

Concerning the Elder Gi-myu's search for the Elder Gi-zi.

Narrated by Wang Da-lu.

Episode 1.

It was at a time of adversity
that the Elder Gi-myu went in search of the Elder Gi-zi
at the Elder Gi-zi's house.

5 As he approached the place where the man Gi-zi lived,
the Elder Gi-myu sang a song of enquiry as follows,

"Where is the Elder Gi-zi?
Is the Elder Gi-zi at home?"

The Elder Gi-zi's retainers heard him and sang in reply,

10 "The Elder Gi-zi is on Mount Mi-lie,
That mountain so high,
The better to pasture the Elder Gi-zi's flocks and herds.
The Elder Gi-zi is not at home.

15 But on Ox-day when the ox lies prone,
Or Tiger-day when the tiger sleeps,
Then, please do come!"

The Elder Gi-myu returned, and, having come back, remained
until Ox-day and Tiger-day then he went and sang,

"Where is the Elder Gi-zi?
Is the Elder Gi-zi at home?"

20 The Elder Gi-zi's retainers heard him
and they sang in reply,

25 "The Elder Gi-myu has travelled far and long,
Alas that his time is not the time of coming together,
That his season is not the season of coming together,
For the Elder Gi-zi is not at home.

The Elder Gi-zi is gathering bamboo seed on yonder mountain
range,

Gathering bamboo seed to feed the soldiers.
But on Ox-day when the ox lies prone,
Or Tiger-day when the tiger sleeps, please do come!"

30 The Elder Gi-myu returned, and remained until Ox-day and Tiger-day really
came,
Then he went back and sang,

35 "Alas for the Elder Gi-zi and the Elder Gi-myu,
Two comrades and friends well matched,
Good companions indeed!
Where is the Elder Gi-zi?
Is the Elder Gi-zi at home yet?"

The Elder Gi-zi's retainers and soldiers sang in reply,

40 "The Elder Gi-myu has travelled far and long,
Risking his life and taxing his strength,
But the Elder Gi-zi is not at home.

The Elder Gi-zi has gone cutting wild herbs along the valley
slopes,
Cutting wild herbs to feed his wife.
But on Dog-day or Pig-day please do come!"

The Elder Gi-myu then returned and remained until Dog-day and Pig-day
saying,
45 "This time it could be that we may meet!"
So with a purpose the Elder Gi-myu went, and singing, he said,

50 "Alas for the Elder Gi-zi and the Elder Gi-myu,
Those two comrades and friends so well matched!
Where is the Elder Gi-zi?
Is the Elder Gi-zi at home?"

The Elder Gi-zi's retainers sang in reply,

55 "Alas that his time is not a time of coming together,
That his season is not a season of coming together.
The Elder Gi-zi is collecting hawthorn berries on the river bank,
Is collecting hawthorn berries to nourish the family.
Tomorrow certainly please do come".

The Elder Gi-myu returned and remained waiting.
Next day, to be certain, before it was light,
the Elder Gi-myu rose and, leading his retainers, went and reached that place,
60 then, singing, he said,

"Alas for the Elder Gi-zi and the Elder Gi-myu,
Those two comrades and friends so well, so very well matched!
Where is the Elder Gi-zi?
Is the Elder Gi-zi at home?"

65 This the Elder Gi-zi heard,
heard the sound of the Elder Gi-myu's voice raised in song.
The Elder Gi-zi arose and hurried to come and open the door,
arose and hurried down.
So the Elder Gi-myu and the Elder Gi-zi
70 those two comrades and friends rejoiced,
those comrades and friends laughed together.

Episode 2.

As a result the Elder Gi-myu and the Elder Gi-zi, the two of them, wanted to go together to secure the whole territory every where, but the times were so bad that no one had the least little bit of anything. Robbers and soldiers were attacking one another, and when people wanted to sow or reap there was no peace. In the Elder Gi-zi's family there was but one small female dog remaining.

The mother said to the Elder Gi-zi, "Honestly we two have nothing to set before our guest. The only thing that is left is this small bitch. Let us take and kill it for you to share and eat, and so let us part". She wanted them to take and kill the bitch, and having eaten, go their several ways. But the Elder Gi-zi remonstrated with his wife saying, "Do not kill it! Keep this bitch, it will be your friend". Having spoken, the Elder Gi-myu and the Elder Gi-zi went to set right the whole neighbourhood. They were gone for "thirteen years", [that is upwards of a year] leaving in the spring and returning some considerable time later. When the Elder Gi-zi was still a long way away, the small bitch was wagging its little tail and went to welcome him, but his children had gone off with the herdsmen and shepherds, and his wife, dressed in old ragged clothes was out in the shack outside.

The Elder Gi-zi said, "This dog must not be killed because a dog is very loyal to the person who treats it well". On account of this the Elder GI-zi issued an instruction to his descendants and to the children, "Do not kill a dog, keep it to guard the house. Let the young women, when the men are away in the forest, be at pains to guard the house, just as a dog guards his master's house. Never again kill a dog, let the women make such killing a matter of great concern".

Episode 3.

Later there were events which explained matters further.

At the time of the story songs there was so much fighting below and above that people became very short of food. Thieves and robbers abounded, and there was so much aggravation from robbers and soldiers that people could neither raise crops nor farm. If any one had just a little it would be seized and consumed by the robbers. Those who were strong were attacking one another, and everywhere through all the world there was much fighting. The Elder Bi-zai led out his retainers and soldiers to secure the territories. The Elder Bi-zai was famous. Whenever the Chinese sought to kill him he did not die. They might cut off his head but he would grow another! The Chinese might kill him but they could not overcome him. So the Chinese brought a very pretty young Chinese woman to be his wife and keep house for him.

The Chinese woman looked after our Miao elders very carefully, but with malicious intent she asked the Elder Bi-zai, "How is it that when your head is cut off, you still have another one?" To begin with the Elder Bi-zai was unwilling to say, and after that, he tricked the Chinese and killed so many of them that only a few remained. In fact he nearly exterminated them. But then presently, he did tell her and the Chinese woman went and taught a group of her relatives how they could come and harass him.

Episode 4.

At this time when speaking of their leader, the retainers were not permitted to call him the "Elder Gi-myu". When they met one another they simply called him "the old man", and also they all spoke of one another as "the man", since they were not willing to let the Chinese know who the head person was, for fear that, if the Chinese could distinguish who was the head and leader of the retainers and soldiers, they would take his life. For this reason also they composed songs when visiting one another. So if they were going to their own folk, they would always sing a song enquiring whether there were any strangers present, and in this way our Miao retainers and soldiers were able with assurance to distinguish their own people.