

CREATING A NEW SONG GENRE

Educational songs in Bai for young children

Author: Liz Billard PhD, B. Mus. 2009

PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER:

This paper describes the process by which new songs using the Bai language and Bai musical style were composed and are being used in the classroom for educational purposes. It shows what was involved in getting to know musicians, recording, transcribing and analysing Bai songs so that meaningful discussions with musicians about musical structure could take place. The ultimate goal of this discussion was to encourage local musicians to compose new songs which could be used to aid learning in the classroom as well as to collect traditional children's songs which could also be used when appropriate. The paper concludes with a description of the response by teachers, students and parents following the introduction of these songs and the educational benefits that occurred.

METHODOLOGY:

The following research and analytical method was used to discover the basic structure of Bai children's songs so that the results could become a guide for composing similar songs for classroom use. This song genre is usually the domain of children aged from babyhood to around eight years.

Recording:

The songs which became the basis for analysis were recorded during April 2003. Collecting them was made easier because we were based in Jianchuan County in Jinhua¹. We had relatively easy access to villagers whose homes were in Shilong village because it is the place where the MLE experimental project is taking place. It was while recording these songs that I was introduced to local musicians and villagers. At first, I was always accompanied by a town or village official and a Bai friend who helped when communicating with locals.² Later, an official did not always accompany us.

Before recording the songs sung by villagers, I tried finding people in Jinhua¹ who knew and were willing to sing Bai children's songs for me to record. Most people were reticent or

¹ Jinhua town is the county seat.

² Local Chinese was non-standard and often difficult to follow. Some women could only speak Bai which was a handicap for me as project commitments did not allow time for me to acquire good oral Bai language skills. Being accompanied by a Bai native speaker was also useful when I was not sure of the significance of what was happening. When officials were sure of what I was doing in the village, they relaxed and did not feel the need to accompany me.

said they could not remember any songs. The latter often admitted that they had learned them as children but they said they were not passing them on to their own children.³ I met some people⁴ who wrote down the words for traditional children's songs, but they were mainly interested in publishing the words in books on Bai culture or in one case, for analysis of the word structure.⁵ I have only seen one book on Bai culture which has transcribed the melodies of some Bai songs using Jianpu but there was no musical analysis.⁶

The songs I recorded in 2003 include adult and children's songs which were sung by male and female singers and children. The songs were recorded in Dali at a Bai language literacy class⁷, in Shilong village and at Shibaoshan. The adult singers included professional musicians, amateur performers who sometimes performed at the local music festival at Shibaoshan or other local performances, and ordinary folk who do not usually perform in public. The children were recorded in their homes or at school. All the songs are solo performances and most were unaccompanied. Some singers accompanied themselves on the sanxian⁸ which was plucked to fill in gaps at the end of lines with decorative flourishes and provide a simple accompaniment as a singer was singing.

The words of the songs collected were transcribed by Zhang Jianzhu (my Bai teacher) and I transcribed all of the songs in western notation with several of them also being transcribed in Jianpu and a graphic form of notation.

ANALYSIS:

I will limit the discussion for this session to one song example in order to illustrate the techniques used to analyse all the children's songs. This song is representative of this genre.

³ This was possibly because the town people are more concerned that their children learn Chinese before starting school.

⁴ e.g. Zhang Wenbo, a long time serious promoter of literacy in the Bai language.

⁵ e.g. Duan Ling who lives in Xiaguan but was originally from Jianchuan. His book, "Baizu Qudiao Gelu Tonglun" (Bai folk song and its form), Yunnan Minzu Chubanshe, 'Baizu Wenhua Yanjiu Cong Shu' (Part of a series of books on Bai culture research), is an analysis of Bai song structures, though there is no reference to melody. He also wrote another booklet, "Hhep Baipsvl" (Learning to read and write Bai), She Zhenghua - Editor, 'Baizu Minjian Wenyi de Baohu Yu Chuancheng Peixun' (The protection of Bai culture and Bai literacy training). This booklet was produced for use in a Bai literacy class for musicians with the financial support of the Fufeng University in Japan. The booklet uses song words to teach singers to read and write Bai.

