

Miao spirits that were worshipped and those that caused sickness

Compiled by Yang Yung-xin.

- 1 **The Spirit Zu-gi-za.** This was the chief of the spirits. He was the one who was everywhere. Reverence demanded that he should be addressed as Yeu-su-mu.
- 2 **Bi-nzao.** This was one which influenced people and was also a sky-power. It could influence people making them restless, or influence them making them impatient, or influence them making them angry. It made people, thus influenced, liable to hang themselves, or else to fall into water, or kill themselves by jumping off a cliff. Such a person who had died had to go and be a horse for the sky-power to ride. This person had to continue so until he in turn had influenced another to die as well, then he might go and join the ancestors. The bi-nzao were under the Spirit Zu-gi-za, and had to recognise his authority.
- 3 **Water ki-zo.** This kind lived in the water. If people went to wash clothes and encountered it, they would suffer from headaches and become unwell. It would be necessary to seek the shaman-healer to come and cure them, then presently they would recover.
- 4 **The spirits bi-jio-a-su.** These spirits, together with the ki-zo which live in caves and caverns, were of a single kind, but they had two sorts of appearance. One sort took human form and did not harm people, the other sort took the form of cattle and pigs and could cause people to become sick.
- 5 **A-she.** This kind of spirit borrowed the form of snakes, cats and chicken, and could bite children who had not yet grown big.
- 6 **Zi-qiao-bao.** This was a kind of smoke which might be encountered in burial grounds. People who were so encountered were taken violently ill. If such had been encountered it was necessary to pen in the spirit by burning the beard of a goat. Then the person would recover.
- 7 **Yi gi-lao-jiw.** Also called ti-shao-ma. This was a kind of magical object made by the Yi, which they would bring and hide. If it were encountered by cattle or pigs, these would jump around several times and immediately die. It was necessary to call the shaman-healer to come and gather it, to dig it up and carry it away. Then all would be well.
- 8 **Yeu-jio-dlang-hnu.** Also called Yeu-dlang-hnu. This was one who, the old people said, made sky and earth and all things.
- 9 **The venerable and the old.** This was the custom of the old people to worship rocks and to worship trees, in order that the rocks and trees might protect people and bring peace. The time for this worship was every year in Horse-month and on Horse-day.
- 10 **Worship of the door.** This was worshipped in order that the door might shut evil and calamity outside, and open that the good and the fortunate might enter the house.

11 **Sowing souls.** Also called zao-ki-lao.

12 **Ndao-shu.** This was the pollution of a house caused by a daughter, or by the death of a person from another house, or by that which was ritually unclean. It was necessary to get the shaman-healer to come and gather it up, then things would be well.

13 **Nao-nao.** This concerned one party of people ill-wishing another party. They made a “nao-nao” which they took and buried. The result was that the person whose “nao-nao” had been made died, so punishing the family which had been ill-wished. It was necessary to call the shaman-healer to come, dig it up and carry it away, then things would be well.

Above has been set out thirteen kinds of spirits, some were good, some were evil. If they were encountered, people would become seriously ill. When this happened it was necessary to call the shaman-healer to come and cure the disease. Below will be set out how the spirits had to be worshipped, and how the cure was brought about that the patients might recover.