

M257

Song of the surroundings of the Sao-no family.

Sung by Li Xing-zhen.

This year we may know,
Know who it was went to survey his land,
Know that Lord Sao-bang-no went to survey his land.

5 Surveying he went to the banks of the river Na-zhu.
His survey took him south for seven days.
His survey took him north for seven months.
He surveyed the whole of the Miao community.

10 This year we may know,
Know who it was who had a disturbing dream.
Gha-sao Lord Bang-no had a disturbing dream.

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no called,
Called the Miao people to come and confer,
For on the Chinese border there was much military activity.

15 Who had many mouths?
The people on the border had many mouths,
But the ordinary Miao people's mouths were few.

20 Gha-sao Lord Bang-no summoned,
Summoned the elders of the ordinary Miao people,
So the elders of the ordinary Miao people arrived,
Arrived at Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's house.

"Do the communities of Miao people live far away?
For with so much military activity on the Chinese border,
There is fear that the community of Miao people may suffer".

25 When the elders of the ordinary Miao people made answer,
What did the elders say?

The elders bade Gha-sao Lord Bang-no call,
Call the people, the ordinary people to come,
To come and bring several yoke of cattle, coloured cattle, to be slaughtered.

30 The flesh of the cattle would be eaten with roasted corn,
But the hides would be stretched to make drums.
Stretched for large drums to be used toward the sun's rising,
Stretched for small drums to be used toward the sun's setting.

35 The bones would be burned and harrowed in,
Burned and harrowed in when the rice was tilled,
Tilled, that white rice might fill the store,
Tilled, that white rice might fill the house.

This year we may know,
 Know that Gha-sao Lord Bang-no has had a disturbing dream.
 Gha-sao Lord Bang-no rose forthwith to tell,
 40 To tell the two elders, so he opened his mouth.

What did Gha-sao Lord Bang-no say?
 Gha-sao Lord Bang-no dreamt that he saw,
 Saw flying cranes which completely filled the people's land.

How did the two elders make answer?
 45 "There is fear that the people may be caught up in fighting,
 There is fear that the Ruling Race's great army may fill the land".

Who was it that was first to rise?
 The elders said that Gha-sao Lord Bang-no was first to rise.
 Gha-sao Lord Bang-no even before,
 50 Before midnight was up and planning.

"We must go and rouse,
 Rouse the large drums away to the sun's rising,
 For the Chinese soldiers are coming,
 The Chinese soldiers are coming and will fill the people's land completely".

55 What was the right action for the two elders to take?
 How should the two elders arrange things?
 "We will beat three strokes, the large drums will sound three times,
 And the sound will spread out over seven day's journey".

The two elders could not bear the thought,
 60 So they drew out the sticks and beat,
 Beat the small drums away to the sun's setting as well,
 And the sound of the small drums spread out over seven month's journey.

When the Ruling Race heard it,
 The Ruling Race returned and withdrew.

65 *When Gha-sao Lord Bang-no returned,
 He called the people, the ordinary Miao, who came and arrived.
 What did Gha-sao Lord Bang-no intend to do?
 "Come let us go to the river Li-zhu and build!"*

70 *He took the ordinary Miao and went to the river Li-zhu to build,
 To build a bridge with a single arch which spanned,
 Spanned the main stream of the river Li-zhu.
 So he built a bridge with an arch, and on the left side set a plantation of pine
 trees.*

75 *The ordinary Miao went and dragged,
 Dragged the stone and dragged the rock to build,
 To build the arch which spanned,
 Spanned the main stream of the river Li-zhu.*

*So he built an arch to stand,
To stand, rounded, over the main stream of water.
He built a bridge with an arch, and on the right side set a plantation of fir trees.*

80 The plantation of pine trees grew and became big,
Sufficient for Gha-sao Lord Bang-no to shelter in the shade.
The plantation of fir trees grew and became big,
Sufficient for Gha-sao Lord Bang-no to shelter from the rain.