⁶ The system of Jianpu notation widely used in China is based on western solfa. The numbers represent the degrees of the western major scale in which 'doh' is the number '1' and is the first note of the major scale. If the music being transcribed is in the minor scale, the number '6' or 'lah' will be the first degree of the minor scale or mode used. However, the note for the number '1' will be indicated (e.g. 1 = A) which is the first degree of the related major scale at the top of the song to indicate the key signature that applies. Notes without dots above or below will generally be associated with notes in the nearest octave around middle C. A note with a dot above it will be an octave higher than the note with no dot, a dot below will be an octave lower. Bar lines are used and the rhythm is shown using horizontal lines. One line joining two numbers indicates two quavers. Two lines indicates semiquavers. A zero indicates a rest.

⁷ The workshop pioneered the above booklet prepared by Duan Ling.

⁸ The sanxian is the traditional Bai three stringed instrument. The strings are tuned to the notes A below middle C, D and A above middle C.

Song: “Lix lix pot”

This version of the song was sung by Li Liqing aged 21 at the time of recording. At that time she was a serious amateur but has since become a professional singer. She sang this song along with some other songs while attending the Bai language literacy class designed for musicians held in Xiaguan. She comes from a musical family in Shilong village and her mother, grandfather and a niece were recorded later when I visited the village. I was introduced to her by one of the teachers of the course who has since come to work on the project. I had especially asked her if she would sing some children’s songs for me so I could record both the songs and her answers to questions about the songs. She referred to the children’s songs she sang as being ‘in her mother’s domain’ rather than her own.⁹ She sang a few other adult songs for me to record as well without this kind of qualification. She said her mother taught her the song when she was a child.

This example (Allocated English name¹⁰: Broken pickle jar) is shown in western notation, Jianpu and graphic notation to describe musical structure, choosing the most appropriate one for the type of discussion. The music accompanying the words “Ya-hat-hex” at the end of the song has been transcribed in western notation using the pitch actually sung. The ending is modified in the Jianpu and graphic notation versions to reflect the pattern used at the end of most songs and using the tonality already established.¹¹ This ending is often used as a sign that the song is ending or to let a partner in a duet know that the singer is finishing his part and it is her turn to sing (and vice versa). Below, transcribed in western notation, is the recorded version as it was originally sung.

Lix lix pot

Voice Performer: Li Liqing

♩ = 72

1

Lix lix pot, At - daf gvl - cit saind dain - pot, Meib - yin jial - hol

5

dop - kex - zaix, Maip donp mel zvl pot. (Ya hat hex.)

⁹ This could be because she was single with no children of her own at the time. She has since married and has a child of her own but I have not yet found out whether she is singing these songs to her young son.

¹⁰ The English name reflects the song content not the Bai name of the song which, I was told, has no particular meaning.

¹¹ This was discussed with musicians who said that would have been the intention of the singer.

Jianpu version of the song

The above song is shown below using jianpu notation and includes the modified version of the ending “Ya-hat-hex”.

1 = A* $\frac{2}{4}$ (F# natural minor scale)

6 6 3 | 3 1̇ 1̇ 3 | 3 6 3 0 |

Lix lix pot, At - daf gvl - cit saind dain - pot,

1̇ 65 1̇ 1̇ | 3 6 6 0 | 1 1 6 65 | 6 1 645 | 6 0 0 |

Meib-yin jian-hol dop-kex-zaix, Maip donp mel zvnl pot. (Ya - hat - hex)**

* actual pitch recorded 1 = A

** this phrase goes below a comfortable pitch for the singer so notes modified to fit within the mode already established

Pitch

1. Actual notes used, frequency and pitch range

() are notes used only in the ending

1 1 2 1 2 1 6 2 8 5 (number of times used in the song)

The frequency of notes used tends to confirm that the notes in brackets are more likely to be a slip in pitch because of the low pitch of the finishing phrase “Ya-hat-hex” which was outside the comfortable range for this singer.

2. Apparent tonal centres and tonality

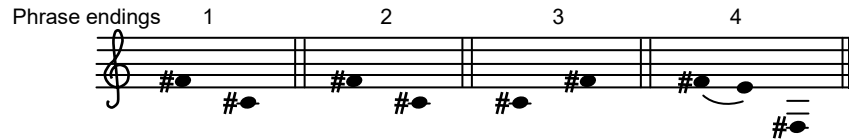
Intervals

(Degree) 1 5 1 3 5 7 8

(Jianpu) (6) (3) (6) (1) (3) (5) (6)

The tonality seems to be suggestive of the aeolian mode with strong tonal centres on the first (F#) and fifth (C#) degrees.

