

M211
The Elder Gi-vu and the Elder Gi-no.

Sung by Yang Zhi.

Notes

This song is recorded in:- Document A (no. 5, page 10), Document E (no. 5, page 10), Document K (no. 10, page 30), Document L (no. 18, page 65), Document M (no. 4, page 17), Document N (no. 25, page 455). Document K, followed by Document L, has consistently written the name of the first elder as 𐄂ⁿ 𐄂^o, "Gi-nggo". This is corrected in the subsequent documents M and N. In the Miao text the following pairs of lines appear as single long lines in some or all of the documents, but the rhythm and balance is much better when they are split into two. Lines 73 & 74, 76 & 77, 99 & 100, 117 & 118, 147 & 148, 162 & 163, 176 & 177, 180 & 181.

Line 11 . This line is missing in Document E.

Lines 31 - 33 . In the process of copying, these lines have become increasingly garbled through Documents E, K and L, so that in Document M line 33 is missing altogether, and in Document N line 33 and half of line 32 have disappeared.

Line 45 . In Document E the word 𐄂[̄]𐄂[̄], "seeking", was misread as 𐄂[̄]𐄂^{̄nc}, and the mistake was repeated in all later documents.

Lines 56 and 57 . In all the documents line 56 begins with the names of both the Elders, and both are the implied subject in line 57. That is to say, both men were riding together on a brown horse and at the same time both were riding together on a dappled horse. The problem is easily resolved by beginning line 56 with the name of one Elder and line 57 with that of the other. This also restores the proper parallelism to the couplet.

Line 66 . In Document E the word 𐄂^{̄nc}, meaning "both" has been misplaced and follows the word 𐄂^{̄o}, "soldiers", rendering the line meaningless. Later documents failed to correct the error.

Line 69 . Document A reads 𐄂[̄]𐄂^{̄o}, "laid flat" instead of 𐄂[̄], "shot".

Line 80 . After line 80 Document E adds:- 𐄂[̄] 𐄂[̄] 𐄂[̄] 𐄂[̄], 𐄂^{̄nc} 𐄂[̄] 𐄂[̄] 𐄂[̄] 𐄂[̄] 𐄂[̄] 𐄂[̄] 𐄂[̄]. That is, "Returned to the North of Cai-sie-mi-fu-di".

Lines 87 - 89 . In the Miao text these three lines have been abbreviated and run together into a single long line, but the internal parallelism makes it simple to restore the original three lines.

Line 93 . In all the Documents this line ends, ... 𐄂[̄] 𐄂[̄], 𐄂[̄] . "... stars, oh". Thus the line asserts that the confluence of the streams of Nzhi-mi-li and Ndrang-li-mo "vexed the Chinese stars". A footnote in Document N which says that this means "pained their eyes", will hardly do, for there is no indication of "pain" or "eyes" in the context. What

appears to have happened is that, at an early stage, a badly written 'C^u, was copied as J^u, so that 'C^u 'C^u, "every day", became 'C^u J^u, "stars".

Lines 98 and 100 . In both these lines Document A omits V_u, "Ten- thousand", and misreads J⁻ C^o, as J⁻ C^o.

Line 104 , This line is missing from the Miao text. It has been restored by reference to line 22, in order to complete the parallelism with line 105 and to preserve the symmetry of the stanza comprising lines 102 to 105.

Line 105 . The Miao text reads "nine" instead of "seven". This must be a mistake, as the number cannot be different from the same phrase in lines 23 and 27.

Line 115 . This line is missing in Document N.

Lines 119 & 120 . Documents K, L, M & N omit C T_z Lⁿ D_o in these lines, while line 120 is missing entirely in Document N.

Line 129 . The word C Δ^o, "in the midst", is conjecture. Documents A, K and L have J^o, "shoot", while Documents E, M and N read C Δ^{'o}, the meaning of which may be "to leak". Neither meaning fits the context, whereas C Δ^o makes good sense.

Line 135 . This line is missing in Document E.

Line 138 . In Document K and subsequent Documents L, M and N C^o, "many", is replaced by 6^o, "great", borrowed from the next line.

Line 139 . In Documents A and E the word 6^o, "great" is written L_o, "come".

Line 145 . This line is missing in total or in part in all the documents except Document E.

Line 167 . In all the documents this and line 168 are joined into an over-long line. In the later Documents K, L, M and N the words 3^o C^o Jⁿ C₋ have been omitted altogether, and the phrase V^o Δ^u Lⁿ C₋, which is an honorific title for "the ancestors", has been taken literally, "a great black rock". This produces a single line meaning, "There was a great black rock which resembled a lion's throat". In Documents A and E the verb D⁻, "to take", has been misplaced to a position at the beginning of the line, and in Document E appears as D^o, "did". The result makes no sense, and accounts for the problems in the later documents, but, restored to its proper place, it gives a perfectly good meaning, line 168 follows naturally and, with lines 169 and 170, forms a fully balanced stanza.

Line 188 . All documents except two read t^{'u}, "destroy". Document A has C t_u, "cut off", while Document N has "cab", "blow".

Line 192 . For the final four words the various documents offer three different readings. Document A: 6^o J^o C T_z, Λ₋, "spread to the bottom of the plain, oh". Document E: 6^o Y⁻ C^o, Λ₋, "spread to the roots, oh". Documents K, L, M and N: 6^o J^o C^o, Λ₋, "spread to the

bottom of the roots, oh". The first reading is the best.