

M266
The song of Tiger Valley.

The singer is not recorded.

This was a bad time, a bad year.
The crops did not ripen and the fruit did not set.
There was commotion within the borders of the Ruling Race,
And disturbances on the estates of the Yi overlords.

5 Who was it who raised sons?
The Zhangs and the Wangs raised sons.
The Zhangs' small boy was named Bang-huei,
While the Wangs' small boy was named Gang-shuei.

10 The day came when Bang-huei and Gang-shuei became full-grown youths.
Bang-huei and Gang-shuei wore embroidered gowns patterned with spots,
Or wore gowns which appeared entirely blue.

They pursued the striped tiger away to the black forests,
Intent on catching a tiger to secure its skin,
Intent on catching a tiger to secure it well.

15 Bang-huei and Gang-shuei saw,
Saw solid stone ideal for honing swords,
And saw hard stone ideal for honing spears,
Sharp swords, swords as they ought to be,
And sharp spears ready for thrusting.

20 What with commotions within the Chinese borders,
And disturbances within the borders of the Yi,
Bang-huei and Gang-shuei could not bear the thought,
Bang-huei and Gang-shuei could not continue to dwell there.

25 The sons Bang-huei and Gang-shuei took,
Took their black, curved crossbows, carried on their backs,
And took their shining swords, girded at the waist,
To contest the strength of the Ruling Race,
To contest the might of the Ruling Race.

30 The contest took place by the river in Tiger Valley, that long river,
The contest took place by the river in Tiger Valley, that wide river,
And they defeated the Ruling Race by the river where Tiger Valley narrows to a
gorge,
For the Ruling Race could not capture it.

35 Bang-huei and Gang-shuei stretched,
Stretched their cross-bows well with their feet,
And set their arrows well with their hands,
Pressing them into the groove along the stock of the bows so they could not be
shaken.

The arrows, following a curving, path flew and struck,
Struck down the Ruling Race completely,
And Bang-huei and Gang-shuei laughed aloud.

40 The pity was that though the conflict might continue for forty years, it could not
be concluded.

The people, the Miao community, had no way of ending it,
So they got Bang-huei and Gang-shuei to return a second time and block the
way.

They blocked it completely for three years, sparing no one.

How should the Ruling Race respond?

45 The Ruling Race could come that way no longer,
The Ruling Race could not pass,
And the Ruling Race was heavy-hearted.

So the Ruling Race sought,

50 Sought Bang-huei and Gang-shuei every day,
Sought Bang-huei and Gang-shuei everywhere,
Sought the dwelling and the hiding place of Bang-huei and Gang-shuei.

Now Bang-huei and Gang-shuei were sleeping,
Were sleeping inside a tree, fixed up like a tiny house.

55 A tiger may have nine lairs,
But Bang-huei and Gang-shuei's accomodation for sitting and sleeping was
inside a tree.

Inside a tree was their place of living and hiding.

Because the Ruling Race was heavy hearted,

60 The Ruling Race was also black at heart.
Taking swords and spears, swords and knives, they came to seek and to snare,
Setting their snare between two trees.

So it was that the Ruling Race was able to catch,

To catch Bang-huei and Gang-shuei and take them away.
They fettered Bang-huei and Gang-shuei's hands with iron chains,
And led Bang-huei and Gang-shuei away to the Ruling Race's city,
65 Led them to the Chinese city in Tiger Valley.

A full year passed,

Then, as they reached the end of the Ruling Race's year,
The Ruling Race took Bang-huei and Gang-shuei and killed them.

70 With the sunshine bright on the Ruling Race's city centre,
The Ruling Race enjoyed a good New Year festival,
Many of the Ruling Race's guests and companions gathered unhindered,
So the Ruling Race saw the old year out reassured.

Thinking about all this pained our hearts,
Thinking of all this broke our spirit.

75 Thus it is ended.