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... and incorporating a widespread population of numerous sub-cultural entities. It is inevitable that many things have been left unsaid in the digestion and condensation of the musical heritage of a billion people into a single volume. Furthermore, in the research field, the door is just opening and there is more to be learned as Western scholars are permitted to study at the cultural source. Therefore, let me be the first to say that this book is far from being comprehensive or complete. It represents a preliminary but concrete attempt to understand the multiple dimensions of Chinese music – hopefully, an attempt that will stimulate other inquiries and further ventures, especially from my senior colleagues. There is a Chinese saying that seems to be appropriate to my circumstances: *ma qian xu*. Translated freely, it refers to the foot soldiers who invariably precede the cavalymen in the charge.