

M384

**A song of spirit worship.**

**The Hmao-dang clan's song of offering an ox to the ancestors.**

*Collected by Wang Ming-ji.*

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B pages 27 and 28.

**Line 1.** The basic meaning of the word 'ᵀ" is "people", and in particular a community of people. In modern usage it refers to the Hua Miao who call themselves ᵀ" 'ᵀ", "A-hmao". The word is prefixed to names of villages and to clans, and here refers to seven groups of people, that is the seven sub-clans.

**Line 1.** The word ᵀᵀ normally means "a kind" or "a sort". In the present context it means "a clan".

**Line 2.** The word ᵀᵀ has a wide sweep of meanings. In modern speech it means "spirit" and ᵀ" ᵀᵀ is a verb meaning "to worship the spirits". The basic meaning seems to be something having life, and in the old songs the word is regularly prefixed to the names of animals and birds. In the present context it means a group of living people, and is used in parallel to the word "clan".

**Line 9.** The basic meaning of the word ᵀᵀ is similar to that of the word 'ᵀ" in line 1. In common speech ᵀ" ᵀᵀ is the normal name for the Yi people, but here it simply refers to the seven sub-clans.

Of the names of the seven sub-clans, the first two may be totemistic in origin, and the third may have been derived from its proximity to a Chinese settlement. The fourth presumably refers to living in a valley, and fifth to living on a hill slope. The sixth group may have got its name from their skill in the use of bamboo. The aromatic plant wormwood is common on the hills of the Yunnan-Guizhou border. It is called ᵀ" ᵀᵀ or ᵀ" ᵀᵀ, and gives its name to the seventh sub-clan.