

M471

## Miao lads go to fetch their brides.

*Told by Yang Xiu-gong.*

They say that once upon a time there were two bridegrooms who went to fetch their brides. They reached a place where there had been a village of Miao but they had all been eaten by the kha. Only the two young women were left. The two Miao lads said to the two brides, "What do you do that causes the kha to come?" They said, "It is when we pound the corn that the kha comes". The two bridegrooms said to them, "In that case you girls start pounding corn". So it was that the kha woman arrived.

The kha woman said, "My two nephews, will you strike first, or shall I strike first?" The two Miao lads said, "Auntie, you strike first!" The kha woman thrust with her sword, but the two bridegrooms dodged to either side. Then the two bridegrooms thrust with their swords and cut the kha woman all to pieces. However, the bits of flesh came and adhered together and formed the kha again. The two Miao lads then treated their swords by smearing them with chicken droppings. They attacked again and attacked successfully.

After this they went to find the kha's house. They went and saw two little khas in the house. They enquired, "What is your mother doing?" The two little khas replied, "Our mother has gone to bring meat in a basket and fetch blood in a gourd". The two bridegrooms went and saw a great cavern full of human bones. They went and said to the little khas, "When you are hungry what do you eat?" The two little khas said, "We take these human bones, fit them together and blow at them so they turn into people. Then we eat them". They replied, "In that case put all these bones together, and then you can eat plenty". The two little khas followed this instruction, put them together and blew at them, and they all came to life. The two Miao lads took the little khas and killed them. They then sent the people back each to his own home.