

M455

**The youth who married a sky-maiden.**

*Collected by Wang Ming-ji.*

- The sun was shining brightly,  
And the sunshine was good,  
Good for the Miao man to go and channel water.  
But sky-maidens flew whistling from the sky,  
5 And made the Miao man's stream muddy.
- The children went out minding the pigs,  
And while minding them crossed the edge of the Miao man's water.  
So the Miao man came and scolded,  
The Miao man scolded the children.
- 10 The children spoke together,  
"Who will go and talk to him?  
Let the children tell the Miao man".  
So the children told the Miao man and said,
- "When the sun is shining brightly,  
15 Who is it, at breakfast time,  
Who is it that flies whistling from the sky,  
And stirs the Miao man's stream to make it muddy?"
- The Miao man went and built a booth,  
Built a hide, built a booth near the water pool.  
20 The Miao man went and stayed there,  
Went to keep watch at his stream of water.
- When breakfast time came,  
The sky-maidens flew whistling from the sky.  
The sky-maidens took off their wings,  
25 Their mottled, dappled wings at the water's edge.
- While the sky-maidens were stirring the water,  
The Miao man ran and took,  
Took a sky-maiden's mottled, dappled wings,  
Took them away under his arm.
- 30 The Miao man shouted at the sky-maidens,  
Who flew whistling back into the sky,  
But one sky-maiden could not go.  
The Miao man went and brought,  
Brought the sky-maiden, returned and reached,  
35 Reached the Miao man's home.
- The sky-maiden having no name,  
Call the sky-maiden Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu.  
The Miao man having no name,

Call the Miao man Di-ya-shi-njiang.

40     This year we may know,  
      Know that this year Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu has given birth,  
      Given birth to two brothers.

      The elder brother having no name,  
      Call the elder brother Ndrao-ghu.

45     The younger brother having no name,  
      Call the younger brother Ndrao-ghv.

      Bo-tyu-nyu-yyu went farming,  
      Went farming every day.  
      But farming and tilling tax the strength,  
50     And it taxed Bo-tyu-nyu-yyu's strength.  
      So Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu sent Di-ya-shi-njiang out to farm.

      Then Di-ya-shi-njiang spoke out,  
      "You two, do not go troubling your mother!"  
      But Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv cried incessantly and troubled,  
55     Troubled Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu greatly.

      Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu spoke,  
      Spoke to Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv and said,  
      "When your father is staying with you,  
      What does he give you to eat, Ndrao-ghu, Ndrao-ghv?"

60     Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv replied,  
      "Father gives us the sky-maiden's mottled dappled wings,  
      Gives them to us to play with.

      Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu asked, "Ndrao-ghu, Ndrao-ghv,  
      Where did you put them away?"  
65     "We put them away in the covered basket".  
      Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu ran to take it and look.  
      "But where did you put that away?"  
      "We put it up there in the loft".

      Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu went, went and took it and looked.  
70     She took out the sky-maiden's mottled, dappled wings  
      And measured them against the sky maiden's arms.  
      They fitted the sky-maiden's arms exactly.

      The sky-maiden took them and flew over there,  
      And Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv, all smiles, went to look.  
75     The sky-maiden flew back over here,  
      And Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv, laughing aloud, went to look.

      Then the sky-maiden spoke,  
      "When the day comes that you two have finished caring for your father,  
      Then you may follow the sky-maiden".

As the sky-maiden flew whistling back into the sky,  
Her shadow fell across the Miao man.  
The Miao man, turning round, looked into the sky above,  
But the sky-maiden disappeared into the clouds up in the sky.

The Miao man returned home,  
85 And the Miao man spoke,  
Spoke to Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv and said,  
“This time indeed you two have eaten your mother!”

There came a day when Ndrau-ghu and Ndrao-ghv were grown up,  
And having looked after the Miao man until he died,  
90 Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv followed Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu.

