

**Hua-Miao Archive
Songs and Stories**

Miao Social Life

Old marriage customs and songs about marriage

Songs M301 to M314

Introduction, Translation, Transcription and Notes

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M301
Arranging marriages according to the old customs.

Written by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

By way of introduction to a group of six songs about marriage which he had collected, Wang Ming-ji wrote a short explanatory note which he amplified by further observations inserted in the songs themselves. This material is here brought together. The writer was at pains to point out that things had changed during the years, and some old customs had fallen into disuse, but they did apply to the time when these songs were first sung .

The expression “zi-ghao” had two meanings. It was the name given to the middleman who conducted the marriage arrangements, and it was also the word for the visits for negotiations which the middleman undertook. “A zi-ghao” means “to make marriage arrangements” or “to make a match”.

The Miao used the same sequence of twelve animals as did the Chinese for counting the passage of days or years, so that a “ba-zhu” was strictly a twelve day period. When Wang Ming-ji said “thirteen days”, what he meant was “the thirteenth day”. That is if the middlemen paid their first visit on, say, Dragon-day, their next visit would be on the thirteenth day, namely the next Dragon-day.

It is not quite clear at what point the middlemen would have to make the announcement if the bride was unwilling. Presumably she would refuse to go and meet the bridegroom, and it would then be for the middlemen to go out and break the news to him, and the whole party would have to return home.

The stipulation of an initial stay of two years after marriage did not, apparently, prevent the bride from going home, if that were necessary, to finish the “bridegroom’s gown”. The restriction on her visits was to ensure that the first child would be born in her own new home. It was considered unlucky for a woman to give birth in her parents’ home, and should this happen, elaborate and costly rites of purification had to be performed to remove the pollution, and to carry the child’s spirit to the new home where it properly belonged. If this were not done, the child would not thrive.

The Miao made their own cloth from hemp, so that the “bridegroom’s” gown would be very largely of home grown yarn, spun and woven, dyed and made up by the bride herself. For the decoration and the embroidery work it was necessary to buy some finer red, blue or brown cotton material in the Chinese markets. The presentation of some red material by the bridegroom’s family was an earnest of their good faith and serious intentions.

M301
Arranging marriages according to the old customs

Written by Wang Ming-ji.

To begin with approaches had to be made, and it was necessary to make four such approaches. The time for making the approaches was at intervals of thirteen days. So it was said, "One ba-zhu, one approach excursion". (A ba-zhu is thirteen days.) Whether the bride was obtained or not, it was necessary to make the four excursions, one approach each ba-zhu.

1. Go and enquire. After this others may not.
2. Go and enquire to get a reply.
3. Go and enquire to get a firm response.
4. Go and fetch the bride.

They would bring the bridegroom to within one li, and send his friends to fetch the bride. If the bride was willing to go, and her mother and father were willing to give her to the bridegroom, then her home people would appoint the bridesmaids to accompany her. When the young men came to fetch the bride, the girls of the village would try to prevent her from going, but her parents, her sisters-in-law and her brothers would ignore them. However, when the bride was fetched, an older person went with her. The bridegroom then would take hold of the bride. With the bridesmaids properly prepared, and the bride willing to go, all would return together for a meal, then they would all depart together.

If the bride was unwilling to go, the middleman would announce that the marriage was off.

In the bridal party there had to be seven women in all, five young women, one matron and, of course, the bride. There had to be five men, including one older man, one head-man, and one nephew who was the "cattle bringer", the person who brought the cattle back from the bridegroom's family.

Explanation: When married the bride should go for about two years. The parents on both sides should be equally rich to arrange a marriage. For a marriage there were normally required, one bullock, five goats, and one pig, but provided there were seven animals it would do.

On the bride's side, it was necessary for her to make the "bridegroom's gown". Even though she was already married, the bride had to return to her parents' home to make this gown, only so would it count as the "bridegroom's gown".

M301

3⁸ 3^{nc} Y⁻ L₁₁]₀ Y⁻ [']¹¹ Y⁻]₀.
method of old which arrange marriage.

U₀₆ ɔ_{ne} [']ⁿ S¹¹.
Wang Ming-ji wrote.

]₅ Y⁻ †^r]¹¹. Ā Y⁻
begin make approach. necessary make

Δ¹¹]¹¹ †^r]¹¹.
four times approach.

Y⁻ †^r]¹¹,]₁₁ †^r 'C^u]₀ Yⁿ [']ⁿ
make approach, thirteen days is one time

]₀ Y⁻
which make

†^r]¹¹. Y⁻ Lⁿ Ĉⁿ ɿ_n]₀, Yⁿ]⁻ [']^u
approach. do like this said that, one ba-zhu

ɔ₁₁ Yⁿ
go one

C[']_n Yⁿ]⁻ [']^u]₀]₁₁ †^r 'C^u. T¹¹ ɿⁿ
occasion. one ba-zhu is thirteen days. get not

T¹¹ C⁸
get bride

Ā ɔ₁₁ Δ¹¹ C[']_n.
necessary go four occasions.

1. S^u ɔ₁₁ C₀. [']⁸]₀. L⁻ ɿⁿ †^r.
first go ask, raise cause others not able.

2. ɔ₁₁ C₀]₀. Tⁿ L^u.
go ask cause answer words.

3. ɔ₁₁ C₀]₀ T¹¹ L^u.
go ask which get words.