3. Melodic cadences



The cadences seem to confirm the suggested mode.

4. Melodic intervals and frequency

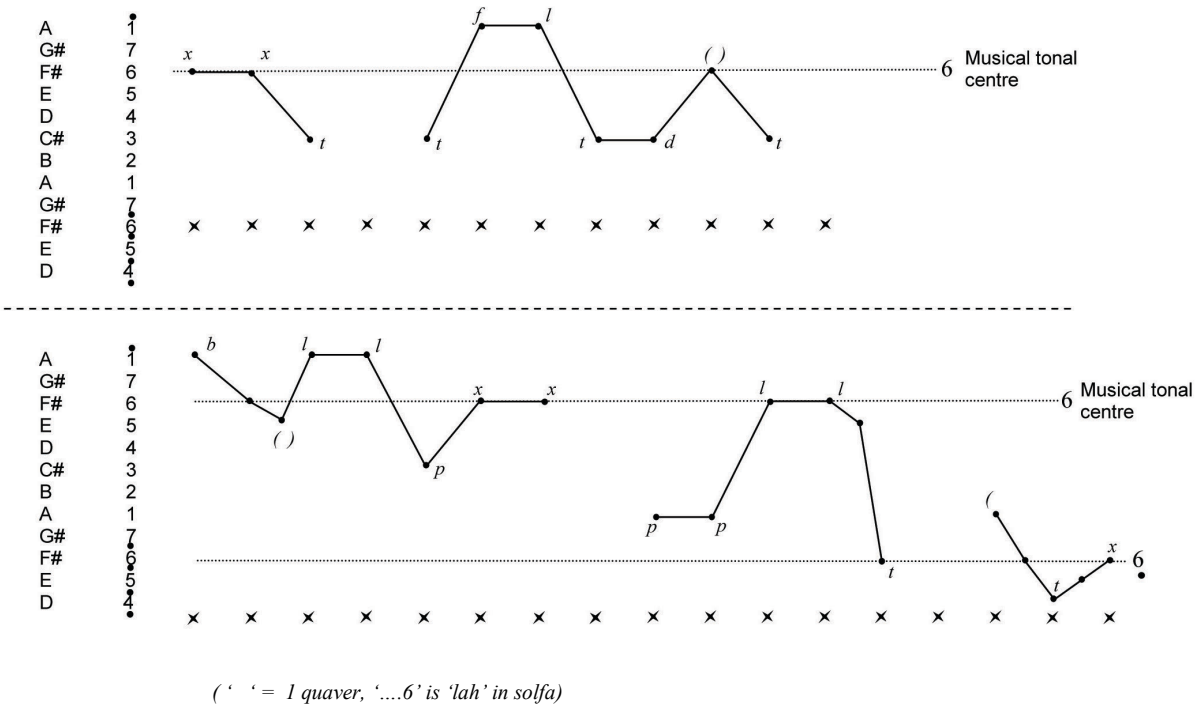
Intervals

Unison	M2a*	M2d	m3d	P4a	P4d	m6a	m6d	M6a	M6d	m7d
8	1	1	1	3	2	1	3	1	1	1

Frequency

* 'a' and 'd' refer to 'ascending' and 'descending' forms.

The succession of melodic intervals and melodic shapes of phrases is most clearly seen in the graphic notation below.



4. Melodic shape and speech tones

The most interesting discovery about the melodic shape is that it follows the high, medium and low speech tones. The graphic notation shows this relationship clearly and it not only became the basis for discussing melodic characteristics with local musicians, the majority of whom have no formal music training, but it was also used when discrepancies between the speech tones and melody appeared. In each case where this occurred, an error in the

transcription of the word was confirmed after discussing it with the person who transcribed the words or a musician.

