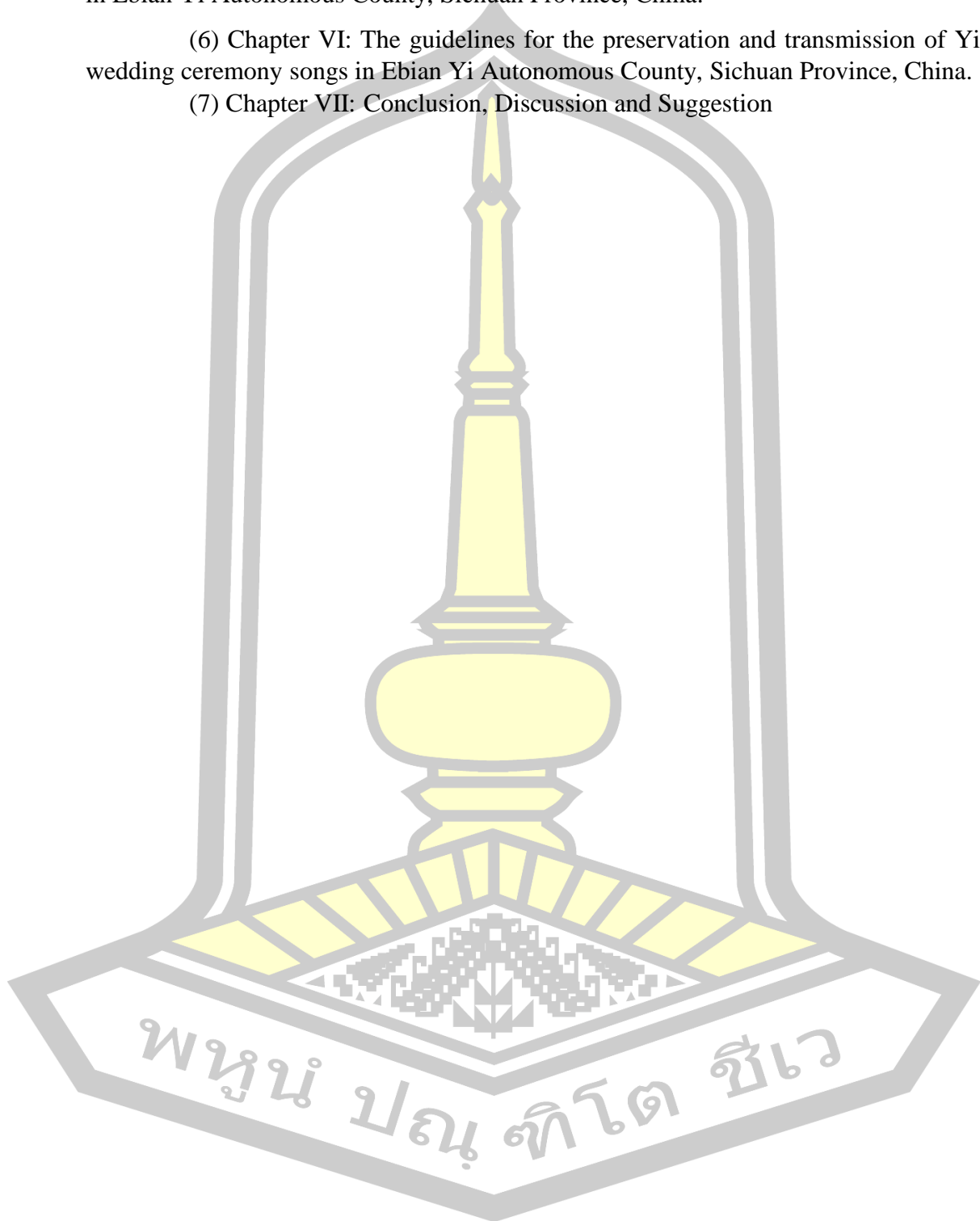
(3) Chapter III: Research Methodology

(4) Chapter IV: The current status of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(5) Chapter V: The characteristics of songs selection Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(6) Chapter VI: The guidelines for the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

(7) Chapter VII: Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestion



## CHAPTER IV

### **The current status of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.**

In this chapter, the researcher analyzes the current status of Ebian Yi wedding songs based on literature and field research findings. The analysis includes case studies of weddings, the categories and functions of wedding songs, their significance, and the challenges they face.

1. The Process of Ebian Yi Wedding Ceremony
2. Types of Ebian Yi Wedding Songs
3. Functions of Ebian Yi Wedding Songs
4. Significance of Ebian Yi Wedding Songs
5. Challenges Facing Ebian Yi Wedding Songs

#### **1. The Process of Ebian Yi Wedding Ceremony**

##### **1.1 Rationale for the Case Selection**

Between 2022 and 2024, the researcher conducted a two-year field research in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, and had the privilege of participating in eight traditional Yi weddings, including six bridegroom weddings and two bride weddings. Among these, the wedding in January 2024, a bridegroom wedding, strictly adhered to traditional customs and exhibited typical characteristics of Ebian Yi wedding ceremonies, making it an ideal subject for this research.

This wedding spanned three days and involved multiple traditional rituals. Participants included the groom, the bride, both families, relatives, friends, village elders, and community members, encompassing both Yi and Han individuals. This wedding exemplified the diversity and cultural integration present in Ebian Yi wedding ceremonies, providing a representative case for analyzing the application and transmission of wedding songs.

Through the research of this wedding case, it is possible to gain an in-depth understanding of the current state of Ebian Yi wedding music, particularly in terms of the usage of wedding songs in contemporary ceremonies, the challenges faced in their

transmission and preservation, and the impact of modernization on these songs. This research provides valuable field data and analytical foundations for the preservation and promotion of Ebian Yi wedding music.

### 1.2 Background of the Case Wedding

Date: January 3 to January 5, 2024

Event: Wedding Ceremony of Shua Renjia

Participants: Bridegroom, bride, their families, Bimo priests, friends, village elders, and community members

Groom's Location: Yang Village, Ebian Yi Autonomous County

Bride's Location: Honghua Township, Ebian Yi Autonomous County

Groom: Shua Renrenbu

Age: 22 years

Bride: E'e Ayi

Age: 21 years



Figure 26. Groom: Shua Renrenbu Bride: E'e Ayi

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 26 presents a photograph of the bride and groom taken after they completed all the wedding ceremonies. The couple first met through a matchmaker, and after developing a romantic relationship, they ultimately entered into marriage.

### 1.3 Detailed Description of the Wedding Process

#### 1.3.1 The First Day of the Wedding

Date: January 3, 2024

Content: On the first day of the wedding, the activities primarily focus on preparations and welcoming guests. The host family is busy preparing the banquet, warmly receiving visitors, and organizing entertainment to enhance the festive atmosphere of the celebration.

Description:

On the morning of the first day of the wedding, the Shua Ren family, along with relatives, friends, and neighbors who came to assist, began their busy preparations. Each person had a clear task: some were responsible for boiling water and slaughtering livestock (pigs and cattle) while welcoming guests; others took care of tea brewing, wiping tables, stir-frying vegetables, and serving dishes; and there were specific staff members responsible for keeping the wedding accounts. Despite the heavy workload, everything proceeded in an orderly manner.



Figure 27. The groom's relatives and neighbors prepare the food

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 27 shows the scene of slaughtering pigs to host relatives and friends during a Yi (彝) wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan. In Ebian Yi weddings, those responsible for the slaughtering are typically relatives and neighbors of the groom. The choice of meat for the wedding feast is generally determined by the family's financial condition. In this particular wedding, the hosts prepared both pork and beef to entertain the guests.



Figure 28. Groom's family cooking  
Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 28 depicts the cooking scene during a Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan. As the dishes served at Ebian Yi weddings are typically limited to two or three, with stews being the main course, multiple large pots are used to cook all the ingredients, ensuring that there is enough food to accommodate all guests.

By 11 a.m., the yard had become crowded with guests who had come to offer their congratulations and gifts. The hosts quickly arranged the dining tables and methodically organized the seating, ensuring that every guest was well taken care of.



Figure 29. The groom and his mother greet the guests with a toast  
Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 29 depicts the scene during a Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan, where the groom and his mother are welcoming guests. In Ebian Yi weddings, the

hosts use the act of toasting to greet their guests. The Yi people of Ebian believe that alcohol is the best way to express respect, friendship, and blessings, making the toasting ceremony an indispensable part of the wedding reception.



Figure 30. The groom's relatives and neighbors sat down for dinner

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 30 illustrates the scene during a Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan, where family, friends, and neighbors are seated for the meal. In Ebian Yi weddings, the hosts typically provide each guest with disposable bowls and chopsticks for easy cleanup. The wedding feast primarily features meat dishes, with fewer varieties of vegetables, reflecting the dietary characteristics of Yi wedding banquets.

At 3:00 PM, young women begin to perform the traditional Yi dance, Dati Dance, in the courtyard, creating a lively and joyful atmosphere. People of all ages eagerly join in. As the day progresses, the atmosphere becomes even more festive. At 5:30 PM, preparations for dinner begin, and after the meal, the groom's family and friends start decorating the newlywed's home to create a celebratory and warm ambiance.

In the evening, people once again take part in Yi dancing, which continues until 11:30 PM. Throughout the wedding preparation phase, the entire community is immersed in the celebratory atmosphere, collaboratively making detailed preparations for the formal wedding ceremony the following day.



Figure 31. Friends and family get together and dance

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 31 illustrates the scene during a Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan, where people gather to dance. In Yi weddings, young people celebrate by performing the traditional Yi Dati Dance, while the elderly and children watch or converse on the sidelines, creating a harmonious interactive atmosphere. This scene showcases the Yi people's strong cultural tradition of song and dance, as well as the intergenerational cultural transmission.

### 1.3.2 The Second Day of the Wedding

Date: January 4, 2024

Content: The rituals of the second day of the wedding, including the welcoming of the bride, water splashing, and the blessing ceremony.

Description:

In the morning, the groom's relatives and neighbors gather at the groom's home to assist in wedding preparations. After lunch, at 1:30 PM, 15 young men, referred to as Xianmu, are dispatched from the groom's family to the bride's family to escort the bride. These Xianmu are carefully selected youths, symbolizing the groom's family's respect and sincerity.

Before departing, the groom's family women offer each Xianmu a bowl of liquor and a pack of cigarettes as a gesture of blessing and support for the successful completion of their task. Then, the Xianmu take gifts such as alcohol, meat, candy, and money and head toward the bride's home to perform the wedding ritual.



Figure 32. Bride Escort Ceremony.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 32 illustrates the Bride-Receiving Ceremony during a Yi wedding in Ebian, Sichuan. In Yi weddings, the bride-receiving ceremony is a crucial ritual. The groom's family carefully selects the number of Xianmu, which must always be odd. These young men not only need to be young and handsome but also must be skilled in singing, dancing, wrestling, and possess eloquence, symbolizing the dignity and sincerity of the groom's family.

At 2:20 PM, the Xianmu group arrives at the bride's home. A scout from the groom's side has already informed the bride's family of the procession's arrival. The bride's family, especially the young women, have gathered along the path the Xianmu will take and prepared water to welcome them. As the Xianmu approach, the women use large basins, ladles, and wooden bowls to splash water on them, while bystanders cheer and encourage the procession, creating a lively and joyful atmosphere. After the "Xianmu" settle down, the young women apply soot from the cooking pot onto their faces. After a brief rest, the Xianmu hand over the arranged betrothal gifts to the bride's family. The bride's young women then offer them drinks and invite them to take their seats for a meal.



Figure 33. Water Splashing Ceremony.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 33 depicts the scene of water splashing during a Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan. The Yi people believe that clean water has the power to drive away evil spirits, banish demons, and bring happiness. Therefore, water is splashed during Yi weddings to express good wishes for a smooth ceremony and future happiness. This ritual fully embodies the cultural connotations and symbolic meaning of the Yi marriage customs.



Figure 34. Toasting and Soot Application Ceremony.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 34 illustrates the scene of toasting and applying soot from the cooking pot during a Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan. The Yi people regard toasting as an important ritual for expressing respect, friendship, and blessings. Meanwhile, applying soot from the cooking pot symbolizes the removal of evil and impurities, signifying wishes for a prosperous and harmonious future for the newlyweds. This ceremony also conveys good wishes to the welcoming party. These rituals not only

reflect the deep cultural significance embedded in Yi marriage customs, but also demonstrate the rich ceremonial symbolism, fully embodying the Yi people's aspirations for a good life and blessings for family harmony.



Figure 35. Bride's Family Banquet.  
Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 35 illustrates a scene in the Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian County, Sichuan, where Han compatriots participate in the wedding feast. In the villages of Ebian Yi Autonomous County, the Yi and Han peoples have coexisted harmoniously for a long time. The scene in the figure shows neighbors from the bride's family attending the wedding meal, reflecting the friendly relationship and cultural exchange between the two ethnic groups in the region.

After the meal, the Xianmu began assisting the Bimo in preparing the materials needed for the blessing ceremony. The ceremony took place outside the courtyard, where the Bimo used willow branches, Artemisia, and moneywort to set up a ritual array. The array was divided into three zones: black, floral, and white. Black represented inauspicious areas, floral symbolized places with both good and bad, and white indicated pure areas. Once the array was arranged, the Bimo began the blessing ceremony, which consisted of eight parts.

(1) First Part: The Bimo announces the commencement of the blessing ceremony to the participants, formally guiding them into the solemn ritual process.

(2) Second Part: The Bimo performs symbolic actions to cleanse the past, removing any inauspicious elements, and clearing the way for the bride's future.

(3) Third Part: The Bimo prays for the bride's blessing by moving from dark to light, symbolizing the bride's transition from impurity to a new, pure life.

(4) Fourth Part: Using a ritual staff dipped in water, the Bimo touches burning wooden sticks to extinguish the flame. This symbolic act represents the extinguishing of all negative influences.

(5) Fifth Part: The Bimo places hot stones on an unclean spot, and then pours clean water over them, causing smoke to rise. This represents the purification of the bride's clothes through the smoke. The clothes are then placed above the smoke, symbolizing the dissipation of negativity along with the smoke. Finally, the bride's garments are moved from the dark to the floral, and ultimately to the white area.

(6) Sixth Part: The Bimo leads a rooster through the ritual array, symbolizing the completion of one stage of the ceremony.

(7) Seventh Part: The Bimo raises a cup of water-soaked liquor, chanting blessings for the bride's happiness and future well-being.

(8) Eighth Part: Upon completing the chant, the Bimo hands the water-soaked liquor to the bride to drink, symbolizing the completion of the blessing ceremony. This stage emphasizes that by consuming the blessed liquor, the bride receives all the prayers and protection.

In the blessing ceremony, music serves as a vital medium for religious expression, closely intertwined with the ritual actions, thereby showcasing profound cultural and spiritual significance. The Bimo, as the central figure presiding over the ceremony, integrates music into the entire process of the blessing through the recitation of sacred texts. This not only highlights the sanctity and solemnity of the scriptures but also guides participants into a reverent religious atmosphere.



Figure 36. Xianmu Prepare Ritual Materials.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 36 depicts a scene in the Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian County, Sichuan, where the Xianmu assists the Bimo in preparing ritual materials. The Xianmu is responsible for stripping the bark from willow branches and cutting them into the required quantity and length according to the specifications of the ritual array. Once the Bimo has arranged the ritual array, the ceremony can officially begin.



Figure 37. Bimo Ceremony.

Source: Lin Yang, from fieldwork in 2024

Figure 37 depicts a scene from the Yi (彝) wedding ceremony in Ebian County, Sichuan, where the Bimo conducts the blessing ritual. During the ritual, the Bimo recites sacred texts continuously, with the entire ceremony lasting for 18 minutes. The blessing ceremony is one of the most crucial elements of the wedding in Ebian Yi Autonomous County. The Bimo is sent by the groom's family and, together with the Xianmu, travels to the bride's home. The ritual is typically performed outdoors at the bride's house.

In the evening, we received a notification from the bride's family that the Zuo and Kes song contest, originally scheduled for the evening and the following morning, had unfortunately been canceled. According to the divination results from the Bimo, it was determined that the bride could not participate in the duet competition during this year's wedding ceremony. As a result, these activities were called off. In Yi weddings, the arrangement of entertainment activities such as Zuo and Kes typically depends on various factors, including the economic status of the hosting family, the availability of appropriate performers, and the results of the Bimo's divination. Consequently, the complete documentation of such singing traditions during wedding ceremonies has become increasingly rare. We deeply regret

the cancellation of these activities. As a substitute for the song contest, the guests engaged in drinking, chatting, and playing cards.

### 1.3.3 The Third Day of the Wedding

Date: January 5, 2024

Content: The rituals of the third day of the wedding, including the crying wedding ceremony, carrying of the bride, announcing the good news, and the identification ritual.

Description:

At 5 AM, the bride is carried by her younger brother to a fruit tree outside the courtyard, adhering to strict traditional rituals. During this process, the bride must be carried sideways to avoid contact between her sensitive parts and the person carrying her, demonstrating respect for the customs. The ground is covered with corn stalks and a blanket of cloth is placed on top of them. The bride stands on this surface, symbolizing fertility, abundance, and a prosperous, happy life.

Once the bride is dressed, her family presents a bowl of cooked meat as a ritual offering, symbolizing their blessings and hopes for her new life ahead. At this point, two of the bride's relatives begin to sing the Re Da crying wedding song. The melody is slow and lyrical, filled with emotion, expressing feelings of separation. The performers engage emotionally with the bride through their heartfelt singing, and she, moved by the music, gradually shows signs of sadness as she responds to the emotional content of the song.

As the song continues, the bride starts to cry. This crying not only conveys her reluctance to leave her family but also reflects the deep emotional meaning expressed in the song. The inclusion of the crying wedding song adds rich cultural significance to the ceremony, enhancing the solemnity of the event and evoking an emotional resonance among the participants. This, in turn, creates a warm and touching atmosphere at the scene.

After the crying ritual concludes, the bride is again carried by the younger brother and placed onto the wedding vehicle. Throughout the ceremony, the bride's feet are not allowed to touch the ground, maintaining the sanctity of the ritual. A portion of the bride's family accompanies her as she is sent off, while her parents

remain absent, symbolizing their blessing for her independent life. With this, the wedding ceremony on the bride's side is brought to a fulfilling conclusion.



Figure 38. Bimo Ceremony.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 38 depicts a scene from a Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan, showing the bride being dressed. During this process, elders assist the bride in putting on three skirts and three tops, one of which is the skirt she wore during her coming-of-age ceremony. For the Yi people in Ebian, wedding attire must consist of an odd number of items, and the bride's age at marriage must also be an odd number. This tradition stems from the belief that odd numbers symbolize prosperity and good fortune, while even numbers are considered inauspicious. Therefore, both the number of pieces in the wedding attire and the bride's age must adhere to this cultural practice of oddness.



Figure 39. Kujia Ceremony.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 39 illustrates a scene from the Crying Wedding Song ceremony during a Yi wedding in Ebian, Sichuan. The Crying Wedding Song is one of the most significant rituals in the Yi wedding ceremony. Traditionally, these songs expressed dissatisfaction with marriage, but today, they predominantly convey the bride's feelings of sorrow and reluctance at leaving her family and loved ones.



Figure 40. The Xianmu carried the bride.

Source: Lin Yang, from fieldwork in 2024

Figure 40 depicts a scene from a Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan, where the bride is carried by a Xianmu member. In the Yi wedding customs of Ebian, the bride's feet must not touch the ground before arriving at the groom's home, as doing so is considered inauspicious.

At 8:00 AM, as the wedding procession approached the groom's house, two young people from the bride's family were sent ahead to announce her arrival and inform the groom's family to prepare for the ceremony and send someone to receive her. Prior to the bride's arrival, the groom's elder family members spread ferns under the fruit trees in the courtyard, symbolizing fertility and good fortune. Due to the fact that the bride's mother-in-law did not have a new shelter constructed during her wedding, the bride was required to follow the same customs as her mother-in-law did upon entering the groom's house. Once the bride was carried by the Xianmu to the courtyard of the groom's house, the Xianmu laid a blanket on the mugwort and cardboard, inviting the bride to sit on it.

Once settled, the groom's unmarried cousin presented the bride with water-soaked alcohol, buckwheat cakes, and rice. After the meal, the separation ceremony was held. The groom's cousin first applied pig lard on the bride's head three times,

followed by combing her hair three times, transforming her low ponytail into two braids. Then, the cousin removed two layers of the bride's clothing, symbolizing the end of her childhood. Following this, the "breaking the thread" ceremony was held, where the cousin cut the red headband from the bride's head to sever ties with any inauspicious elements. Finally, the bride's head was covered, and she wore a conical hat.

Subsequently, the groom's younger cousin carried the bride into the bridal room. Once the bride entered the room, the groom was permitted to enter. After exchanging rings, the groom's family began to serve the guests. Once lunch was concluded, the guests gradually left, marking the completion of the wedding ceremony.



Figure 41. Bride Escort Ceremony.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 41 illustrates the scene in a Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan, where the groom's family and friends welcome the bride. Throughout the ceremony, members of the Xianmu take turns carrying the bride to the groom's house, where she is placed beneath a fruit tree outside. Once all wedding rituals are completed, the bride and groom are allowed to sit together.



Figure 42. Bride Takes Her Seat.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 42 depicts the scene in a Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan, where the bride takes her seat. In Yi tradition, the bride's feet must not touch the ground before entering the marital home. Therefore, during the wedding ceremony, fern fronds, cardboard, and a Xianmu mat are spread on the ground, ensuring the bride sits on them to adhere to traditional customs and avoid any inauspicious symbols.



Figure 43. Distinguishing Ceremony and Thread-Breaking Ceremony.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 43 depicts the scenes of the Distinction Ceremony and Breaking the Thread Ceremony in a Yi wedding in Ebian, Sichuan. In Yi weddings, both the Distinction Ceremony and the Breaking the Thread Ceremony are among the most significant rituals. These ceremonies not only carry profound cultural symbolism but also reflect transitions and blessings within the traditional Yi marriage customs.



Figure 44. Distinguishing Ceremony and Thread-Breaking Ceremony.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 44 illustrates the scene of the bride entering the bridal chamber in a Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian, Sichuan. In this tradition, the bride is carried into the bridal chamber by the groom's cousin. Following this, the bride and groom exchange rings, marking the completion of the wedding ceremony.

Three days after the wedding ceremony, the groom, accompanied by family and friends, carries gifts such as wine and meat to the bride's family home to pay respects to her parents. During this visit, the couple is welcomed with the traditional water-pouring ceremony by the bride's parents, symbolizing their welcome. The bride's family also invites relatives and neighbors to slaughter pigs and drink wine, celebrating the occasion together. After lunch, everyone returns to the groom's house, where a family-wide Bimo ritual is held. According to the Bimo, this ritual symbolizes registering the bride into the household and informing the ancestors that the bride has officially joined the groom's family.

In the past, after visiting the bride's family, the groom would return home with his relatives, while the bride would remain at her parental home. She would only return to her husband's home during holidays or special occasions. In some regions, a ceremony to bring the bride home for the first time after the wedding would take place on the ninth day, symbolizing the longevity of the marriage. However, this stay was typically temporary, and the bride would often return to her parental home after staying at the groom's house for ten days to half a month. Over multiple trips back and forth, the bride and groom would gradually live together and have children. This

process could take several years, with some lasting three to five years, and others as short as one or two years.

However, in modern society, this custom has undergone significant changes. In the eight weddings the researcher participated in, the majority of the couples returned to the groom's home on the same day the wedding ceremony concluded, and a Bimo ritual was held the first time the bride entered her new home. Originally, the Yi traditional wedding symbolized the establishment of the marital relationship but did not imply immediate cohabitation. This practice has evolved with the passage of time.

#### 1.4 Ceremony Process Table

To provide a clearer representation of the Yi wedding ceremony process, researchers have compiled a structured timeline outlining the chronological order of each ritual along with its cultural significance. The details are as follows:

Time	Chinese Ceremony Name	English Ceremony Name	Significance
Morning, January 3, 2024	Choubei (筹备) Yingbin (迎宾)	Preparations and Guest Reception	Demonstrates the hospitality of the Yi people and ensures a smooth wedding reception.
Late Morning, January 3, 2024	Songli (送礼) Yanxi (宴席)	Guest Arrival and Banquet	Strengthens social bonds and reflects the ceremonial and relational aspects of Yi wedding customs.
Afternoon, January 3, 2024	Taiowu (跳舞) Qingzhu (庆祝)	Dance Celebrations	Showcases Yi dance culture and enhances the celebratory atmosphere.

Evening, January 3, 2024	Buzhi xinfan (布置新房) Qingzhu (庆祝)	House Decoration and Evening Festivities	Decorating the new house symbolizes the beginning of a new life, reinforcing family and community ties.
After Lunch, January 4, 2024	Yingqin (迎亲)	Bride Escort	The bride escort symbolizes the groom's family's sincerity and respect for the bride.
2:20 PM, January 4, 2024	Poshui (泼水)	Water Splashing	Water splashing represents purification and good fortune, while soot application symbolizes the removal of bad omens.
3:00 PM, January 4, 2024	Qifu (祈福)	Blessing	The blessing ritual ensures the bride's happiness and highlights the religious beliefs of the Yi people.
Evening, January 4, 2024	Saige (赛歌)	Singing competition	The discontinuation of the traditional singing competition reflects the evolving nature of modern wedding ceremonies.
5:00 AM, January 5, 2024	Kujia (哭嫁) Beixin niang (背新娘)	Crying marriage and Bride Carrying	The Crying marriage expresses sorrow for leaving the natal family, while bride carrying symbolizes reverence for tradition.
8:00 AM, January 5, 2024	Baoxi (报喜)	Announcement	The announcement notifies the groom's family of the bride's arrival and marks a significant transition.

Noon, January 5, 2024	Fenbian (分辨) Duanxian (断线)	Distinction and Breaking the Thread	The Distinction and Thread-Breaking Ceremony signifies the bride's formal transition into her new social identity.
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Source:Lin Yang

## 2. Types of Ebian Yi Wedding Songs

### 2.1 Classification of Wedding Songs

Between 2022 and 2024, the researcher, with the assistance of the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Publicity Department, Cultural Center, and intangible cultural heritage practitioners, conducted multiple field studies. It was observed that the government of Ebian Yi Autonomous County classifies wedding songs into three categories : religious songs, crying wedding songs, and entertainment songs (such as Zuo, Kes, and Kezhi). These songs are performed entirely a cappella, with no instruments or accompaniment. Religious and crying wedding songs are the core components of the wedding ceremony, playing an indispensable role in every wedding. Entertainment songs (such as Zuo, Kes, Kezhi, etc.) are dependent on factors such as the economic situation of the hosting family, the availability of suitable performers, and the Bimo divination results.

Before the researcher participated in the fieldwork for the wedding from January 3 to 5, 2024, the intangible cultural heritage practitioner, Muse Wangti, informed the researcher that this particular wedding was one of the rare occasions where the full range of Ebian Yi wedding songs could be displayed. However, during the wedding on January 4, 2024, based on the results of the Bimo's divination, it was considered inappropriate to perform entertainment songs that day, and the originally planned duet entertainment songs were canceled. As a result, the music of this wedding was limited to two categories: religious songs and crying wedding songs.

#### 2.1.1 Religious Songs

In Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, Yi (彝) families conduct at least three medium to small-scale Qifu ceremonies each year. The Qifu ceremony

varies widely, ranging from a few hours of simple rituals to large-scale events lasting nine days and nights, providing diverse practical contexts for the performance of Bimo music. Bimo music is widely spread among the people, and the Bimo uses various scales for singing according to the needs of different ceremonies and the content of the scriptures, typically in a solo form. During the Qifu ceremony, the Bimo combines Yi's unique literature and music, creating a profound and ever-changing artistic style through chanting and reciting scriptures. Its melodies can echo with the ancient and simple charm, or evoke a chilling sense of fear. At times, the music is passionate and soaring, while at others, it is deep and heavy. This rich emotional expression offers the audience a mysterious and profound experience.

It is noteworthy that Bimo songs from different factions exhibit distinct melodic styles. These songs vary in modes, tonality, rhythm, and melody, showing significant diversity. Therefore, Bimo music is not a singular form but a complex system consisting of various musical elements, with each faction's Bimo songs possessing unique musical characteristics. This diversity fully reflects the complexity and regional differences in Bimo culture's musical expression.

#### (1) Song Content

The Qifu Song is a mandatory musical piece performed during the Ebian Yi wedding blessing ceremony, consisting of two parts: the Bichang Shi and the Bisong Shi. Each part has its own distinct musical characteristics and cultural significance.