85 When Gha-sao Lord Bang-no returned home,
There was fear that the people's land might be filled with fighting soldiers.
Gha-sao Lord Bang-no by midnight was first to rise.
How did Gha-sao Lord Bang-no react?
He reacted by fetching the two elders to his house.

90 They struck the large drums, which sounded,
Sounded three times away to the sun's rising,
Then the two elders struck,
Struck the small drums, which sounded,
Sounded their noise away to the sun's setting.

95 Gha-sao Lord Bang-no was going to battle,
So he struck the large drums which sounded all over the land.

The Ruling Race took horns of copper and iron to blow,
And summon their retainers and soldiers.
When the retainers and soldiers arrived,
They seized Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's border country.

100 Then Gha-sao Lord Bang-no led out his soldiers and drove,
Drove the Ruling Race's great army,
Drove it back across the banks of the Great River,
And there destroyed the Chinese king's soldiers and retainers.

105 When Gha-sao Lord Bang-no departed,
He departed and left,
Left the women and children there,
There in the great valley of the river Li-zhu.

110 The women and children bewailed.
How did they bewail and lament?
"Why has Gha-sao Lord Bang-no not slain the foe and returned?"

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's women and children put,
Put two babies in a place of hiding for they said,
"These two babies are already crawling and even talking!"

115 When they spoke what did they say?
"We wonder when the time will come for us to follow,
To follow our Father and our Sire!"

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's women and children said,
 "These two babies are possessed!"
 120 So they called retainers and soldiers to come and to carry,
 To carry the two babies, to go and to throw,
 To throw them away on the ground by the great sheet of rock.

Twelve days, perhaps thirteen, after having thrown them out,
 The women and children could no longer bear the thought.
 125 So the two women and children relented and called,
 Called the retainers and soldiers to go and look,
 To look and see what had become of the two babies.

The retainers and soldiers looked,
 Looked and saw that the two babies had crawled,
 130 Crawled on all fours and climbed,
 Climbed up the rock face on all fours, up to the mountain of fir trees,
 And the two babies had eaten completely all the foliage on the fir trees.

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's women and children told,
 Told the two retainers and soldiers to return, to go back and carry,
 135 Carry the two babies back.
 So the two retainers and soldiers went and carried,
 Carried the two babies home.

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's women and children asked,
 Asked the two spirit-possessed, "What magic food do you eat?"
 140 "Our food is copper ore,
 And our drink is iron ore".

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's women and children took,
 Took horns of copper and iron and heated them,
 Heated the liquid copper and liquid iron until it boiled,
 145 Heated it for the two spirit-possessed to drink.

The two spirit-possessed drank it,
 Drank the liquid copper and liquid iron, drank it straight down.
 Then the two spirit-possessed spoke,
 What were the words they spoke?
 150 "Still we do not know the taste of our mothers' milk".

"You two spirit-possessed, what do you eat to live on?"
 "We two spirit-possessed eat,
 Eat the foliage of the fir trees to live".

The two babies crawled out,
 155 Crawled out and requested horses,
 Requested Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's black and grey horses to ride.

So Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's women and children led out,
 Led out two horses, black, grey and mottled ready,
 Ready for the two spirit-possessed to ride.

160 But the two spirit-possessed said,
"These two are not the horses for us to ride".
The two spirit-possessed then continued,
"Please provide us with horses of our own size".

The people came all together to provide them,
165 And the two spirit-possessed crawled out,
Crawled out and led,
Led away two small colts to ride.

They took the colts and led them outside,
Where the spirit-possessed dipped,
170 Dipped up three basins of clear water and washed,
Washed the small colts and they became fine horses.

The two spirit-possessed requested,
Requested saddles to ride.
So Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's women and children brought out,
175 Brought out Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's saddles, fine decorated saddles.

But the two spirit-possessed said,
"On our Father's, our Sire's saddles we will not ride".
Instead the two babies crawled,
Crawled away and took,
180 Took two saddles, broken and soot encrusted.

The two spirit-possessed then dipped up,
Dipped up clear water and washed,
Washed the saddles which emerged,
Emerged as two fine saddles.

