

M233

Song of how twelve Miao clans, fleeing, reached Nuo country.

Sung by Yang Zhi.

Notes

This song is recorded in Document M (no. 11, page 73) and Document N (no. 32, page 498).

As explained in the introduction, the final passage, (lines 114 - 155) was omitted deliberately from Document M by the compilers. Apart, however, from this major omission, there are still sufficient differences between the text of Document M and that of Document N, to suggest that the manuscripts from which the respective editors were working were also divergent, the result of copyists errors and alterations through the years. Nevertheless such differences amount to less than 15% of the total song.

From Document M the following ten lines are missing, 1 to 4, 15 and 16, 29 and 30, 60 and 61. From Document N the following fifteen lines are missing. 13 and 14, 20 to 25, 40 and 41, 58, 104 to 107.

At a number of points two lines of the song appear as a single long line in one or other document, occasionally in both. The list is as follows, 8 and 9 M and N, 12 and 13 M, 12 and 15 N, 22 and 23 M, 38 and 39 M and N, 40 and 41 M, 42 and 43 M, 64 and 65 M, 71 and 72 M and N, 80 and 81 M, 90 and 91 M, 96 and 97 M, 98 and 99 N, 100 and 101 M and N, 102 and 103 M, 112 and 113 M and N.

Line 2. The correct expression for a female cousin is ㄅㄩˋ ㄉㄨˊ but in common speech the first syllable is often shortened which explains why throughout this song it has been written, ㄅㄩˋ ㄉㄨˊ in Document M, and "ngib mof" in Document N.

Line 6. In Document N the final word ㄐ, "to investigate" has been changed to "naf" meaning "to look".

Line 27. This line is split into two in Document M.

Line 45. In Document N this line is shortened to read, ㄐˊ ㄉㄨˋ ㄅㄩˋ ㄉㄨˊ ㄒㄩㄣ ㄌㄨㄣ, "The Yi cousin said".

Line 66. In this line, and several times in succeeding lines, the word ㄐ°, "to wipe" is used. On each occasion the word is misprinted in Document N as "shit" instead of "shot".

Lines 90 and 91. In Document N the phrase ㄌㄨㄣ ㄐˊ ㄌㄨㄣ is attached to the end of line 90.

Line 116. The words ㄒㄩㄣˋ 'ㄘㄨˊ ㄒㄩㄣˋ, "towards the East" are missing in the printed text.

Line 141. After this line the text of Document N continues,

"This is sung that the twelve Miao clans, When sacrificing to the spirits and entertaining them as guests should remember and follow".

In the context of this song these lines are meaningless since there has been no reference to worshipping the spirits of the ancestors, nor to any tradition or ritual which had to be perpetuated. However, it is entirely relevant to the final section of the song, also by Yang Zhi, describing how the twelve clans fled from the ancient homeland at the time of the fifth moon festival, their departure being masked by the continuing noise made by rams and billy-goats tethered to small drums. During the transmission of the manuscripts the final two lines of that song have apparently been detached, and mistakenly included in this song. They have now been returned to their proper context.