

M231

Twelve families of Miao, fleeing, reached Nuo country.

Sung by Yang Zhi.

- When twelve families of Miao dwelt on the Tracts of Mi-li,
At the Golden City, Lao-u and Lao-gi-jiai on the great plain,
It was pleasant as the sun's rising,
It was propitious as the sun's appearing.
5 Hearts were peaceful as a basket is smooth within,
Hearts were restful as a large basket is flat within.
- While the sky remained constant,
In Monkey-month or Cockerel-month,
When Chinese families and Miao families celebrated the Fifth-Moon Festival,
10 The Chinese families came from Cai-sie-mi-fu-di,
While the Miao families were living in the cities of Ndlo-hlang-dleu-di.
- Which Chinese families were these?
These were the families of the Chinese Leader Gi-yie who seized the land.
Which Miao families were these?
15 These were the families of the Leader Gyu-myu-zhyu the guardian of the land.
- When the sky grows black, rain must follow,
When hearts become evil, the training of soldiers begins.
The Chinese families and the Miao families were like great black bulls
about to interlock horns,
For the Chinese families and the Miao families disputed the land,
20 The Chinese families and the Miao families disputed the place.
- They fought through practically a whole cycle of twelve years.
The Miao families saw many of the young generation fall in battle,
As the companies of Miao soldiers suffered heavy casualties.
So it was also when one considered the Chinese leader Gi-yie on the other side.
25 The Miao families spoke together and said,
"Fighting yields no shelter from the sun,
Soldiering yields no shelter from the rain!
Could we flee to the limits of the sky and the limits of the earth, none need
strike with his hands,
Could we flee to the ends of the sky and the ends of the earth, none need strike
with his feet.
- 30 So let us leave the Tracts of Mi-li and the Plains of Li-mo to the Chinese clans,
Let us leave them for the Chinese Leader Gi-yie to make his own portion of
land,
Let us leave them for the Chinese Leader Gi-yie to make a portion for himself".
- Then the Miao families sought a time, sought an occasion for setting out,
They sought a time, sought an occasion in Monkey-year or Cockerel-year,
35 And chose Monkey-month or Cockerel-month.

Then, on the fifth day of the fifth month, which was Cockerel day,
The Miao families gathered together all their members to flee in earnest,
Like a mother-hen brooding her little ones under her feathers that none might
stray away.

40 This time when the old folk fled,
They climbed right up to the high mountains above the river Nzhi-mi,
And the children, when they had climbed to the mountain top, jumped for joy.

For this time they had escaped from the Chinese Leader Gi-yie and crossed over
the pass,
And the old folk, having fled so far, killed chicken and killed pigs in
celebration,
For today they had escaped from the power of the Chinese Leader Gi-yie.

45 Now the Miao families had devised a plan,
The Miao families had devised a scheme.
They caught rams and tied them to hand-drums,
They caught billy-goats and tied them to stick-drums.

50 As the rams ate grain and vegetables from the storage baskets,
And as the billy-goats ate grain and vegetables from the winnowing baskets,
They dragged the hand-drums and stick-drums, and banging them, made a great
noise.

When the Chinese Leader Gi-yie sent retainers in secret to come and spy,
They saw that the Miao families had gathered their members and every one had
fled.
Fleeing, they had gone nearly half a month's journey.

55 When the Chinese Leader Gi-yie sent soldiers under cover to come and look,
They saw not a single person remaining of the twelve Miao clans.
They saw only rams and billy-goats dragging hand-drums and stick-drums and
making a great noise.

The Miao families had taken their members and were fled and gone.
The twelve Miao clans, fleeing, had reached a place where the land was well
drained.

60 But the old folk, great and small, were sad at heart,
The old folk, great and small, were heavy hearted,
As they lamented for the Tracts of Mi-li and the Plains of Li-mo now beyond
reclaim.

They made ballads by which to return and look,
And as they looked back to the Tracts of Mi-li and the Plains of Li-mo their
tears flowed down,
As they looked back to the Tracts of Mi-li and the Plains of Li-mo they lifted
their voices and wept.

They made ballads by which they returned again,

Would they could flee to the limits of the sky and the limits of the earth where
none need strike with his hands!

Would they could flee to the ends of the sky and the ends of the earth where
none
need strike with his feet!

Thus it was that the ballads of the twelve Miao clans began.

70 Now, when we Miao make sacrifice to the spirits entertaining them as guests,
We do not take rams or billy-goats for the offering,
Because rams and billy-goats protected,
Protected the lives of the twelve Miao clans.

75 Rams and the billy-goats protected,
Protected the twelve Miao clans climbing away from the Plain,
And this is sung that the twelve Miao clans,
When sacrificing to the spirits and entertaining them as guests, may remember
and follow the tradition.

Thus it is ended.