

How the Miao from Sao-no country dispersed everywhere.

Written by Yang Jing-de.

We Miao, driven from our neighbourhood, arrived in the Sao-no country. Afterwards there was a group, drawn from both the river Bi-trao and the river A-na districts, which set out, following the bends of the river Li-gi, where they spread out and settled down. There were very many who, following up the Gi-jiai river came to dwell in two locations by that river. There were also those from three areas by the river Bi-trao, who removed to Hmao-a-yi-di. One group from there followed the Yi Lady as slaves removing to Drao-nbu-zhu, Xuin-dien in Yunnan Province. Then there was a group that moved from the river Bi-trao area to the plain of A-dyu. Of these people there were some who rose and went on to Hmao-a-dyu (Yang-shan). When the Miao had dispersed and were living all over the Weining area, a famine year caused one group to move back to the Lang-dai side of Zhi-jing.

When the Miao arrived in Sao-no country we were all slaves, with no strength for military action and without leadership. This being the case we dispersed and no leader arose. This dispersion was due to:

Firstly, disturbance in the neighbourhood. Such a disturbance was especially great when Wu Sa-guei came fighting against Byu-no and Sao-no in the reign of the Emperor Kang Xi. At that time we Miao were dependent on the Nuo landlords for our living. When the Nuo landlords were driven out and scattered by the Governor's troops, at that time many Miao fled to the Yi-liang country. That is now more than three hundred years ago.

Secondly, going as Nuo slaves. They went as slaves with the Nuo lady-daughter. We Miao moved to the Wu-ding country went in the first place as slaves with the lady-daughter of the Nuo lord, but then, hearing that the country was good, a great number simply followed.

Thirdly, While out hunting they saw that an area was good, and simply packed up, and moved there.

Fourthly, because of famine, heavy compulsory labour, and being pressed as soldiers, people moved. Then when staying might result in over-close intermarriage, there were many who moved for this reason, like those who removed to Ngha-ndu and the Kunming countryside.

When we Miao dispersed in every direction from the Weining area we had no wise person to lead us. However, when our old folk came here to live in the Weining country, we had an able individual, a commander to lead the soldiers in combat with the Manchu (Ching Dynasty) troops. This old person commanding the soldiers was called the man Hai. He was a Weining, Zhu-wen person, and on the eighteenth of the twelfth month in 1870, he led the soldiers, together with Miao soldiers from Shuen-qiai, in an attack upon Weining city. He did capture the city, but because the number of troops under the magistrate's command was so great, our Miao soldiers were scattered in the fighting. The old person commanding the soldiers led his group to the river Bi-trao, to that area, and afterwards to Yi-liang, Hmao-lao and Ying-shan.

Then there was a man among the Miao old folk who was very wise. He was an elder of the old people's ruling family. This ruling elder was in dispute with those who wanted to seize his land and carried his case all the way to Beijing, and won. The emperor presented him with a magistrate's decorated hat to wear, and appointed him as magistrate in Shuen-chai.

We Miao, driven from our neighbourhood, arrived in the Weining area with a rising generation, alive and virile. We had among those old folk any number of able and wise people, but now we are very weak, very conscious of how much we fall short of the past. We must work hard, learning in all fields so that we may establish our standing and dwelling place along with other Miao tribes. Only so shall we be worthy descendants of our forebears.