

M106
A song of setting sky and earth in order.

Sung by Zhang Ming.

Notes

This song is found in Document K (no. 5/2. page 20.) and in Document L (no. 13. page 44.)

Line 2. $T^u C^{\text{b}}$ would normally mean "sons", and a note in Chinese at the end of the line in both documents gives it as "male children". However, this cannot be the meaning in the present context because the younger child was given the name $C\Delta^{\text{nc}} T^n G_u C^{\text{t}} J^{\text{r}}$, and the word G_u means specifically, "young woman". Moreover, in Yang Zhi's version of the song, that child wore a garment called an \hat{Y} which is an apron worn by women, never by men. Accordingly, $T^u C^{\text{b}}$ is here translated "offspring" and not "sons".

Line 6. Document K reads, \bar{J} where Document L reads, \bar{L} . Both mean "the younger child".

Line 8. $J^- J^{\text{r}}$ in modern speech could only mean "what?". In the songs it can mean either "who?" or "what?", and in the present context, it is almost certainly the former.

Line 20 and line 24. Document K reads, $C^{\text{r}} \Lambda^{\text{r}} T^n J^-$, the name of a migratory bird, possibly a wild goose. Document L changes this to, $C^{\text{r}} \Lambda^{\text{r}} T^n C J^-$, which is a hawk or some kind of bird of prey. The earlier document is preferable.

Line 21. Both documents read, $C^{\text{t}} J^n C_{\text{ni}}$, instead of, $J^n C^{\text{t}}$, at the beginning of this line. The former expression is a title, widely used in the songs, but not in common speech, for a person of importance or influence, and is well translated, "the Master ..." Its use here can only be a scribal error. Document L has mistakenly read, D^- , meaning, "there are" as, D^{r} .

Line 24. In both Documents K and L there is an additional line which follows line 24 and is identical to line 28. This is clearly superfluous as it upsets both the sense and the poetic pattern of the passage, and has therefore been omitted.

Lines 25 to 30. In these lines the expressions, $C_n \text{D}^- T^n C T^u$ and $\text{D}^- C_n T^n C T^u$ occur. C_n is simply a connector with no very specific meaning, and $T^n C T^u$ could mean, "the borders of the land", but in this context is more probably, "the edge of the world". If this is correct then, as in Yang Zhi's version of the song, having finished their work at the Nine Lakes of Gi-nzyu, brother and sister proceed to the edge of the world. What they went there to do is not explained, but they were apparently away for quite a long time. The chief difficulty in this phrase lies with the word D^- . This can only mean "to have", but it is hard to see what "to have the edge of the world" may mean. D^- is quite

clearly written five times in each manuscript so that it can hardly be a scribal misreading of some other verb, as, for example, "to go", "to arrive" or "to reach", or possibly "to see", "to look at" or even "to set out" or "to set in order". The exact meaning remains unclear. In the English translation the verb "to gain" has been employed. It gives a fairly good sense and preserves a little of the Miao "to have".

Lines 27 and 30. The words $J^r \dagger^s$ would normally mean, "could not" or "were not able", but here, it is not that they could not return, but rather that, their work being still unfinished, they chose not to return.

Lines 45 and 49. Following the reading in Document K, the first word in these lines is $\square_.$, which means, "only". In Document L it is written, \square^- , which means, "if". This line is found in other songs, but always begins with $\mathcal{D}_.$ or \mathcal{D}_z .