**Bichang Shi:** Bichang Shi is a vocal performance form that is conducted through singing, often using suggestive interjections (such as Ah-ha or A-yi). These interjections not only guide the singing but also help to create a sacred atmosphere for the ceremony. The melody of the introduction is highly flexible, typically accompanied by vibrato and glottal articulation, creating a resonant, deep, and penetrating sound. The melody generally stays within an octave, following a stepwise progression, which conveys a solemn and profound style. This is in harmony with the religious and ceremonial nature of the wedding blessing.

**Bisong Shi:** This part is primarily recited in a chanting manner, with the tone of the language following the rhythm. Compared to the Bichang Shi, the melody in the Bisong Shi is less pronounced, but the emotional expression is conveyed through rhythmic variation and a high-pitched tone. The voice in Bisong Shi is both beautiful

and soaring, alternating with the singing, forming a unique performance style that blends singing and recitation. This form enhances the ceremonial feel of the song, emphasizing the critical function of the wedding ceremony, which is to pray for peace and offer blessings.

#### (2) Performance Format

The Qifu Song is a traditional folk song specifically performed during the wedding blessing ceremony of the Ebian Yi ethnic group. As an indispensable core musical element of the wedding ritual, the Qifu Song is typically presented as a solo performance. It is usually performed outdoors at the bride's home, with the singing scheduled for the second day of the wedding, typically in the afternoon after the arrival of the groom's procession at the bride's home.

#### (3) Characteristics

**Performer:** The song is performed by a Bimo, a religious leader in the Yi (彝) community.

**Language:** The song is sung in Old Yi, a traditional dialect of the Yi people.

**Performance Style:** It is an unaccompanied solo vocal performance.

**Transmission:** The song is passed down orally from generation to generation. The lyrics incorporate fixed texts from sacred scriptures, while additional context-specific content is included, with some improvisation in the melody.

**Lyric Structure:** The lyrics follow a structure of parallelism, where lines and phrases mirror each other, maintaining a balanced and rhythmic pattern.

**Performance Requirements and Taboos:** The scripture portions of the song must be performed accurately without errors. Additionally, the song is prohibited from being sung indoors.

#### (4) Functions

The Qifu Song plays a significant role in the wedding ceremony in two main aspects. Firstly, it serves as a form of chanting through which blessings are invoked for the bride, seeking to expel evil spirits, ensure safety, and pray for the fertility of offspring and family harmony, thereby imbuing the wedding with a sacred religious significance. Secondly, as a central musical element of the blessing ritual, the Qifu Song further enhances the solemnity of the ceremony, symbolizing good wishes for

the bride and emphasizing the functional and cultural significance of Yi (彝) wedding music in religious rituals and its critical role in cultural transmission.

### 2.1.2 Crying wedding Songs

The Crying wedding song is deeply embedded within Yi culture, playing a pivotal role in both pre-wedding and wedding ceremonies. It embodies profound cultural meanings and rich social significance. In the pre-wedding ceremony, Crying wedding songs are typically performed by two or more women. The lyrics often reflect a retrospective view of the daughter's upbringing and express gratitude for her parents' care. These songs serve as an emotional vessel for familial bonds and mark an important moment before the wedding ceremony begins.

During the wedding ceremony, Crying wedding songs are presented in two main forms: first, during the Zuomu Mo ritual, where representatives from both the bride and groom's families perform a duet, with two participants engaging in a call-and-response style; second, after the bride has completed her dressing and preparation, female relatives or friends of the bride perform the song. Through these musical expressions, the songs convey the complex emotions of relatives, including their reluctance to part with the bride and their blessings for her future marriage.

In traditional society, Crying wedding songs also carried an important social critique, particularly concerning arranged marriages and the practice of bride price, serving as an outcry against the oppression of Yi women under the slavery system. These songs often portrayed Yi women's helplessness and resistance to their fate, expressing their desire for autonomous marriages. Additionally, they reflect the hardships faced by daughters during their upbringing, highlighting the profound gratitude towards parents for their care and the sorrow associated with the moment of separation.

As society and culture have evolved, both the content and form of Crying wedding songs have undergone changes. Today, these songs are less focused on protest and more on expressing the emotional farewell and well-wishes for the bride. This shift reflects the progress of social systems and the transformation of marriage practices, while also underscoring the changing roles and status of Yi women in contemporary society.

Common Crying wedding songs include: Re Da, Gan Mo A Niu, Jiujiu De Laili, Qiangqin De Laili, Toupa De Laili, Duishange De Laili, Xiangnian Mama, Mama De Nver, and Hunyin Ziji Zuozhu. These songs, each with its unique characteristics, also reflect the evolving position of Yi women within the context of marriage systems.

#### (1) Song Content

Re Da, an indispensable Crying wedding song in the wedding ceremonies of the Ebian Yi people, exhibits notable diversity in terms of its tonality, key, rhythm, and melody across different regions. This diversity not only reflects regional cultural differences but also embodies the unique understanding of marriage and family within the Yi community. In Ebian Yi wedding rituals, Re Da is typically performed in two singing styles: crying while singing and singing without crying.

The crying while singing style is characterized by the performer shedding tears while singing, expressing an emotional tension of song amidst tears, tears within song. This style profoundly conveys the sorrow and reluctance the bride feels as she leaves her family, with rich and complex emotional layers. The emotional expression here is heightened by the simultaneous act of crying, which amplifies the sorrow conveyed through the song.

In contrast, the singing without crying style replaces crying with long, melodious singing. Through changes in pitch and melody, the performer conveys emotional depth. Although there is no accompanying crying, the song's emotional content remains sorrowful, with the melodic rise and fall creating a deeper emotional resonance.

#### (2) Performance Format

Re Da in Ebian Yi wedding ceremonies is typically performed using a call-and-response style, a form that not only enhances the ritualistic nature of the performance but also amplifies the transmission and expression of emotions. As a core musical element of the wedding ceremony, the performance of Re Da is often held beneath the fruit trees in the bride's family yard, a location rich in cultural symbolism within Yi marriage customs, representing the continuity and propagation of life.

Call-and-response: In this performance style, an elder female typically begins the singing, and another woman responds by singing in unison. The leader guides the emotional ebb and flow of the song, while the respondent reinforces the emotional expression through the repeated melody. This duet form not only strengthens the interaction between the bride and her family and relatives but also conveys collective emotional support and comfort.

### (3) Characteristics

Performers: Traditionally, Crying wedding songs are sung by the bride, her mother, relatives, and friends. In contemporary settings, this role is typically assumed by the bride's relatives or friends.

Language of Performance: The song is sung in the Yi language.

Form of Performance: The performance is a cappella and follows a call-and-response structure.

Transmission of the Song: The song is passed down orally, with fixed lyrics and melodies; however, improvisation may be incorporated depending on the context of the performance, providing a degree of flexibility.

Lyrical Structure: The lyrics often follow a repetitive, parallel structure, characterized by strong rhythm and rhyme, which enhances the aesthetic appeal of the music.

Performance Requirements and Taboos: In Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Crying wedding songs are exclusively sung by women. During performance, the lyrics must be recited accurately, as any deviation from the fixed content is considered inappropriate, ensuring the solemnity of the ceremony and the correct conveyance of cultural meaning.

### (4) Functions

Re Da in the wedding ceremony plays a significant role in two main aspects. First, it expresses the complex emotions of the bride and her family regarding the imminent separation, showcasing a profound emotional depth. Second, as a crucial component of the wedding ritual, Re Da marks the bride's departure from her parental home, carrying symbolic significance. At the same time, Re Da enhances the overall emotional atmosphere of the ceremony, making the event more solemn and moving.

### 3. Functions of Ebian Yi Wedding Songs

In the daily life of the Ebian Yi people, music holds an important cultural position, permeating various life rituals and everyday activities. Whether in significant ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, and other rites of passage, or in leisurely moments such as drinking gatherings and casual conversations, the Yi people habitually express their emotions and document their life experiences through song and dance. It is noteworthy that singing tends to be more widespread and favored than dancing within this culture, due to its convenience and the fact that it is not constrained by the environment. Regardless of time or place, the Yi people can always use song to express their emotions. This cultural trait of expressing emotions through music has become deeply embedded in the daily lives of the Yi people, making it an indispensable part of their culture. (Luo Yaxi, interview, August 2023)

#### 3.1 Functions of Blessing Songs

##### (1) Religious Function

The Yi people are characterized by a diverse range of belief systems, primarily including ancestor worship, nature worship, and the worship of household deities. Over the course of their long history of production and daily life, the Yi people have developed a set of core worldview concepts, often referred to as the Three Views—the view of the Three Realms (the celestial realm, the earthly realm, and the underworld), the view that all things possess spirits, and the view of duality in all things, such as male and female. These beliefs have profoundly influenced the formation of Yi culture, especially as manifested in the Bimo culture.

Bimo culture, as one of the core elements of Yi culture, encompasses a wide range of fields including philosophy, history, education, astronomy, literature, customs and rituals, and medicine. It continues to have a broad influence in the Yi community of Ebian Yi Autonomous County, particularly in the performance of Bimo rituals and the related mythological narratives.

In the Yi wedding's blessing ceremony in Ebian, the Bimo plays a central role through the chanting of sacred texts, functioning to ward off evil spirits, avert disasters, and offer blessings. The primary purpose of the blessing ceremony is to pray for the happiness, safety, and fertility of the newlyweds. Additionally, through the Bimo rituals rooted in primitive religious beliefs, the ceremony imbues the

wedding with sanctity and solemnity. Throughout the entire process, the Bimo acts as an intermediary between humanity and the natural world, further enhancing the sacred atmosphere of the blessing ceremony and ensuring the smooth progression of the wedding.

This phenomenon not only demonstrates the significant religious function of Bimo culture in Yi weddings but also highlights its core position within the local social and cultural framework. As an integral part of Yi spiritual life, Bimo culture not only has a profound impact on the sanctity of wedding rituals but also carries rich social and historical significance at broader cultural and religious levels.

### (2) Cultural Transmission Function

In Yi society, the Bimo plays multiple roles, not only overseeing religious affairs but also deeply involved in various aspects of daily life, including childbirth, marriage, funerals, illness, festivals, hunting, and farming. The Bimo holds both spiritual authority and the responsibility for cultural transmission, positioning them as a vital intellectual class and cultural transmitter within Yi society. As guardians of Yi culture, the Bimo plays an irreplaceable role in rituals and the transmission of cultural knowledge.

Bimo culture is not merely a religious system but encompasses all aspects of Yi traditional culture, becoming an encyclopedic and integrated cultural framework. Through written records and ritual practices, Bimo culture transcends both time and space, preserving the Yi people's belief system and cultural traditions. It has a lasting influence on the spiritual life of Yi society.

In the blessing ceremony of Yi weddings in Ebian, the role of the Bimo is not limited to religious activities but also highlights the important function of cultural transmission. By chanting ancient scriptures, the Bimo passes on the Yi people's beliefs, traditional values, and cultural history to the next generation. As a vital vehicle for cultural transmission, the blessing ceremony ensures the continuity of Yi cultural memory across generations through oral tradition.

### (3) Social Function

In the Yi wedding blessing ceremony in Ebian, the participation of the Bimo imparts significant social integration to the ritual. As a religious authority and elder within the family, the Bimo not only represents sacred religious power but also

symbolizes the family and community's recognition and support of the marriage. Through the Bimo's chanting, the blessing ceremony endows the wedding with solemn social meaning, further strengthening the social bonds within the family and between the family and the broader community.

The Bimo's blessing songs in the wedding ritual represent the collective blessings of the family and their recognition of the marriage, reinforcing the position of marriage as a core component of both the family and societal structure. Through this process, the wedding becomes not only a celebration for the individual or family but also a crucial mechanism for maintaining family unity, community solidarity, and social harmony.

### 3.2 Functions of Crying wedding Songs

In the Ebian Yi region, the Crying wedding song remains an indispensable part of the wedding ceremony. However, its meaning and function have quietly evolved, and the song no longer carries the sadness and dissatisfaction it once did. With the development of society, the Crying wedding custom has incorporated new content and significance during its transmission, undergoing a qualitative transformation. Today, many Yi women, having found their desired marriage partners, approach their weddings with joy, no longer harboring the past feelings of resentment. The Crying wedding song now more frequently expresses the blessings and feelings of reluctance from parents and family members as they bid farewell to the bride. (Ao jia, August 2023, Interview)

#### (1) Emotional Expression Function

The Le E Te Yi is regarded as the genealogical record and cultural treasure of the Yi people, a historical and culturally significant ethnographic scripture. Through this text, one can trace the way of life during the matrilineal clan society period of the Yi people. During this era, society was matrilineal, with family lineage passing through the female line, and women held dominant roles within both the family and society. However, with the establishment of the patrilineal system, the Yi people gradually transitioned to a patrilineal society, where the status of women declined, and patriarchal authority became increasingly dominant. This shift led to the emergence of gender inequality, deeply affecting marriage and family structures.

Women gradually lost autonomy in marriage, becoming victims of arranged marriages.

In this context, arranged marriages placed women in a subordinate position within the marriage, unable to freely express their emotions. In the past, women used the traditional practice of Crying marriage as a means of protesting against the injustice of their marriages, expressing their repressed feelings and dissatisfaction. Crying marriage was not only a form of emotional release but also a way of seeking psychological comfort. Over time, this form evolved into the Crying marriage song in Yi wedding ceremonies, becoming a form of lyrical music with profound emotional expression. It conveys both the reluctance of the family to part with the bride and deep blessings for her future.

#### (2) Cultural Transmission Function

The Crying marriage song serves as an important medium for the cultural transmission of the Yi people, preserving their traditional music forms, language, and marriage customs through generational transmission within families and communities. In Yi wedding crying marriage ceremonies, participants not only enjoy the aesthetic experience of the music but also learn and transmit cultural knowledge and the belief system of the Yi people.

The lyrics of crying marriage songs often include historical legends, customs, religious beliefs, and common life knowledge, thus fulfilling the dual function of a musical performance and a cultural record. Through comparative analysis, it is apparent that certain crying marriage songs feature a narrative structure, incorporating historical events and cultural meanings, thus acting as a medium for carrying the collective historical memory of the Yi people.

In addition to the content of the lyrics, cultural transmission is further reinforced through teaching by word and example in the ceremony. During the collective Crying marriage ceremony at an Ebian Yi wedding, singers use music passed down through generations to express their blessings and reluctance for the bride. Participants, through this immersive experience, strengthen their sense of cultural identity and belonging. The younger generation internalizes these emotions and cultural values by imitating and participating, thus incorporating them into their ethnic identity. Through the transmission of emotions, crying marriage songs are not

only a musical symbol in the wedding ceremony but also a tool for the transmission of the emotional and value-based aspects of ethnic culture.

### (3) Social Cohesion Function

Yi wedding songs, through collective participation, strengthen the bonds between family and community members, enhancing collective identity and social cohesion. As a crucial ceremony involving both families and the community, the wedding reflects the interconnection and cooperation between families, in-laws, and neighbors. In the process of Yi marriage, the groom's family cooperates to bring the bride, while the bride's family collectively sends her off, making the wedding a collective action that strengthens family and community unity.

Wedding songs serve not only as a medium for emotional exchange but also provide a space for participants of different identities, classes, and ages to share cultural knowledge and values. Through collective singing, participants express emotions, voice their wishes, and witness the union of the marriage. In this process, music plays a social function, serving not only as a form of entertainment but also as an important tool for fostering cohesion within the family and community.

The wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi further reinforces emotional connections within the family, deepening communication and cooperation between its members. At the same time, the wedding offers an opportunity for interaction and solidarity among neighbors. Thus, the crying marriage song not only conveys emotions during the wedding ceremony but also serves as a vital cultural medium for maintaining social cohesion within families and communities.

### (4) Educational and Moral Instruction Function

Yi wedding songs play a significant educational and moralizing role in the wedding ceremony, reminding the newlywed couple of their responsibilities and obligations within marriage, particularly their commitments to family and society. These songs subtly convey expectations about marriage, family, and social roles, becoming an essential component in the socialization process of both the bride and groom.

Historically, the Yi written language was primarily held by the Bimo, local leaders, and other elite classes, with the general populace passing on knowledge through oral culture. Wedding songs, therefore, have become an important tool for

cultural transmission, conveying the teachings and behavioral norms of elders to the younger generation through collective participation. In the wedding ceremony, which serves as a microcosm of society, participants not only learn social customs but also transmit traditional morals, cultural knowledge, and ethnic arts through song. Ebian Yi people continue to maintain this tradition, reinforcing the awareness of social responsibility and cultural values through their wedding rituals.

#### **4. Significance of Ebian Yi Wedding Songs**

Among the traditional festivals of the Yi people, the most significant is undoubtedly the Yi New Year. Additionally, marriage ceremonies hold an important place in their cultural practices. The life of the Yi people is always immersed in music. Of particular note is the unique Bimo music, which serves as a vital carrier of Yi culture. Bimo rituals are conducted nearly year-round, with ceremonies taking place daily. Through these rituals, the Yi people seek blessings, ward off evil, cure illnesses, and call souls to rest. Bimo music primarily consists of recitations and singing, making it an important medium for transmitting many of Yi's cultural traditions and knowledge. The Bimo is not only regarded as a wise figure in Yi society but also masters various forms of art, including music and painting. These artistic forms constitute an indispensable part of Yi culture. (Luo Yaxi, August 2023, Interview)

##### **4.1 The Significant Value of Religious Songs**

###### **(1) Historical Value**

Bimo songs, as religious music, are created by the Bimo and have been passed down orally, preserving unique modes, vocal styles, and recitative tones. These songs have become a distinctive medium for transmitting Bimo culture. The widespread use of Bimo music in Yi society makes it an invaluable resource for researching the history of Yi music and religious music. For instance, in Yi weddings and daily rituals, Bimo songs not only convey religious and cultural messages but also document important historical events and social changes. These musical forms hold significant importance for the research of ancient music transmission paths and the evolution of musical forms.

###### **(2) Literary Value**

Bimo songs, as a repository of Yi poetic tradition, provide invaluable examples for the transmission of Bimo culture and stand as a testament to the tradition

of combining song and poetry. The lyrics of these songs are often derived from sacred texts, encompassing historical origins, proverbs, and sayings, thus showcasing Yi's rich literary heritage. Through Bimo songs, many poems and incantations from the Bimo scriptures have been preserved and propagated, offering critical resources for the research of Yi literature and oral traditions.

### (3) Artistic Value

Bimo songs, as a core element of Yi culture, offer significant insights for modern music composition. Their unique melodies and rhythms embody the wisdom of the Yi people, encompassing cultural connotations related to politics, economics, philosophy, literature, art, medicine, military affairs, customs, and rituals. Bimo songs have a profound impact on the innovation of ethnic music, making them invaluable resources for the research of religious music and indigenous music. They exhibit high artistic value, reflecting the cultural depth of the Yi people.

### (4) Social Value

Bimo songs are a vivid representation of the Yi people's ultimate concerns, enhancing ethnic identity and psychological belonging within the group. For instance, in Yi traditional festivals and wedding ceremonies, Bimo songs, through their educational and emotional expression, strengthen community cohesion and national pride. By blending education with entertainment, Bimo songs play an irreplaceable role in the transmission of traditional culture, contributing to the promotion of ethnic unity and social harmony.

## 4.2 Importance of Crying Wedding Songs

As an ancient custom that has persisted for thousands of years among the Yi (彝) people of the Greater and Lesser Liangshan regions, the Yi Crying wedding songs not only showcase its emotional depth but also reflect the rich cultural significance of the Yi people. By analyzing the content of these songs, one can uncover specific historical characteristics of marriage, which reveal some residual forms of ancient marital customs. At the same time, Crying wedding songs express the Yi people's struggle against an unjust marriage system and their longing for a happy marital life. Thus, Crying wedding songs embody profound cultural heritage

and hold significant historical and social meaning.(Muse Wangti, April 2023, Interview)

#### (1) Historical Value

The Yi Crying wedding songs is a core component of Yi culture, containing customs that have been passed down for thousands of years and showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the Yi people. These songs not only record many of the marriage customs of the Yi people but also provide valuable references for researching the marital conditions, folk art, and rituals of specific historical periods. They reflect the remnants of ancient marriage systems while also expressing the Yi people's resistance to these systems and their desire for happy marriages. Consequently, crying wedding songs hold an important place in historical research.

#### (2) Cultural Value

The Yi Crying wedding song is not only a symbol of ethnic customs but also an embodiment of the personal freedom and independence of Yi women, reflecting the spirit of individual liberation. Its cultural value offers important insights into the construction of contemporary marriage ethics. The accessibility, conciseness, and vivid imagery of the Crying wedding songs not only enrich Yi culture but also contribute to the broader landscape of China's diverse cultural heritage.

#### (3) Artistic Value

From both a literary and musical perspective, Yi Crying wedding songs possess remarkable artistic value. Their melodies are soaring and melodic, with a gentle and extended rhythm, while the tunes are beautiful and captivating, showcasing the high artistic achievement of collective oral creation. These songs hold significant aesthetic and referential value in enriching Chinese folk literature and music.

#### (4) Social Value

In modern society, Yi Crying wedding songs not only have a positive social significance in promoting the independence of women's personalities and expressing the liberation of individuality, but they also serve as an important avenue for cultural transmission. Their integration into the modern tourism economy has facilitated cultural display and exchange, thereby promoting local economic development and further enhancing their social influence.

## 5. Challenges Facing Ebian Yi Wedding Songs

To gain a deeper understanding of the current state of wedding ceremonies in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, the researchers conducted a questionnaire survey with participants from actual weddings, aiming to collect firsthand data on cultural transmission, music performance, and social impact. By combining these data with relevant literature and other interview content, the researchers identified several key issues and their underlying causes.

### (1) Formalization of Wedding Ritual Content

The wedding ceremony of the Ebian Yi (彝) people remains an important part of local culture. Although the younger generation has some understanding of the wedding process, they lack a deeper understanding of the cultural significance and symbolic meaning behind the ceremony. The planning and execution of the wedding are primarily led by middle-aged and elderly individuals, with younger people mostly participating according to the instructions of their elders, lacking initiative and a profound understanding. This generational gap has led to the gradual formalization of the wedding ceremony, posing challenges to cultural transmission.

Surveys indicate that the participation of young people in weddings is typically passive. They follow the instructions of their elders to complete the ceremony, without fully understanding the underlying symbolic meaning. Interviews revealed that the younger generation often needs to rely on the explanations of elders to articulate the meaning of certain rituals, indicating that cultural transmission is more a process of passive reception rather than active learning. This phenomenon is partially attributed to the accelerating pace of modernization and urbanization, which has led to a decreased focus on traditional culture among young people. As a result, wedding ceremonies are becoming increasingly formalized, with cultural significance gradually being lost in the process of transmission.

### (2) Weakening of Language and Script Transmission

Although the Yi language is still widely spoken in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, the transmission of the Yi script has significantly weakened. A survey revealed that 95% of respondents are unable to read Yi characters, reflecting a severe decline in the transmission of written culture, with cultural continuity now largely

dependent on oral transmission. However, relying solely on oral transmission does not ensure the integrity and sustainability of cultural preservation.

The survey findings show that Ebian Yi Autonomous County is a region where both Yi and Han people reside. The Yi language is partially preserved through oral transmission within families, and many people can communicate in Yi, but Yi script is rarely used in daily life. (Azuo Ouluo, Interview, July 2023) mentioned in an interview: "When I was young, learning Yi script relied mostly on oral transmission. It wasn't until I reached middle school that the school began offering Yi script courses, and we started learning it systematically. However, because Chinese was mainly used in daily life, the application of Yi script gradually decreased, and much of it was forgotten." He further noted that while his children can understand Yi, they almost never speak it voluntarily. This phenomenon is not an isolated case, as the children of his friends face similar challenges.

In the educational system, Mandarin is the primary language of instruction, and bilingual education (including both Yi and Chinese) has not been widely promoted. As a result, the younger generation has almost no ability to read and write in Yi script. This language choice in the education system has further exacerbated the disconnection in Yi script transmission, posing a serious threat to the continuation and preservation of Yi written culture. Azuo Ouluo expressed deep concern about this issue, stating that language transmission is facing a severe challenge and has begun to consider ways to address this problem.

### (3) Marginalization of Bimo Culture

With the growing influence of popular culture on the younger generation, the cultural value of traditional songs has gradually weakened, and the space for the transmission of traditional music has been increasingly squeezed. The influence of Yi culture on modern youth has significantly diminished, with many young people showing little interest in traditional wedding customs and music, and some even displaying indifference towards cultural transmission. This phenomenon reveals the crisis of cultural transmission that Yi culture faces in modern society.

Survey results indicate that the participation of young people in Yi wedding ceremonies is relatively low. In the six weddings in which the researchers participated, young people, aside from fulfilling essential roles, were almost entirely

absent from other activities, with the primary participants being middle-aged and elderly individuals. There are several reasons behind this phenomenon. First, the lyrics of traditional songs, such as Duet songs and Crying wedding songs, often contain a wealth of ancient Yi language, proverbs, and long poems, which the younger generation struggles to understand due to cultural gaps, leading to a decrease in their interest in traditional music. Second, the performance style of traditional Yi music is relatively monotonous and lacks diversity, making it difficult to engage young people or foster a sense of belonging. This intergenerational cultural gap, combined with the limitations of traditional music forms, has caused traditional wedding music to gradually lose resonance with the younger generation.

#### (4) Decrease in Traditional Wedding Song Performers

In Ebian Yi Autonomous County, the number of traditional singers who can perform wedding songs has been declining year by year. Currently, the folk singers who are able to master and perform these songs in their entirety are mainly middle-aged and elderly individuals, with the younger generation largely unable to transmit this tradition. The reduction in the number of Transmitters has made the continuation of wedding songs highly vulnerable, and the lack of young successors means that this cultural form may face the risk of extinction in the near future.

Survey results indicate that the transmission of Yi wedding songs in Ebian relies primarily on oral tradition. (Qubie Geha, interview, February 2024). mentioned in an interview that learning Bimo songs requires Transmitters to memorize thousands of volumes of Yi (彝) ancient texts and scriptures written in ancient Yi script, which do not contain musical notation. Therefore, the transmission can only occur through oral passing. For the younger generation, this method of transmission is highly demanding and difficult, and many choose to abandon it due to the long learning process and high level of difficulty. Furthermore, the transmission of Crying wedding songs is highly dependent on actual performances during wedding ceremonies. Since the county does not have professional Crying wedding singers, the tradition is mainly maintained through family transmission and personal interest. However, the limitations of this transmission method result in insufficient knowledge

of these traditional cultures and music among the younger generation, further exacerbating the difficulty of preserving this tradition.

#### (5) Weakening of Cultural Identity

With the rapid development of society, the lifestyle of the Yi people has undergone significant changes, and the cultural identity of certain groups has gradually weakened. The importance of traditional wedding songs has become increasingly diminished in their lives. While most respondents acknowledge the necessity of preserving Yi culture, their recognition of its urgency is relatively weak. Many hold a neutral stance, indicating that while there is cultural awareness, a clear disconnect still exists between awareness and action in the actual transmission and participation.

Survey results show that some young Yi people in Ebian Yi Autonomous County have chosen to adopt Han wedding ceremonies, and Yi weddings in the county are often simplified or omit several traditional procedures. The complete Yi wedding ceremony is now mostly preserved in rural areas, with the influence of traditional wedding customs gradually weakening. At the same time, the younger generation tends to use Chinese or Mandarin, leading to a significant decline in the frequency of Yi language use. These phenomena indicate that the weakening of cultural identity further exacerbates the severe challenges faced by the transmission and preservation of traditional wedding music.

#### (6) Economic Constraints

Due to uneven economic development, some rural areas in Ebian Yi Autonomous County are unable to invite traditional performers, such as duet singers and Kes, due to financial constraints. This limits the ability to fully present traditional Yi wedding ceremonies, which in turn affects the transmission and preservation of the culture.

Survey results indicate that complete traditional wedding ceremonies are relatively rare in Ebian Yi Autonomous County. In the eight weddings that the researchers participated in, none fully showcased the traditional Yi wedding rituals. Particularly in rural areas, many traditional components, such as the Duet ceremony, have been canceled due to economic reasons, further limiting the display and transmission of traditional culture.

### (7) Limitations of Technology and transmission

In Ebian Yi Autonomous County, the Transmitters and performers of traditional music are primarily middle-aged and elderly individuals. However, due to technological and financial constraints, these valuable musical materials have not been effectively protected or promoted. The impact of modern culture and multiple other factors has led to the gradual neglect and forgetting of Yi traditional music forms by the community.

