

**M357**  
**Hua Miao spirit worship.**  
**Worship of the venerable and the old,**

*Compiled by Wang Ming-ji.*

The business of worshipping at the mountain was the worship of the Spirit Zu-gi-za. This mountain was called, "The venerable mountain". The person who officiated was someone in the village who knew the manner of the worship. Each year in Horse-month on Horse-day, on this high day, all the village brought chicken and flasks of wine. One person went from each family. One person took a basin of maize meal and they went to the venerable mountain. (Among the rocks and trees on this venerable mountain, no generation either felled the trees or cut the grass. On the day of worship only it was permissible to fell trees and to cut grass.) When they were worshipping, the person officiating said,

Grandfather rock, Grandfather tree,  
You live on high, you can see clearly.

Take care of the children  
As they walk the rocky, the precipitous paths,  
And when they walk through the waters.

From thieves and soldiers, tigers and wolves  
Do you defend them  
And give them protection.

Next year on this day,  
The children will bring,  
Bring wine for you to drink,  
Bring chicken for you to eat.

Explanation. When the chicken had been boiled and the maize meal was cooked, the person who was officiating first dipped up some maize meal in a spoon, and broke off some fragments of chicken on to the spoon. Having poured some wine on to the maize meal and the meat, he declared, "It is ready! It is ready!" and so poured out the offering. Then everyone dipped up maize meal, and when they had eaten they returned. (When worshipping a rock, the offering was scattered on the rock, when worshipping a tree it was scattered on the tree.)