

**M268**  
**The song of Du-bw, the dull one.**

*Sung by Wang Shi-cong.*

Notes

This song is recorded in Document M (no. 19, page 129) and in Document N (no. 37, page 534)

**Note.** The editors of both documents were apparently working from manuscripts which were written as continuous prose. In dividing the text into lines, each went his own, often quite arbitrary, way, with scant recognition of the poetic scheme or the often elaborate system of parallelism employed.

**Lines 4 and 5.** In Document M these lines have been abbreviated and run together. Here, and throughout the song, in Document N the Miao word for "lord",  $\overset{1}{\text{C}}$ , has been transcribed "zhid". This is strictly incorrect since "zhid" is a somewhat different sound written  $\overset{f}{\text{C}}$  in Miao script. However it is the best that the transcriber could do since the final in the word  $\overset{1}{\text{C}}$  is not recognised in the Pinyin script. It is more usual to write it "zhyud", but this is  $\overset{2}{\text{C}}$ , a totally different sound, and equally incorrect.

**Lines 7, 8 and 9.** In Document M sections of these lines have been omitted and the remainder condensed into a single line.

**Line 10.** This is the reading in Document N. Document M reads,  $\text{C}_n \text{C}_v \text{D}^= \text{L}^n \text{V}_n \text{Y}^- \text{J}^$  3" as in line 3.

**Line 11.** The form of the name  $\overset{u}{\text{J}} \text{A}_n$ , "Bu-yi", is that found in Document M. When it was transcribed into Pinyin in Document N, it became, probably incorrectly, "Bud jif" implying that the original read  $\overset{u}{\text{J}} \text{C}_n$ . In place of this line, Document M repeats lines 4 to 7, condensed into two lines and with the name "Bu-yi" substituted for "Fao-hniao".

**Line 14.** Both Document M and Document N refer to trees that grew on the plain of Bu-yi. Document M calls them  $\text{t}^r \text{CT}^n \overset{u}{\text{T}}^r$ . Now  $\text{C}^n \text{t}^r$  is the name of a tree from which dye is extracted, possibly the sumach, while  $\overset{u}{\text{T}}^r$  is the pine tree. Most likely the name  $\text{t}^r \text{CT}^n \overset{u}{\text{T}}^r$  is an archaic form of  $\text{C}^n \text{t}^r$ . Document N implies that the "plain Bu-yi" was also called the "plain of zit-ndit", and adds "where pines grew". "Zit-ndit" would be a transcription of  $\text{t}^r \text{CT}^n$  which looks very much like a misreading of the  $\text{t}^r \text{CT}^n$  in Document M. However there is a footnote in Document N which says that the "plain of zit ndit" means the "plain of zit guul". But this does not help because the word "guul" does not exist. There is no vowel sound "uu" in Miao. This is obviously a printer's error, but what it should have read is impossible to say.

**Lines 17, 18, 20 and 21.** These lines are all missing in Document M.

**Line 36.** This line is missing in Document N.

**Line 38.** The text followed in this line is that of Document M, where the final phrase 𠄎<sup>3</sup> C<sub>z</sub> means "ripen many kinds", that is "many kinds of crops", which fits the context perfectly. Document N, however, transcribes the phrase "shied nangb" and adds a footnote saying that this means, "silk cloth". It is extremely difficult to see how this meaning can possibly be derived from these words, however they are read, and also how it fits the context of crops growing on the plain. "Silk cloth" does not "ripen" like rice.

**Line 43.** This line, found only in Document N, looks very much like an addition to the text, but the sudden appearance and disappearance of the Elder Shi-tru would be hard to explain if it were not in the original version of the song.

**Lines 55 to 64.** These lines have been left out altogether in Document M, and in Document N lines 55 to 58 which continue the description of the Chinese rites of ancestor worship, have been moved out of context to follow line 64.

**Line 71.** This line is missing in Document N.

**Line 86.** Instead of 𠄎<sup>2</sup>, "to leave", Document M reads 𠄎<sup>2</sup>, "to wrap up". Document N, mistakenly, adds "every night" following "every day", and the word for bed, "zangx" is wrongly written "nzangx"

**Line 87.** Document N omits the word "city" and rearranges the preceding three words to read 𠄎<sub>r</sub> C<sub>L</sub> 𠄎<sub>u</sub> which means "carried on their backs"

**Lines 88 and 114.** These lines are both missing in Document M.