185 The two spirit-possessed put,
Put bits into the horses' mouths,
And set the saddles on the horses' backs.

Then the two spirit-possessed rode,
Rode three times to the mouth of the river,
190 And the fine horses neighed,
Neighed three times having travelled seven days' journey.

The two spirit-possessed rode,
Rode nine times to the head of the river,
And the fine horses neighed,
195 Neighed nine times having travelled seven months' journey.

The two spirit-possessed returned,
And struck three times on the large drums,
Which sounded three times over seven days' journey.

200 They struck nine times on the small drums,
And the small drums sounded nine times,
Sounded some nine times over seven months' journey.

Then the two spirit-possessed followed,
Followed their Father, their Sire.
They went and they reached,
205 Reached the banks of the great river,
Reached the place where their Father had been fighting.

What did Gha-sao Lord Bang-no say?
"Concerning what matter have you two soldiers come?"
The two spirit-possessed replied,
210 "We two spirit-possessed concerning,
Concerning our Father, our Sire have come.

Our Father, our Sire went to do battle,
To do battle throughout the land,
And he has been gone for nearly fourteen years".

215 Then Gha-sao Lord Bang-no said,
"What is your Father's, your Sire's name?"
"Our Father's, our Sire's name is Gha-sao Lord Bang-no".

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no therefore prepared,
Prepared white pork and white rice to serve,
220 To serve for the two spirit-possessed to eat.
But the two spirit-possessed refused.

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no asked,
"You two spirit-possessed, what magic food do you eat?"
"Our magic food is copper ore,
225 And our magic drink is iron ore".

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no took,
Took horns of copper and horns of iron and heated them,
Headed the liquid copper and the liquid iron until it boiled,
Heated it for the two spirit-possessed to drink.

230 The two spirit-possessed drank it,
Drank the liquid copper and liquid iron, drank it straight down.
Then the two spirit-possessed spoke.
What were the words which they spoke?
"Still we do not know the taste of our mothers' milk!"

235 "You two spirit-possessed, what do you eat to live on?"
"We two spirit-possessed eat,
Eat the foliage of fir trees to live".

In what manner did the two spirit-possessed then speak?
"Since coming out among the people we have become very drowsy,
240 But we have not managed to sleep.

The distance we have travelled is great and the stages long,
We have come but we are tired,

We two have become very drowsy,
We two spirit-possessed must sleep.

245 Should there be a day when the Ruling Race's retainers and soldiers come,
We fear that if the two elders call,
That call we two spirit-possessed might not hear.

If the day comes you two elders must take,
Take a small gong and come and support,
250 Support for us two spirit-possessed our heads and our noses.
Then strike the gong thrice and call three times,
And we two spirit-possessed will hear".

So the two spirit-possessed slept,
Slept drowsily away.
255 Slept away for practically fourteen years.

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no remained,
Remained until midnight when he heard,
Heard the sound of the Ruling Race's harness bells of copper and of iron,
And the Chinese king's retainers and soldiers coming to fill,
260 To fill the people's land completely.

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no looked all around,
Looked up at the sky where swallows and cuckoos were flying,
Flying and darkening the sky.
Gha-sao Lord Bang-no went to halt,
265 To halt the great army, but in vain.

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no could not bear the thought.
He drew out the gong and went back and struck,
Struck the gong thrice and called three times.

The spirit-possessed awoke,
270 Jumping so suddenly up in the bed,
That blood streamed from their noses as from a sword thrust.

The spirit-possessed came out,
Came quickly out to observe,
To observe the people's land,
275 Black with retainers and soldiers.

They looked all around,
And saw the sky above darkened with swallows and cuckoos.

The spirit-possessed pulled up.
Pulled up a great pine tree,
280 Its trunk was thirteen fathoms,
And its branches spread over a small hill.

The spirit-possessed then took,
Took the pine tree and beat,

285 Beat the Ruling Race's retainers and soldiers to death,
Until the ground was black with the dead.

Three times they beat them right through to the head of the valley,
Which grew black with the dead of the Ruling Race's retainers and soldiers.