Speech tones

Tone mark	Pitch	Relaxed/ tense
<i>l</i>	55	relaxed
<i>b</i>	55	tense
<i>f</i>	35	relaxed
<i>x</i>	33	relaxed
(no tone mark)	33	relaxed
<i>t</i>	31	relaxed
<i>p</i>	42	tense
<i>d</i>	21	tense

The close relationship between melody and speech tones seen in Bai children's songs is not usually a feature of adult songs. When adult singers incorporate children's songs into a performance of an adult song, the melody follows that of the adult song being sung. In the above song, there is no modulation of key, but there is a shift in pitch where a whole phrase drops and the note which had previously been allocated to medium tones (33) now becomes a high tone (55) and notes previously allocated to low tones (31, 42 and 21) become medium tones (33). This drop in pitch gives a sense of closure to the song and is commonly used in Bai songs. The 'f' tone (35) is more flexible in its use and it sometimes appears as a high tone or a medium tone. The rule seems to be that it must follow a note lower than itself.

5. Decorative notes

Passing notes and auxiliary notes also feature in Bai songs and children's songs. In this song decorative notes occur on the words 'Meibyin, zvnI' and 'Ya-hat-(hex)'. They allow the melody to flow more and add melodic and rhythmic interest. Professional songs will decorate the basic melody of a song considerably in their own personal style.





Rhythm, stress, rhyme & speech tones

1. Bai children's songs also have very definite structures in relation to stress, rhyme and speech tones. A very comprehensive analysis of this can be found in Duan Ling's "Baizu Qudiao Gelu Tonglun" (Bai folk song and its form),¹² and this song is one of the structures typically used. An analysis of the rhythm, the number of stresses (syllables) per line, the rhyme and its relationship with speech tones is shown in the table below. Displayed in

¹² Duan Ling is a linguist of some standing as well as being a Bai musician.

western notation, the stresses are quavers which form one of the patterns usually used (3, 7, 7, 5) and the rhyming pattern is AABA. According to Duan Ling's analysis, the most important aspect of the rhyme is

that the tones must 'rhyme'. That is, if 'A' in the rhyming pattern is a low tone, it may be a '31' (t), '42' (p) or a '21' (d).¹³ In this song the 'yunmu' (rhyming sound of the word) which is 'o' matches exactly, but this is not always the case in Bai songs. Other words might have included those which end with 'at, ond, op, ut... etc.)

Rhythm	Stresses	Rhyme	Tones
 Lix lix pot,	3	A	3-1
 At - daf gvl - cit saind dain - pot,	7	A	3-1
 Meib-yin jial-hol dop-kex-zaix,	7	B	3-3
 Maip donp mel zvnl pot.	5	A	3-1

Translated, the song reads:

Song words	Meaning	Chinese translation	Bai-Chinese-English words
Lix lix pot	Li li po	(起头词)	(no meaning)
Atdaf gvlcit saind dainpot?	Whose pickled vegetable jar is broken?	谁家腌菜罐打破	atdaf 谁 who? gvlcet 腌菜 (pickled veges) saind 罐子 (jar) dainpot 打破 (break, smash)
Meibyin jialhol dopkexzaix	Tomorrow just happens to be market day.	明天刚好是集市 (大街天)	meilyin 明天 tomorrow jianhol 刚好 it happens that dopkexzix 集市 country fair, market (大街天)
Maip donp mel zvnl pot.	(We) can buy another one (the same).	重新买一个	donp 重新 another new zvnl 重新 一个 (罐子) (another) one

¹³ Duan Ling, "Hhep Baipsvl" (Learning to read and write Bai), op. cit., pp.46-54.

Conclusions

There was opportunity to discuss the above musical structures informally with a few locals including singers.¹⁴ As a result, I came to the following conclusions.

1. Bai children's songs have very definite patterns for lyrics which include the number of lines to songs, the number of syllables per line and rhyming rules.
2. It is possible to read the words in Bai and know what the basic melody of the song is because the melody uses high, medium and low notes wherever there are high, middle or low speech tones.
3. Apart from the melody created by the speech tones, these simple songs can be made more interesting by the addition of some decorative notes such as passing notes and auxiliary notes and by adding other fill-in syllables (e.g. 'Zil ab') occasionally during performance. Other stylistic additions such as slides between notes might also be used.
4. Many Bai people, including non musicians, enjoy composing words for children's songs in the hope that they can create clever or interesting ideas, while at the same time, choosing words that make an interesting tune.
5. While Bai songs have never been used in schools formally, it ought to be possible to compose new songs using the above characteristics to produce an entirely new genre of Bai children's songs which can be used to teach children to count or help them learn about colours or any other useful information.