They went and reached an Yi household.  
“Today a couple of honourable guests have come,  
And we have nothing to kill to entertain them.  
To entertain them we must catch and kill a goose”.

95 At midnight that night, while Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv were asleep on the  
wooden floor upstairs,  
The pair of geese were lamenting,  
“O that Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv would not eat goose flesh!  
Kill the mother goose then the little goose would be motherless,  
Kill the little goose then pity the mother goose!”

100 Ndrao-ghu roused Ndrao-ghv to listen quietly  
To what the pair of geese were saying. The pair of geese continued,  
“O that Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv would not eat goose flesh,  
Then would the pair of geese show Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv their road.  
O that Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv would not drink gosling broth,  
105 Then would the pair of geese show Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv their home”.

Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv replied, “We will not eat goose flesh,  
If the pair of geese will show Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv their home.  
Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv will not drink gosling broth,  
If the little goose will show Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv their way”.

110 “Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv, go and stay up there in the pass,  
For Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu, the three sisters,  
Will arrive up in the pass.

Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv, go and stay up there in the pass.  
Your eldest aunt, riding a mule, will go first,  
115 Your Middle aunt, riding a piebald horse, will arrive in the middle,  
Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu, riding a grey horse, will arrive behind.  
Let Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv run and cling to the grey horse”.  
Ndrao-ghv ran to cling to the grey horse,  
But Ndrao-ghu did not listen.  
120 Ndrao-ghu ran and clung,  
Clung to the eldest aunt,

But her mule turned back and bit him and Ndrao-ghu died.

The gi-zhw birds were calling,  
And vexed Ndrao-ghv's heart.  
125 So Ndrao-ghv went and sought  
The gi-zhw birds' roost among the bushes,  
And Ndrao-ghv took and strangled the gi-zhw birds' young.

But the gi-zhw birds, still calling, plucked,  
Plucked green leaves and went and fanned,  
130 Fanned the heads of the gi-zhw birds' young.

This Ndrao-ghv copied.  
Ndrao-ghv ran and plucked,  
Plucked green leaves and went and fanned him,  
And Ndrao-ghu revived.

135 Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu took,  
Took Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv and they went and reached,  
Reached Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu's home.  
Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu was overjoyed,  
But the man Dlang-ndu hated,  
140 Hated Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv greatly.

When the next day came,  
Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv were about to leave.  
But the man Dlang-ndu was evil hearted.  
The man Dlang-ndu took Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv to cut the forest.  
145 The man Dlang-ndu made Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv cut on the lower side,  
While the man Dlang-ndu cut on the higher side

The man Dlang-ndu cut, but was not first to make the tree fall,  
Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv cut and were first to make the tree fall.  
The man Dlang-ndu called,  
150 Called to Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv to come home,  
But Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv kept quiet.

The man Dlang-ndu spoke,  
"Surely Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv are dead!"  
Then Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv came quickly out,  
155 And the man Dlang-du took,  
Took Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv back home.

Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv were about to leave,  
But the man Ndlang-ndu was evil hearted.  
The man Dlang-ndu would take Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv to burn the scrub.  
160 He made Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv stand on the higher side,  
While the man Dlang-ndu burnt from the lower side.  
But Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu drew clear water,  
For Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv to carry,  
And Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv poured out,  
165 Poured out clear water on the earth below to make a refuge.

