

M152
Nzyu-fa lao qualifies as a shaman-healer.

Sung by Yang Zhi.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document C (no. 13, page 17) and in Document N (no. 42/2, page 569).

Title. The title in Document C is $\text{C}\text{t}_{\text{3}} \text{Γ} \text{L}_{\text{u}} \text{C}^{\text{u}} \text{L}^{\text{n}} \text{C}\text{J}_{\text{c}}$. The phrase, $\text{C}^{\text{u}} \text{L}^{\text{n}} \text{C}\text{J}_{\text{c}}$ is the name given to unpaid labour required by a landlord. In this context it would mean something like "Nzyu-fa-lao's public service". In Document N the title is "zaob daot nwb". The first word is a mistake for "nzaol" which means "to qualify" and occurs in lines 12, 13, 14 and 16. The title means, "Qualifies as a shaman-healer", and this has been chosen as the more appropriate of the two. The titles have all been supplied by editors and are not part of the text of the songs.

Line 5. In Document N, following this line an extra line is inserted. "The Miao maid, the bride, was beautiful". This is a conventional line found in a number of songs, but it belongs to a rather different context and is out of place in this sequence.

Line 7. Document N reads "yus" instead of "yius" for "to give birth to".

Line 14. In Document N the final exclamation E_{n} has disappeared and line 15 is joined directly to line 14. The word "diel", meaning "true", is incorrectly written "dil".

Line 16. This line is omitted in Document N. Its loss upsets the structure and balance of the passage, and leaves line 17 unconnected. To compensate, the name Nzyu-fa-lao is repeated at the beginning of line 17.

Line 17. The final word in this line according to Document C is A^{u} , but Document N reads "hxais", which, in Miao script would be written, I_{u} . It could be that this is a single word which can be pronounced in two different ways, or it could be that these are separate words with similar meanings. In the present context they both signify the art practised by the shaman-healer and they are parallel to the word C^{3} .

Lines 20 and 21. These are intended to be a couplet of two parallel lines, but early in the transmission of the written text, the beginning of line 21, $\text{J}_{\text{u}} \text{C}\Delta^{\text{nc}} \text{T}^{\text{n}} \text{T}^{\text{u}} \text{C}^{\text{3}}$, was lost, so that in Document C the lines are not balanced and do not connect properly. Document N simply joins 20 and the second half of 21 into a single, unpunctuated sentence divided into two lines without reference to meaning or format. When the missing words are restored the song falls into its proper pattern.

Line 21. In Document N the final exclamation is incorrectly written "yus" instead of "yas".

Line 23. In Document C this line is joined to the previous line, while in Document N the place name is written "hnaob lib mangb".

Line 24. The verb $\text{D}_8 \text{J}'^o$, "did cure" is missing in this line from both documents. In Document N the final word "mob", "sickness" is misprinted "nob".

Line 25. In Document N the first two words are printed "mah gskot" instead of "mangs kot", and the final word on the line which should be "zaob", meaning "well" has been substituted by "nob", a repetition of the mistake in the line above.

Line 26. Document N again has trouble with the first word "mangs" which this time appears as "mdgs,".

Lines 27 and 28. In these lines and also in lines 30, 38, 49 and 50, Document C has the expression, $\text{T}^u \text{C}^{nc} \bar{\text{J}}$. An explanatory note written in Miao between the lines of the text, but in the same hand as the manuscript itself, reads, $\text{T}^b \text{C}^b \text{J}_u \text{T}_- \text{T}^n \text{D}- \bar{\text{J}} \bar{\text{C}} \text{T}^- \text{T}_{nc}$. people who dead not have life weep great deal. That is, "Dead people, having no life, weep much". If this note is correct, then the phrase $\text{T}^u \text{C}^{nc} \bar{\text{J}}$ means "the persons weeping for life", and the second word meaning "to weep" ought to be written, $\bar{\text{C}}$. However, although this interpretation is just possible for lines 27 and 28, it is not admissible in the other four occurrences of the phrase. The idea that the word written C^{nc} was really $\bar{\text{C}}$, the verb "to weep", was probably derived as the opposite of the verb "to laugh" in line 28, but it is, in fact, the word C_{nc} which means "age" and occurs in a number of other phrases similar to this one. Here it should be written $\text{T}^u \text{C}_{nc} \bar{\text{J}}$, and means "the persons (of) age (to have) life". That is, "the living" or "those alive", and is identical in meaning $\text{T}^u \text{T}_n \bar{\text{J}}$ in line 24. The compiler of Document N has written "nied" (= $\bar{\text{C}}$, "to weep") each time but has no note to explain what it means in the context of the different lines.

Line 29. In Document N the word "cyus" has lost its initial "c". There is also a note in brackets in the text saying that this means that "he served large locusts for the soldiers to eat".

Line 32. The word $\bar{\text{C}}'$ means "ashes" and is regularly used as the name of the colour grey. A note in Miao in both documents explains that this "grey horse" was in fact a cloud. This has been added to the translation.

Lines 33 and 34. The word T_n (in Document N written "dix" in line 33 and "dik" in line 34) means "hand", but is regularly used of the fore-feet of animals, and of the wings of birds.

Line 34. Instead of the word J^u meaning "upon", Document N reads "hxuk" (= l'_u) meaning "clear".

Lines 38, 39 and 40. These lines are missing in Document N.

Line 55. Where Document C reads $\Delta_o \text{J}^- \text{C}^+ \text{r}$, Document N has "dlok diknkhal". (This should be printed "dlok dik nkhal"). The former means "laughing and smiling", as over some pleasurable experience, the latter means "to roar with laughing", as at a joke or an amusing situation. The context in this song clearly favours the former.

Line 57. In the process of compiling Document N the penultimate word in this line, \mathbb{T} , was misread as \mathbb{T}' and appears in the Romanisation as "traot". This can mean "of old", and a note in brackets then explains that the line refers to "words which had been spoken", whatever that may mean in the context. In fact this line is exactly parallel to line 54.

Line 61. The word for "wide open" of eyes is $\mathbb{C}\overset{nc}{\Delta}$. Document C has it mistakenly written $\mathbb{C}\Delta^v$, and in Document N "ndlyul".