Survey results show that some young people record wedding music and post it on social media, but this is more of a documentation effort rather than an active promotion. Among the middle-aged and elderly Transmitters, only a few can handle basic social media tasks, and there is a lack of systematic strategies for promoting wedding music. Their recording activities are usually limited to documenting the ceremony or broadcasting it live, making it difficult to form an effective mechanism for preservation and transmission.

### Summary

Based on fieldwork and systematic analysis of Ebian Yi wedding music, this chapter focuses on the current status of Ebian Yi wedding music in the context of contemporary society. The study reveals that the wedding process of the Ebian Yi people showcases distinctive cultural connotations and ceremonial structures. These ceremonies vividly reflect the symbolic characteristics and unique ritualistic essence of Yi social culture. Wedding songs, primarily comprising Religious songs and Crying marriage songs, serve multiple functions during the ceremonies, including religious blessings, emotional expression, and social interaction. Additionally, they play a crucial role in strengthening cultural cohesion within the community while highlighting the artistic uniqueness and profound cultural depth of Yi music.

However, the simplification of wedding ceremonies, the weakening of cultural identity, and the impact of economic and technological changes have posed significant challenges to the performance frequency and preservation of wedding songs. The decline in the number of traditional performers and the weakening of linguistic transmission have further exacerbated this predicament.

## CHAPTER V

### **The characteristics of songs selection Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.**

This chapter systematically analyzes two types of music in Yi weddings in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China: Religious songs and Crying wedding songs. Using Qifu song and Re Da as case studies, the chapter explores their musical characteristics from multiple dimensions, including the performers, performance styles, lyrics, form, melody, and rhythm. The goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the uniqueness and cultural connotations of Yi wedding music in Ebian.

1. Analysis of the Musical Characteristics of the Religious Song Qifu Song
2. Analysis of the Musical Characteristics of the Crying wedding Song Re Da

The Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian profoundly reflects the Yi people's perspectives on existence, reproduction, and their cultural history. Yi marriage is not merely a family affair but a collective activity closely connecting families, kinship networks, and local communities. Furthermore, it serves as a crucial medium for the transmission and preservation of Yi culture.

In Yi weddings, songs play a central role in the rituals. They not only embody religious beliefs but also serve as key vehicles for emotional expression, reflecting the rich cultural connotations of Yi traditions.

This research based on field research, focuses on two widely recognized and culturally representative wedding songs performed during the Yi wedding ceremony held from January 3 to 5, 2023, in Ebian: the Religious song Qifu Song and the Crying marriage song Re Da. A systematic analysis was conducted to examine the musical characteristics of these songs from six dimensions: performers, performance forms, lyrics, musical structure, melody, and rhythm. The aim is to reveal the unique cultural connotations of these songs and provide new perspectives on the diversity of Yi wedding music.

## 1. Analysis of the Musical Characteristics of the Religious Song Qifu Song

### 1.1 Performer

Jie'er Ayi, male, 48 years old, from Yangcun, Ebian Yi Autonomous County, began researching Bimo blessings at the age of 19 under the guidance of a master. Due to the lack of written musical notation for Bimo songs, they are passed down through oral tradition and continuously reinforced through practice. To date, Jie Er Ayi has accumulated 27 years of experience in Bimo blessing ceremonies. He participates in Bimo activities for over 20 days each month, and annually leads between 40 and 50 wedding Bimo ceremonies.



Figure 45. Bimo Master Jie'er Ayi.

Source: Lin Yang, from fieldwork in 2024

### 1.2 Performance Form

In the Yi wedding ceremony on January 4, 2024, in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Mr. Jie Er Ayi performed the Qifu Song in a solo format. The entire piece is divided into two sections: the first section, Bichang Shi, features a solemn and deep vocalization, emphasizing the free extension of the melody and the use of guttural tones to enhance the sense of awe and authority; the second section, Bisong Shi, focuses on the rhythmic recitation of scriptures, accompanied by a powerful and high-pitched tone. These two sections alternate, creating a solemn and sacred atmosphere for the ceremony. The entire performance was a capella, with no accompaniment or instruments, highlighting the solemnity and sanctity of the ritual.

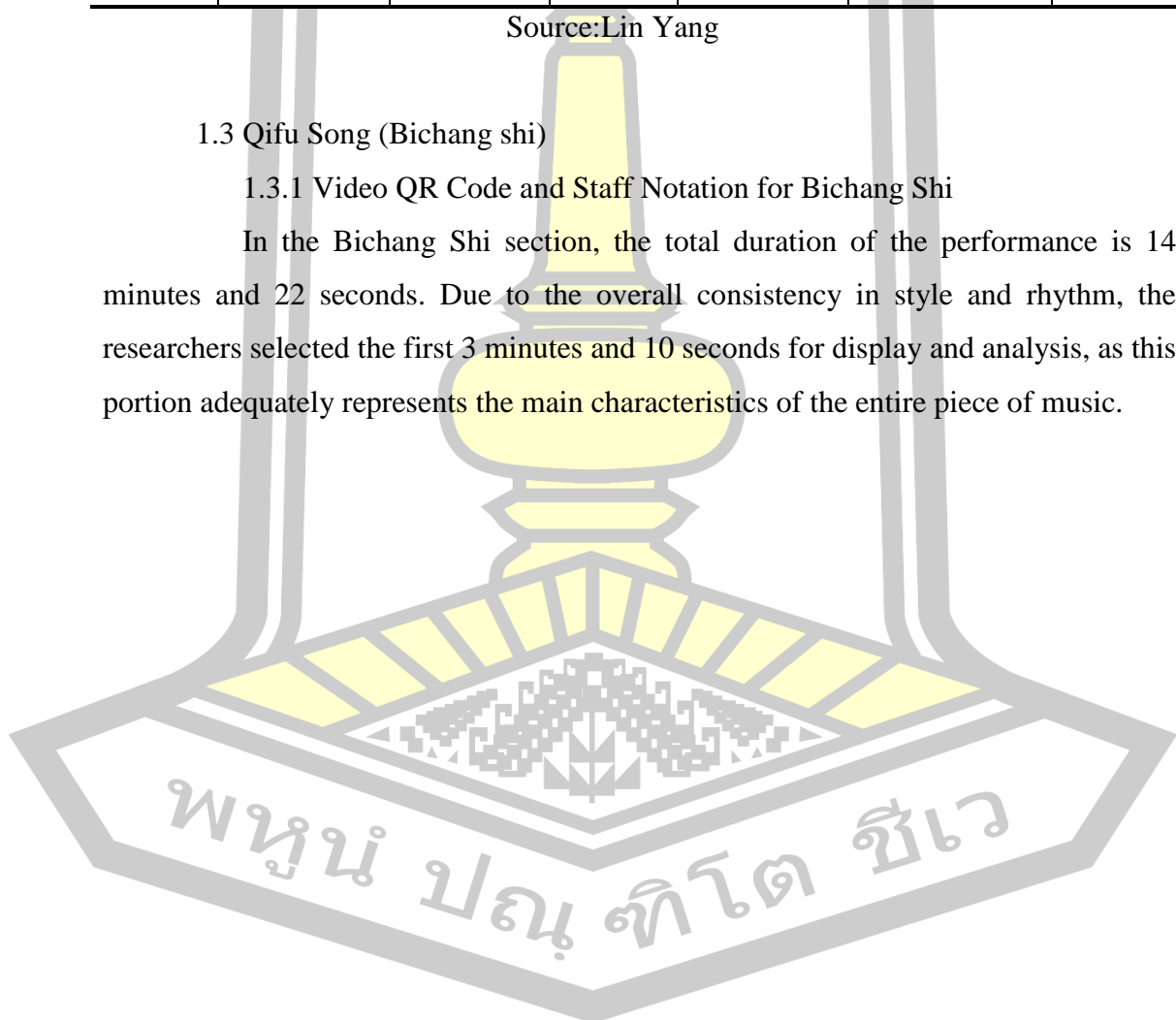
Date	Ceremony Type	Music Type	Song Title	Performer	Performance Sections	Duration
January 4, 2024	Qifu Ceremony	Religious songs	Qifu Song	Jie'er Ayi	Part 1: Bichang shi	18 min 12 sec
					Part 2: Bisong shi	

Source: Lin Yang

### 1.3 Qifu Song (Bichang shi)

#### 1.3.1 Video QR Code and Staff Notation for Bichang Shi

In the Bichang Shi section, the total duration of the performance is 14 minutes and 22 seconds. Due to the overall consistency in style and rhythm, the researchers selected the first 3 minutes and 10 seconds for display and analysis, as this portion adequately represents the main characteristics of the entire piece of music.





## Qifu song(Bichang shi)

Singer: Jie'er Ayi  
Transcription by: Lin Yang

1 2 3

ai za za i kai sa na bie ti lie

4 5 6

bi bi zo ci la bie bie zo ho lei te la la la bie

7 8 9 10 11

bie a ye ke za ai se ka ka va sa a pa e pa ma a pei ta na nia

12 13 14 15

qia bie de na ha qia qie qia qie nie qia qia o bie la va bie se a ma da

16 17 18 19

bie lo a jie qio bie ko a ga la za ce zuo ho lie ya mo se mo

20 21 22 23

mo ce ma mo na ma si si ma mo se mo si nei qie ka ha jie jie ji

24 25 26 27 28

ga ha he di jio la lia ga xia ba va a va hei li kua a tu la jio nia re ma

29 30 31 32 33

jie re la mo la a ge sa zi ku da la nia re ma ma re pu ti go a pu ga bie

34 35 36 37

ba ba ho sa nia re ma o zo la mo le a se la ji gu la jie sa ha nie

2 38 39 40 41 42

sa a nia jie ma nie jie se le kuo sa qie nie jie ma ye ha qio nia jie mo

43 44 45 46

ya ka sa la la ya sa ji ye sa jie ye ji ko sa jie sa ka jio

47 48 49 50

sa wo sa ka ho la jie pu ga jia nia a po a ho pa va ha ke jiang

51 52 53 54

a ka nia va jiang xia ke jio ke jio jio ke va ke ji re la jia ke jia

55 56 57 58

jia su xia la xie xia ma sua ze sua ke suo va ga lie luo gan mo a jie zuo

59 60 61 62

nia mu a nio luo jia mu a bu xia a luo lie lie ga chu li nia ye

63 64 65 66 67

ke lo kuo ho jia lie zuo pa o sa va ma ye ze ce cuo ho na

68 69 70 71

lie ye ma se ce an nia ma se ce bu zuo ca va sa lie jie ma se o nie bei jia

72 73 74 75

nia ka sa lei jia za pa se ga ko jia o sa lie jie a sa hua ma pa mei lua

Figure 46. Musical Notation of Bichang shi.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Before analyzing Figure 46, the researchers would like to clarify the following points:

First, Since the Bimo chant uses Old Yi, and there is currently no modern input method supporting Old Yi characters, the researchers will present the pronunciation of the lyrics in Pinyin.

Second, Bichang shi is a content passed down orally, and the Bimo only knows the general meaning of the scriptures, making it impossible to translate the text word by word into Chinese characters. Therefore, the lyrics will be analyzed separately in the subsequent sections.

Third, Different factions of "Bichang shi" have distinct melodic styles, showcasing diversity in modes, tonality, rhythm, and melody. Based on video recordings from field research, the researchers documented the pitch changes of the performers, which will serve as the basis for analysis.

Fourth, Given that "Bichang shi" is improvised and has a free rhythm, the researchers divided the piece into measures based on the performer's breathing and phrasing, and a rhythm analysis will be conducted accordingly.

### 1.3.2 Lyrics

Due to Mr. Jie'er Ayi's use of Old Yi in his performance, the lyrics cannot be translated word for word. The researchers, with the help of a Yi language translator, can only present the general meaning of the lyrics.

First Section: The Bimo begins by announcing, I will commence the blessing.

Second Section: The blessing starts with the bride's name and background information. The lyrics state that all inauspicious elements associated with clothes that have been torn by dogs, worn out, eaten by insects, stored for too long, or stained with blood will be completely removed.

Third Section: The inauspicious elements will drift away with the river, dissipating like smoke and clouds in the wind. Listen, the lark begins to sing, heralding the dawn as the sun is about to rise. After daybreak, all good things will surround the bride and accompany her throughout her life, enhancing her well-being.

Fourth Section: The inauspicious elements will be extinguished like flames, leaving only the good.

Fifth Section: O thick smoke, disperse and drive away all inauspicious elements surrounding the bride, leaving only the good. The bride will arrive at the purest place.

Sixth Section: Daylight has arrived, and the bride has reached the most sacred place; all inauspicious elements have dissipated, leaving only the good.

The lyrics of Qifu Song are divided into six sections, depicting the complete journey from the opening remarks to the bride's arrival at a pure place. The lyrics emphasize the bride's name and background information, highlighting the significance of individual and familial backgrounds in Yi culture. The wedding is portrayed not only as a personal union but also as a marriage between two families.

The lyrics mention the removal of all inauspicious elements from the bride's past, including worn-out clothes, garments eaten by insects, and items stained with blood. This reflects an anticipation of new life and the abandonment of old things, symbolizing a ritual of rebirth as the bride enters a pure new phase.

Natural elements such as rivers, wind, fire, smoke, clouds, dawn, and the sun frequently appear in the lyrics, holding symbolic significance in Yi culture, representing the cycles of life, purity, and hope. Phrases like drifting away with the river, clouds dissipating in the wind, and flames being extinguished symbolize the expulsion and purification of inauspicious elements, while dawn and the sun signify rebirth and hope, heralding a bright future for the bride.

The lyrics repeatedly express that all good things will surround the bride and accompany her throughout her life, reflecting heartfelt wishes for the bride's future happiness and embodying the Yi people's aspirations for a fulfilling life. This song employs the unique style of Bichang, performed by the Bimo with a distinctive tone, closely intertwining lyrical content with musical form to convey a rich cultural and religious atmosphere.

## 1.3.3 Structure form

## (1) Formal Analysis Diagram

Variation form				
Monopolar structure	Theme	V1	V2	V3
Secondary structure		I-VI	I-V	I
Nodule	1-7	8-35	36-65	66-75
Tonality	C# Yu Pentatonic Mode	D Yu Pentatonic Mode		C Zhi Pentatonic Mode

Source:Lin Yang

## (2) Form Analysis

The entire piece is presented as a theme and variations form, but it incorporates a substantial amount of improvisational elements, forming a non-standard variation of the theme. In terms of tonal development, the theme is presented in C# yu pentatonic scale, while the subsequent variations, Variation I and Variation II, primarily employ D yu pentatonic scale, maintaining a relatively stable tonality. The brief final variation, Variation III, shifts to C zhi pentatonic scale, creating a striking tonal contrast and variation. A detailed analysis is as follows:

Theme: The thematic section of the piece is analyzed based on the traditional Chinese pentatonic scale, with C# yu pentatonic scale as its tonality. In determining the key signature for the pentatonic scale, it is necessary first to identify its tonic, which is based on the interval of a major third in the melody. In this piece,

the scale presents a major third interval between E, F#, and G# (see Figure 47), and thus the tonality can be established as E major in Western tonal music. Next, by analyzing the final note of the melody, the tonic is confirmed to be C#, as the theme ends with the note C#. Therefore, the tonality of this section is confirmed as C# yu pentatonic scale.



Five notes:	yu (羽)	gong (宫)	shang (商)	jue (角)	zhi (徵)	yu (羽)
Movable-do:	C#	E	F#	G#	B	C#
Fixed-do:	A	C	D	E	G	A
Roll-call:	la	do	re	mi	sol	la

Figure 47. C# yu pentatonic scale

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 47 illustrates the structure of the C# yu pentatonic scale, including the five fundamental pitches (yu, gong, shang, jue, zhi), which correspond to the Western pitch names (A, C, D, E, G) and the solfège syllables (la, do, re, mi, sol). This diagram reflects both the modal characteristics of the pentatonic scale and its integration with the Western music system.



Figure 48. C# yu pentatonic scale

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 48 illustrates the position of the Qifu Song (Bichang Shi) within the C# yu pentatonic scale, reflecting the tonal characteristics and structural features of traditional Chinese music.

The theme of the entire piece spans from measures 1 to 7, presenting a distinct overall material composed of several core motifs. Firstly, the motif in measure 1 is made up of an appoggiatura and an extended note, which becomes the basis for development in subsequent variations. The second motif appears in measure 3, with its primary melody being C#-E-E-C#. This motif reappears and is further developed in later sections. The most significant motif occurs in measure 4, with the melody being E-B-E-E-C#. This type of accompanying material plays a crucial role throughout the piece. The theme ultimately concludes on the tonic C# yu pentatonic scale, forming a conclusive cadential termination.

C# Yu Pentatonic mode      Primary motive      Secondary motive

1      2      3

ai      za za i kai      sa na bie ti ne

4      5      6

bi bi zo ci la      bie bie zo ho lei      te la la la bie

7      8      9      10      11

Third motive

bie a ye ke za      ai se ka ka va sa      a pa e pa ma      a pei ta na nia

Figure 49. The theme of Qifu Song (Bichang Shi)..

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 49 illustrates the primary motifs and structural characteristics of the thematic section: The composition is based on the C# yu pentatonic scale, reflecting the characteristics of traditional pentatonic scales. The primary motif (marked in red) first appears in measure 1 and serves as the core musical material that drives the development of the entire piece. The secondary motif (marked in orange) appears in measure 3, contrasting with the primary motif and enriching the content on multiple levels. The third motif (highlighted in a green box) further develops the previously presented material in measure 4, adding variation and depth to the composition.

Variation I: The tonality of Variation I is still based on the traditional Chinese pentatonic scale theory, specifically the D yu pentatonic scale. First, it is

necessary to establish the tonic. According to the interval arrangement in this section (see Figure 50), the intervals F-G-A form a third, which confirms F as the tonic. Next, by analyzing the main note of the melody (see Figure 51), the tonic of this section is identified as D. Therefore, the tonality of Variation I is established as the D yu pentatonic scale, with F as the tonic and D as the main note.



Five notes:	yu (羽)	gong (宫)	shang (商)	jue (角)	zhi (徵)	yu (羽)
Movable-do:	D	F	G	A	C	D
Fixed-do:	A	C	D	E	G	A
Roll-call:	la	do	re	mi	sol	la

Figure 50. D yu pentatonic scale.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 50 illustrates the structure of the D yu pentatonic scale, including the five fundamental pitches (yu, gong, shang, jue, zhi), which correspond to the Western pitch names (A, C, D, E, G) and the solfège syllables (la, do, re, mi, sol). This diagram reflects both the modal characteristics of the pentatonic scale and its integration with the Western music system.

Variation I spans from measures 8 to 35 and is divided into six distinct phrases. All developmental materials are derived from variations and extensions of the thematic material. The overall tonality shifts to the D pentatonic scale, with the third core motive from the theme adopting a cyclical development pattern. This approach ensures smooth transitions between the phrases, creating a steady flow across the entire section. Ultimately, Variation I concludes satisfactorily on the tonic note of the D pentatonic scale.

Figure 51. Variation I of Qifu Song (Bichang Shi).

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 51 illustrates the thematic motifs and structural characteristics of Variation I: The initiating motif (marked in green circle) appears in measures 8 to 10 and serves as the core musical material driving the development of the entire piece. The concluding motif (marked in green) reveals the gradual closure of the composition. The tonic (marked in red circle) in measure 34 indicates that the piece ultimately returns to a stable tonality in the D yu pentatonic scale.

Variation II: The tonality of Variation II is identical to that of Variation I, continuing the development based on traditional Chinese pentatonic scale theory, and thus will not be reiterated. Variation II spans from measures 36 to 65, and its developmental pattern closely mirrors that of Variation I, still rooted in the core motif of the theme. It adopts a "recurring coda" development pattern for the material. Compared to Variation I, Variation II features fewer musical phrases, consisting of five phrases in total, and the tonality remains in the D yu pentatonic scale.

It is noteworthy that the musical material in Variation II begins with a double variation that recalls the main material from Variation I. The first recall introduces the material from Variation I, while the second recall omits the accompanying material before the main motif, using more simplified notes to guide the development of the subsequent material. Ultimately, Variation II concludes with a cadential termination on the tonic of the D yu pentatonic scale, bringing the entire section's development to a close.

34 **D Yu Pentatonic mode** 35 36 37

ba ba ho sa nia re ma o zo la mo le a se la ji gu la jie sa ha nie

38 39 40 41 42

sa a nia jie ma nie jie se le kuo sa que nie jie ma ye ha qio nia jie mo

43 44 45 46

ya ka sa la la ya sa ji ye sa jie ye ji ko sa jie sa ka jio

47 48 49 50 **Second appearance**

sa wo sa ka ho la jie pu ga jia nia a po a ho pa va ha ke jiang

51 52 53 54

a ka nia va jiang xia ke jio ke jio jio ke va ke ji re la jia ke jia

55 56 57 58

jia su xia la xie xia ma sua ze sua ke suo va ga lie luo gan mo a jie zuo

59 60 61 62

nia mu a nio luo jia mu a bu xia a luo lie lie ga chu li nia ye

63 64 65 66 67 **Tonic**

ke lo kuo ho jia lie zuo pa o sa va ma ye ze ce cuo ho na

Figure 52. Variation II of Qifu Song (Bichang Shi).

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 52 illustrates the musical structure and thematic motifs of Variation II: This section unfolds based on the D yu pentatonic scale, reflecting the modal characteristics of traditional Chinese music. The thematic motif appears for the first time in measures 37 to 40 (marked in red box) and reappears in measures 41 to 46 (marked in orange box). Through repetition and development, the motif enhances the

musical coherence. The tonic (marked in green circle) in measure 67 indicates that the composition returns to a stable tonality.

Variation III: The tonality of Variation III is still based on the theory of the traditional Chinese pentatonic scale, transitioning into the C zhi pentatonic scale. First, by analyzing the arrangement of the scale (see Figure 53), the gong note is determined to be F. The tonic of the entire piece (see Figure 54) is C, establishing the tonality of this section as the C zhi pentatonic scale.



Five notes:	zhi (徵)	yu (羽)	gong (宮)	shang (商)	jue (角)	zhi (徵)
Movable-do:	C	D	F	G	A	C
Fixed-do:	G	A	C	D	E	G
Roll-call:	sol	la	do	re	mi	sol

Figure 53. C Zhi pentatonic scale.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 53 illustrates the structure of the C zhi pentatonic scale, including the five fundamental pitches (zhi, yu, gong, shang, jue), which correspond to the Western pitch names (G, A, C, D, E) and the solfège syllables (sol, la, do, re, mi). This diagram reflects both the modal characteristics of the pentatonic scale and its integration with the Western music system.

Variation III consists of measures 66 to 75, continuing the development and variation of the primary material, but with the tonality shifting to the C zhi pentatonic scale. The most notable change in the variation is the alteration of the first note, F, to C, thereby further reinforcing the tonality of the C zhi pentatonic scale. The piece ultimately concludes with a perfect cadence on the tonic of the C zhi pentatonic scale

63 64 65 66 67  
ke lo kuo ho jia lie zuo pa o sa va ma ye ze ce cuo ho na  
C Yu Pentatonic mode

68 69 70 71  
lie ye ma se ce an nia ma se ce bu zuo ca va sa lie jie ma se o nie bei jia

72 73 74 75  
nia ka sa lei jia za pa se ga ko jia o sa lie jie a sa hua ma pa mei lua  
Tonic

Figure 54. Variation III of Qifu Song (Bichang Shi).

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 54 presents the melody of Variation 3, with annotations indicating the starting pitch (C Yu Pentatonic Mode) and the final tonic, highlighting the modal foundation and structural characteristics of the melody.

### 1.3.4 Melody

The melody of this piece is primarily constructed through the combination and development of multiple motifs. It begins with a long note based on the tonic of the key, signaling the start of the main melody. The melody then moves into a descending section, with triplet material developing around the tonic of the current key. Finally, it ends with a small third leap, returning to the tonic. Key connecting materials throughout the piece serve to transition between phrases, expanding around the tonic, zhi, and gong notes of the current key. The development of the melody and the variation of motifs in the entire piece are based on the materials shown in the figure, with further variations and extensions.

1 2 3 4  
ai za za i kai sa na bie ti lie bi bi zo ci la  
C# Yu Gong tone Descending material Core motivation cyclic form

Figure 55. Variation III of "Qifu Song" (Bichang Shi).

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 55 illustrates the structural characteristics of the melody: The melody is based on the tonic of C# yu pentatonic scale, unfolding according to the pentatonic scale of the yu mode, with a clear starting pitch. In measure 2, the melody displays a descending material with a decreasing characteristic, and the core motif developed between measures 2 and 3 further emphasizes key intervals, reflecting the features of repetition and variation. The cyclic structure in measure 4 strengthens the coherence and rhythmic sense of the music, collectively showcasing a sense of layered structure and logical progression in the melodic design.



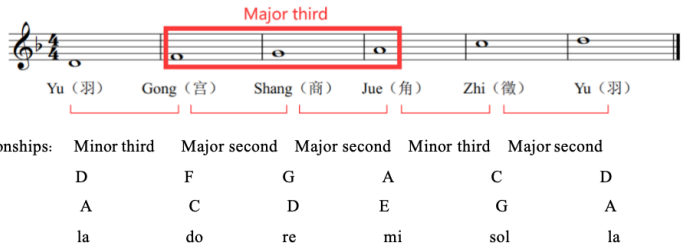

### 1.3.5 Tonality



Overall, the tonal structure of the piece is relatively orderly, with the tonic of C# yu pentatonic scale. Variations I and II retain the characteristics of the yu scale, with a modulation to D yu pentatonic scale through a small second ascending interval. Variation III shifts to the same tonic system of D yu pentatonic scale, specifically to the C zhi pentatonic scale.

Schedule of tonality				
Structure	Theme	Variation 1	Variation 2	Variation 3
Tonality	C# Yu pentatonic mode	D Yu pentatonic mode	D Yu pentatonic mode	C Zhi pentatonic mode
Modulation mode	Homophone	Minor second modulation on the main key		gong system modulation with the previous tone

Source: Lin Yang

The overall structure of the tonal scale and the characteristic notes in the score are illustrated in the figure below:

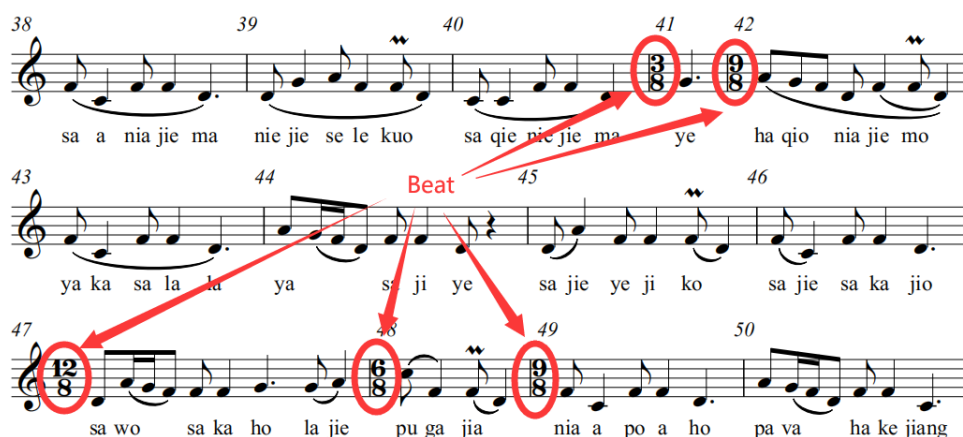
C# Yu scale	
Tonality	C# Yu pentatonic mode
Third interval	E-F#-G#
Musical scale	 <p style="text-align: center;">Interval Relationships: Minor third Major second Major second Minor third Major second</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Movable-do: C# E F# G# B C#</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fixed-do: A C D E G A</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Roll-call: la do re mi sol la</p>
Characteristic note	
D Yu scale	
Tonality	D Yu pentatonic mode
Third interval	F-G-A
Musical scale	 <p style="text-align: center;">Interval Relationships: Minor third Major second Major second Minor third Major second</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Movable-do: D F G A C D</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fixed-do: A C D E G A</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Roll-call: la do re mi sol la</p>
Characteristic note	

C Zhi scale	
Tonality	C Zhi pentatonic mode
Third interval	F-G-A
Musical scale	 <p>Interval Relationships: Major second   Minor third   Major second   Major second   Minor third</p> <p>Movable-do: C   D   F   G   A   C</p> <p>Fixed-do: G   A   C   D   E   G</p> <p>Roll-call: sol   la   do   re   mi   sol</p>
Characteristic note	

Source: Lin Yang

### 1.3.6 Rhythm

The most notable feature of the rhythm in this piece is the use of multiple time signatures, including 3/8, 6/8, 9/8, and 12/8, as shown in the diagram below. The rapid transitions between these time signatures give the rhythm a highly free and expansive quality, avoiding the rigidity typically associated with traditional time signatures.



