

M110

How Ya-ya shot the suns and moons.

Sung by a grandfather from Hmao-a-bw.

The suns came over the horizon,
The suns came, shining as they came.
They shone on Ya-ya's soft-wood trees till they were altogether parched and
dry.

Except for Ya-ya's great, green mulberry tree standing by the river.

5 Ya-ya shouldered,
Shouldered his axe and returned to fell it.
He felled it and the trunk fell across the river,
He felled it and the branches fell across the valley.
He felled it and from the trunk fashioned a crossbow,
10 He felled it and from the branches made arrows.

Ya-ya fashioned an excellent crossbow.
Ya-ya fashioned it, but who was to bear it?
He had fashioned it for the people to bear,
But the people could not shoot with it,
15 So Ya-ya having fashioned it, Ya-ya had to bear it.
Where did he bear it to shoot?
He bore it to shoot at the wide shores of Gi-nzyu.

Sun-maids and Moon-youths abounded,
And the people could not endure their shining.
20 But standing in the water,
Ya-ya could shoot at seven suns and hit seven,
Standing in the sticky mud,
He could shoot towards the dark shores of Gi-nzyu,
And with every shot he could hit a pair.

25 But then the bow-string snapped, and it whipped,
Whipped and turned back the moon and the sun with its burning heat.

It was dark, black darkness.
In the dark Ya-ya went out ploughing,
But he could not see to plough,
30 So Ya-ya lit a flaming torch to fix to the oxen's horns.

It was extremely dark, complete darkness.
In the dark Ya-ya went out riding,
But he could not see to ride,
So Ya-ya lit a flaming torch to fix to the horse's bridle.

35 What, of the people's possessions, had the strongest voice?
The bull's voice was strongest,
Then let the bull go and call the sun.
But the sun was so frightened it would not come out.

What had the most resounding voice?
40 The tiger's voice was most resounding,
Then let the tiger go and call the moon.
But the moon was so frightened it would not come out.

What, of the people's possessions, had the most reassuring voice?
45 The cockerel's voice was most reassuring,
Then let the cockerel go and call the sun.

Thus Sun-maid appeared,
So people could see sky and earth clearly,
And when the sky became quite dark,
Moon-youth appeared,
50 Shining upon the people's sky and land and water.

The people had nothing,
Had nothing to give,
To give to the cockerel, that would serve,
Would serve the cockerel as a head-dress.

55 So the people took,
Took a lacquered comb they had brought and gave that,
Gave that to the cockerel as a head-dress.

Now the cockerel could use it but did not know how to wear it,
For he put the lacquered comb upon his forehead
60 With the toothed edge turned upward.

Thus it is ended.