

M105
The work of setting sky and earth in order.

Sung by Yang Zhi

Notes

This song is recorded in Document A (no. 13, page 36), Document E (no. 13, page 33), Document K (no. 5/1, page 18), Document L (no. 12, page 38), Document N (no. 21, page 432).

Line 9. Document N mistakenly reads, "ib lwb dab", "one only" instead of "at lwb dab", "two only".

Lines 12 and 13. Document A reads, ɟ̃ ǂ̃, "the youngest". Document E and all subsequent documents read, ɟ̃ ɽ̃, meaning "the second child in the family". In his notes on Document E, Wang Ming-ji, who had in his possession the Shi-men-kan copy of Yang Zhi's original manuscript, corrected, ɽ̃ to ǂ̃.

Line 14. In Document N the first two words in the name, Ndliex-dib Nggus-nzail-shaob are missing.

Line 16. Document A has misread, Lⁿ ɟ̃^u, meaning "simply" as, Lⁿ ɟ̃ⁿ, meaning "went". It adds a full stop at this point and ends the line. The remainder of line 16 is then added on to line 17, resulting in some confusion. In Document E and in subsequent documents the mistake is corrected.

Line 28. Document E and later documents omit the second, ɟ̃ⁿ, but Document A is probably correct, as the repetition of the word means not only that they went, but that they went on and on.

Lines 28 and 29. In the present transcription of the Miao text, the tones of the last three words of line 28 and the first two of line 29 are those found in Document A, and make good sense. In Documents E, K and L the words are written, ... ɽ̃ ɽ̃^r L_s, ɽ̃ ɽ̃^r "...", while Document N reads, "...dox zis leuf, dol daot ..." Read in these tones it is hard to know what meaning was intended.

Line 30. Document K has a superfluous phrase, ɟ̃_z ɽ̃_l ɽ̃^u, meaning "did set in order sky", appended to the end of this line.

Line 31. Document A has omitted the initial word, ɽ̃^s, a purely scribal error. Document K has the same mistake but here it is the result of the additional words in the previous line.

Line 33. Document E, and all subsequent documents omit the word ɽ̃^u in this line.

Line 34. This line is a reconstruction added in the present transcription. It does not appear in any of the documents and must have been missing from Yang Zhi's initial

manuscript. It is, nevertheless, virtually certain that such a line was there in the original song. The phenomenon of rhetorical questions is not uncommon in the songs, but invariably, having posed the question in one line, the answer is given in the next. So when line 33 asks, "Where do they say that the Nine Lakes of Gi-nzyu were located?" poetic form requires that line 34 should answer the question and also that it should begin, "They say that the Nine Lakes of Gi-nzyu were located ..." Fortunately the remainder of the line can be supplied with a high degree of certainty, because in another song, Tao Zi-gai's "Song of the creation of the world", lines 23 to 26 read,

"The Nine Lakes of Gi-nzyu,
Nine, set in nine localities,
Nine, set in nine places,
This was where the River Shi, the River Gi-bang was gathered at last."

The missing line therefore must read, "They say that the Nine Lakes of Gi-nzyu were located in nine places". When this has been supplied then the whole stanza of six lines is made up of three perfectly balanced couplets.

Line 36. This line is omitted in Document N.

Line 39. Document E and all subsequent documents use the modern form of the verb "to arise", $\dot{J} \dot{J}^b$. Document A correctly retains the archaic form, $\dot{J} \dot{J}^- \dot{J}^b$.

Line 40. At the end of this line Document N reads, "...did set in order earth", instead of "...did set in order sky".

Line 44. Document A reads, $J^r \Delta^-$, and Document N reads, "dhit dlat". All the others read, $J^r \bar{\Delta}'$, which means, "plainly", "directly", or "urgently", and gives the better sense.

Line 45. Document L, followed by Document N, omit the word L'' , meaning, "town", in the expression, $'\text{D}'' J^r L^u L''$.

Line 47. In Document N there is an explanatory note which says that "veb njiaot" are long, rectangular rocks.

Line 48. This line is missing in Document N.

Line 50. The first word of this line in Document A is, Γ^n , "shone", instead of $'C^u$, "sun". The conjunction, Γ_n , in the middle of the line is omitted, and the whole is attached to the beginning of line 51.

Line 54. As in line 44, Document A reads, Δ^- instead of $\bar{\Delta}'$.

Lines 57 to 64. Line 57 and line 61 fix the times in the year when "Sun-maid and Moon-youth separate their roads". In all the documents this is given as "Dragon-month or Rabbit-month" and "Dog-month or Pig-month". That is, in the lunar calendar, months 12 or 11 and months 6 or 7, which cover the winter and summer solstices respectively. However, as explained in the introduction, it is at the equinoxes, not at the solstices, that the celestial paths separate, and the other songs which describe this

phenomenon are clear that it occurs in spring and autumn. A further problem arises because lines 59 and 60 go on to explain that at this time of the year, namely, mid-winter, Sun-maid is travelling the far road while Moon-youth takes the near road, implying that in winter, days are long and nights short. Similarly lines 63 and 64 suggest that in summer, days are short and nights are long, which, of course, is not true. The problem disappears if, following other versions of the song, "Snake-month or Horse-month" is substituted in line 57, and "Ox-month and Rat-month" in line 61. This emendation has been adopted in the present text, nevertheless it is most unusual to find such a mistake in any song by Yang Zhi. The expressions, "On reaching Dragon-month or Rabbit-month" and "On reaching Dog-month or Pig-month" do occur elsewhere, in, for instance, the Song of the Flood, and it seems that they have been mistakenly repeated here. Since, however, the error appears in all the documents, it must go back at least to the work of the scribe who first copied Yang Zhi's original autograph, and perhaps to the singer himself.