38                      39                      40                      41                      42

sa a nia jie ma    nie jie se le kuo    sa qie nie jie ma    ye    ha qio nia jie mo

43                      44                      45                      46

ya ka sa la la ya    sa ji ye    sa jie ye ji ko    sa jie sa ka jio

47                      48                      49                      50

sa wo sa ka ho la jie    pu ga jia    nia a po a ho    pa va ha ke jiang

Figure 56. Rhythm of Qifu Song (Bichang Shi)

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 56 demonstrates the significant role of rhythm in the musical expression through the use of compound meters (12/8 and 9/8) and meter changes. The 12/8 meter creates a smooth and flowing atmosphere, while the introduction of the 9/8 meter adds a sense of tension and forward momentum. The alternating changes between these two meters inject a sense of layering and dynamic variation into the melody. The clear distribution of accents and rhythmic points further strengthens the sense of pulse, making the overall melody more expressive and structurally rich.

In terms of rhythmic patterns, the overall use of rhythms throughout the piece is relatively structured, primarily consisting of continuous syncopation built upon eighth notes and quarter notes.

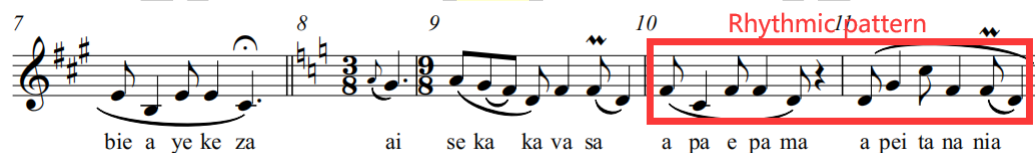


Figure 57. rhythmic patterns of Qifu Song (Bichang Shi)

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 57 illustrates the rhythmic regularity and fluidity of the piece. The rhythmic pattern in measures 10 to 11, highlighted in the red box, is constructed through the repetition of eighth-note rhythms, which creates a cohesive sense of movement and enhances the overall unity of the music. Additionally, some notes incorporate syncopated rhythms and slurs, adding more dynamism and flexibility to the melody.

#### (8) Vocal Characteristics

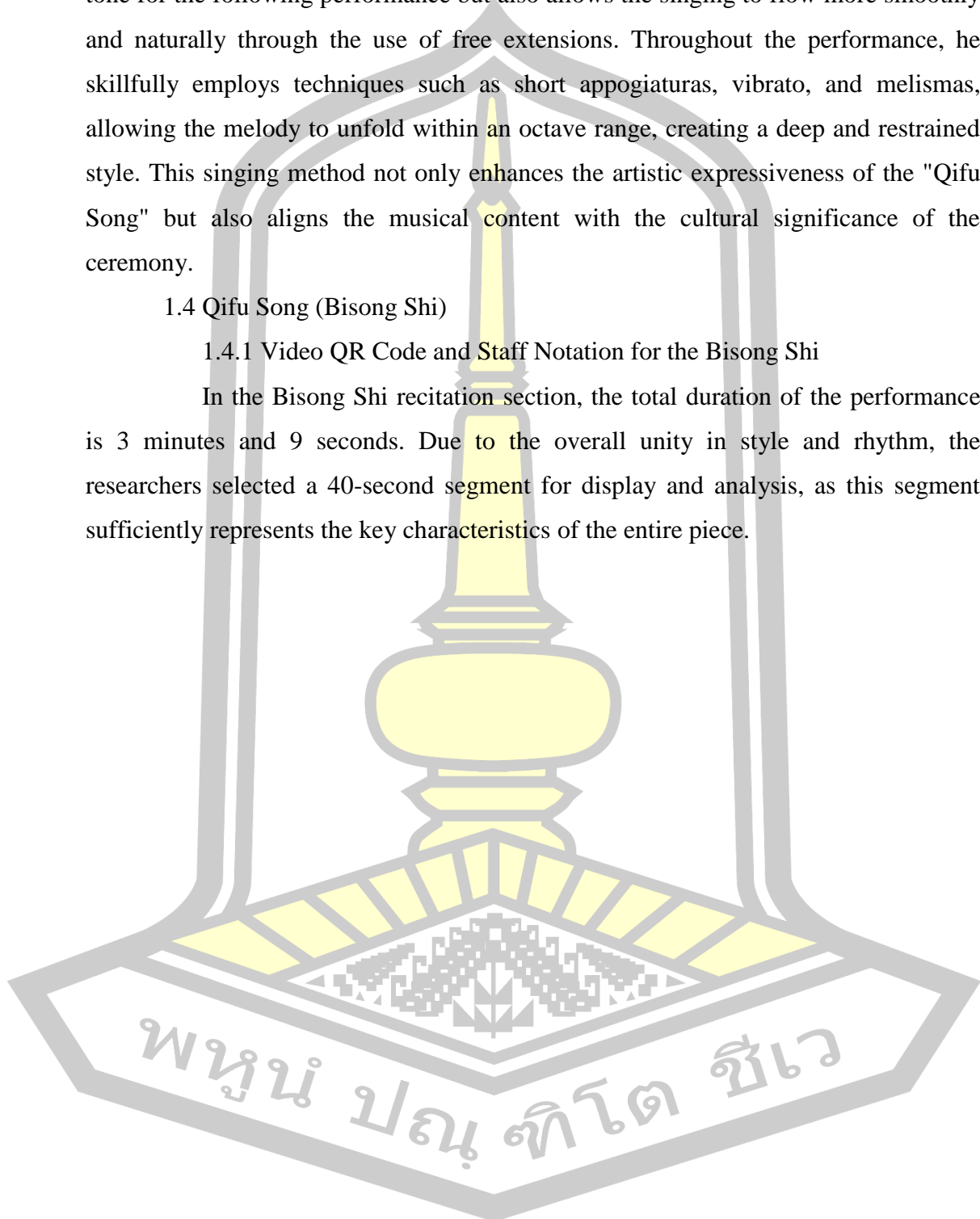
During the performance of the Qifu Song, Mr. Jie'er Ayi employed unique throat techniques that enhanced the song's sense of grandeur and intimidation. This folk singing style not only strengthened the solemnity of the ceremony but also provided a deeper emotional expression to the song. The rhythmic and melodic characteristics of the Qifu Song are closely related to its distinctive vocal technique. At the beginning of each melodic phrase and ceremonial segment, Mr. Jie'er Ayi

introduces the singing with interjections such as A-yi, which not only sets a solemn tone for the following performance but also allows the singing to flow more smoothly and naturally through the use of free extensions. Throughout the performance, he skillfully employs techniques such as short appoggiaturas, vibrato, and melismas, allowing the melody to unfold within an octave range, creating a deep and restrained style. This singing method not only enhances the artistic expressiveness of the "Qifu Song" but also aligns the musical content with the cultural significance of the ceremony.

#### 1.4 Qifu Song (Bisong Shi)

##### 1.4.1 Video QR Code and Staff Notation for the Bisong Shi

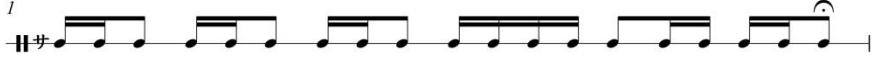
In the Bisong Shi recitation section, the total duration of the performance is 3 minutes and 9 seconds. Due to the overall unity in style and rhythm, the researchers selected a 40-second segment for display and analysis, as this segment sufficiently represents the key characteristics of the entire piece.




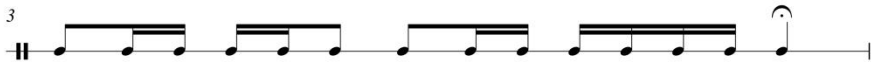



## Qifu song (Bisong shi)


Singer: Jie'er Ayi  
Transcription by: Lin Yang


1  
  
 ge ge wa niu ge wa zhe ge ma ga na na she hua ze la ge ge nia


2  
  
 ri e zhe me ge ge fu mo luo ga nia mo zhe zen mo ga ga cuo ga jio pa luo ta


3  
  
 ge na pa na mu ke ko ce nie ka ze fei nie na

4  
  
 shen me ge bo er bo da ge bo er bo ga gan ma na me zha ce le ce le ma

5  
  
 ce la niu ce wa jia nia le ku ma ce la ga jio wa jia go o

6  
  
 ce ce ma nio jia ga na ce zuo wa jia han jio na ge jie nu jio na fei jie na

7  
  
 ra yo ba ga rua nia yo o po ca ge jie jie bo da fei jie wa nio po ge jio tang luo ta

8  
  
 ge na ba na mu de ko a sa bo xia wa ra nia qie jie la

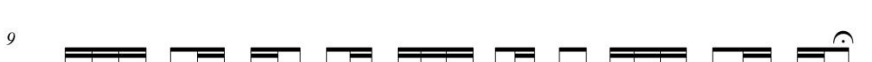
9  
  
 qia jie ma jie lei ma jie ma gu la cuo a qie ke sa ma gu la la le nio ga he bo wa ge nia zhe na qie jie na

Figure 58. Musical Notation of Bisong shi.

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Before analyzing Figure 58, the researchers would like to clarify the following points:

First, since the Bimo recitation is performed in Old Yi, and there is no modern input method available to support Old Yi characters, the researchers present the pronunciation of the lyrics in pinyin.

Second, the Bisong Shi is an orally transmitted scripture recitation. The Bimo only understands the general meaning of the scripture and is unable to translate it word-for-word into Chinese characters. Therefore, the lyrics will be analyzed separately in subsequent sections.

Third, the Bisong Shi varies in rhythm styles across different sects, showing significant diversity. Based on video recordings from field research, the researchers have presented the rhythmic variations of the performer as the basis for analysis.

Fourth, due to the improvisational nature of the "Bisong Shi," its rhythm is relatively free. The researchers have divided the sections according to the performer's breathing and phrasing, and conducted a rhythmic analysis.

Fifth, given that the Bisong Shi, as a recitation piece, lacks a clear tonality and melody, with only a rhythmic structure, the researchers will only present the notation of the rhythm in this analysis.

#### 1.4.2 Lyrics

The lyrics of the Bisong Shi can be divided into three main sections, each demonstrating distinct characteristics, with the rhythm adjusting according to the content of the lyrics.

The first section mainly introduces the historical origins of the water-soaked wine, providing a detailed explanation of its origins and cultural background. This section focuses on the transmission of information, with a narrative tone. The rhythm is relatively steady but retains a sense of compactness. The lyrics in this section are primarily descriptive, emphasizing the cultural context and historical significance.

The second section involves the bride reciting prayers for blessings, wishing her a prosperous family and happiness. This section centers on blessings and prayers, with rich emotional expression, varied sentence structures, and fluctuating

tonalities. The rhythm adjusts accordingly with the changes in emotional expression, fully showcasing the diversity of blessings and the depth of emotions. The lyrics in this section are marked by vibrant emotional undertones, with varying sentence patterns and tonal shifts, conveying heartfelt wishes for the bride's future life and highlighting the blessing function of the ceremony.

The third section marks the end of the ceremony, indicating that the bride may change into her wedding attire and prepare to leave. This section is concise and direct, with short and powerful rhythm, and the tonalities taper off, symbolizing the formal conclusion of the ceremony. The lyrics in this section summarize the entire ritual process with succinct, forceful language, indicating the conclusion of the ceremony, and through the changes in rhythm and tonalities, conveying the solemnity and importance of the ceremony's closure.

In summary, the lyrics of the Bisong Shi effectively convey its unique cultural connotations and emotional depth through clear thematic expression, tight rhythm, and varied sentence structures. The analysis of the lyrics reveals that the Bisong Shi is not only rich and diverse in content but also enhances its expressive power and emotional impact as a core component of the ritual through the integration of musical elements.

#### 1.4.3 Structure form

##### (1) Formal Analysis Diagram

Multi-paragraph description									
Structure	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Nodule	1-1	2-2	3-3	4-4	5-6	7-7	8-8	9-9	10-10

Source:Lin Yang

##### (2) Form Analysis

The Bisong Shi primarily utilizes a multi-section structure, lacking significant melodic development overall. Instead, it is conducted through a recitation format that runs throughout the piece. Its main expressive method relies on the use of recited words and rhythmic variations, which distinguish each section. The entire

piece is divided into nine sections based on the rhyme changes in the recited words. Each section consists of independent recited words, and the rhyme and rhythmic shifts create unique rhythmic patterns and a sense of rhythm. Although the content of each section is independent, the form maintains a consistent style, constructing a unified structure centered around language and rhythm. This ensures the piece remains cohesive while exhibiting variation.

The image displays a musical score for the Qifu Song (Bisong Shi) sections. It consists of nine staves, each representing a section. Each staff begins with a red Roman numeral indicating the section number (I through IX). The lyrics are written below the musical notation. The score is set in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The lyrics are as follows:

**I**  
ge ge wa niu ge wa zhe ge ma ga na na she hua ze la ge ge nia

**II**  
ri e zhe me ge ge fu mo luo ga nia mo zhe zen mo ga ga cuo ga jio pa luo ta

**III**  
ge na pa na mu ke ko ce nie ka ze fei nie na

**IV**  
shen me ge bo er bo da ge bo er bo ga gan ma na me zha ce le ce le ma

**V**  
ce la niu ce wa jia nia le ku ma ce la ga jio wa jia go o

**VI**  
ce ce ma nio jia ga na ce zuo wa jia han jio na ge jie nu jio na fei jie na

**VII**  
ra yo ba ga rua nia yo o po ca ge jie jie bo da fei jie wa nio po ge jio tang luo ta

**VIII**  
ge na ba na mu de ko a sa bo xia wa ra nia qie jie la









**IX**  
qia jie ma jie lei ma jie ma gu la cuo a qie ke sa ma gu la la le nio ga he bo wa ge nia zhe na qie jie na

Figure 59. Qifu Song (Bisong Shi) sections

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

#### 1.4.4 Rhythm

The core rhythmic patterns of each section of the piece are shown in the figure. Overall, although the piece primarily utilizes free meter, the rhythm is employed in a restrained and organized manner. The main rhythmic patterns focus on combinations of eighth and sixteenth notes, forming patterns such as eighth note followed by sixteenth and sixteenth note followed by eighth. Additionally, groupings of four sixteenth notes also occupy a significant proportion, while other rhythmic types, such as syncopation, are relatively rare throughout the piece. The overall rhythmic design is relatively simple but possesses a strong sense of rhythm.

Each part uses rhythm type at a glance	
Paragraph	Rhythmic pattern
I	
II	
III	
IV	
V	
VI	
VII	
VIII	
IX	

Source:Lin Yang

As shown in the table and the following two sections of the score, the rhythm of the entire piece evolves from a loose to a more compact structure, with the rhythm becoming increasingly dense, particularly in the latter sections, significantly enhancing the overall sense of rhythm.

In measures 1 to 4, the rhythm predominantly consists of sixteenth and eighth notes, with a smooth and relaxed flow, resulting in a relatively low density.

1  
ge ge wa niu ge **zhe ge ma ga na na she** hua ze la ge ge nia

2  
ri e zhe me ge ge fu mo luo ga nia mo zhe zen mo ga ga cuo ga jio pa luo ta

**The overall rhythm is primarily based on eighth notes and sixteenth notes**

3  
ge na pa na mu ke ko ce nie ka ze fei nie na

4  
**shen me ge bo er bo da** ge bo er bo ga gan ma na me zha ce le ce le ma

Figure 60. Qifu Song (Bisong Shi) — Rhythmic Patterns in Measures 1-4

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 60 illustrates the rhythmic characteristics of the melody, primarily composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, creating a compact and coherent rhythm. The red annotations highlight the use of rhythmic patterns and rests, showcasing the fluidity of the melody and the layered structure of the music.

From measures 5 to 9, the rhythm gradually transitions from the eighth-note-dominated pattern in measures 1 to 4 to a sixteenth-note-based pattern, incorporating syncopated rhythms. This shift makes the rhythm more compact and varied.

5  
ce la niu ce wa jia nia le ku ma ce la ga jio wa jia go o

6  
ce ce ma nio jia ga na ce zuo wa jia han jio na ge jie nu jio na fei jie na  
A dense rhythmic texture composed of continuous sixteenth notes and syncopation

7  
ra yo ba ga rua nia yo o po ca ge jie jie bo da fei jie wa nio po ge jio tang luo ta

8  
ge na ba n mu de ko a sa bo xia wa ra nia qie jie la

9  
qia jie ma jie lei ma jie ma gu la cuo a qie ke sa ma gu la la le nio ga he bo wa ge nia zhe na qie jie na

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for five measures (5-9) of the Qifu Song (Bisong Shi). Each measure is represented by a staff with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Measure 6 and measure 7 contain dense passages of continuous sixteenth notes, which are highlighted with red boxes. A red arrow points from the text 'A dense rhythmic texture composed of continuous sixteenth notes and syncopation' to these highlighted sections. The lyrics are written in Chinese characters below each staff.

Figure 61. Qifu Song (Bisong Shi) — Rhythmic Patterns in Measures 5-9

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 61 illustrates the rhythmic features of measures 5 to 9, primarily consisting of continuous sixteenth notes and syncopated rhythms. This creates a dense rhythmic texture that enhances the music's sense of movement and tension. The red annotations highlight key rhythmic sections, reflecting the dynamic expression of the melody and the overall coherence of the piece.

In terms of meter usage, the piece primarily follows free rhythm, with no fixed rhythmic pattern throughout the recitation process. The performer is free to interpret and express the music according to their own understanding and emotional response, which emphasizes an essential feature of traditional Chinese music—improvisation. Due to the oral transmission of traditional music, which lacks a standardized notation system, the free variation of rhythm is further reinforced. This form of rhythmic development is rooted in this broader cultural context. At the same time, the weakening of the melody shifts the focus more toward the rhyme in the lyrics.

In the Chinese language system, syllables are composed of initials, finals, and tones. Finals can be categorized into simple finals, compound finals, special finals, and nasal finals. The finals used in this piece are mostly simple finals, but they are

combined with structures of compound finals, which helps to highlight the sense of each section. Despite the free rhythm and the complexity of the melody, the sense of closure at the end of each section is still effectively conveyed. Additionally, the pitch contours of the lyrics use four tonal categories: Yin Ping (level tone), Yang Ping (rising tone), Shang Sheng (departing tone), and Qu Sheng (falling tone), further reinforcing the sense of conclusion at the end of each section.

Every rhyme			
Paragraph	Consonant	Vowel	Tone of voice
I	n	i、a (diphthong)	nià
II	t	a	tà
III	n	a	nà
IV	m	a	mà
V	j	i、a (diphthong)	jià
VI	n	a	nà
VII	t	a	tà
VIII	l	a	là
IX	n	a	nà

Source:Lin Yang

#### 1.4.5 Tonal Analysis

Overall, the recitation throughout the piece concludes with a consistent tonal resolution on the Qu Sheng (falling tone). This is particularly evident in the resolution of the first and fifth sections, where a dual-final structure is employed. Initially, the final resolves to the Yin Ping (level tone) i, before transitioning to the Qu Sheng (falling tone) a. Through this dual-final usage, the entire composition is naturally divided into two structural parts: Sections 1–4 and Sections 5–9.

1  
ge ge wa niu ge wa zhe ge ma ga na na she hua ze la ge ge **nia**

2  
ri e zhe me ge ge fu mo luo ga nia mo zhe zen mo ga ga cuo ga jio pa tuo **ta**

3  
ge na pa na mu ke ko ce nie ka ze fei nie **na**

4  
shen me ge bo er bo da ge bo er bo ga gan ma na me zha ce le ce le **ma**

5  
ce la niu ce wa jia nia le ku ma ce la ga jio wa jia go o

6  
ce ce ma nio jia ga na ce zuo wa **jia** han jio na ge jie nu jio na fei jie **na**

7  
ra yo ba ga rua nia yo o po ca ge jie jie bo da fei jie wa nio po ge jio tang tuo **ta**

8  
ge na ba na mu de ko a sa bo xia wa ra nia qie jie **la**

9  
qia jie ma jie lei ma jie ma gu la cuo a qie ke sa ma gu la la le nio ga he bo wa ge nia zhe na qie jie **na**

The rhyme scheme of these nine paragraphs ultimately converges on the final vowel sound "a."

Figure 62. Qifu Song (Bisong Shi) Characteristics of the Lyrics

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 62 illustrates the rhyme scheme of the melody, where the final syllable of each of the nine lyrical sections converges on the vowel sound a, marking the conclusion of the rhyme scheme.

#### 1.4.6 Vocal Characteristics

The performance of the Bisong Shi is characterized by a strong rhythmic foundation, with the voice embodying both softness and power, aimed at conveying a solemn and sacred atmosphere. The performer enhances the rhythmic quality and emotional expression of the recitation through variations in pitch and the elongation of specific syllables, a feature closely related to the structure of the lyrics. The rapid and compact rhythm of the lyrics, combined with clear enunciation of syllables,

shapes the overall effect of the performance. The diverse sentence structures and concise, forceful phrases further elevate the expressive power of the recitation, effectively conveying rich emotions and the ceremonial significance. Although the melodic aspect is relatively subdued, the Bisong Shi creates a unique and impactful performance style through the interaction of rhythm and pitch, playing a crucial role in cultural and emotional expression within the ritual context.

## 2. Analysis of the Musical Characteristics of the Crying wedding Song Re Da

### 2.1 Performer

Hailai Jiluomu, female, 45 years old, from Honghua Village in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, is the bride's maternal cousin. She learned Crying wedding songs from her mother since childhood. Due to the lack of written notation for these songs, this musical form has been passed down primarily through oral tradition, continually reinforced and refined through practice. At the wedding on January 5, 2024, she served as the lead vocalist, responsible for performing Section A.



Figure 63. Hailai Jiluomu

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Leze Jinshi, female, 39 years old, also from Honghua Village in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, is the bride's maternal aunt. She learned Crying wedding songs from her grandmother, similarly relying on oral tradition for transmission, which has been solidified through practice. At the same wedding, she acted as the backing vocalist, responsible for performing Section B.



Figure 64. Leze Jinshi

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

## 2.2 Performance form

During the Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian on January 5, 2024, Hailai Jiluomu and Leze Jinshi performed Re Da using a call-and-response format. The entire piece is divided into two sections: initially, Hailai Jiluomu serves as the lead vocalist, followed by Leze Jinshi who imitates in a supportive role. This alternating performance creates a gentle, tender, and emotionally resonant atmosphere.

In contrast to traditional Crying wedding songs, which typically feature high-pitched, mournful, and poignant tones, contemporary versions exhibit a blend of soaring and softer elements, evoking a sense of intimacy. While retaining traditional emotional expressions, modern Crying wedding songs place greater emphasis on conveying blessings and feelings of farewell.

Date	Ceremony Type	Music Type	Song Title	Performer	Duration
January 5, 2024	Kujia Ceremony	Crying wedding Songs	Re Da	Hailai Jiluomu、Leze Jinshi	2 min 5 sec

Source:Lin Yang

### 2.3 Crying wedding song Re Da: Video QR Code and Sheet Music

During the Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian on January 4, 2024, the only Crying wedding song performed was Re Da, sung collaboratively by Hailai Jiluomu and Leze Jinshi. Due to repeated requests from the bride's Xianmu to expedite the tempo during the ceremony, the performance duration was shortened to 2 minutes and 5 seconds. Based on the findings from field research, the researchers provide video documentation of the performance along with the corresponding sheet music notation.





# Re Da

Singer: Hai lai Jiluomu  
Leze Jinshi  
Transcription by: Lin Yang

1 2 3 4 5

Singer A  
re da a qie re re su ji bu gu yi wa re da

Singer B

6 7 8 9 A 10

Singer A  
re da a no se pu le

Singer B  
a qie re re su ji bu gu yi wa re da

11 12 13 14 15

Singer A  
ka pu wo re nu ri jio re da

Singer B  
re da de ple ka pu

16 17 18 A

Singer A  
re da

Singer B  
nu re nu gu jio re da

19 20 21 22

Singer A  
si pu le ka hei su jie su zi jie ru da

Singer B  
re da

2

23 24 25 26 A

Singer A

Singer B

si pu le ka hei su re su zi jio re da

27 28 29 30

Singer A

Singer B

a qi li re re su jia bu gu yi wa re da B

31 32 33 34 A

Singer A

Singer B

a qi re re su ji bu gu wa re da

35 36 37 38

Singer A

Singer B

a di bu bou long ke bu gu yi wa re da B

39 40 41 42 A

Singer A

Singer B

a di bu gou long ke bu gu wa re da




3

43 44 45 46

Singer A  
 ha no ke ke lu ji bu gu yi wa re da  
 哈 诺 柯 柯 鲁 吉 布 古 伊 瓦 雷 达

Singer B  
 re da  
 雷 达

47 48 49 50 A 51

Singer A  
 re da li yi a qie  
 雷 达 里 伊 阿 切

Singer B  
 a no ke ke lu ji bu gu wa re da  
 阿 诺 柯 柯 鲁 吉 布 古 瓦 雷 达

52 53 54 55 56

Singer A  
 re re qiu de si ji bu gu yi wa re da  
 雷 雷 秋 德 斯 吉 布 古 伊 瓦 雷 达

Singer B  
 re da li yi a qie  
 雷 达 里 伊 阿 切

57 58 59 60 A

Singer A  
 re da  
 雷 达

Singer B  
 re re si ji bu gu wa re da  
 雷 雷 斯 吉 布 古 瓦 雷 达

61 62 63 64

Singer A  
 bu lu bo qie bu po ji ji bu gu yi wa re da  
 布 鲁 波 切 布 波 吉 吉 布 古 伊 瓦 雷 达

Singer B

Figure 65. Musical Notation of Re Da

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Before conducting the analysis in Figure 65, the researchers would like to clarify the following points:

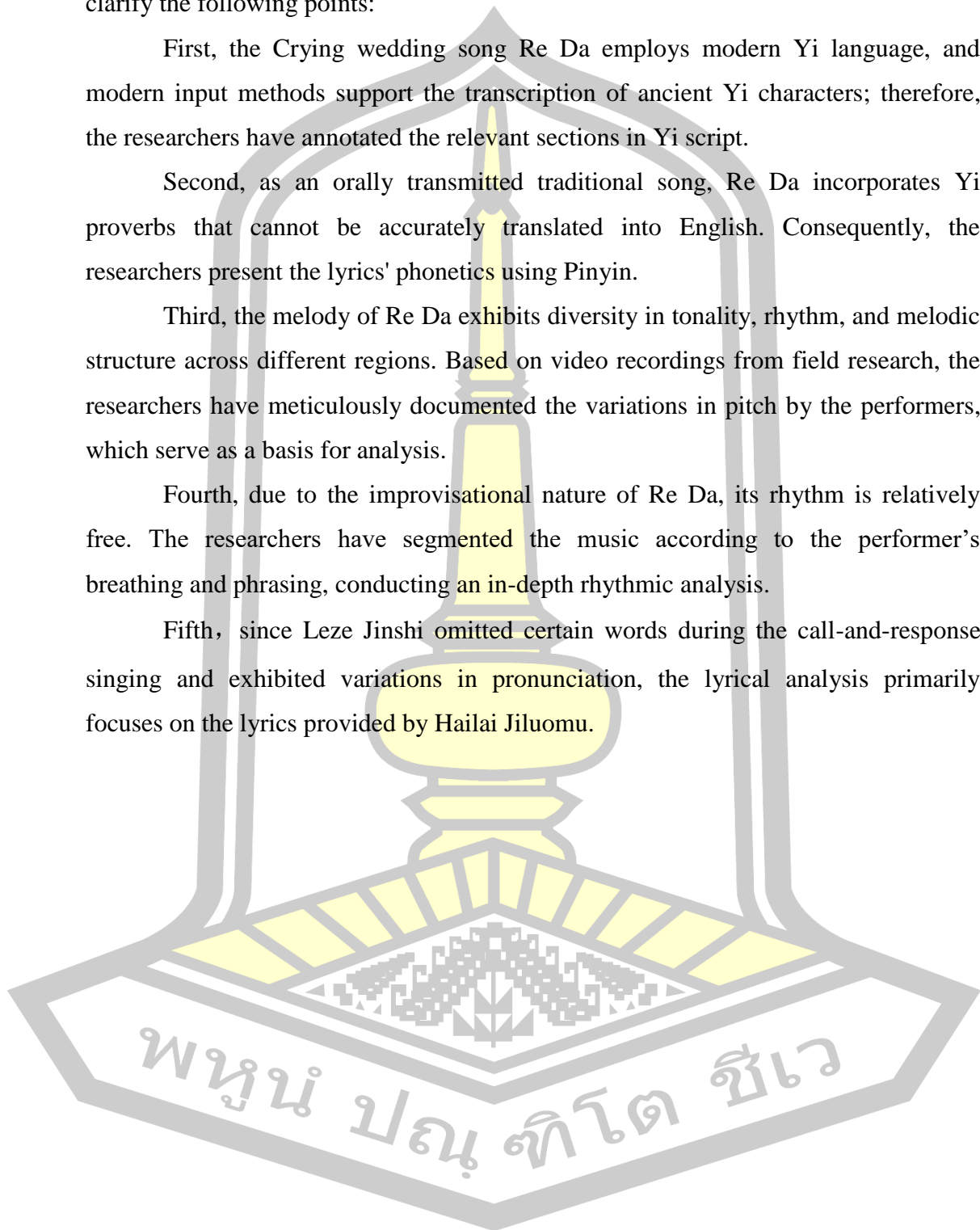
First, the Crying wedding song Re Da employs modern Yi language, and modern input methods support the transcription of ancient Yi characters; therefore, the researchers have annotated the relevant sections in Yi script.