Motivating locals to compose new songs

After completing the above, I asked a well respected professional singer Li Genfan¹⁵ whom I knew quite well to organize a more formal meeting with singers and musicians in his home village of Shilong. So that this meeting would have fruitful outcomes, my preparations needed to allow that those present might not understand what I was hoping they would be able to do. Indeed, this turned out to be the case. Those attending had no experience of children's action songs or special Bai songs composed and used in the classroom for educational purposes.

Meeting Plan

The plan for the meeting included talking about the basic aims of the MLE project in their village such as: promoting the children's interest in the Bai language and culture; easing young children's first encounter with school by enabling them to read and write first in their own language (the only language they know); and helping the children to transition to the

¹⁴ Several other songs of this type were recorded and analysed and the above observations were confirmed as characteristic of this song genre.

¹⁵ He was king of the local Bai folk festival at that time.

national language more easily. Special songs composed for use in the classroom would include using Bai songs to learn to read and write their own language and new songs to help them learn many other new things. The songs used in the program would include traditional songs as well as new songs which would resemble traditional songs. Other songs which reflect many characteristics of traditional songs, but which might be more flexible in structure, would also be used. The songs needed to fit weekly themes, reflect everyday life in the village and express the children's own perspective on life at their age. They could also be used to learn to count, learn about the seasons, learn healthy habits and so on. To help the local musicians understand the kind of songs needed, I decided to create some examples myself using my limited knowledge of the Bai language, together with the understanding of the structure of traditional children's songs I had already gained.

The first example I produced was a counting song introducing the numbers 1-5. It also fitted one of the weekly themes, "Families" which was planned for use during the first few weeks of school. The melody follows the patterns set by the speech tones as in traditional songs. The words also fit several of the characteristics of a traditional children's song.

Sexded ngvxkox zex ngel hot (Five finger family)

	Word stress	Rhyme	Speech tone
Sexded ngvxkox zex ngal hot.	7	A	3 – 1
Aibyip, Anei, dix – mox – hox,	7	B	3 – 3
Aldildiaipkox cuzzex ngot.	7	A	3 – 1
Yi, gonx, sanl, xi, ngvx.	5	B	3 – 3

Translation:

Five fingers make up my home.

Grandpa, grandma, mum and dad,

The thumb of course is me.

One, two, three, four, five.

The song was not necessarily a good song. The second line sounds more western than Bai and the word 'aldildiaipkox' for thumb presented problems as most Bai do not use a special word for the thumb. Thus, those with whom I consulted were of two minds whether this word would be recognized. However, the song served as a reasonable example for content and trying to create the kind of song desired. Later, a song similar to this one was composed. It still differed from traditional songs in that the rhythmic pattern for the first four lines was not the same as the second group of four lines. (See below)

Sexdet ngvxkox zex ngal hot

Teacher sings: Yi, gonx, sanl, xi, ngvx, (*The children put their hands behind their backs.*)
 Yi, gonx, sanl, xi, ngvx,
 Sexdet ngvxkox zex alna?
 Yi, gonx, sanl, xi, ngvx.

The class sings: Sexdet ngvxkox zex alda. (*The children show a hand in front.*)
 Sexdet ngvxkox zex ngal hot,
 Dixmox, aibyip, Atnei, ngot, (*The children point to each finger.*)
 Yi, gonx, sanl, xi, ngvx. (*The children count each finger.*)

Translation:

One, two, three, four, five
One, two, three, four, five
Where are your five fingers?
One, two, three, four, five

Here are my five fingers.
My five fingers are my family,
My parents, grandpa, grandma, and me,
One, two, three, four, five

The second example is a song composed to show that it may not always be possible to make the ideas needed in an educational song fit the patterns used in traditional songs.

Nevertheless, it contains several of the structural characteristics. This song is designed to help new students listen for their names and respond to the teacher. It can also be adapted to help students locate objects in the classroom.

(Child's name) zex alna?