- The man Dlang-ndu burnt,  
 Burnt and scorched the scrub till it was burnt black,  
 Until the scrub was scorched completely.  
 Then the man Dlang-ndu called Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv to come out.
- 170 But Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv kept quiet.  
 “This time, surely, Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv are dead!”  
 Then Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv came quickly out,  
 And the man Dlang-ndu took Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv back home.
- Next day Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv were about to leave,  
 175 When the man Dlang-ndu took Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv out for a game.  
 The man Dlang-ndu wanted Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv to go first,  
 But Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv made the man Dlang-ndu go first.
- So the man Dlang-ndu went and became,  
 Became the Ruling Race’s water buffalo grazing yonder.  
 180 Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu bade Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv raise,  
 Raise their hands and point to the buffalo,  
 And the man Dlang-ndu with Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv came home.
- Then the man Dlang-ndu made Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv go and hide.  
 Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu took Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv and turned,  
 185 Turned them into two spoons placed in a covered basket.  
 The man Dlang-ndu came and called.
- But Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv remained quiet.  
 The man Dlang-ndu was evil hearted,  
 “Surely Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv are dead!”  
 190 Then Ndao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv came quickly from the covered basket.
- Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv made the man Dlang-ndu go and hide.  
 The man Dlang-ndu became the Ruling Race’s capsicum pod,  
 Which attached itself at once to the Ruling Race’s bunch of capsicum.
- Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu made Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv raise,  
 195 Raise their hands to point, and to call out,  
 Call out that the man Dlang-ndu had gone,  
 Gone to the Ruling Race’s bunch of capsicum.
- Then the man Dlang-ndu came out,  
 Returned with Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv and reached,  
 200 Reached the man Dlang-ndu’s house.
- The man Dlang-ndu made Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv go and hide,  
 Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu took Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv and turned them,  
 Turned them into Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu’s ball of hemp in her hip basket.  
 The man Dlang-ndu came and called.
- 205 But Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv remained quiet.

The man Dlang-ndu said,  
“Surely Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv are dead!”  
Then Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv jumped quickly from the hip basket.

210 Next day Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv were about to leave,  
And Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu ladled white rice  
For Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv to carry for lunch.  
Bo-dyu-nyu-yyu bade Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv go,  
Go by way of the people’s country of bamboo.

215 “You two go by the clear water of the river Li-yiu,  
And marry the monkey maidens of Li-yiu.  
Do not go by the rough roads of Li-hmao,  
Do not go by the people’s rough roads.

Should you go and marry by the muddy water of the river Li-hmao,  
You two will get in marriage Nggu-yi-nzeu’s tiger maidens.  
220 As you go, should you hear the rustle of a snake you two must not touch it”.

When a snake did rustle on the higher side of the road,  
Ndrao-ghv said, “Our mother told us  
That we two were not to touch the snake”.  
But Ndrao-ghu would not agree.  
225 Ndrao-ghu beat the black snake and killed it,  
And thereby he actually beat his own mother.

Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv came and reached a stage on the way,  
And Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao took out their lunch to share and eat,  
Ndrao-ghu and Ndrao-ghv took out the white rice to share and eat.  
230 But as Ndrao-ghv served out the rice for Ndrao-ghu to eat,  
Ndrao-ghu’s white rice turned to sand.

Ndrao-ghv said, “Our mother bade us go,  
Go by the people’s country of bamboo,  
And forbade us to go by by the rough roads of Li-hmao”.  
235 So Ndrao-ghv arrived in the people’s country of bamboo,  
And married a Monkey maiden of Li-yiu.

Ndrao-ghu arrived by the rough roads of Li-hmao.  
He went to marry by the muddy water of the river Li-hmao,  
And married Nggu-yi-nzeu’s tiger maiden.  
240 The tiger maid wore a patterned apron,  
An apron with a pattern of spots.

Nggu-yi-nzeu’s tiger maiden schemed,  
Schemed well and schemed with care.  
“The Chuan Miao deer are grazing yonder on the mountain,  
245 Let us return and wait for some to eat”.  
She made Ndrao-ghu remain by the water,  
While Nggu-yi-nzeu’s tiger maiden went yonder to the mountain.

A partridge came along first,

And Ndrao-ghu was about to shoot,  
 250 To shoot the partridge,  
 But the partridge would not agree.  
 "Do not shoot the partridge,  
 There is another, better than I, coming behind".

A pheasant came behind,  
 255 And Ndrao-ghu would shoot the pheasant,  
 But the pheasant would not agree for Ndrao-ghu to shoot it.  
 "There is another, better than I coming behind".

