

M354

Hua Miao spirit worship.

1. The Spirit Zu-gi-za and the ancestors. 3.

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The worship of the Spirit Zu-gi-za was divided into three stages.

1. The worship of the Spirit Zu-gi-za.
2. The offering of livestock to the ancestors.
3. Zi.

Explanation. The worship of the Spirit Zu-gi-za, the offering of livestock to the ancestors and zi were all on account of people being sick and afraid of dying, therefore they worshipped. If, having performed the rituals and the worship, death did occur, then it was said that the rituals had been wrongly performed and that was why death had come. However, zi was concerned with the fear that the family, from the greatest to the least, all might be “swept away”. (“Swept away” meant to die off until no seed remained.) Then they worshipped the Spirit Zu-gi-za, but they would worship with the ox.

One. Explanation of the days for the worship of the Spirit Zu-gi-za.

- 1 On Pig-day those officiating at the rites gathered
- 2 On Rat-day the zu-mu and the brothers gathered.
- 3 On Ox-day, at the time of the morning meal, the pig was killed for the worship of Yeu-su-mu, and in the evening livestock was offered to the ancestors.
- 4 On Tiger-day “ox falls”.
- 5 On Rabbit-day guests departed.

Further explanation. The day when the zu-mu and the brothers arrive was called “guests arrive”. (“guests arrive” meant that the guests gathered.) On Ox-day they “washed the ancestors feet”. On Tiger-day the “ox fell”. (That is they killed the ploughing ox.) On Rabbit-day the “guests departed”. (“Departed” meant they dispersed.)

Two. Offering livestock to the ancestors. See what has been written above.

Three. Zi. When it was feared that the family might die out then the rites called zi were performed.

Before any worship was performed, when a person was sick they would go and call the shaman-healer to see him. The shaman-healer might say,

1. “The jet-black one is required”. (The jet-black one was the great pig.)
2. Or, “Something is required for the place of arriving”. (The place of arriving was the door.)
3. Or, perhaps the ancestors felt themselves slighted, well then, “The ancestors want something to eat and drink, hence the sickness”.
4. “The ancestors’ ox-rope is tangled”. (Tangled means the line would die out.)

Now explanations for these four sub-sections.

1 **Performing the ritual of the "jet-black one".** (That is killing the large pig.)

Explanation. The shaman-healer having been called, and having concluded that the ancestors required the "jet-black one", and the sickness being better, then they performed the rituals. When they wanted to kill and eat the pig they would call the zu-mu to come. "Gather on Pig-day, worship on Ox-day". As they were about to worship they would lead the pig out of doors, and the zu-mu would chant, (at the same time the zu-mu's assistant would pour wine for the ancestors.

A-yeu-su-mu be pleased,
Arise, turn back your countenance,
Turn your face,
Smiling come and take from your children.
 One cup, one bowl,
 Two cups, two bowls,
 Three cups, three bowls,
Of this wine to drink, and
Smiling stretch out your hand,
To take and hold your livestock, your pig.

Then he would chant,

When we had food to eat, we did not care to eat,
But gave it to the large pig to eat.
When we had water to drink, we did not care to drink,
But gave it to the large pig to drink.

If there are deep holes in the tombs to be filled,
Let the large pig be struck down to block them.
If there are deep holes in the graves to be covered,
Let the large pig be struck down to stop them.

When, in the south, Chinese tongues draw near,
Let the pig be struck down to block them.
When, in the north Yi tongues grow long,
Let the pig be struck down to stop them.

When the children go out of doors,
From colds and coughs,
Let the pig be struck down to protect them.

When the children go farming,
If they work the flat land,
May good crops fill the flat land.
If they work the level land,
May good crops fill the level land.

If the children are working the high ground,
May the good low ground come jumping,
Jumping to the children's high ground.

If the children are working the low ground,
May the good high ground come jumping,
Jumping to the children's low ground.
So shall the fertile land and place,
Come to the midst of the children's land,
And the children will gather crops and harvest,
To fill the houses and fill the place.

May the children's women-folk live to fill the houses,
May their men-folk live to fill the place.
May fine offspring fill the terraces of the fields,
With cattle and pigs like water flowing.

Let the Nji-vang-bi-lao strike down,
Strike down the large pig to the ground!

When he had finished speaking, they would take the large pig and kill it. (Nji-vang-bi-lao. A stick of rhus, from which the skin had been scraped to make it white, was used to kill the large pig when worshipping the spirits. It was called "nji-vang-bi-lao".)

2 See section 8. (Door a-nzhang)

3 Offering livestock to the ancestors. (See also above) The zu-mu would cut three pieces of bamboo to make divining sticks, for the zu-mu to divine whether to offer pigs and chicken. (The words chanted were the same as in 1 above.)

Divining sticks. He split the bamboo with a knife and spoke the ritual words.

This year is a famine season, a famine year,
The blossom opened but did not set,
The fruit formed but did not mature,
A famine season and the crops have not ripened,
A famine year and the fruit has failed.

If the ancestors are wanting to eat and to drink, then
One strip face down and one strip face up.

Whose father are you,
So full of impatience for a live pig?
Whose mother are you,
So full of impatience for a live chicken?

The words with which to escort the spirits. The zu-mu would escort them saying,

Let grandmother take grandmother's chicken, carrying it in her arms,
And take her pig, leading it with her hand.
Let her draw them to her place of sitting, her place of sleeping,
Her fir-wood house of jointed planks.

Let grandfather take his pig, leading it with his arm,
And take his chicken holding it within his hand.
Let him draw them to his place of sitting, his place of sleeping,

His fir-wood house of planks of pine.

(“Fir-wood house” was a name for the coffin.)

4 Zi, which was the striking down of the old ox.

(The incantation for the offering of the ox was the same as the incantation for the offering of a pig.) Then there were the Miao words of offering that the person who “bound the spirits”, that is the zu-mu, spoke.

Grandmother had so little that she crept under the bed,
But grandmother has received the “great horned one” to plough the earth, Great,
and fat as a bear!

Grandfather had so little that he crept through a gap in the partition,
But grandfather has received the “trained horned one” to plough the sky,
Trained, and fat as a tiger!

The zu-mu also chanted,

Whether they remain within,
Whether they travel without, enfold them.
Let their offspring spread abroad,
With herds of cattle grazing back and forth in an unbroken stream.
It is ready! It is ready!

Let their flocks of sheep and goats
Be like the roebuck,
Eating leaves and bamboo shoots,
Aye! Going yonder in unbroken stream.
It is ready! It is ready!

Let their fine cattle and horses
Be like the deer,
Coming from the forest in unbroken stream.
It is ready! It is ready!

The zu-mu then escorted the spirits and said,

Take, O ancestral spirits,
The skirts and gowns you wore at the festival,
And depart below.

At this time they would beat the drum and make it sound, “Ndyu - - - - “ like this.