	Word stress	Rhyme	Speech tone
(Teacher sings) ...(Name)... zex alna?	5	A	3-3
...(Name)... zex alna?	5	A	3-3
(Student sings) Ngot zex alda, ngot zex alda.	6	A	3-3
(Everyone sings) ...(Name)... zex alda?.	5	A	3-3

Translation:

(Teacher sings) *Where is(child's name/object)?*
 Where is(child's name/object)?
 (Student sings) *Here I am, here I am. (or Here it is)*
 (Everyone sings) *Here is(child's name/object).*

The final version of this song included in the preschool program appears below later. As I was still in the early stages of learning the Bai language and felt unable to express enough ideas using the Bai language, I also included some ideas for songs in Chinese such as:

在镜子里看到我***Looking in the mirror***

两只眼睛，一个鼻子；
 两个耳朵，一个嘴巴；
 很多头发，一个头，
 在镜子里看到我。（等等）

*Two eyes and one nose;
 Two ears and one mouth;
 Lots of hair, one head,
 I see myself in the mirror.*

我长大***I grow up***

每天我长大，长大，
 以前我很小，
 现在我变高，变高，
 我上学前班。

*Every day I am growing up,
 I used to be very small,
 But now I am quite tall
 And I go to preschool.*

There were others but the above are sufficient here to show how the local musicians could be shown some other ideas using Chinese.¹⁶

The meeting

Six musicians came to the meeting including Jiang Wufa, the village mayor, who was also a singer-songwriter. The others were: Li Genfan (male, organizer of the meeting), and four others Li Fuyuan (male), Zhang Simei (female), Li Liqing (female) and Zhang Jiayi (female)¹⁷ all of whom were singers. All the participants were also attendees at our first adult Bai literacy course held in Shilong village and were very enthusiastic about becoming literate in their own language so they could write Bai songs down in the Bai language.

¹⁶ They were already used to seeing Chinese translations of Bai songs.

¹⁷ Zhang Simei and Zhang Jiayi later became two of the four teachers appointed to teach in the preschool.

I used the above plan and several song samples to discuss with these musicians what kinds of songs were needed for the classroom. It was a very humbling experience presenting my own song examples as I knew these musicians would be able to compose much better songs. Since communicating ideas was the main aim of this meeting, my desire was to get them motivated enough to want to try composing similar songs. They saw that my efforts lacked skill, cultural knowledge and native fluency in the Bai language but still respected my interest in their music and culture. I presented them with the themes for weeks 1-10 of the preschool (for five year olds) with a few extra details such as when they would need counting songs or other teaching songs. I left the meeting hoping they would think of traditional songs that might fit themes as well as try composing some new songs.

The second and subsequent meetings

This meeting was held a few weeks later with a smaller group¹⁸ and I discovered that three of our previous attendees, Li Fuyuan, Li Liqing and Zhang Simei had produced around 30-60 songs each which they had written out for me in Bai. Zhang Jiayi was also present. We discussed what they had done and I gave each of them a small tape recorder to tape what they had done because taping them individually during the meeting consumed too much time. They presented me with the tapes and written words at another meeting two weeks later. These songs provided several songs, traditional and new, which became part of the preschool program. Most of them underwent some modification several times, as did other songs written later for the first ten weeks of the school year, and later for weeks 11-40.

Results

Two or three songs were composed for each week which were related to the weekly themes and/or some aspect of the teaching program such as maths. While there is acknowledgement of authorship given in the songbook for the first year of preschool, the group (which included the newly appointed teacher trainees) decided that the songs had undergone so much revision by the whole group that they did not want to assign names to any of the songs produced for the second year of preschool.

Three songs are presented here to give an idea of the finalized versions of songs included in the first few weeks of the preschool program.

The first two examples are associated with the theme for week two, "Myself". They are both very popular because of the actions used with the songs and their relevance to stories about looking in the mirror, and growing up. The first one is included on the VCD produced by the Culture Bureau in Jianchuan and sung by the preschool children with other traditional Bai

¹⁸ Li Genfan and Jiang Wufa were too busy with other duties to be involved.

children's songs. The version printed below was sung by the preschool teachers while undergoing project led teacher training.

1. Ngot zonp gainp

I look in the mirror

Weinx atsvnl, bifzix neid,

Two eyes, one nose,

Yinxdedguanl svnl, juixgail neid,

Two ears and one mouth,

Detbot kox nox dedmal jil,

On the head lots of hair,

Zonp gainp zil anxgeinp.

Look in the mirror and see.

Ngot zonp gainp

Zanx Sibmeib gol Lit Fvfyuinp

1 $\text{♩} = 132$

Weinx at - svnl, bif- zix neid, Yinx - ded - guanl svnl,

4 juix - gail neid. Det - bot kox nox ded - mal jil,

7 Zonp gainp zil anx - geinp.

2. Ngot golkek

I grow up

(The children do actions.)