Second, as an orally transmitted traditional song, Re Da incorporates Yi proverbs that cannot be accurately translated into English. Consequently, the researchers present the lyrics' phonetics using Pinyin.

Third, the melody of Re Da exhibits diversity in tonality, rhythm, and melodic structure across different regions. Based on video recordings from field research, the researchers have meticulously documented the variations in pitch by the performers, which serve as a basis for analysis.

Fourth, due to the improvisational nature of Re Da, its rhythm is relatively free. The researchers have segmented the music according to the performer's breathing and phrasing, conducting an in-depth rhythmic analysis.

Fifth, since Leze Jinshi omitted certain words during the call-and-response singing and exhibited variations in pronunciation, the lyrical analysis primarily focuses on the lyrics provided by Hailai Jiluomu.



## 2.4 Lyrics

## Part A、 B Lyrics

Keep her, quickly keep the daughter Regardless of her beauty, the daughter is to be married today

Keep her, quickly keep the daughter Before dawn, she is still the daughter of the family

Keep her, quickly keep the daughter After dusk, she will become someone else's

Keep her, the daughter is bound to be married sooner or later The daughter will wander like the crows on the roof

Keep her, quickly keep the daughter The daughter will be like the cuckoo in spring, Calling in March and then disappearing into the mountains and seas

Keep her, quickly keep the daughter It turns out that daughters cannot avoid getting married

Keep her, quickly keep the daughter The daughter will marry far away, like leaves drifting with the wind

Keep her, quickly keep the daughter Even orphans will find a good match

Source: Lin Yang

The lyrics of the Crying wedding song Re Da exhibit a notable degree of improvisation, blending traditional verses with spontaneous creation. While the lyrics contain fixed traditional phrases, performers also improvise based on the context at

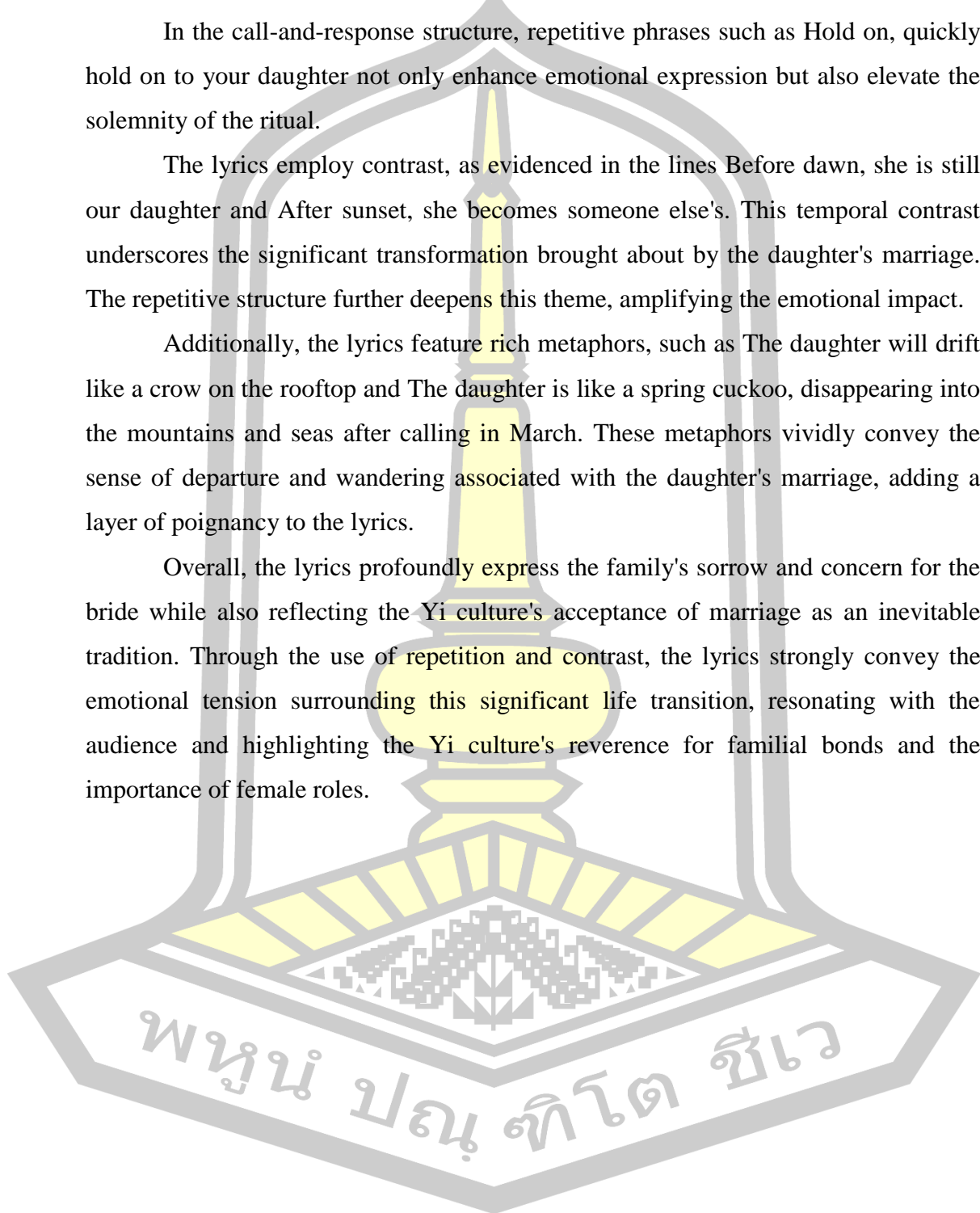
the moment. This improvisational quality infuses the lyrics with vitality and flexibility, allowing them to adapt to various situations and emotional tones.

In the call-and-response structure, repetitive phrases such as Hold on, quickly hold on to your daughter not only enhance emotional expression but also elevate the solemnity of the ritual.

The lyrics employ contrast, as evidenced in the lines Before dawn, she is still our daughter and After sunset, she becomes someone else's. This temporal contrast underscores the significant transformation brought about by the daughter's marriage. The repetitive structure further deepens this theme, amplifying the emotional impact.

Additionally, the lyrics feature rich metaphors, such as The daughter will drift like a crow on the rooftop and The daughter is like a spring cuckoo, disappearing into the mountains and seas after calling in March. These metaphors vividly convey the sense of departure and wandering associated with the daughter's marriage, adding a layer of poignancy to the lyrics.

Overall, the lyrics profoundly express the family's sorrow and concern for the bride while also reflecting the Yi culture's acceptance of marriage as an inevitable tradition. Through the use of repetition and contrast, the lyrics strongly convey the emotional tension surrounding this significant life transition, resonating with the audience and highlighting the Yi culture's reverence for familial bonds and the importance of female roles.



## 2.5 Structure form

## (1) Formal Analysis Diagram

Variations on two themes- First theme			
Primary structure	Nodule	Bar number	Tonality
A	1-4	4	E Shang pentatonic mode
A1	9-13	5	
A2	18-21	4	
A3	26-29	4	
A4	34-37	4	
A5	42-45	4	
A6	50-54	5	
A7	60-64	5	
Variations on two themes- Second theme			
Primary structure	Nodule	Bar number	Tonality
B	5-8	4	G Shang pentatonic mode
B1	14-17	4	
B2	22-25	4	
B3	30-33	4	
B4	38-41	4	
B5	46-49	4	
B6	55-59	4	

Source:Lin Yang

## (2) Formal Analysis

The overall form of the piece is presented as a double-theme variation, yet it also reflects characteristics of both the parallel two-part form and the recapitulation three-part form to some extent. Therefore, the structure of the piece can be seen as an edge-form structure composed of multiple formal elements. In terms of tonality, the work primarily develops between the E shang pentatonic scale and the G shang pentatonic scale. A detailed analysis follows:

Section A: The tonal analysis of Section A is based on traditional Chinese pentatonic scale theory, with the overall tonality being E shang pentatonic scale. First, the tonic must be identified (see Figure 67), with the tonic of this piece being D. Next, the dominant note is determined; the dominant note in Section A is E. The pitch levels of the melody in Section A (see Figure 66) are E-#F-A-B-D-E, and the tonic system is D-E-#F-A-B, which corresponds to the D tonic system. Since the dominant note is E, the tonality of this section is established as the E shang pentatonic scale with D as the tonic and E as the dominant note (see Figure 66). Furthermore, based on the variations of the dominant note, this tonic system can transition into four possible tonalities: F jue pentatonic scale, A zhi pentatonic scale, B yu pentatonic scale, and D gong pentatonic scale.



Five notes:	shang (商)	jue (角)	zhi (徵)	yu (羽)	gong (宫)	shang (商)
Movable-do:	E	F#	A	B	D	E
Fixed-do:	D	E	G	A	C	D
roll-call:	la	do	re	mi	sol	la

Figure 66. E Shang pentatonic scale

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 66 illustrates the structure of the E pentatonic scale, including the five fundamental pitches (shang, jue, zhi, yu, gong), which correspond to the Western pitch names (D, E, G, A, C) and the solfège syllables (re, mi, sol, la, do). This

diagram reflects both the modal characteristics of the pentatonic scale and its integration with the Western music system.

Singer A

Gong tone Shang tone Zhi tone Jue tone Yu tone Tonic

re da a qie re re su ji bu gu yi wa re da

E Shang Pentatonic mode

Figure 67. E Shang pentatonic scale

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 67 indicates the positions of the five primary tones (gong, shang, zhi, jue, yu) and the tonic in the Crying wedding song (Re Da), illustrating the modal characteristics of the pentatonic scale.

Section A, as the first part of the entire piece, unfolds its thematic material in the E shang pentatonic scale. This section consists of 4 measures, beginning with the tonic of the E shang pentatonic scale and concluding on the dominant note of the E shang pentatonic scale, forming a conclusive phrase that starts with the tonic and ends with the dominant note. The core motif is shown below, and while the melody is developed based on the E shang pentatonic scale, the entire structural material revolves around the D note as the central axis. The meter primarily uses eighth notes, creating a mixed meter combination of 6/8 and 9/8.

Singer A

Time signature Time signature Time signature

re da a qie re re su ji bu gu yi wa re da


E Shang Pentatonic mode

Figure 68. Mixed beat in Re Da

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

The tonal analysis of Section B is based on the G shang pentatonic scale. First, the tonic must be established, which is typically done by identifying the major third interval in the melody. In the melody of Section B, the major third interval is F-G-A (see Figure 68), thus the tonic is determined to be F. The dominant note is identified based on the final note of the melody, which is G, making G the dominant note.

Therefore, the tonality of Section B is the G shang pentatonic scale, with F as the tonic and G as the dominant note (see Figure 69). Furthermore, within the F tonic system, four additional tonalities can be derived: G shang pentatonic scale, A jue pentatonic scale, C zhi pentatonic scale, and D yu pentatonic scale. Hence, within the same complete pentatonic tonic system, different dominant notes can form five distinct tonalities.



Five notes:	shang (商)	jue (角)	zhi (徵)	yu (羽)	gong (宫)	shang (商)
Movable-do:	G	A	C	D	F	G
Fixed-do:	D	E	G	A	C	D
roll-call:	re	mi	sol	la	do	re

Figure 69. G shang pentatonic scale

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 69 illustrates the structure of the G shang pentatonic scale, including the notes (shang, jue, zhi, yu, gong), their corresponding Western pitch names (D, E, G, A, C), and the solfège syllables (re, mi, sol, la, do). This diagram reflects both the modal characteristics of the pentatonic scale and its integration with the Western musical system.



Gong tone Shang tone Zhi tone Jue tone Yu tone Tonic

Singer B

re da a qie re re su ji bu gu yi wa re da

G Shang Pentatonic mode

Figure 70. G shang Pentatonic Melody Annotation

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 70 illustrates the melodic structure based on the G pentatonic scale within the piece, marking the five primary pitches (shang, jue, zhi, yu, tonic). This



Section B1 introduces slight internal variation based on Section B. Measures 18 to 59 primarily consist of simple reductions or variations of the previously mentioned material. Notably, Section A7, consisting of five measures, introduces a reprised quality to the piece, ultimately concluding the entire composition on the tonic of the E shang pentatonic scale in Section A7. This structure illustrates the intrinsic connections between the sections and the overall unity of the composition.

### 2.6 Melody

This melodic analysis is summarized based on traditional Chinese pentatonic scale theory. The overall melodic framework of the piece primarily consists of the four measures shown below. While the material in Section B undergoes a tonal shift, the basic structure and development of the melody still revolve around these four measures. The melody begins its development on the tonic of the E shang pentatonic scale and subsequently returns to the tonic of the E shang pentatonic scale through the transition from #F to E, thereby completing the statement of the first motif. Overall, the melody is constructed with dotted rhythms and quarter notes. The following A-#F and B-D intervals form the second motif of the lyrical melody, and these two notes are connected by a tie, forming a dyadic motive. The third motif is constructed around the recurring motive of the three notes D-E-#F. The final D-E interval represents the fully fixed motif of the thematic material. The development of the entire piece consistently maintains the coherence and integrity of this motif.

First core motivation    Second core motivation    Third core motivation    Full fixed motive

Singer A  
re da    a qie re re    su ji    bu gu yi wa    re da

re da    a qie re re    su ji    bu gu yi wa    re da

Singer B

E Shang Pentatonic mode

Figure 72. Motivation development



Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 72 illustrates the melodic structure of the piece based on the E shang pentatonic scale, marking the first, second, and third core motifs, as well as the fully

fixed motif. It demonstrates the gradual logical progression of the melody from its beginning to its development.

### 2.7 Tonality

The tonality structure of the entire piece is very clear, presenting characteristics of dual tonality. First, Section A is based on the tonic E shang pentatonic scale, and then through transposition, the G shang pentatonic scale is introduced to drive the development of the overall material. This tonal shift forms an evolution from E shang pentatonic scale to G shang pentatonic scale, as detailed in the table and figure below.

E Shang scale	
Tonality	E Shang pentatonic mode
Third interval	D-E-#F
Musical scale	 <p>Interval Relationships: Major second   Minor third   Major second   Minor third   Major second</p> <p>Movable-do:   E   F#   A   B   D   E</p> <p>Fixed-do:   D   E   G   A   C   D</p> <p>roll-call:   la   do   re   mi   sol   la</p>
Characteristic note	 <p>E Shang Pentatonic mode</p>
G Shang scale	
Tonality	G Shang pentatonic mode
Third interval	F-G-A

**Musical scale**

Interval Relationships: Major second    Minor third    Major second    Minor third    Major second

Movable-do:	G	A	C	D	F	G
Fixed-do:	D	E	G	A	C	D
roll-call:	re	mi	sol	la	do	re

**Characteristic note**

G Shang Pentatonic mode

Source: Lin Yang

1 Singer A: re da a que re re su ji bu gu yi wa re da

2 Singer B: (rest)

3 Singer A: re da a que re re su ji bu gu yi wa re da

4 Singer B: (rest)

5 Singer A: re da a que re re su ji bu gu yi wa re da

6 Singer B: (rest)

7 Singer A: (rest)

8 Singer B: (rest)

9 Singer A: re da a no se pu le

10 Singer B: (rest)

Figure 73. Tonal Positioning

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 73 illustrates the modal transition of the melody from the E shang pentatonic scale to the G shang pentatonic scale.

### 2.8 Rhythm

The overall rhythm of the piece is composed of a combination of 6/8 and 9/8 time signatures, incorporating several fixed rhythmic patterns. Specifically, the rhythmic structure shown in the figure below is a two-note pattern with a short-long arrangement, which imbues the music with a sense of reluctance and emotional depth.

Singer B

30 B 31 32 motive 33

re da a qi re re su ji bu gu wa re da

Figure 74. Motive

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Additionally, the piece employs a rhythmic combination consisting of a dotted quarter note followed by three eighth notes. This long-short-short-short rhythmic structure is used at the beginning of most sections, establishing a fixed initiating rhythm that creates a stable sense of meter.

Singer A

18 A motive 19 20 21

re da si pu le ka hei su jie su zi jie ru da

Figure 75. Motive

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Finally, the rhythmic structure at the end of each section incorporates a faster tempo, combining dotted quarter notes and quarter notes followed by eighth notes with a rest, creating a sudden stop effect. This rhythm conveys a sense of reluctance and blessing directed towards the bride.

Singer A

A 2 3 4 motive 5

re da a qie re re su ji bu gu yi wa re da

Figure 76. Motive

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

## 2.9 Vocal Characteristics

The performance of Re Da is characterized by a duet between two female singers, with the interaction between the lead and echo parts being natural and fluid. The singers primarily use chest voice (modal voice), maintaining a steady pitch with a relatively narrow vocal range. Although the melodic line is simple, it is highly expressive and rhythmically strong, effectively engaging the audience's emotions. The high degree of repetition in the lyrics strongly conveys the sense of reluctance and blessing associated with the daughter's departure for marriage. Through delicate emotional expression, the performers bring the emotions in the lyrics to life. During the performance, the pronunciation and rhyming structure of the lyrics largely guide the direction of the melody, making it more fluid and expressive.

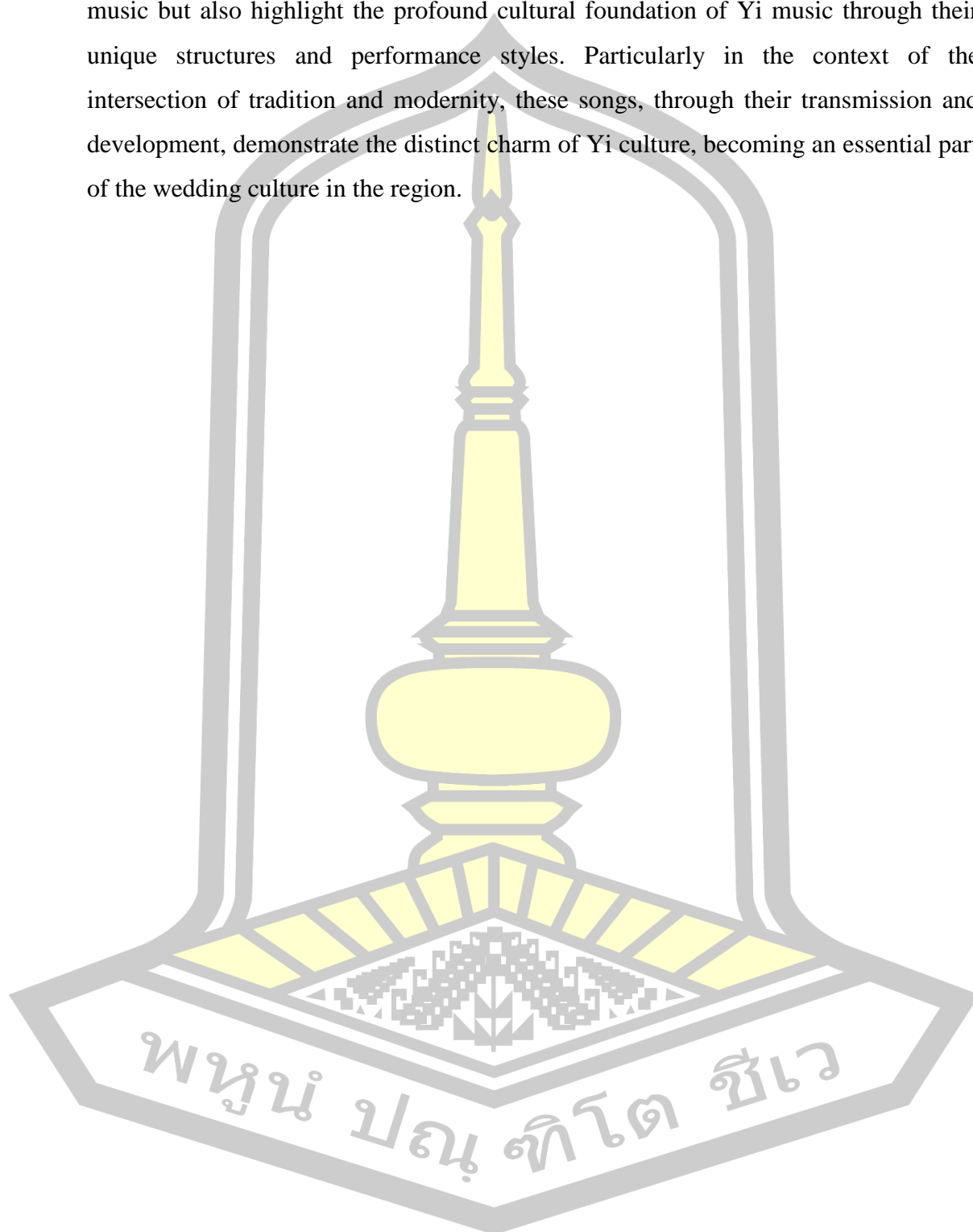
### Summary

The wedding music of the Ebian Yi ethnic group plays a significant role in cultural transmission, with its unique musical forms deeply reflecting the rich cultural connotations and regional characteristics of the area. During the Ebian Yi wedding from January 3 to 5, 2024, the wedding songs were primarily divided into two categories: religious song and crying wedding song.

The religious song Qifu song consists of two parts: Bichang shi and Bisong shi, performed in unaccompanied monophony. This piece integrates a single-theme variation form with a chanting style. The tonal structure begins with the C# yu pentatonic scale, transitions through the D yu pentatonic scale, and ends with the C zhi pentatonic scale, showcasing a clear tonal progression. The rhythmic features include complex meter and free rhythm, with the melody closely intertwined with the lyrics, incorporating elements of improvisation, reflecting the distinctive style of traditional folk singing.

The Crying marriage song Re Da is performed in a call-and-response format, using a dual-theme variation structure and two-part form. The melody alternates between the E shang pentatonic scale and the G shang pentatonic scale, with rhythm shifting between 6/8 and 9/8 time signatures. The development of the melody is closely tied to the lyrics, with improvisational elements further enhancing the emotional depth and dynamic expression of the song.

Ebian Yi wedding songs not only enrich the expressive forms of wedding music but also highlight the profound cultural foundation of Yi music through their unique structures and performance styles. Particularly in the context of the intersection of tradition and modernity, these songs, through their transmission and development, demonstrate the distinct charm of Yi culture, becoming an essential part of the wedding culture in the region.



## CHAPTER VI

### **The guidelines for the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.**

This chapter aims to explore effective strategies for the preservation and promotion of Ebian Yi wedding songs, with the goal of providing valuable references and insights for the preservation and transmission of traditional music both within the Ebian Yi community and globally.

1. Guidelines for the Preservation of Ebian Wedding Ceremony Songs
  - 1.1 Guidelines for Local Government Preservation
  - 1.2 Guidelines for Local Schools Preservation
  - 1.3 Guidelines for Local Residents Preservation
2. Guidelines for the transmission of Ebian Wedding Ceremony Songs
  - 2.1 Guidelines for Local Government Transmission
  - 2.2 Guidelines for Cultural External Transmission and Exchange
  - 2.3 Guidelines for Cultural Transmission and Education Promotion

Due to various reasons, the field records of the Ebian Yi wedding process did not present traditional wedding songs such as Ganma Aniu, Zuo, and Kes. However, these songs were once an indispensable part of the wedding ceremony, carrying rich cultural connotations and social functions, and forming the core of Ebian Yi wedding music. The preservation of these traditional songs is not only about safeguarding a specific musical form but also about continuing and promoting the overall cultural value of Ebian wedding music. Research indicates that Ebian Yi wedding songs face several challenges in their transmission process, including the formalization of wedding ceremonies, the weakening of language transmission, the marginalization of Bimo culture, the decline in traditional performers, and the erosion of cultural identity. To address these issues, this research, through in-depth interviews with key groups such as officials, cultural transmitter, and performers, as well as systematic collection and analysis of literature from relevant departments in Ebian Yi Autonomous County

(e.g., the Propaganda Department, Cultural Center, and Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau), has summarized a series of guidelines for cultural preservation. These guidelines aim to promote the preservation and transmission of Ebian Yi wedding music and reinforce its cultural significance in modern society.

## **1. Guidelines for the Preservation of Ebian Wedding Ceremony Songs**

Through comprehensive interviews with government officials, cultural preservers, and performers, as well as the systematic collection and analysis of relevant documents from government departments of Ebian Yi Autonomous County (such as the Propaganda Department, the Bureau of Culture, and the Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs), the preservation guidelines for Ebian Yi wedding songs have been formulated.

### **1.1 Guidelines for Local Government Preservation**

The researcher divides the preservation guidelines of the Ebian Yi Autonomous County government into three key phases:

1984–2001: Cultural Reform and Revitalization Period

2002–2012: Cultural Branding and Cultural-Tourism Integration Period

2013–Present: Cultural Transmission and International Development Period

#### **1.1.1 First Phase: 1984–2001 Cultural Reform and Revitalization Period**

Following the establishment of Ebian Yi Autonomous County in 1984, the county leveraged the political advantages of ethnic regional autonomy to embark on cultural reform and development, driven by the nationwide reform and opening-up. Through a series of governmental initiatives, local cultural vitality was unleashed, and the distinctive culture of the Small Liangshan Yi region was revitalized.

During this period, Ebian placed a strong emphasis on the collection and organization of intangible cultural heritage. Starting in 1988, systematic efforts were made to compile folk literature and to edit the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle. This led to the publication of Ebian Folk Literature Waves in 1989 and Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Folk Literature (Ebian Volume) in 1994, the latter of which won a provincial first prize and provided valuable documentary support for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, the Ebian Folk Art Association was established, organizing experts to systematically

record and promote local culture. Several literary works, including *The Wind of Liangshan* and *The Pearl of Small Liangshan*, were published as part of these efforts.

In 1995, Ebian Yi Autonomous County issued the Regulations on Yi Language and Script, which laid the legal foundation for the preservation of the Yi language and script. The regulations explicitly safeguard the right to learn and use the Yi language, promote bilingual education in Yi and Mandarin, standardize the use of language in society, and require that all institutional signage be bilingual. The government also placed significant emphasis on the cultivation of language professionals, enhancing the quality of Yi language specialists through activities such as translation and the compilation of ancient texts, ensuring the sustainability of language transmission.

In terms of performing arts, the first mass singing competition (1988), the first Small Liangshan Arts Festival (1990), and the Torch Festival Arts Festival (1993) were organized, promoting the transmission of Yi music and dance. Yi-style wrestling, as a representative of local sports culture, achieved notable success in several competitions. Additionally, the construction of the Three Centers and 17 township cultural stations, along with the inclusion of cultural funding in the fiscal budget, strengthened the infrastructure supporting cultural preservation and transmission.

#### 1.1.2 Second Phase: 2002–2012 Cultural Branding and Cultural-Tourism Integration Period

The period from 2002 to 2012 was a crucial time for the cultivation of Ebian's local cultural identity. Through the deep integration of culture and tourism, significant efforts were made to promote the preservation and development of intangible cultural heritage. Taking advantage of the development of the Heizhugou Scenic Area, Ebian created the cultural brand Ganma Aniu, which became a landmark achievement in cultural-tourism integration. In 2006, the first Ganma Aniu Beauty Pageant was successfully held, marking the beginning of cultural brand development. By 2008, the event expanded from a beauty contest to include song, music, dance, and makeup competitions, forming a series known as the Five Competitions, and was upgraded to the Ganma Aniu Arts Festival. The second arts festival in 2012 led to the participation of national celebrities in the Central China Television's (CCTV) One Song program, further enhancing the influence of local culture. These events provided

important support for the preservation and transmission of Yi (彝) culture and intangible cultural heritage.

