1. The Pictographic Naxi Dongba script

Editors in chief: Guo Dalie, Yang Yihong
Compiled by Mu Chen

Translated and reworked by the Naxi Script Resource Centre
www.sinoglot.com/naxi

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Lesson 1
Syllables in Naxi (1)

(While Naxi pinyin is used in conjunction with the International Phonetic Alphabet throughout the book I personally find it to be overly confusing and have only used IPA in the translation. Go here for a useful IPA soundboard)

**Tones**

Naxi, being a tonal language, has four main tones.

1) the mid level tone – pa33

   e.g. a33 ŋi33 = yesterday

2) the high level tone (similar to the first tone in mandarin) – pa55

   e.g. ʂə55 = speak

3) the low rising tone (similar to the second tone in mandarin) – pa24

   e.g. bàr24 bàr24 = piglet

4) the falling tone (similar to the fourth tone in mandarin) – pa21

   e.g. do21 = see

**Pronunciation**

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Pronunciation practice

Vowels

a: a21 meet, come together a55 duck

æ: æ21 chicken

ə: ə33 (sentence particle)

œr: œr33 copper œr21 rope

o: o33 bone o55 empty, turn upside down

Initials

p: pa33 frog pa21 wide

pabs55 write p'ər21 pull out

p': p'œr21 white p'œr21 untie
b: ba21 flower  ba21 howl
be33 do, make  be33 snow
t: tar55 close
to33 board  to55 slope
t': t'e33 flag  t'a55 can, be able to (pagoda)
d: do21 see
g: ga21 on top
New Characters

ə33 = particle used in transliteration or as a prefix; like noise coming out of a mouth

p'ər21 = white, originally meaning 'untie'; like a rope being untied

be33 = do, make; like a tool and a piece of material

to33 = wooden board

t'e33 = flag, often used as t'e21, 'here'

gə21 = on top of, often used as gə33, 'of' (possessive particle)

Writing practice

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