Hatzix-xiaizix ngot golkek.

Everyday I grow up,

Le'le gol zil ganldopkek.

Bit by bit growing bigger,

Atyin zeibit atyin ganl,

Day by day a little bit taller,

Dixmox huanl tio kek.

My parents are very happy.

Hatzix-xiaizix ngot golkek.

Everyday I grow up.

Dixmox hanl ngot ganldopkek

My parents see me getting bigger

Hatxiai sainx ngot ngaid hhepsvl,

Want me to go to school each day,

Zafhot dient galxien.

My whole family is delighted.

3. Tonpxuf zex alna? (Where is my classmate)

(The teacher sings)

(Child's name)... tonpxuf zex alna?

(Child's name)... tonpxuf zex alna? (That student then stands up.)

(The class sings or the student sings when more confident.)

(Child's name)... tonpxuf zex alda.

(Child's name)... tonpxuf zex alda.

Translation:

Where is classmate Zhang Aizhen?

Where is classmate Zhang Aizhen?

Here is classmate Zhang Aizhen.

Here is classmate Zhang Aizhen.

.... tonpxuf zex alna?

Brightly

1 $\text{♩} = 116$

Zanx Aib - zenx tonp - xuf zex al -

4 na? Zanx Aib - zenx tonp - xuf

7 zex al - da.

Learning the songs together

As the project sponsored teacher training, materials production and song composition neared the conclusion of eighteen months of intense preparation, the teacher trainees and other project workers spent time learning to sing the songs as a group. This included developing a

group style and choosing a pitch suitable for young children to sing comfortably.¹⁹ Most of the songs lent themselves to actions or playing a game. Because this kind of song was a new genre, the group needed some help deciding suitable actions or how the game could be played. The teachers then practised with one person being the teacher and using the usual line by line method for teaching children Bai songs until each teacher was familiar with the songs and confident in teaching them.

In the classroom, the teachers taught the songs and the children responded with great enthusiasm. In fact, the children developed such a strong love of singing traditional children's songs as well as the new songs that they went home and sang them to their parents. The parents were delighted and responded enthusiastically and went on to teach their children other traditional songs. This resulted in a revival of Bai children's songs when parents who had stopped teaching them to their children began teaching them again.

The influence of the songs sung in the preschool program has spread widely with the recording of a VCD²⁰ which included a segment of children's songs sung by the project preschool children dressed in traditional Bai costume.²¹ Children all over Jianchuan County now play these songs over and over again with the result that many have learned to sing the songs themselves.

Another benefit of the use of Bai songs in the preschool is that Yi and Lisu children who began their schooling not knowing any Bai learned to understand and speak in Bai (the regional language of wider communication) during the first six to twelve months of their first year of preschool. This was an unexpected benefit of the use of the songs in the context of the very interactive educational program. Zhang Jianzhu, who was supervising the preschool teachers and observing classes on a weekly basis, said she was amazed to be able to communicate with Yi and Lisu children in Bai from six months on into the first year of preschool.

Future plans

In order to encourage Bai children to continue to enjoy Bai song, we hope to develop another new modern style of Bai children's song using modern and traditional instruments to accompany them. At present, primary aged children leave behind the 'nursery-rhyme' type of young children's song seeing it as babyish. Some children go on to sing adult Bai songs while

¹⁹ Bai singers are more used to singing solo than as in groups. Initially this group of adults tended to sing at a pitch that was too low for the natural vocal range of young children. The higher pitch was still comfortable for those participating.

²⁰ This VCD was the first Bai VCD to include children singing Bai children's songs with dancing or actions. Local government officials were also pleased with the inclusion of children's songs. The VCD was produced by the local Culture Bureau and included many well-know adult Bai singers. While SIL EAG had indicated a wish to produce such a VCD, the initiative eventually came as a community culture project with financial help provided by Wycliffe-SIL office in Australia.

²¹ There are a number of Yi and Lisu children in the preschool and they also participated enthusiastically in the making of this VCD.

still in primary school, some of which contain inappropriate themes. Most children move on to sing Chinese children's songs and never retain much interest in Bai songs.²²

²² However, Chinese songs are taught in the second year of preschool to help the children learn Chinese. In this context, learning Chinese songs has been a very useful tool for language learning.