Artistic creation became a crucial means of cultural transmission. In 2007, a large-scale ethnic musical drama, *Ganma Aniu*, was successfully staged at the Leshan Giant Buddha Theatre with an investment of 3 million yuan. The musical presented the profound connotations of Yi culture through artistic form. In the same year, Ebian published the *Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle*, which systematically recorded the Yi people's customs, festivals, and traditions in the 26th chapter, *Social Customs*, providing critical documentary support for cultural preservation. Moreover, the local Yi music group, *Yi Combination*, achieved significant success in national music competitions, with their works widely circulated. Their performances have become exemplary models of innovation and transmission in Yi non-material cultural heritage music.

Through media publicity and the integration of culture and tourism, the influence of Ebian culture has been further expanded. Starting in 2004, documentaries such as *The Magical Heizhugou* and *Charming Ebian Heizhugou* were broadcast on China Central Television (CCTV) and several regional satellite TV stations, attracting widespread attention. These visual works not only showcased Ebian's natural beauty but also deeply explored its rich cultural connotations, contributing to the shaping of the cultural brand.

The public cultural service system has been continuously improved, providing a solid foundation for cultural preservation. The functions of public cultural service facilities, such as cultural centers and libraries, have been progressively optimized. The widespread development of public fitness and mass cultural activities has driven an increase in social vitality. Through diverse cultural activities and infrastructure development, Ebian has achieved a win-win outcome of cultural prosperity and social development while preserving traditional culture.

### 1.1.3 Third Phase: 2013–Present Cultural Transmission and International Development Period

Since 2013, Ebian has entered a new phase focused on cultural excavation, transmission, and international development. Through the systematic review of local

history and culture, along with the concentrated exploration and application for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) resources, the county has further deepened its cultural transmission system and explored diverse development pathways for cultural and tourism integration.

In 2015, to adapt to modern needs, Ebian revised the Regulations on Yi Language and Script, further improving the bilingual education system, standardizing language usage in society, and promoting the widespread use of Yi-Mandarin bilingualism in schools and the community. This provided strong support for the preservation of the Yi language and script.

During this period, the number of ICH projects increased from 7 to 53, including 9 at the provincial level, 7 at the municipal level, and 37 at the county level. The number of ICH transmitters grew from 2 to 42, covering various fields such as traditional Yi craftsmanship and customs. A series of cultural books were published, including *The Chronicle of Ebian Yi*, *Ebian Intangible Cultural Heritage*, and *The Biography of the Beautiful Goddess Ganma Aniu*, which systematically document Ebian's history, culture, and ethnic customs.

Cultural transmission has gradually moved toward internationalization. In 2019, the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) project *Artistic Revitalization of Yi New Village* was showcased at the UNESCO headquarters, marking a step toward integrating ICH-centered cultural and creative industries into the global context. Meanwhile, local cultural events such as the *Ganma Aniu Arts Festival* and ICH tours have strengthened the brand effect of Ebian culture.

In terms of cultural facilities and experiences, several cultural bases have been established, including the *Leixi Anti-Japanese War Road Memorial Hall* and the *Ganma Aniu Cultural Center*, providing platforms for the public to directly engage with and experience Yi (彝) culture. Through ongoing activities such as the *Cultural Caravan*, cultural transmission has reached grassroots levels, allowing traditional culture to thrive anew within the modern context.

To more clearly present the specific measures and outcomes of the aforementioned preservation guidelines, we have organized them into the table below. The table summarizes the key areas and their specific implementation content and

achievements by different phases, making the development trajectory of the preservation efforts more visually intuitive along the timeline.

Phase	Area	Specific Implementation and Outcomes
First Phase (1984–2001)	Cultural Policy Reform	Ebian Yi Autonomous County launched cultural reform after its establishment, incorporating cultural funding into the fiscal budget.
First Phase (1984–2001)	Intangible Cultural Heritage Organization	Systematically organized folk literature and compiled the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle; published Ebian Folk Literature Waves and other works.
First Phase (1984–2001)	Yi Language Preservation	In 1995, the Regulations on Yi Language and Script were issued, guaranteeing the right to language learning and use, and promoting Yi-Mandarin bilingual education.
First Phase (1984–2001)	Cultural Performance and Infrastructure	Held the first mass singing competition and the Small Liangshan Arts Festival; constructed the Three Centers and cultural stations.
Second Phase (2002–2012)	Cultural Branding	Created the Ganmo Aniu cultural brand; held the beauty pageant and upgraded it to an arts festival.

Second Phase (2002–2012)	Artistic Creation	Created the large-scale ethnic musical Ganmo Aniu; published the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Chronicle.
Second Phase (2002–2012)	Media Publicity	Filmed promotional videos The Magical Heizhugou and Charming Ebian Heizhugou, attracting widespread attention.
Second Phase (2002–2012)	Cultural-Tourism Integration and Public Culture	Optimized public cultural facilities and widely carried out public fitness and mass cultural activities.
Third Phase (2013– Present)	Intangible Cultural Heritage Transmission System Construction	The number of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) projects increased from 7 to 53; cultural books such as The Chronicle of Ebian Yi and Ebian ICH were published.
Third Phase (2013– Present)	Language Regulations Revision and Bilingual Education	In 2015, the Regulations on Yi Language and Script were revised, improving the bilingual education system and promoting the transmission and widespread application of the Yi language.
Third Phase (2013– Present)	International Transmission and Cultural Branding	ICH projects were showcased at UNESCO headquarters; strengthened the brand effect of the Ganmo Aniu Arts Festival.

Third Phase (2013–Present)	Grassroots Cultural Transmission	Cultural transmission reached grassroots levels through activities such as the Cultural Caravan, promoting the transmission of traditional culture.
Third Phase (2013–Present)	Cultural Facility Construction and Experience	Cultural facilities such as the Leixi Anti-Japanese War Road Memorial Hall and the Ganma Aniu Cultural Center were established, providing direct experience platforms for the public.

Source:Lin Yang

## 1.2 Guidelines for Local Schools Preservation

### Intangible Cultural Heritage Entering Schools

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) serves as an essential memory of ethnic cultures, bearing unique customs related to production, daily life, and distinct national cultural contexts. As a primary platform for cultural and artistic education, schools play a vital role in preserving and transmitting ICH. On March 21, 2022, the Ebian County Cultural Center, in collaboration with Ebian Middle School, launched the Intangible Cultural Heritage Entering Schools program, which included choral and dance classes. These initiatives not only promoted the transmission and development of ICH projects but also reinforced students' sense of identity with traditional culture and cultural confidence, while embodying the core socialist values.

#### (1) Dance Course

Teaching Theme: The course centers around the provincial-level ICH item Huantongqun, and includes a teaching module on the Yi (彝) ethnic dance Nuobo Po.

Teaching Content: The curriculum includes an introduction to the background of the Huantongqun story, as well as demonstrations of dance movements, rhythms, and facial expressions. Detailed guidance is provided on the transition from rhythm to emotional expression.

**Teaching Objectives:** Through lively and hands-on practice, students will acquire basic Yi dance movements and emotional expressions, further deepening their understanding of the distinctive cultural style of the Yi people.



Figure 77. Dance class

Source: Ebian Cultural Center, from filedwork in 2024

Image 77 illustrates a scene from the dance teaching session at Ebian Middle School, conducted by actors from the Ebian County Cultural Center. In this session, the Huantongqun, also known as the Coming-of-Age Ceremony, is depicted. The Yi (彝) people vividly refer to this ceremony as a wedding without a groom. Therefore, the promotion of the "Huantongqun" is not only an effort to preserve this traditional rite but also a significant step in the transmission and propagation of Yi wedding music.

## (2) Music Course

**Teaching Theme:** The course focuses on the traditional music of the Yi people from the Lesser Liangshan region, incorporating knowledge of the staff notation system, vocal techniques, and related content.

**Teaching Content:** The music curriculum primarily involves an explanation of traditional melodies and rhythms, complemented by live demonstrations and student-teacher interaction. This approach helps students intuitively experience the unique charm of Yi music.

**Teaching Objectives:** Through music education, the course aims to cultivate students artistic refinement and cultural awareness, while also sparking their interest in intangible cultural heritage (ICH) music.



Figure 78. Music class

Source: Ebian Cultural Center, from filedwork in 2024

Image 78 illustrates a scene of ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) music instruction conducted by performers from the Ebian County Cultural Center at Ebian Middle School. Through this music education, students not only acquired knowledge of traditional Yi (彝) music but also developed a deeper understanding and interest in Yi music and culture. This initiative further contributed to the preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage (ICH).

### (3) Sustainability Measures

To ensure the ongoing implementation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Entering Schools initiative, the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Cultural Center arranges for professional dance and music teachers to deliver weekly lessons at Ebian Middle School. These courses integrate intangible cultural heritage (ICH) with music and dance creation, resulting in a fusion of traditional culture and modern art education, thus establishing a long-term mechanism for ICH preservation within the school.

To clearly showcase the specific implementation and outcomes of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Entering Schools initiative, we have organized its content in the table below. The table categorizes the courses by course type, teaching theme, teaching content, and teaching objectives, providing a visual representation of the core elements and practical approaches in the transmission of ICH through different courses.

Course Category	Teaching Theme	Teaching Content	Teaching Objectives
Dance Course	Provincial-level ICH project Huantongqun , Yi dance Nuobo Po	Background introduction, movement breakdown, rhythm and emotional guidance	Master the basic movements of Yi dance, understand cultural nuances.
Music Course	Yi Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) music from Lesser Liangshan , staff notation and vocal techniques	Explanation of melody and rhythm, demonstration and interactive experience	Enhance artistic cultivation, stimulate interest in ICH music.
Sustainability Measures	Weekly ICH courses integrating tradition and modernity	Regularization of ICH courses, fusion of culture and education	Strengthen cultural identity and awareness.

Source:Lin Yang

### 1.3 Guidelines for Local Residents Preservation

During the field research, the researcher primarily interviewed the Director of the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Cultural Center, the Vice President of the Dance Association, and cultural transmitters. Using them as samples, the relevant preservation suggestions were compiled. Regarding the transmission and preservation of Ebian Yi (彝) music, the key informants provided the following specific responses:

#### 1.3.1 Director of the Cultural Center

In an interview conducted in August 2023, Luo Yaqi, the Director of the Ebian Autonomous County Cultural Center, made the following suggestions for the protection and transmission of Yi wedding music culture. These suggestions cover several aspects, including the training of transmitters, cultural innovation and promotion, improvements in transmission methods, and attention to groups related to wedding music culture.

### (1) Balancing Tradition and Innovation

In the preservation of wedding music, it is essential to balance the retention of its traditional cultural essence with appropriate innovation to engage modern audiences. Encouraging the creation of new compositions for wedding ceremonies and music, blending traditional melodies with modern musical elements, ensures that wedding music can both transmit its cultural roots and adapt to the needs of the new era without losing its foundational essence.

### (2) Selection and Optimization of Cultural Elements

During the transmission of wedding music, it is important to retain the essence and discard the irrelevant or outdated elements. Cultural aspects that conflict with modern values, or that are unreasonable or discriminatory, should be optimized and adjusted. By fostering progressive thinking, both transmitters and audiences can engage with wedding music culture in a way that aligns with modern societal values, breathing new life into the tradition.

### (3) Continuous Exploration and Documentation of Wedding Music

There should be an ongoing effort to explore new elements within wedding music, while systematically organizing and documenting existing content. Digital tools can be utilized to preserve wedding music, providing a reliable foundation for future research and transmission. Opportunities for innovation should be sought during the actual performances of wedding ceremonies and related music, to enhance their vitality and transmission.

#### 1.3.2 Vice President of the Dance Association

Jia Shishuai Bo, Vice President of the Lesser Liangshan Jile Dance Association, in an interview conducted in 2022, provided the following suggestions regarding the preservation and transmission of Yi wedding music culture. His recommendations encompass a wide range of areas, including overall preservation, the cultivation of transmitters, educational promotion, and commercial development.

#### (1) Strengthening Overall Preservation through Bimo Culture

The core of Yi culture is rooted in Bimo culture, which includes language, script, as well as customs related to weddings and funerals. Jia Shishuai Bo argued that Bimo culture should serve as the entry point for systematically preserving and transmitting wedding music, ensuring its integrity and uniqueness within the broader

cultural system. He emphasized that Bimo culture is a crucial source of wedding music. By leveraging its rich historical and cultural foundation, not only can wedding music be better preserved, but it can also provide abundant resources for both transmission and innovation.

### (2) Responsibility Awareness and Cultivation of transmitters

Jia Shishuai Bo pointed out that the application for intangible cultural heritage (ICH) projects should prioritize preservation and transmission as core objectives, rather than blindly focusing on quantity. One of the major issues is the insufficient number of transmitters and their lackluster performance. He suggested enhancing the responsibility awareness of transmitters through specialized training, ensuring that they clearly understand their mission and responsibilities in the preservation of wedding music. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of fostering a sense of pride and cultural identity among transmitters. This cultural recognition will motivate more people, particularly the younger generation, to actively engage in the preservation of wedding music. In addition, appropriate financial support or benefits should be provided to transmitters, creating better conditions for their sustained involvement in transmission work.

### (3) Commercial Promotion and Modern transmission

Building on the protection of cultural essence, Jia Shishuai Bo proposed combining modern transmission methods with commercial promotion to expand the reach of wedding music to a wider audience. He stressed that integrating wedding music with cultural performances, ICH exhibitions, and similar activities can both showcase its unique charm and facilitate its integration with the market, thus injecting new vitality into cultural transmission.

#### 1.3.3 Cultural Transmitter

Cultural Transmitter: Qubie Geha

Qubie Geha, a Bimo blessing transmitter, in 2023, provided the following specific suggestions for addressing the challenges faced in the transmission of Ebian Yi wedding music, particularly in relation to the transmission of Religious songs and crying marriage songs, and promoting the continued development of traditional culture:

### (1) Increase Economic Support and Incentives

In response to the livelihood pressures faced by transmitters, it is recommended that special funds or economic subsidies be established to provide financial security for Bimo culture transmitters and Crying marriage singers. This would attract more people to engage in the transmission of intangible cultural heritage (ICH).

### (2) Promote Digital Protection and transmission

It is essential to utilize modern technologies to digitally document Bimo culture and songs, including the organization and preservation of audio, video, and textual materials. Multimedia communication methods can expand the audience base, enhance cultural influence, and provide standardized reference materials for future transmission.

### (3) Organize Cultural Display Activities

Regular exhibitions, cultural festivals, and other events related to wedding music should be organized to increase public attention and recognition of Bimo culture and songs. This would provide more practical scenarios and social support for the transmission of these cultural traditions.

#### Cultural Transmitter: Muse wangti

Muse wangti, a transmitter of the Kes culture, in an interview conducted in 2023, provided the following suggestions for addressing the decline in the number of Kes and Zuo singers. His proposals focus primarily on increasing economic support and utilizing modern transmission methods to counter the decreasing prevalence of Kes and Zuo singing traditions.

#### (1) Strengthen Economic Support to Stabilize the Foundation of protection

The main cause of the decline in the number of professional Kes singers is insufficient funding. Many families with limited financial resources are unable to bear the costs associated with the learning and transmission of Kes and Zuo, leading to the gradual abandonment of these traditional singing forms.

Muse wangti suggests establishing dedicated funds to provide economic subsidies to Kes singers and transmitting families, alleviating their financial burdens and ensuring that they can focus on the research and transmission of this musical art.

#### (2) Promote Kes Culture through Multidimensional Channels

The promotion of Kes culture requires the use of diversified channels. He proposes organizing competitions, performances, and other activities to increase public awareness and interest in Kes culture, thereby creating a broader social impact for its transmission.

Additionally, utilizing modern media platforms, such as live streaming through social media platforms like TikTok, can showcase Kes performances and instructional content online. This approach can attract a wider audience, particularly the younger generation. Moreover, the interactive nature of live streaming can directly foster audience engagement and cultural identification with Kes.

#### Cultural Transmitter: Azu Ouluo

Azu Ouluo, a cultural communicator and ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) transmitter, in an interview conducted in August 2023, identified several challenges facing the preservation of Ebian Yi (彝) wedding songs and music, emphasizing the urgent need for strategies combining innovation and transmission. He proposed the following suggestions to promote the effective preservation and transmission of Ebian wedding music:

##### (1) Strengthen Oral Transmission and Systematic Recording

Azu Ouluo emphasized that with the gradual passing of the older generation of transmitters, the original content of wedding songs and related musical forms may not be fully preserved. He suggested utilizing recording and video technologies to systematically document the songs and musical content while the transmitters are still alive, ensuring the preservation of their unique cultural essence and artistic value.

##### (2) Innovate Forms to Attract Young People

Addressing the issue that traditional forms may not attract contemporary youth, Azu Ouluo pointed out that the moderate adaptation of Areniu love songs received positive feedback. He believes that the protection of wedding music requires incorporating modern musical elements or innovative performance forms while maintaining the spiritual core of the tradition. This approach can increase the interest and engagement of younger generations.

### (3) Optimize Family Language Environment

Azu Ouluo mentioned that many Yi children today can understand Yi but are reluctant to use it actively. He believes that more situations for speaking Yi should be created within families. By optimizing the family language environment, children's interest in and identification with Yi culture can be nurtured.

To provide a clearer presentation of the experts' suggestions on the preservation and transmission of Ebian Yi wedding music, the researchers have organized the content into the table below. The table categorizes the suggestions by the proposer and the content of the proposals, visually presenting the key points and practical approaches from different fields in promoting the protection of wedding music culture.

Informant	Suggestions
Luo Yaxi	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Innovate moderately while retaining the essence of traditional culture, incorporating modern elements to attract audience interest.</li> <li>2. Optimize transmission content, removing elements that do not align with modern values.</li> <li>3. Continuously explore wedding music and systematically organize and digitize its preservation.</li> </ol>
Jiashi Shuaibo	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rely on Bimo culture for systematic protection of wedding music, ensuring its cultural integrity.</li> <li>2. Raise the awareness of transmitters' responsibility, enhancing transmission effectiveness through training and economic support.</li> <li>3. Expand influence through exhibition and other means, utilizing commercialization and modern transmission.</li> </ol>

Qubie Geha	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish special funds to alleviate the financial pressures on transmitters.</li> <li>2. Utilize modern technology to record and disseminate Bimo culture and music.</li> <li>3. Regularly host cultural exhibitions and activities to increase public attention.</li> </ol>
Muse Wangti	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen economic support to stabilize the foundation of Kes singer transmission.</li> <li>2. Organize competitions, performances, and other activities, using social media platforms to promote Kes culture and attract younger generations.</li> </ol>
Azu Ouluo	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Record wedding music through audio and video to preserve its cultural core.</li> <li>2. Incorporate modern elements or innovative expressions to attract young people's participation.</li> <li>3. Optimize family language environments to cultivate children's interest in Yi culture.</li> </ol>

Source:Lin Yang

## 2. Guidelines for the transmission of Ebian Wedding Ceremony Songs

### 2.1 Guidelines for Local Government Transmission

(1) The promotion of Ebian Yi tourism began in 1997 when the Ebian Yi Autonomous County invited a photographer from Sichuan Province for an inspection. During this period, he captured a powerful series of photographs in Heizhugou. Later that year, a grand opening ceremony and photography exhibition were held at the Workers' Cultural Palace in Beijing, attracting representatives from groups such as Tsinghua University and Peking University, along with officials from various departments. However, at this stage, the cultural elements of Ganmo Aniu were not yet incorporated. It was only after 2000 that the concept of Ganmo Aniu culture

gradually emerged, leading to the creation of related musical dramas. In 2007, we launched the first musical drama themed around Ganmo Aniu, which included the highly popular song Song of Suoma Flower, performed by Ha Hui. Although the song had a unique style, it contained fewer Yi cultural elements. Nevertheless, the lyrics integrated the story archetype of Ganmo Aniu and the important Yi plant symbol, Suoma flower, marking the initial fusion of Yi culture within this musical. Subsequently, we organized three consecutive Ganmo Aniu Arts Festival beauty pageants, where I personally participated in the rehearsals, leaving a deep impression of the process. The first arts festival was a cautious endeavor, where we carefully addressed each step, much like crossing a river by feeling for stones. However, through continuous effort, the event was successful and further promoted Yi culture, allowing more people to understand and appreciate the music and arts of Ebian Yi .(Interview, Luo Yaqi, August 2023)



Figure 79. The Goddess of Beauty: Ganmo Aniu  
Source: Ebian Cultural Center, from filed work in 2024

Figure 79 showcases the premiere scene of the original large-scale Yi epic stage musical Goddess of Beauty: Ganmo Aniu, which was first performed in 2019 in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan. The musical, which received an investment of 0.1 billion yuan from Ebian Yi Autonomous County and Leshan City, is the first epic musical in China themed around Yi culture. It serves to preserve and showcase the cultural connotations and spiritual values of the classic Yi legend Ganmo Aniu.

(2) The Gujing Yi Wedding Customs Cultural Industry Park project was approved in December 2019 and is being led by the Ebian Yi Autonomous County government. The project is located in Gujing Village, Heizhugou, Ebian Yi

Autonomous County. The goal of the project is to promote the integration of local culture and tourism by creating an immersive experience village for Yi wedding customs, a national Yi wedding celebration landmark, and a national wedding customs tourism destination. To achieve this, the government has planned three main areas—Red Love, Golden Companionship, and Green Dependency—to comprehensively showcase Yi wedding customs. The project was awarded to the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Transportation Construction Co., Ltd., which began construction on February 1, 2021, with a one-year construction period. The project was essentially completed and put into use on January 7, 2022, with a total investment of approximately 60 million yuan. This initiative not only reflects the local government's commitment to the preservation and transmission of Yi culture but also contributes to regional economic growth and the prosperity of the tourism industry through the development of the cultural industry.



Figure 80. Yi Romance in Heizhugou Yi Wedding Customs Performance

Source: Ebian Cultural Center, from filed work in 2024

Figure 80 showcases the premiere of the Yi Love Heizhugou Yi wedding customs performance, which took place in 2021 in Gujing Village, Heizhugou Town, Ebian Yi Autonomous County. This performance, themed around the Yi wedding customs of Lesser Liangshan, incorporates the real-life landscape of Heizhugou and innovatively designs scenes and content. It presents the daily life and marriage customs of the Yi people, including aspects such as food, clothing, shelter, and transportation. Through four scenes—Welcoming Guests, Singing Duels, Displaying Beauty, and Yi Wedding Customs—audiences are able to experience the simplicity and romantic love of the Yi people in Lesser Liangshan. This immersive live

performance not only promotes Yi culture but also provides tourists with a deep, cultural experience.

(3) To comprehensively showcase the historical culture, economic and social development, and poverty alleviation achievements of Ebian Yi Autonomous County, the Ebian County government has created the Memory of Ebian cultural district, which has become an important cultural exhibition and tourism attraction.

It is understood that Ebian will regularly hold immersive performances of the Memory of Ebian image cultural (Intangible Cultural Heritage) corridor, further promoting the development of the cultural and tourism industry. The Memory of Ebian cultural corridor is divided into six chapters: Ancient Call, A Thousand Years in One Step, Towards Rebirth, Passionate Years, Bathe in the Spring Breeze, and Green Rise, which fully showcase the historical context and modern development of Ebian. In the immersive performance, traditional Yi wedding rituals are recreated through performances such as Blessing – Bimo Chanting, the Yi beauty Ganma Aniu drama, and Yi Wedding Customs – The Bridegroom's Journey to the Bride. These performances revive traditional Yi wedding rituals, such as the crying wedding, bride kidnapping, water splashing, pot smoke wiping, and wrestling. These activities not only showcase Ebian's Intangible Cultural Heritage but also provide tourists with an immersive experience of Yi culture, highlighting the proactive efforts of the Ebian County government in promoting cultural tourism integration through cultural promotion policies.



Figure 81. Memory of Ebian Performance

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 81 illustrates a performance from the Memory of Ebian image cultural (Intangible Cultural Heritage) corridor in 2020, including Blessing – Bimo Chanting and Yi Wedding Customs – The Bridegroom’s Journey to the Bride , which feature the water-splashing traditional wedding ceremony. These performances vividly showcase the important cultural customs and rituals of the Yi people, offering an immersive experience for the audience to deeply engage with Yi culture. The performances further promote the transmission and flourishing of Yi traditional culture, highlighting the unique charm of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ebian Yi.

To more clearly present the policy measures taken by the Ebian Yi Autonomous County government in promoting Yi wedding songs and culture, the following table summarizes the key events, timeframes, and details of these initiatives. This summary outlines the significant practices in cultural promotion and development by the government.

Year	Event/Project	Details
1997	Initial promotion of Ebian Yi tourism; Heizhugou photography exhibition	A photography exhibition was held at the Workers' Cultural Palace in Beijing, attracting attention from representatives of Tsinghua University , Peking University , and other organizations. However, the Ganmo Aniu cultural elements were not yet integrated.
2000	Introduction of the Ganmo Aniu cultural concept; music drama creation	The Ganmo Aniu story and Yi plant symbols such as the Suoma flower were incorporated into cultural creations.
2007	Launch of the Ganmo Aniu musical, including Song of Suoma Flower	The musical was launched, though the Yi cultural elements were limited, it gained widespread popularity. The story's theme emphasized Yi culture.

2007-2010	Three editions of the Ganmo Aniu Arts Festival beauty pageant	Personally participated in the planning and rehearsals, successfully promoting Yi culture and attracting more attention.
2019-2022	Gujing Yi (彝) Wedding Customs Cultural Industry Park project approved and constructed	An immersive village showcasing Yi wedding customs culture was built with a total investment of approximately 60 million yuan, opening in 2022.
2023-2024	Development of the Memory of Ebian cultural district, immersive performances	Performances such as Blessing – Bimo Chanting were held to showcase Ebian's Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), promoting the integration of culture and tourism.

Source:Lin Yang

## 2.2 Cultural Promotion and Exchange

(1) The Ebian Yi Autonomous County government has played an active role in promoting the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and the transmission of folk songs. In 2010, the China CCTV Music Channel's Folk Songs·China program featured Ebian Yi Autonomous County in its Folk Songs·Territory series. Set against the backdrop of Heizhugou, a local scenic spot, the program, with the support and cooperation of the local government, invited guests to introduce the variety of local folk songs and their historical legends. The program recorded several original folk songs, including wedding songs Re Da, A Yi Ga Ga, Da Yan, Bosu Bolaha, Er Tuo Ge Bu, and A Yi Niu Niu, as well as love song A Re Niu and narrative song Ganmo Aniu. Through this folk music program, the folk songs of Ebian were widely disseminated, providing an excellent opportunity and platform for their promotion and preservation, further advancing the transmission and enhancement of Yi culture.



Figure 82. Folk Songs of China Performance

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 82 presents a scene from the performance of folk songs during the visit of the China CCTV Music Channel's Folk Songs·China program to Ebian Yi Autonomous County in March 2010. This event received strong support from the Ebian Yi Autonomous County government. The program, by showcasing a variety of Yi (彝族) original folk songs, further promoted the preservation and transmission of Yi music.

(2) In May 2024, a themed performance titled "Tianfu Elegance as Beautiful as Brocade" was held at the Shanghai Expo Exhibition Center as part of the China Brand Day series. Actors from the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Cultural Center passionately performed Nimuze, a song celebrating the tremendous changes in the Yi (彝族) region and the good life brought about by the government's beneficial policies. They also performed enthusiastic dances to the melodies of A Men Niu Niu and A Ge's Qin, A Mei's String, and presented the audience with Yi-style embroidered sachets, symbolizing their heartfelt invitation for guests to visit Yi homes. Such local cultural performances not only promote the transmission and preservation of regional culture but also significantly enhance the audience's sense of identity and appreciation for Sichuan culture, providing an important platform for the promotion of local traditions.



Figure 83. Tianfu Elegance as Beautiful as Brocade. Performance

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 83 presents a captivating performance by the actors of the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Cultural Center during the exhibition. Through the presentation of various traditional Yi songs and dances, the performance further promoted the transmission and preservation of Yi music. This performance not only showcased the rich cultural essence of the Yi people but also provided strong support for the transmission and preservation of intangible cultural heritage, enhancing the recognition and acceptance of Yi music across a broader range of fields.

To more clearly showcase the external publicity and communication measures taken by the Ebian Yi Autonomous County government in promoting Yi wedding songs and culture, the following table summarizes the key years, projects, and details, outlining the important practices in cultural preservation.

