The Western botanists who provide much of this book’s source material were self taught in Chinese, and they did not consistently adhere to any system of romanization when writing Chinese proper names. For this reason, I have chosen to use the contemporary *hanyu pinyin* system of romanization for the names of places and geographical features usually written in Chinese. Where the botanists use a widely accepted English equivalent I often give it side by side with the Chinese (or sometimes Tibetan or Naxi) name.

For the names of people, I also use the *hanyu pinyin* system, except where I have been unable to find or make a precise guess at the Chinese characters. In those cases, I have written the names as my sources did, choosing a single version for any one person when they were inconsistent.

There are several systems of romanization for the Naxi language. Since Joseph Rock is one of this book’s main characters, however, and since he provides some of the Naxi source material, I have chosen to use a simplified version of the complex and awkward system of transcription that he invented, given in Joseph Rock, *A Na-Khi–English Encyclopedic Dictionary*, vol. 1 (Rome: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1963), xxxi–xxxvii. My simplifications are as follows. I have eliminated all of Rock’s dia-criticals except for his umlauts over the o, a, and u. I have replaced with dia-criticals the numbers that Rock uses to indicate tones: I use a grave accent over a vowel to indicate a low tone, which Rock marks with the number 1; I place no accent mark over the vowel to indicate a mid-level tone, which Rock marks with the number 2; and I use an acute accent over a vowel to indicate a high tone, which Rock marks with the number 3. In addition, I eliminate the hyphens that Rock places between syllables. In verse, I separate all syl-
labels with spaces; when quoting an individual word I place its syllables together without spaces or hyphens.

For Tibetan terms and proper names, I have used pronounceable equivalents, supplementing them with the Wyle system in parentheses where it seems appropriate.