

Lesson 4

Syllables in Naxi (4)

Pronunciation

initials (4)

ts	ts'	dz
tɕ	tɕ'	dz̥
tɕ	tɕ'	tɕ

Pronunciation practice

Initials

ts: tsɿ33 knot, tie



ts': ts'e21 ten



dz: dzɿ33 eat



tɕ: tɕsu55 awl



tɕ': tɕ'ɿ33 this

tɕ'ua55 six



dz̥: dz̥ə21 catch



te: tei55 small/scissors



tɕ': tɕ'i33 thorn




dz: dzi21 water

ɕy33 to have





New Characters

tsɿ33  = knot, tie, often used as the auxiliary particle tsɿ55


tse21  = ten


dzɿ33  = to eat


tʂu55  = awl, often used as tʂu55, join


tʂ'ɿ33  = this, often used as tʂ'ɿ33, hang

tʂ'ua55 **111**
111 = six







































ɬei55  = small, original meaning is ɬei55, scissors

ɬe'i33  = thorn, often used as ɬe'i33 sweet and ɬe'i55, sell

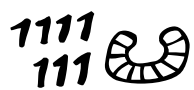
dzi21  = dzi21 water

dzy33  = to have, original meaning is dzy21, bracelet. In Naxi, dzy33, dzy21, dzi21 and i33 mean to have/possess/exist. If the target is an inanimate object, dzy33 is used. If the target is a person or animal, dzy21 is used. If the target is a plant or bodily organ, dzi21 is used, and if the target is water or food containers, i33 is used.

Writing practice

New Phrases



şar33 dzy33 be busy, have something to do



mə33 tsɿ21 take no notice of, to not count



ha33 dzɿ33 eat a meal



gə21 to55 top side



ɬi21 mə33 i33 have no water



ɬi21 uə33 ɬi21 t'ɿ33 kɿ33 clear brook fountainhead (to the

north of Lijiang old town).

The Naxi Language

Naxi is a Tibeto-Burman language related to the Moso and Loloish languages. It is one of the few minority languages of China to have its own ancient written language and extant texts. It is also closely related to the Lisu, Pumi and Hani languages.

Naxi is divided between the Eastern and Western dialects. The Western dialect has the Jade Dragon Naxi autonomous county and the Lijiang ancient town as its centre, while the Eastern dialect has the Ninglang and Yongning counties as its centre. The dialect presented in this book is the Western dialect which is often referred to as standard Naxi.

Naxi preserves the following phonetic characteristics of the Tibeto-Burman language family:

1. syllables are mostly formed by the combination of vowels and consonants, some are formed solely from vowels
2. consonants are either voiced or voiceless, voiced consonants in most areas are split between voiced consonants and voiced nasal coronal consonants
3. vowels are mostly simple, most are monophthongs, diphthongs are rare
4. every syllable has its own (relatively) fixed tone