Year	Event/Project	Details
2010	CCTV Folk Songs of China visits Ebian	The program, filmed at the Heizhugou scenic area in Ebian, recorded several indigenous folk songs, including wedding songs, love songs, and narrative songs. This provided an opportunity for the preservation of folk songs and contributed to the transmission and promotion of Yi culture.
2024	China Brand Day Special Performance	During an exhibition at the Shanghai Expo Exhibition Center, Ebian Cultural Center performers sang and danced to classic Yi works and gifted Yi embroidered pouches. This initiative promoted regional cultural preservation

		and enhanced recognition and reputation for Sichuan culture.
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Source:Lin Yang

### 2.3 Cultural Transmission and Educational Promotion

(1) On March 9, 2024, Ebian Yi Autonomous County held a themed event for the protection of minors at Beifeng Mountain Square, coinciding with the Aiyi Mengge Children's Day. The event was themed Five Educations Together, Yi Toward the Future. With a rich program that included a folk culture parade, artistic performances, intangible cultural heritage reserch sessions, and legal awareness promotion, the event consistently highlighted the concept of minor protection. It not only passed on the outstanding traditional Yi culture but also focused on fostering admirable qualities in children, such as diligence, bravery, unity, mutual help, and courage in the face of adversity. The event expressed the Yi people's sincere hopes for the healthy growth and safety of their children. By bringing together forces from various sectors, systems, and social classes, the event called on society as a whole to pay attention to the protection of minors, promoting the all-around healthy development of children. This series of initiatives reflects the organic integration of ethnic minority culture and contemporary social needs, providing cultural support and practical experience for minor protection.



Figure 84. Aiyi mence Children's Day

Source: Lin Yang,from filedwork in 2024

Figure 84 presents photos from the Ayi Mengge event held in Ebian Yi Autonomous County. This event not only helped children learn self-protection knowledge but also effectively promoted the transmission and awareness of Yi culture. By combining minor protection with Yi cultural elements, the event strengthened children's safety awareness and self-protection abilities, while also providing an important platform for the transmission of Yi's outstanding traditional culture. This innovative approach has played a positive dual role in both minor protection and cultural promotion.

(2) On April 23, 2024, Ebian Yi Autonomous County officially launched the Shuxiang Ebian National Reading event, themed Building a Society of Book Culture, Sharing Modern Civilization. The event featured the opening program Golden Mouth Harp and a situational display of the classic Yi historical book, family traditions, and the play Maduo Ce, showcasing the profound cultural heritage and unique charm of Yi culture, which received widespread acclaim. Additionally, the Four Decades Hand in Hand poem created by the county library and cultural center was recited with deep emotion, celebrating the 40th anniversary of Ebian's establishment and highlighting the spirit of cooperation and collective effort. This event particularly focused on promoting Yi language and culture, using a variety of artistic forms to advance the transmission of Yi traditional culture. Interactive sessions, such as cultural lectures and recommendations of classic books, attracted numerous citizens, further enhancing public attention to and recognition of Yi language and arts. This event provided a new platform for the transmission and innovation of Yi culture, significantly promoting the spread and development of minority languages and the arts.



Figure 85. National Reading Event

Source: Lin Yang, from filedwork in 2024

Figure 85 shows the on-site photos of the Shuxiang Ebian • National Reading event, themed Building a Society of Book Culture, Sharing Modern Civilization. This event not only promoted deep exchanges between Yi and Han cultures but also introduced Yi culture to children. Through a variety of artistic performances and interactive sessions, the event effectively facilitated the transmission and promotion of Yi language and culture among the younger generation, further strengthening mutual understanding and integration between ethnic cultures.

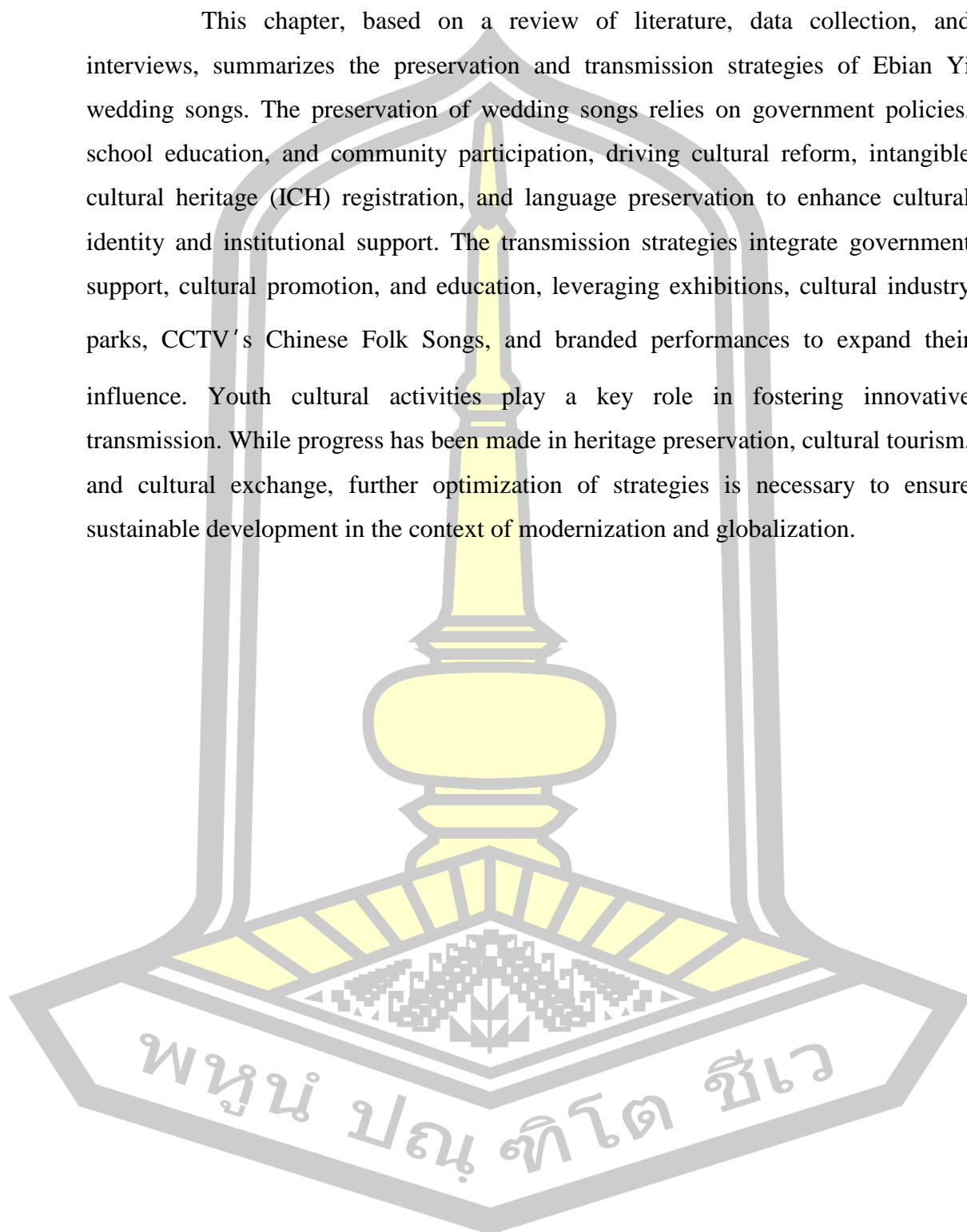
To more clearly showcase the practices and measures taken by the Ebian Yi Autonomous County government in the transmission and educational promotion of Yi culture, the following table summarizes the key years, projects, and details, outlining the important practices in cultural transmission.

Year	Event/Project	Details
March 9, 2024	Ayi Mengge Children's Day Theme Activity for Juvenile Protection	Utilizing platforms such as folk culture parades and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) research activities, the event integrated the concept of juvenile protection while transmitting traditional Yi culture. It aimed to cultivate positive character traits in children and promote their healthy development.
April 23, 2024	Shuxiang Ebian: Nationwide Reading Initiative	Through artistic performances, cultural lectures, and other forms of engagement, this initiative promoted the Yi language and culture, showcased the richness of Yi cultural heritage, enhanced public recognition of Yi culture, and encouraged its transmission and innovation.

Source: Lin Yang

### Summery

This chapter, based on a review of literature, data collection, and interviews, summarizes the preservation and transmission strategies of Ebian Yi wedding songs. The preservation of wedding songs relies on government policies, school education, and community participation, driving cultural reform, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) registration, and language preservation to enhance cultural identity and institutional support. The transmission strategies integrate government support, cultural promotion, and education, leveraging exhibitions, cultural industry parks, CCTV's Chinese Folk Songs, and branded performances to expand their influence. Youth cultural activities play a key role in fostering innovative transmission. While progress has been made in heritage preservation, cultural tourism, and cultural exchange, further optimization of strategies is necessary to ensure sustainable development in the context of modernization and globalization.



## CHAPTER VII

### Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestion

This paper has three research objectives: 1) To investigate the current status of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China; 2) To analyze the characteristics of song selection in Yi wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China. 3) To propose guidelines for the preservation and Transmission of Yi wedding ceremony songs in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

This research employs a multidisciplinary approach, integrating historical literature analysis, field investigations, and ethnomusicological methods. The research findings can be summarized as follows:

#### 1. Conclusion

##### 1.1 Contemporary Status of Yi Wedding Songs in Ebian, Sichuan

This study, based on field research and systematic analysis, summarizes the key characteristics of Ebian Yi wedding music. The wedding process embodies distinct cultural significance, with songs integrated into the rituals, reflecting the richness of Yi social culture. The primary types of wedding songs include religious songs, crying marriage songs, and some playful songs, each with unique features catering to different stages of the ceremony and their cultural and emotional expressions. These songs serve multiple functions, including religious blessings, emotional expression, and social interaction, while also playing a crucial role in cultural transmission and identity reinforcement. As an integral part of intangible cultural heritage, wedding songs hold significant artistic and cultural value. However, they face challenges due to the formalization of weddings, weakened cultural identity, and socio-economic and technological changes, leading to a decline in usage, a reduction in traditional performers, and weakened language transmission. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of Ebian Yi wedding music, offering theoretical support and foundational data for its preservation and sustainable development.

## 1.2 Characteristics of Yi Wedding Song Selections in Ebian, Sichuan

Ebian Yi wedding music plays a vital role in cultural transmission, reflecting the region's rich heritage. During the wedding ceremony from January 3 to 5, 2024, songs were categorized into religious and crying marriage songs. Qifu Song, performed a cappella in a monophonic style, integrates single-theme variation with chanting, transitioning from C# Yu to D Yu and concluding in C Zhi. It features compound and free rhythms, closely aligning melody with lyrics and incorporating improvisation. Re Da, structured with call-and-response, employs dual-theme variation and bipartite form, alternating between E Shang and G Shang pentatonic modes, with rhythmic shifts between 6/8 and 9/8 meters. Its melodic development relies on lyrics and improvisation, enhancing emotional depth. Ebian Yi wedding music, with its distinct structure and vocal techniques, enriches wedding ceremonies while preserving Yi musical heritage.

## 1.3 Guidelines for the Preservation and transmission of Yi Wedding Songs in Ebian, Sichuan

The preservation and promotion of Ebian Yi wedding songs are implemented through a multi-faceted approach, including government policies, school education, community participation, cultural dissemination, and educational promotion. In terms of preservation, the government facilitates the classification of wedding songs as intangible cultural heritage and strengthens the transmission of the Yi language. Schools integrate Yi culture into dance and music curricula to enhance students' cultural identity, while communities are encouraged to actively participate in preservation efforts by providing suggestions and identifying existing challenges. Regarding promotion, the government supports cultural exhibitions, the musical Ganmo Aniu, and the establishment of cultural industry parks to modernize traditional cultural expressions. Media platforms such as CCTV's Folk Songs of China and the 2024 China Brand Day serve as channels for broader cultural dissemination, enhancing public recognition. Educational initiatives engage youth through cultural activities and nationwide reading programs, embedding the cultural significance of wedding songs into learning and fostering cultural innovation and transmission. These comprehensive measures ensure the effective preservation and development of

Ebian Yi wedding songs in contemporary society, further enhancing their cultural value and social impact.

## 2. Discussion

### 2.1 Contemporary Status of Yi Wedding Songs in Ebian, Sichuan

Chen Lian's (2016) diachronic study on the Yi wedding songs of Ebian, Sichuan, reveals the multidimensional crisis faced by this cultural form. Through systematic field research, this study further validates and deepens these findings. The research indicates that the survival predicament of Yi wedding songs in Ebian has evolved into a complex chain of crises. Currently, Yi wedding songs in Ebian are confronted with a declining number of singers, content alterations, simplification of wedding ceremonies, and the breakdown of transmission mechanisms. The study further analyzes the primary factors contributing to this decline, including social transformation, aesthetic shifts, and economic influences.

Field data show that 92.11% of respondents primarily use the Han language in daily communication, with Yi language usage being significantly low at only 7.89%. The younger demographic exhibits a stronger preference for modern wedding formats, a cultural choice that fundamentally reflects Bourdieu's concept of "habitus reconstruction." Notably, language attrition serves as a crucial mediating variable, leading to a cognitive disconnection in intergenerational transmission. Sampling tests reveal that individuals aged 18–25 have only a 21.3% comprehension rate of ritual song lyrics, markedly lower than the 89.7% comprehension rate observed in those aged 45 and above.

### 2.2 Analysis of the Characteristics of Yi Wedding Song Selections in Ebian, Sichuan

In *The Categories and Functions of Yi Wedding Songs in Ebian, Sichuan* (2010), Chen Lian classifies Ebian Yi wedding songs into three categories: Crying Marriage Songs, Play Songs, and Wedding Songs. However, findings from field research suggest a revised classification system, wherein Yi wedding songs in Ebian primarily fall into three distinct categories: Religious Songs, Crying Marriage Songs, and Play Songs. Among these, Religious Songs are an indispensable component of the wedding ceremony.

Moreover, comparative analysis reveals notable distinctions between Ebian Yi wedding songs and those from other regions. Specifically, Ebian Yi wedding songs predominantly feature compound meter, with a prevalence of 6/8 and 9/8 time signatures. These rhythmic characteristics further underscore the unique musical identity of Ebian Yi wedding traditions.

### 2.3 Guidance for the Preservation and Promotion of Yi Wedding Songs in Ebian, Sichuan

In *Reflections and Recommendations on Ebian Yi Wedding Songs* (2016), Chen Lian emphasizes the need to enhance the collection, documentation, and publication of wedding songs, organize diverse forms of folk cultural activities, strengthen Yi language education and communication, and reinforce ethnic music education to ensure the transmission of wedding songs. Additionally, she advocates for integrating the preservation of wedding songs with tourism development.

Field research indicates that the Ebian Yi Autonomous County government has implemented several of these strategies for the preservation and transmission of wedding songs, yielding certain positive outcomes. However, further efforts are needed in school-based promotion, community-based dissemination, and collaboration between educational institutions and local communities. Notably, while progress has been made in lyric documentation, the systematic transcription of musical scores remains largely unaddressed.

## 3. Suggestion

### 3.1 Suggestions for Applying This Research

#### 3.1.1 Collaboration between Universities and Local Government

Universities and local governments should establish a collaborative committee to develop a detailed cooperation plan, ensuring the smooth implementation of projects. In the Ebian Yi Autonomous County Cultural Center, a research and teaching base should be set up to provide a platform for internships and research projects, promoting a close integration of theory and practice. At the same time, a systematic collection and organization of audio and video materials related to Yi wedding music should be undertaken, and experts in ancient Yi language should be

invited to transcribe the lyrics into modern Yi and Chinese to facilitate better understanding and transmission of Yi culture.

### 3.1.2 Improvement of the Education System

Yi intangible cultural heritage and Yi language extension courses should be added to school curricula, using classroom teaching, field studies, and interactive experiences. Senior Transmitters and young apprentices should be recruited annually to teach Yi traditional music and culture through a master-apprentice system, and concentrated training should be conducted.

### 3.1.3 Integration of Culture and Tourism

Different age-targeted research tours should be designed, such as music story sessions for preschool children, music production workshops for teenagers, and field research projects for university students, with summer camps organized annually. An immersive museum and intangible cultural heritage experience center should be established to display the history and development of Yi music, providing tourists the opportunity to personally experience Yi music production and performance.

### 3.1.4 Provision of Economic Support

The government should provide financial support to Transmitters through stipends, funding for cultural activities, and funds for data collection and organization to ensure the smooth implementation of promotion efforts. Funds can be raised through corporate sponsorship, individual donations, and foundation support. A dedicated donation platform and channels should be established, with regular reports on fund usage and project progress.

### 3.1.5 Enhancing Public Engagement

Launch a digital archive project for Yi wedding music, preserving and disseminating audio, video, and stories of Yi wedding music through mobile applications and online platforms. Community residents will be able to scan QR codes or use apps to learn about and engage with Yi wedding music anytime and anywhere. A Yi wedding music cultural ambassador program should be established to train a group of local youth as cultural ambassadors, regularly visiting schools, communities, and rural areas to promote and educate others about Yi wedding music.

### 3.1.6 Diversified preservation Channels

Utilize modern technologies, such as social media and online platforms, to expand the reach of Yi wedding music. Produce relevant audio and video materials and promote them through online channels to attract a broader audience and engage the younger generation.

### 3.2 Suggestions for Further Research

#### 3.2.1 Formation of Interdisciplinary Research Teams

Future studies should integrate experts from multiple disciplines, including linguistics, musicology, and anthropology, to form interdisciplinary research teams. Linguists can delve into the cultural meanings embedded in ancient Yi scripts, proverbs, and epic poetry, while musicologists can analyze the structural and performative aspects of wedding music. Such collaborative efforts will provide a comprehensive understanding of the deeper meanings of Ebian Yi wedding music.

#### 3.2.2 Expansion of Fieldwork Scope

It is recommended that future research encompass a broader range of wedding ceremonies, recording and analyzing additional musical content, particularly in remote areas where wedding traditions remain underexplored. Multi-site fieldwork will enable a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of Ebian Yi wedding music and its manifestations across different regions.

#### 3.2.3 Comparative Studies of Yi Wedding Music Across Regions

Comparative research on Yi wedding music in Ebian and other regions is essential. Such studies should examine the commonalities and differences in cultural practices and musical styles across regions. This approach will help uncover the regional characteristics and transmission patterns of Yi wedding music, offering significant insights into the diversity of ethnic music traditions.

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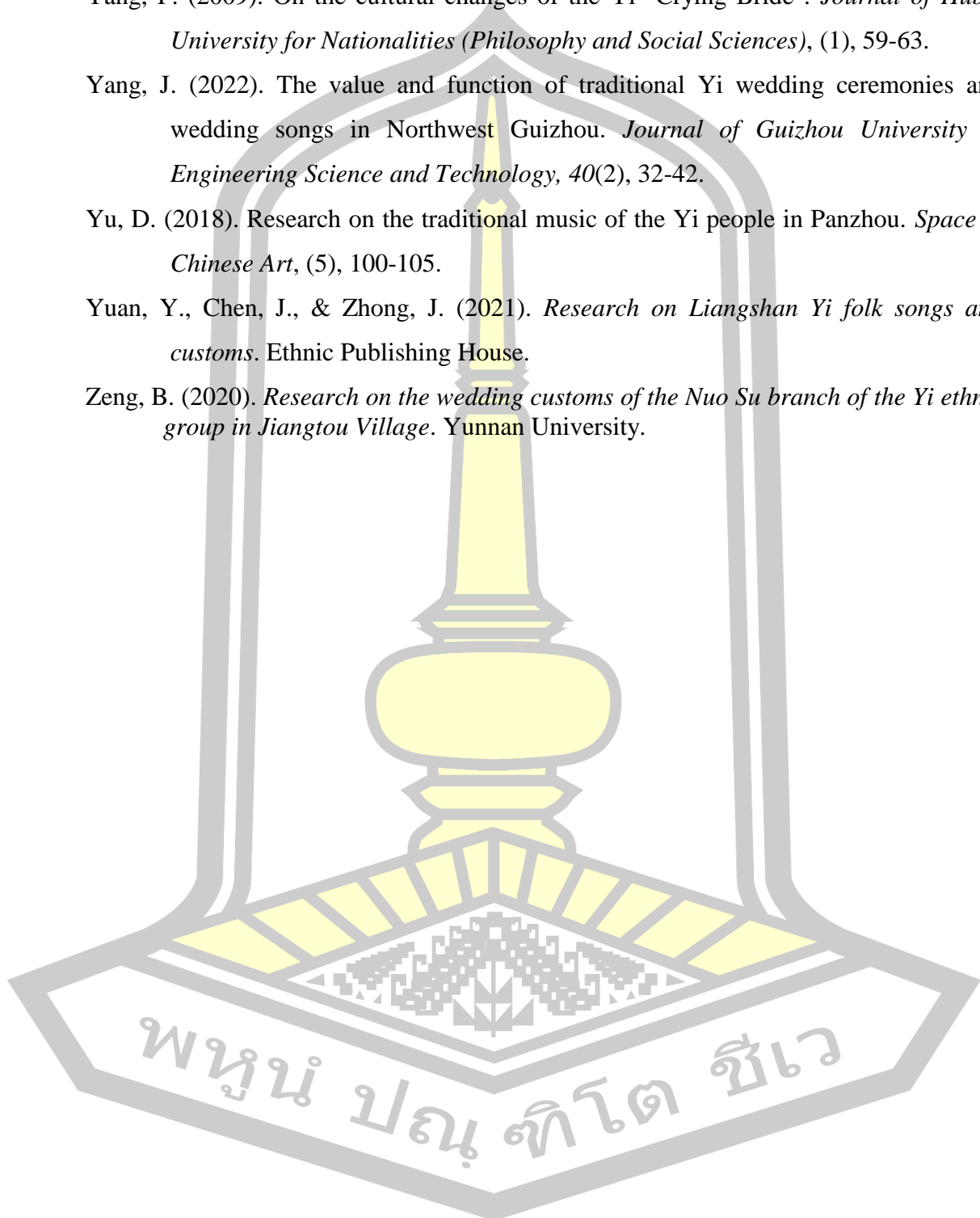
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# APPENDIX

## Appendix A

### Interview record 1

1.Time: June, 2023-December, 2024.

2.Location: Cultural Center of Ebian County, Sichuan Province, China.

3.Interviewees: Director of the Ebian Cultural Center,Luo Yaxi.

Due to the Four hours duration of the interview, only a portion of the content is presented.

Question No.	Question
1	What role does Yi music play in the musical culture of Ebian?
2	What are the key elements or symbolic meanings of the ceremonial music in Ebian?
3	What is your in-depth understanding of the developmental stages of traditional Yi music?
4	What are the current challenges in the development,transmission , and preservation of Yi music?
5	How would you comment on the impact of intangible cultural heritage on local culture?
6	What is your perspective on the current state of Yi music development?
7	What are your expectations and suggestions for the next generation of Yi musicians?

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## Interview record 2

1.Time: August-December, 2023

2.Location: Cultural Center of Ebian County, Sichuan Province, China.

3.Interviewees: Vice President of Xiaoliangshan Jile Dancers Association, Jiashi shuaibo.

Due to the three hours duration of the interview, only a portion of the content is presented.

Question No.	Question
1	Could you provide a detailed description of the Ganmo Aniu Legend?
2	In the process of inheriting the Ganmo Aniu Legend, how do you understand and interpret it?
3	How do you view the position and role of the Ganmo Aniu Legend in the culture of the Ebian Yi people?
4	How does the Ganmo Aniu Legend reflect and transmit Yi culture?
5	How do you view the inheritance and development of the Ganmo Aniu Legend in modern society?
6	What are your thoughts or plans for the inheritance of Yi culture?
7	What expectations and advice do you have for the younger generation of Yi musicians, especially for those inheriting the Ganmo Aniu Legend?

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### Interview record 3

1.Time: June, 2023

2.Location: Cultural Center of Ebian County, Sichuan Province, China.

3.Interviewees: Ebian Cultural Center's Areniu Intangible Cultural Heritage

Transmitter and Actor: Azu Ouluo.

Due to the one-and-a-half-hour duration of the interview, only a portion of the content is presented.

Question No.	Question
1	Could you share with us your connection to Yi folk songs and how you first came into contact with them?
2	What are the distinctive characteristics of the lyrics?
3	How did you approach learning the fundamentals of music?
4	Did you have to learn the Yi script when you were a child?
5	Have you considered encouraging your children to learn musical knowledge?
6	What challenges are you currently facing in preserving the Yi language and culture among the younger generation?
7	Does the cultural center offer any public Yi language classes?
8	Does the cultural center bring in professional instructors to train you?

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#### Interview record 4

1.Time: June, 2023 – December, 2024.

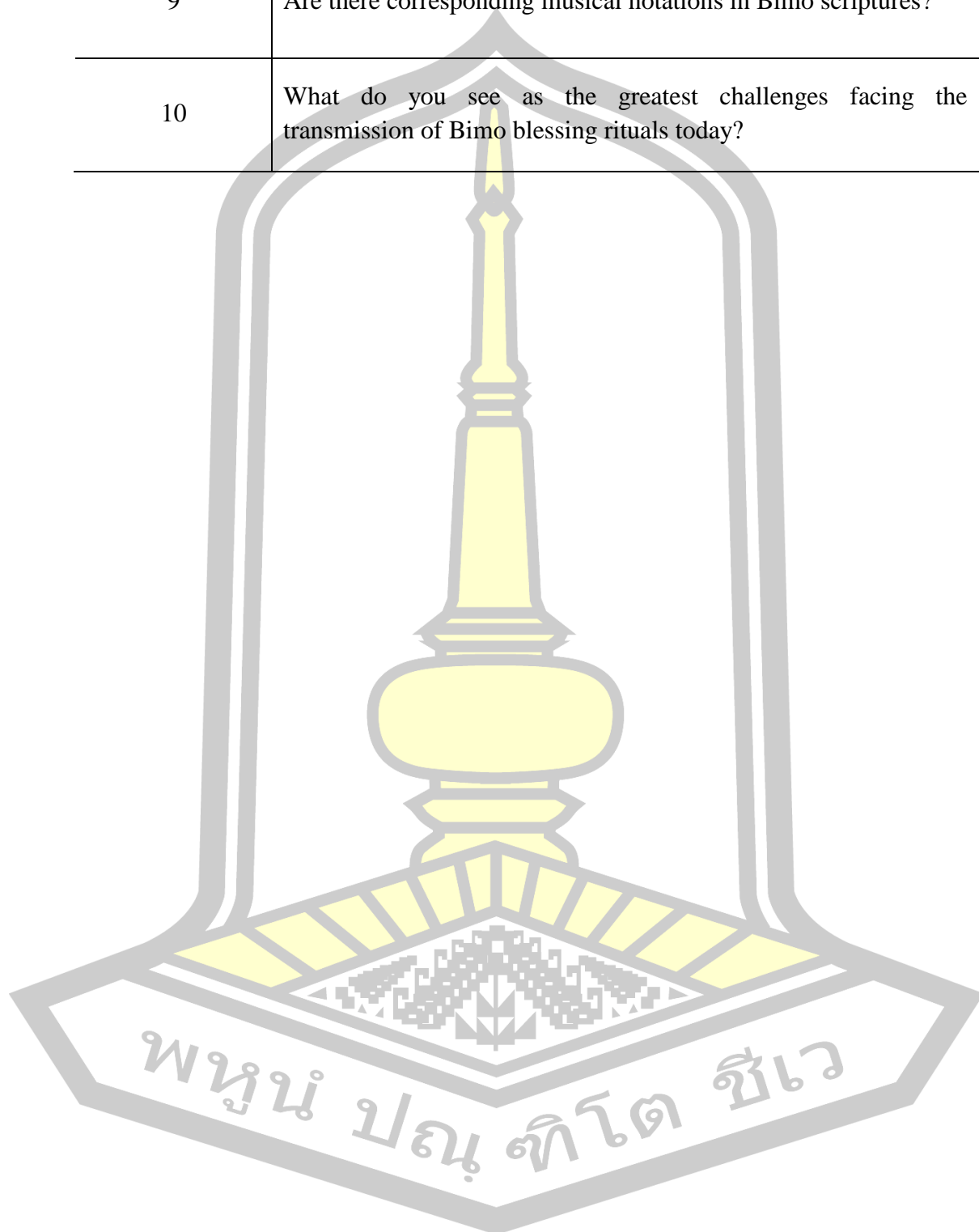
2.Location: Cultural Center of Ebian County, Sichuan Province, China.