Lines 57 and 58. These lines are missing in Document L and Document N.

Line 60. Document A reads, 𠄎𠄎 instead of 𠄎^o.

Line 60. Document E has 𠄎𠄎 'C^o instead of 𠄎𠄎 𠄎^o.

Line 62. Documents K, L and N read, 𠄎^o, "path", instead of 𠄎^o, "road".

Line 64. In Document N, the words "hnuh" and "maol" have been given the wrong tone letters, "x" and "f" respectively.

Line 69. Documents K, L and N omit the final 𠄎^o.

Line 73. In Document K a note in Chinese in the text suggests that this name means "China". The identification is not repeated either in Document L or Document N, and is highly unlikely.

Line 74. Document E has the modern form 𠄎^o 𠄎^o instead of the old form 𠄎^o 𠄎^o. Both forms mean "great". Document E and all later documents omit the final 𠄎^o. In Document N the initial "n" is missing from "ndlyul" meaning "flow".

Line 75. Document N has lost the initial "h" in the word "hmaol".

Line 76. Instead of 𠄎^o 𠄎^o, which is the reading in all the other documents, Document N has "caik daos", an expression which occurs in other versions of this song, and has the same meaning, "yonder" or "into the distance".

Line 77. In Document K, a note in Chinese suggests that the Nine Lakes of Gi-nzyu are to be identified with the Dong Ting lake in Hunan Province. Document L repeats the note, but not Document N.

Line 78. In Documents K and L a note in Chinese in the text identifies 𠄎^o 𠄎^o as Chong Ming Island near Shanghai.

Line 79. Document L has misread 'Ċ as C^{no}.

Line 82. Document N prints a question mark at the end of this line but not again at the end of the parallel line 86, presumably a printer's error.

Lines 82 and 86. These lines are identical except for the expressions, T" J̄ and T" C̄_{nc}. T" J̄ T" C̄_{nc} or D- J̄ D- C̄_{nc} are common expressions which mean, to get or to have a partner. They frequently refer to a person getting or being married. Here the words describe the identical results obtained by brother and sister in their calculations of the calendar, and so are translated, "agree" and "tally".

Line 87. Document N mistakenly reads, "Pig-month" instead of "Horse-month".

Line 93. Document N omits the word "dib" in the expression, "jiax dib gaol zhang", meaning "all kinds".

Line 94. Document A has omitted the word J", meaning "to rear".

Line 97. Document N adds "zaol" meaning "to dwell" at the end of the line.

Line 99. Document A reads J̄ instead of †.

Line 102. C J^v is the normal word for "snow". Δ_n means "hair", "wool" or "feathers" and may also be used for thistle down or cotton wool. The compound Δ_n C J^v also means "snow", but is a quantity or covering of snow. Here this compound is expanded into an alliterative expression, Δ_n Jⁿ Δ_n C J^v in Documents A and E, and Δ_n C Jⁿ Δ_n C J^v in Documents K, L and N. Jⁿ or C Jⁿ has no meaning of its own and the whole is a poetic expression which still simply means "snow".

Line 105. Documents K, L and N add D̄ at the beginning of this line. Document N has also misprinted the word "Hmaob" as "Nhaob".

Line 106. Document A has a superfluous J_v after T_n.

Line 107. Document E, by underlining the expression C̄ T̄_z Jⁿ †'r suggests that it is a proper noun, "Sumach Tree Plain". Document K repeats this and does the same to J̄ C̄ T̄_z Ḡ L_{nc}, "Small Rice Field Plain". This is an attractive suggestion which may well be correct, but since it does not occur in Document A it was probably not in the original copy of Yang Zhi's song.

Line 108. Where all other documents read J^u, in this and the following line Document N has "hxuk", that is l' _v.

Line 109. Document A has a superfluous J^δ following the first word D̄_z, and Document N reads "ghaof", that is T_n, where all other documents read, J_n.

Line 112. The expression $\text{ㄅ}^{\text{ㄝ}} \text{ㄍ}^{\text{ㄛ}}$, which occurs in all the documents except Document A, from which the whole line is missing, means, presumably, "shining braid".

Parallelism with the previous line would suggest that the word ㄘㄩ , which also means "silk" would be more appropriate than $\text{ㄍ}^{\text{ㄛ}}$, "shining". There are sufficient examples of the $\text{ㄍ}^{\text{ㄛ}}$ and ㄘㄩ being used as parallels elsewhere in the songs to warrant an emendation to the text here.

Line 114. Document N transcribes $\text{ㄘㄍ}^{\text{ㄛ}}$ as "nzhws". It should read, "nzhes".

Line 115. In Documents A and E $\text{ㄘㄍ}^{\text{ㄛ}} \text{ㄒ}^{\text{ㄛ}} \text{ㄒ}^{\text{ㄛ}} \text{ㄘ}^{\text{ㄛ}}$ is omitted. Documents K, L and N all include it. This is probably correct as it completes the parallelism with the previous line.

Lines 116 to 118. These lines are missing in Document N.

Line 118. The last three words, $\dots \text{ㄒ}^{\text{ㄛ}} \text{ㄍ}^{\text{ㄛ}} \text{ㄍ}^{\text{ㄛ}}$ are missing in Document L.

Line 120. Document A mistakenly reads $\text{ㄍ}^{\text{ㄛ}}$ instead of $\text{ㄍ}^{\text{ㄛ}}$. Document N also misreads the same word as "jiex" instead of "jiaix".

Line 121. This line is missing in Document N.

Line 122. Document A finishes the song with an exclamation, $\text{ㄩ}^{\text{ㄛ}}$, rather like a sigh of relief.