The two spirit-possessed then said,
"This is not our land or our place,
290 Our home and our place is not here.
Our home and our place is located,
Located in the great valley of the river Li-zhu".

The two spirit-possessed escorted,
Escorted Gha-sao Lord Bang-no to go back, to return
295 And the spirit-possessed led out,
Led out a fine horse just for,
Just for Gha-sao Lord Bang-no to ride until they came,
Came to the great mountain ridge above the river Li-zhu.

They came on and reached,
300 Reached Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's homestead.
Then the spirit-possessed said,
"Our home and our place is not here!"

They had only just arrived at Gha-sao Lord Bang-no's home,
So Gha-sao Lord Bang-no asked,
305 "Where then is your home and your place?"

The spirit possessed said,
"Our home and our place is located,
Located on the Plain of Walnuts, that flat plain,
Located in the cave on the Plain of Walnuts.

310 Our home and our place is located,
Located on the Plain of Walnuts, that wide plain,
Located in the cavern on the Plain of Walnuts.
When we have gone for nearly fourteen years, come and look".

The two spirit-possessed struck,
315 Struck the large drum and it sounded,
Sounded three times towards the sun's rising.
They beat three strokes on the small drum,
Which sounded three times away towards the sun's setting.

"We will give the small drum for you two to carry away".
320 So Gha-sao Lord Bang-no offered.
But the small drum could not boom,
As the large drum was able to boom.

"We will take the large drum and carry it away,
Carry it to the Plain of Walnuts, that wide plain,
325 Away to the cavern on the Plain of Walnuts".

The spirit-possessed added,
 "When the day comes that you come to look,
 A copper, an iron drum will sound".
 And the spirit-possessed said,
 330 "Still we do not know the taste of our mothers' milk!"

Then the spirit-possessed placed,
 Placed saddles on the horses' backs,
 And mounted at a single leap.

Taking the large drum which they carried on their backs,
 335 The spirit-possessed travelled until they reached,
 Reached the cave on the Plain of Walnuts.

When the spirit-possessed had gone for half a period of twelve or thirteen years,
 Gha-sao Lord Bang-no followed and went to see,
 To see the spirit-possessed at the cave on the Plain of Walnuts.

340 Then the drum of copper, the drum of iron sounded,
 Standing there at the entrance of the cave,
 Yet the spirit-possessed did not speak.
 Gha-sao Lord Bang-no was disappointed,
 But the spirit-possessed said nothing.

345 Disappointed, Gha-sao Lord Bang-no remained,
 Remained for half a period of twelve or thirteen years,
 Then he returned and went back to look.

The drum of copper, the drum of iron had changed,
 Had changed into rock and had fallen down and blocked,
 350 Blocked the cave, the cavern entrance, fine and smooth.

Their two fine little horses had also changed,
 Had changed into stone statues and blocked,
 Blocked the cave, the cavern entrance standing guarding it.

There still might be a day when the large drum sounded again,
 355 But meanwhile the people's borders were at peace.

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no returned, went back and remained,
 Remained for half a period of twelve or thirteen years,
 Then Gha-sao Lord Bang-no returned, and came back to see,
 To see the spirit-possessed at the cave on the Plain of Walnuts.

360 That large drum of the spirit-possessed had changed,
 Had changed into rock and fallen down and blocked,
 Blocked the cave, the cavern entrance completely.

The two fine horses had changed,
 Had changed into stone statues and blocked

365 Blocked the cave, the cavern entrance standing firmly.

Now Gha-sao Lord Bang-no accepted the situation.
He returned, came back to control,
To control the people on all sides,
Standing firmly as a rock.

370 The people, the Miao community lived well,
The Miao community lived, their land at peace and their place at rest, so they
did!

Gha-sao Lord Bang-no controlled,
Controlled the people, standing firmly as a hardwood tree,
Standing firmly as pine trees and fir trees on the plain.

375 For the people, with heaven at peace and earth at rest,
Hearts were peaceful as a basket is smooth within,
Hearts were restful as a large basket is flat inside.

Thus it is ended.