3.Interviewees: Transmitter of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Ebian Yi Autonomous County :Qubie Geha.

The researchers conducted 16 interviews with Mr. Qubiege Ha, and have carefully selected some of the content for presentation.

Question No.	Question
1	Could you share your experiences of learning Bimo culture from childhood to adulthood?
2	Have you trained your son to be your successor?
3	Could you tell us about Bimo culture?
4	Could you tell us about the scriptures?
5	What role does Bimo culture hold in the hearts of the Yi people?
6	Could you discuss the relationship between Bimo rituals and weddings?
7	Are the melodies sung by Bimos during prayers all the same?
8	Can you translate Yi scriptures word for word?

9	Are there corresponding musical notations in Bimo scriptures?
10	What do you see as the greatest challenges facing the transmission of Bimo blessing rituals today?



### Interview record 5

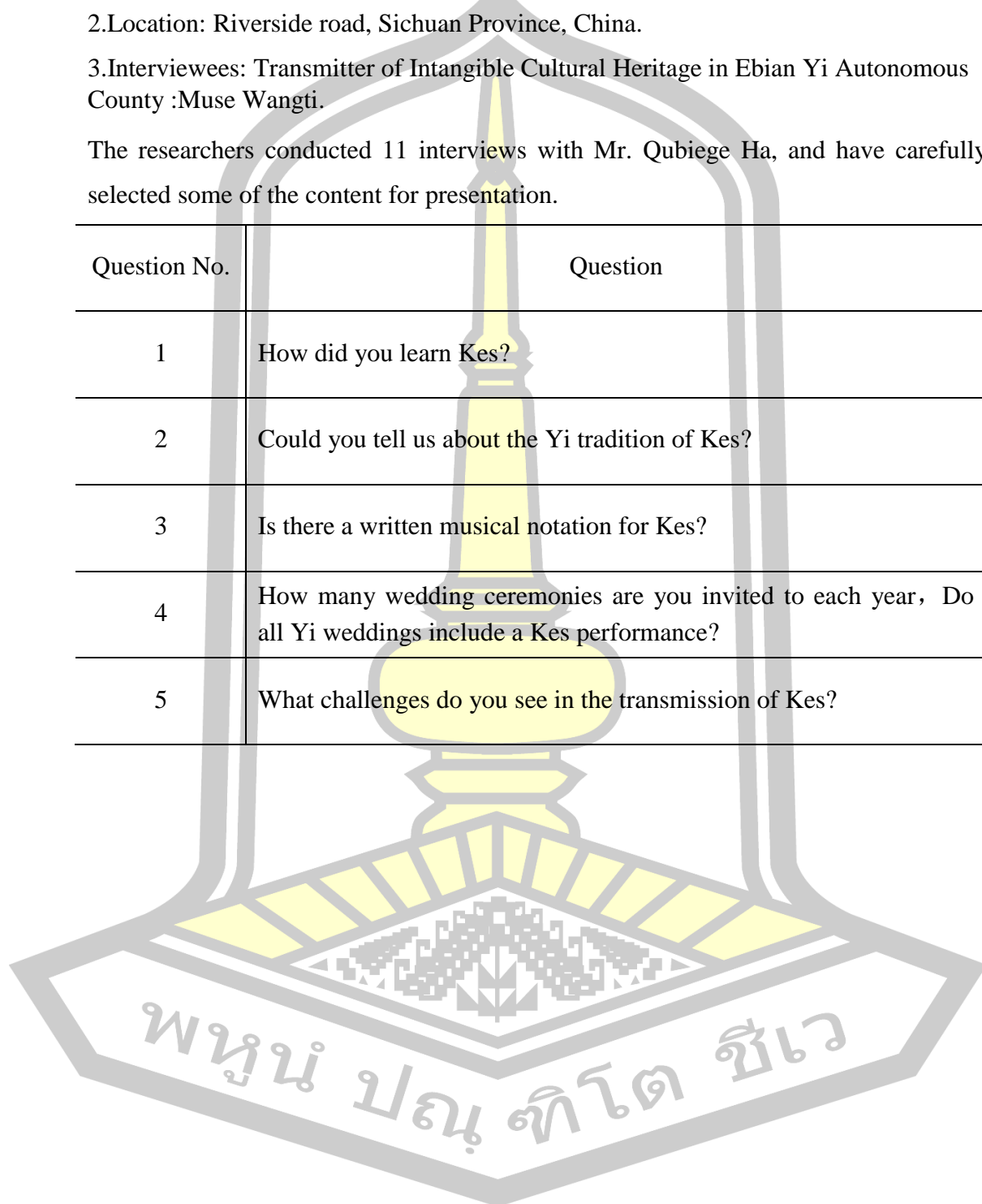
1.Time:August 19, 2023 - May 18, 2024.

2.Location: Riverside road, Sichuan Province, China.

3.Interviewees: Transmitter of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Ebian Yi Autonomous County :Muse Wangti.

The researchers conducted 11 interviews with Mr. Qubiege Ha, and have carefully selected some of the content for presentation.

Question No.	Question
1	How did you learn Kes?
2	Could you tell us about the Yi tradition of Kes?
3	Is there a written musical notation for Kes?
4	How many wedding ceremonies are you invited to each year, Do all Yi weddings include a Kes performance?
5	What challenges do you see in the transmission of Kes?



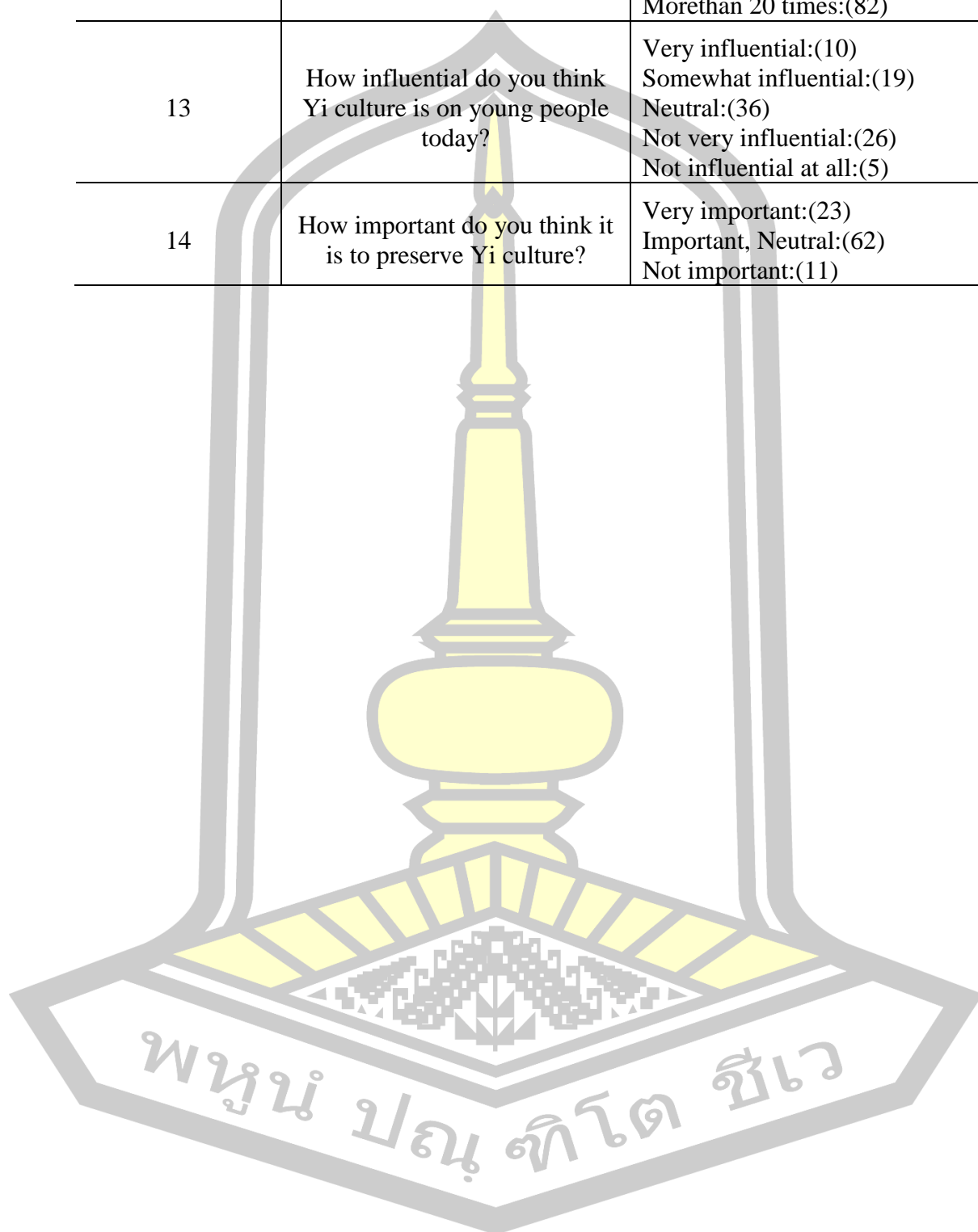
## Appendix B

### Questionnaire 1

1. Time: August 19-25, 2023
2. Location: Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.
3. Interviewees: Interviewed a total of 96 Yi people, aged 20-60, from Ebian Yi Autonomous County.

Question Number	Question Content	Options / Result (quantity)
1	What is your age?	20-30 years:(25) 31-40 years:(30) 41-50 years:(20) 51-60 years:(21).
2	What is your gender?	Male:(41) Female:(54)
3	Do you speak the Han language?	Yes:(74) No:(22)
4	Do you speak the Yi language?	Yes:(94) No:(2)
5	Do you know the Yi characters?	Yes:(1) No:(95)
6	Can you understand ancient Yi script?	Yes:(0) No:(96)
7	How familiar are you with Yi wedding rituals?	Very familiar:(32) Somewhat familiar:(48) Not familiar:(16)
8	How familiar are you with Yi wedding music?	Very familiar:(21) Somewhat familiar:(39) Not familiar:(36)
9	How familiar are you with Bimo culture?	Very familiar:(4) Somewhat familiar:(20) Not familiar:(72)
10	Can you sing the Crying marriage song?	Yes:(2) No:(94)
11	Do you like Bimo music?	Yes:(2) No:(95)
12	How many Yi weddings have you attended?	Never:(0) 5-10 times:(1)

		10-20 times:(13) Morethan 20 times:(82)
13	How influential do you think Yi culture is on young people today?	Very influential:(10) Somewhat influential:(19) Neutral:(36) Not very influential:(26) Not influential at all:(5)
14	How important do you think it is to preserve Yi culture?	Very important:(23) Important, Neutral:(62) Not important:(11)



## Questionnaire 2

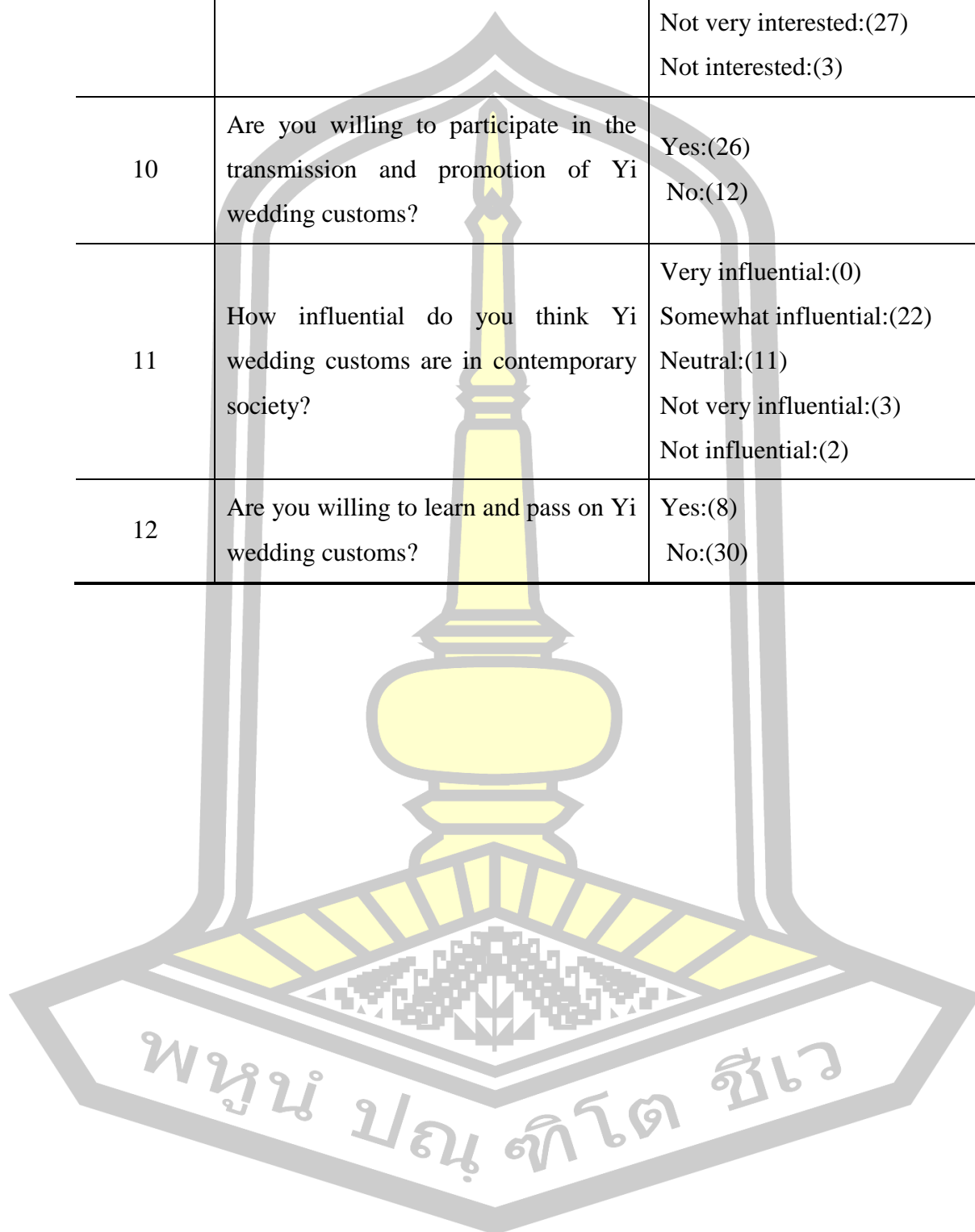
1.Time:January 3-5, 2023

2.Location: Red Flower Village and Yang Village, Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

3.Interviewees: Interviewed a total of 38 Yi people, aged 17-30, from Ebian Yi Autonomous County.

Question Number	Question Content	Options / Result (quantity)
1	What is your age?	17-20 years:(12) 21-25 years:(15) 26-30 years:(11)
2	What is your gender?	Male:(17) Female:(21)
3	Do you understand the significance of each step in the wedding ceremony?	Yes:(0) Understand a little:(14) No:(24)
4	Can you understand the content of the Bimo's chanting?	Yes:(0) Understand a little:(0) No:(38)
5	Can you understand the lyrics of the Crying marriage song?	Yes:(0) Understand a little:(21) No:(17)
6	Do you prefer popular music or traditional Yi music?	Popular music:(38) Traditional Yi music:(0)
7	Do you enjoy attending weddings?	Yes:(36) No:(2)
8	Do you speak more Han or Yi in your daily life?	More Han:(35) More Yi:(3)
9	How interested are you in Yi wedding	Very interested:(0)

	customs and culture?	Somewhat interested:(8) Not very interested:(27) Not interested:(3)
10	Are you willing to participate in the transmission and promotion of Yi wedding customs?	Yes:(26) No:(12)
11	How influential do you think Yi wedding customs are in contemporary society?	Very influential:(0) Somewhat influential:(22) Neutral:(11) Not very influential:(3) Not influential:(2)
12	Are you willing to learn and pass on Yi wedding customs?	Yes:(8) No:(30)



## Appendix C

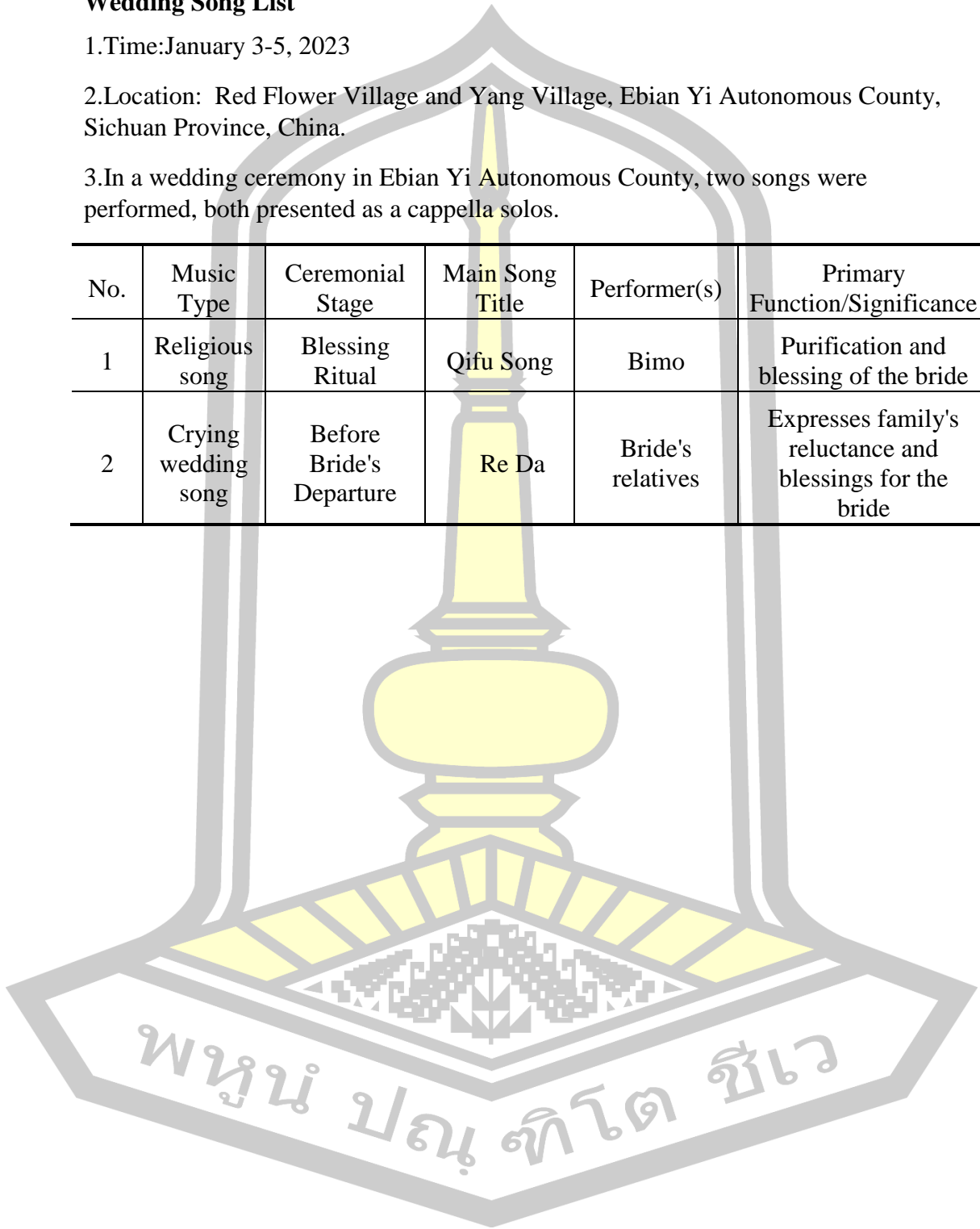
### Wedding Song List

1.Time:January 3-5, 2023

2.Location: Red Flower Village and Yang Village, Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Sichuan Province, China.

3.In a wedding ceremony in Ebian Yi Autonomous County, two songs were performed, both presented as a cappella solos.

No.	Music Type	Ceremonial Stage	Main Song Title	Performer(s)	Primary Function/Significance
1	Religious song	Blessing Ritual	Qifu Song	Bimo	Purification and blessing of the bride
2	Crying wedding song	Before Bride's Departure	Re Da	Bride's relatives	Expresses family's reluctance and blessings for the bride



## Appendix D

### Comparison of the English and Yi Lyrics of the Crying Marriage Song Re Da

In this reserch, researchers conducted an in-depth analysis of the Yi wedding song Re Da. To enhance understanding of the song's cultural connotations and emotional expressions, a comparison of the English lyrics and Yi lyrics of "Re Da" is presented. This comparison not only highlights the differing expressive modes of the lyrics across languages but also emphasizes the unique emotions and imagery inherent in Yi culture. Through this comparative analysis, readers can more intuitively perceive the emotional depth and cultural background of the song, thereby deepening their appreciation and understanding of Yi wedding music.

Part A、 B Lyrics	Part A、 B Lyrics (Yi)
Keep her, quickly keep the daughter Regardless of her beauty, the daughter is to be married today	ꞑ ꞑ, ꞑꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ, ꞑ ꞑ
Keep her, quickly keep the daughter Before dawn, she is still the daughter of the family	ꞑ ꞑ, ꞑꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ, ꞑ ꞑ
Keep her, quickly keep the daughter After dusk, she will become someone else's	ꞑ ꞑ, ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ, ꞑ ꞑ
Keep her, the daughter is bound to be married sooner or later The daughter will wander like the crows on the roof	ꞑ ꞑ, ꞑꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ, ꞑ ꞑ
Keep her, quickly keep the daughter The daughter will be like the cuckoo in spring, Calling in March and then disappearing into the mountains and seas	ꞑ ꞑ, ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ ꞑ, ꞑ ꞑ



## Appendix E

The following musical score is recorded using the International Phonetic Alphabet, which allows for a more precise representation of phonetic features.

### (1) Qifu song (Bichang shi)

### Qifu song (Bichang shi)

Singer: Jie'er Ayi  
Music Engraver: Lin Yang

ai tsa tsa i t'hei sa na pie t'hi lie pi pi tso tʃ la

5 pi pi tso hu lei t'he la la la pie pie a ie k'uo

8 ai ʃei k'ba k'ba pei sa a a p'ha e p'ha ma a p'hei ta na ŋia a k'bia k'bia tia na xa

13 t'ba t'be t'ba t'be ŋje t'ba t'ba o pia la fa p'he ʃa a ma ta pie lo a teie t'bu

17 pie ko a la a tsa t'ə ts ʊ xu lie ia mo ei mo mo ei mamō na

21 ma si si ma mo sia mo si la t'bei k'ba ŋa teie tei

24 ŋa xa xə ti t'hyə la lia ŋjə ʃə p'ha pa ŋa xa k'bi li kua a tu la t'eu

28 ŋja teia ma teia sa la mo la a ku ʃa tʃ ku ta la ŋja teie ma

32 mateie p'hu ki k'bu a p'hu k'ia kei p'hu p'hu xu sa ŋja teie ma o tso la mo lə

2

36

a sə la tɛi ku la tɛi sa xa nje sa a nje tɛie ma nje tɛie sə ei kuo

40

sa tɕʰei nje tɛie ma ei xə tɛie nja tɛie mo ia ka ʂa la la

44

ia sa tɛi i sa tɛi ia tɛi ko sa tɕʰə sa ka tɕʰa tɕuan a sa ka xu la tɕə

48

xu ka tɕʰuei a lian a pʰa a xu pʰa fa a xa kw tɛian a kə tɛian tɛian tɛʰian

52

tɛʰia kə tɛio kə tɛio tɛia kə ia kə tɛi

54

ia la tɛia kə tɛia tɛia kə eian ai ein tɛia ma sua tɕ sua ka tɛia ma a li lua

58

ʔa luo a tɕɿ tɕuan nja ŋ a lo zuan tɛia ŋ a pu ʂua a

61

lia lia lia a tɕʰuo lia zua ə kʰuo lo kʰuo uo tia lie tɕou kʰuə a sa tɕa ma

66

ei tɕou tɕ tɕou xu na liə ie ma sɿ tɕou tɕʰ ia ma si tɕ pu tɕou

70

tɕʰa tɕʰa a lie tɛia ma eio nja pu tɛi nja ka ʂa lei tɛia

73

tɕʰa pa eio lie ko tɛio ʂa lie tɛie a sa xua ma pʰa mei lua

## (2) Qifu song (Bisong shi)

## Chanting(reciting scriptures)

Singer: Jie'er Ayi  
Music Engraver: Liu Yang

1  
kə kə k<sup>h</sup>ua ŋja kə k<sup>h</sup>ua ta ka ma kə la la ʂa xua tʂɿ la kə kə ŋja

2  
tʂɿ i ʂa ma kə kə tʂə ma la k<sup>h</sup>a ŋja ma tʂi sa ma kə kə tʂəŋ ka tʂə t<sup>h</sup>ə lo t<sup>h</sup>a

3  
kə la k<sup>h</sup>a la ma kə ko tʂɿŋ i lə i lei ie la

4  
ʂen mə kə po ʒɿ po tʂa kə po ʒɿ po tʂa kə mə ʒɿ mə la tʂiŋ lə tʂiŋ lə ma

5  
tʂə lə ʒɿ tʂi kua tʂie ŋja lə k<sup>h</sup>uə ma tʂi la ka tʂei ma tʂɿe kə ə

6  
tʂi tʂi ma ŋju tʂə ka la tʂə tʂə ma tʂɿa ?<sup>h</sup>a kuə la kuə tʂei lə tʂyan la sei tʂei la

8  
tʂə tʂe pu tə tʂ<sup>h</sup>a ŋja eye ŋə pu ʂua kə tʂei tʂei pu ta sei tʂei faŋ tʂei faŋ kə tʂə t<sup>h</sup>au lo t<sup>h</sup>a

9  
kə la t<sup>h</sup>a la ŋ kə kuo a sa pəu ʂa la ta la tʂ<sup>h</sup>ə tʂ<sup>h</sup>ə la

10  
tʂei tʂei ma tʂe le ma tʂei ma kui la tʂ<sup>h</sup>uo a tʂɿə kə sə ma kui la la lei ŋjo ka xə kuo ua ka la la la tʂɿe tʂɿe la

## (3) Re Da

## Re Da

Singer: Hailai Jiluomu  
 Leze Jinshi  
 Music Engraver: Lin Yang

A

ts'ə tou a ts'ha ts'he ts'he si teie pu lu i pou ts'ə tou. B

ts'ə tou

6 A

ts'ə tou a no sie pei

a ts'ə ts'hei ts'hei si tei p'hu ku pou ts'ə tou.

11 B

k'ha kə ηə ts'η ηə w teiou ts'he tou

ts'ə tou tie k'hua k'ha k'hu

16 A

ts'ə ta

ηu tsi ηu ku teiou ts'ə tou

19 B

si p'hu lai k'ha e si t'ə si t'η t'ηiou t'ə tou

ts'ə ta

2

23 A

si pʰu lai kʰə ei si tʰə si tʰɿ tɿəu tʰə tou

27

a tʰɿ li tʰe tʰe si tɿ pu ku li fəu tʰə tou

31 A

a tʰɿ tʰə tʰə su tɿ pu ku pəu tʰə tou

35

a tɿ pu pəu ləŋ ə pu kui ləu tʰə tou

39 A

a tɿ pu kua lo kə pu ku u əu tʰə tou

43

ha ŋa kʰe kʰe lu tʰie pu ku i pəu tʰə tou

B

tʰə tou

47 A

tsʰə ta li a tsʰa

a ŋo kʰe kʰe ŋ tsɿ tsʰɿ tsʰɿ tɔu tsʰə tɔu

52

tsʰi tsʰi fu tɔu si tei pu kui pou tsʰə tɔu

tsʰə ta li a tsʰə

57 A

tsʰi tsʰi si tei pu ku pou tsʰə tɔu

tsʰə ta

61

pu lu tsʰɿ tsʰə si tʰa tʰi tʰi pu lu i pou tsʰə tɔu

## Appendix F

### Photos related to fieldwork, interviews, etc



The image depicts the groom's relatives dressed in Yi (彝) traditional attire, celebrating the groom's wedding.



The image shows a family portrait of the groom's family, from left to right: father, mother, grandmother, younger sister, and the groom's older sister. The groom is the second-born in the family.



The image shows a photo of the groom and bride after completing the wedding ceremony, posing for a picture with the groom's parents.



The QR code link shows a video clip of Yi ethnic dance performed by the groom's relatives and friends during the wedding celebration.



The picture displays a photo taken with Yi compatriots.



The image shows a photo of the author during an interview with the heritage practitioner, Mr. Jiashi shuaibo.

## BIOGRAPHY

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