

Miao spirits that were worshipped and those that caused sickness

1. Worshipping the Spirit Zu-gi-za.

Compiled by Yang Yung-xin.

When a person was sick it was necessary to call the shaman-healer to come and decide its nature. There were four kinds,

1. “The jet-black one”. That was to kill and eat the large pig which had been devoted to the spirits.
2. “The place of arriving”.
3. “The ancestors want to eat and drink”. (Offering livestock to the ancestors.)
4. “The ancestors’ ox rope is tangled”. (“The end of the road”.) It was necessary to kill the old ox.

The time for worship was, “Gather on Rat-day, worship on Ox-day”.

In bygone days, if there were sickness, the old folk would call the shaman-healer to come and look, to see what kind of sickness it was. If the shaman-healer said it was this particular kind of sickness, a large pig had to be chosen and devoted. Having waited until the sickness was better, they would then kill and eat the large pig. When they wanted to kill and eat the large pig, it was necessary to call the zu-mu. They would lead the pig out of doors on the eastern side. One person would pour wine into a cup for the ancestors, and this was passed to the zu-mu. Then the zu-mu would say,

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 come, 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 run to block them.

When, in the south, Chinese tongues draw near,
 Let the large pig run to stop them.

When, in the north, Yi tongues grow long,
Let the large pig run to stop them.
When the children go outside, go out of doors,
From colds and coughs,
Let the large pig be struck down to protect them.

When the children farm the flat land,
May good crops fill the flat land.
When the children farm 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 live to fill the walls,
May their men-folk live to fill the place.
May their 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.

Striking down the old ox. Also called zi.

This ritual, called zi, was performed when a family had died to the point of having no seed. Then they would devote livestock, and sacrifice the old ox. (The old folk used to say, "The ancestors' ox rope is tangled", or it was "The end of the road".) They would sacrifice the old ox, and see whether they would beget off spring.

When this zi was performed, it was necessary to see how many brothers there were, and that number of animals had to be offered. First they offered livestock to the ancestors, then zi could be performed. The time table for zi was,

On Rat-day the zu-mu together with the brothers gathered. (Called "Guests arrive".)

On Ox-day, at the time of the morning meal, they killed the pig to worship the Spirit Yeu-su-mu, and in the evening they led out livestock for the ancestors.

On reaching Tiger-day they struck down the old ox. (Called "The ox falls".)

On Rabbit-day the guests dispersed. (Called "Guests depart".)