

M312
Old Miao songs about marriage. 11.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

This year we may know,
Know that the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father, had arranged,
Had arranged for the middleman to go till he reached,
Reached the in-laws' home.

5 The middleman opened his mouth, opened his lips and asked,
Asked that the eldest daughter of woman the mother, and the man, the father,
might come,
Come as the daughter-in-law of the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father.

But the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, recalled,
Recalled that bringing up sons and daughters was no easy matter.
10 It required much labour and hard work,
So the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, gave no answer.

The middleman made three visits, as custom required.
He remained seated in the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's room,
Pressing the case with persistence all night till dawn was breaking,
15 And the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, could make no further
excuse.

The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, discussed in whispers, then
said,
"Well then, let the daughter, the adult young woman go,
Go as the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father's daughter-in-law.

20 This year we may know,
Know that the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father, have received,
Have received word from the woman, the mother, and the man, the father.

So the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father fed,
Fed the fattened chicken to prepare for the marriage,
And fed the spotted pig to prepare for the wedding.

25 They called the neighbours, who came,
Came to fix the time, to fix the date for the marriage.
They fixed it for the fifth of Dragon month or Rabbit month.

Then the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father, arranged,
Arranged for the middleman to return again, and he reached,
30 Reached the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's home,
To tell them the propitious date clearly,
Namely the fifth of Rabbit month.

The marriage party came, threading its way,
Threading its way along the winding road.

35 The marriage party came carrying,
 Carrying meat and meal all cooked and ready, so they arrived.
 But the woman, the mother, and the man, the father grieved,
 Grieved for the daughter, the adult young woman,
 In appearance so good looking.

40 They grieved for the daughter, the adult young woman,
 So able, so skilful with her hands.
 Able and skilful with her hands to do what?
 Able and skilful with her hands to make costumes.

45 She had made the daughter, the adult young woman's "gown of longing".
 She had made costumes, the hlu-nza-nzyu, with a pattern of stripes,
 She had made costumes, the hlu-nza-nzyu, gathered with nine threads.
 She had made skirts of fine material with coloured strips set side by side,
 Set like the rice fields, the long, flat fields on the plain of the Yi-bang river.

50 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, grieved,
 Grieved for the daughter, the adult young woman,
 So able, so skilful with her hands.

55 She was able and skilful with her hands to do what?
 She was able and skilful with her hands to write.
 She could write Chinese characters distinguishing them in order,
 And matters concerning the Chinese she could write out correctly.

So the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, declared,
 That the meat and the meal that the in-laws had brought,
 Bore no comparison even with the baby milk the woman, the mother, and the
 man, the father, had provided.

Thus it is ended.