A stag came behind,  
 And Ndrao-ghu would shoot the stag,  
 260 But the stag would not agree for Ndrao-ghu to shoot it.  
 It turned around and looked intently yonder at the mountain,  
 So Ndrao-ghu turned around and looked intently yonder at the mountain.  
 The striped tigers were coming in a group from yonder mountain.

The stag spoke to Ndrao-ghu and said,  
 265 "Take off your belt and sleeve bands and bind yourself up".  
 So Ndrao-ghu took off his belt and sleeve bands and bound himself up.  
 Then Ndrao-ghu jumped quickly and clung to the stag's antlers,  
 And the stag tossed Ndrao-ghu,  
 Tossed him into the tree above.

270 The striped tigers arrived running,  
 And the striped tigers sought,  
 Sought and sought for Ndrao-ghu.  
 A big gust of wind blew,  
 And moved Ndrao-ghu's shadow as he remained,  
 275 Remained in the tree above

Then the striped tigers looked up into,  
 Up into the tree above,  
 And there was Ndrao-ghu,  
 Up there in the tree above.  
 280 So the striped tigers called,  
 Called to Ndrao-ghu up above.

But Ndrao-ghu could not come down.  
 Then Ndrao-ghu said,  
 "I cannot come down.  
 285 Having reached the tree, the tree holds me,  
 Having reached the rock, the rock holds me.  
 I cannot come down".

As the striped tigers went leaping up,  
 Ndrao-ghu drew his shining sword and slashed,  
 290 Slashed the striped tigers and killed them.  
 But Ndrao-ghu remained,  
 Remained in the tree above.

Ndrao-ghu grew hungry, very hungry,  
 But right at the bottom of Ndrao-ghu's pouch,  
 295 He had one grain of rice which he just licked.  
 The bluebottles were buzzing noisily around,  
 And he shared a little bit,  
 Shared it for the bluebottles to lick.

The bluebottles were going in at the bottom and coming out at the top,  
 300 Going in at the top and coming out at the bottom,  
 And they brought one of their grubs to show Ndrao-ghu the way,  
 And so Ndrao-ghu came down.

Ndrao-ghu then followed,  
 Followed Ndrao-ghv and went,  
 305 Following after Ndrao-ghv.  
 Now the monkey maiden was fetching water,  
 And Ndrao-ghu did evil.

He said, "Monkey maiden what are you fetching water for?"  
 The Monkey maiden replied, "I am fetching water to make,  
 310 To make a skin rash for my brother-in-law!"  
 Ndrao-ghu replied, "Monkey mother if you do not answer me,  
 I will shoot you , monkey mother!"

The monkey mother replied, "If you shoot,  
 I shall hide inside my gourd!"  
 315 Then Ndrao-ghu shot,  
 Shot the monkey maiden,  
 Shot and killed the monkey maiden.

Ndrao-ghu went on and reached Ndrao-ghv's house.  
 Ndrao-ghv's little ones were crying,  
 320 They were crying loudly,  
 So Ndrao-ghu asked, "Ndrao-ghv,  
 Where has their mother gone?"  
 Ndrao-ghv replied, "Our mother has gone to fetch water".

Ndrao-ghu said, "I shot and killed the monkey maiden".  
 325 Ndrao-ghv replied, "Then be afraid of the many brothers in the Gi-chi monkey  
 family".

But Ndrao-ghu made Ndrao-ghv go and gather firewood,  
 Gather firewood for the monkey maiden to carry,  
 And make as though the monkey maiden had carried it yonder by the horners'  
 nest.

Then Ndrao-ghu made Ndrao-ghv go and call,  
 330 Go and tell the monkey family  
 That the hornets had stung her to death.

So the monkey family came to kill,  
 Came to kill the hornets.  
 But when the monkey family came to kill the hornets,



335    The hornets stung the Gi-chi monkey family and killed them all.  
      Except for one cousin only,  
      They were wiped out completely.