4. ɔ_{ii} ɛ^{no} ɕ^ʰ t_ʒ.
go bring wife finish.

l'ɔ̄ ʋ̄ t- t'' ɣⁿ ɕɛⁿ ɛ̄ⁿ
bring bridegroom come to one measure road

ɛ^{nc},
completed,

ɔ_o ʌ^v l- t- ɛ^{no} ɕ^ʰ. ɛ̄^v ɔ_v ɕ^ʰ
cause friends come fetch bride. if bride

ɛ_v ɔ_{ii},
willing go,

ɕ^{nc} ʋ_v l- ɛ_v ɔ̄^v t'' ʋ̄ⁿ
mother father also willing give to bridegroom,

ɣ^v lⁿ
make like

ɕ̄ⁿ ʋ_v ɕɔ̄- t^r ɕɛ_{ni} ɔ_o ɕt_o ɔ_{ii}.
this at home send bridesmaids cause with go

t'' ɔ_v ɣ^v ɓ_v ɔ_{ii} ɛ^{no} ɕ^ʰ ɣ̄ⁿ,
when young men go fetch bride at that time,

ɔ̄-
there are

ɕɔ̄'' ʒ^o t- ɕɔ̄ʒ ɕ^ʰ ɔ̄^v t-
girls village come help bride hold back come.

ɕ^{nc} ʋ_v
mother father

ɣ^v ɕ^{nc} ɣ^v ɕ^v tⁿ ɔ̄^v ɛ^{no}.
sisters-in-law brothers not take notice so it is.

ʋ^{nc} ɛ^{no}
but fetch

C^ḡ ɔ- Yⁿ L^ḃ Y⁻ L₁₁ C₁₀. ɔ₁₁
bride there is one classifier older person with go.

L^ḃ
the

C^ḡ E_n V̄ T̄ E^{nc}.
bride thus bridegroom take hold of completed.

Jⁿ t^{nc}
prepare

CE₁₁ ʒⁿ T_ḡ, C^ḡ E⁻ E₁₀ ɔ₁₁,
bridesmaids well finish, bride if willing go,

Ī^u J^ḃ Yⁿ
all one

t₁₁ S^r L₀ C₁₁ V⁻ T_ḡ,
company return come eat food finish,

Yⁿ t₁₁ L_ḡ
one company gone

T_ḡ. C^ḡ E⁻ Tⁿ E₁₀ ɔ₁₁ t^r t^r J₁₁
finish. bride if not willing go the middleman

Tⁿ C̄ⁿ T^u L^u S^ḡ T_ḡ.
to this break words away finish.

Tⁿ C₁₁ⁿ E¹¹ Ā J^ḡ L^ḃ.
young women marriage require seven persons.

Ā J^ḃ
require five

L^ḃ Tⁿ C₁₁ⁿ, Yⁿ L^ḃ
classifier young women, one classifier

Y⁻ J⁰ E¹¹,
matron marriage,

Ā Lᵇ Cᶜ T̄'. Eₙ D-
require the bride as well. thus there are

Jᶜ Lᵇ.
seven classifier.

Y⁻ Cᵛ E''' Ā Jᵇ Lᵇ,
young men marriage, require five classifier,

Tᵤ Yⁿ
then one

Jⁿ Lᵤ tᵤ, Yⁿ Lᵇ Jᵤ Ā tᵤ,
older man, one person who is head man,

Yⁿ Lᵇ Jᵤ
one person who is

tʳ Vᵤ Tᵛ T- E= T- E=
nephew the person come cattle. come cattle

Jᵤ Vᵤ Λₙ E'''.
which are from family marriage.

Tₙ C T̄'. Y⁻ E''' Ā
say clearly. Making marriage require

Sᵛ Dᵤ Y⁻ Cᶜ
first go make wife

Lⁿ Jᵤ Y⁻ Jᵤ Lᶜ. Y⁻ Sᵆ Cᵐ Vᵤ
about two years gone. two sides mother father

Tᵛ D- Eₙ
all have thus

Tⁿ Tᵇ Tₙᶜ Y⁻ E'''. Y⁻ E''' Ā
equal true make marriage. make marriage require

D- Yⁿ
give one

Tᵤ Cᵐ, Jᵇ Tᵤ E'ᵣ,
classifier cow, five classifier goats,

Yⁿ T_v C]̄.
one classifier pig.

V^{nc} [̄. Ā t_u J^o T_v [̄.
but only require total seven classifier cattle.

C^o J^{nc} Ā Y⁻ Yⁿ L^u [̄'^o
bride hers require make one classifier gown

ᵛ
bridegroom [̄'^o.
new.

L^u [̄'^o Ā, ɔ_u Y⁻ C^o L_ɛ T_ɔ V^{nc}
the gown this, go make bride gone finish but

Ā S^r
require return

L_o C^{nc} V_v C]̄- Y⁻ ɔ_u,
come mother father house make go,

T⁻ L_{nc} S_o [̄'^o
presently reckon gown

ᵛ [̄'^{nc}. CT^u †^r J^u ɔ_u Ā
bridegroom new. cloth middleman is required

Λ_n T^u [̄'^{nc}
family giving

T^u ɔ⁻ T^u †^r †^r J^u [̄^o ɔ_u T^u
son give for the middleman convey go for

Λ_n T^u [̄'^{nc}
family giving

C†', J^o ɔ⁻ CT^u Y⁻ L^u Δ^o CT^u
daughter knot take cloth embroidery cloth

L^{nc} Y⁻ [̄'^o ᵛ [̄'^o [̄_{no}.
red make gown bridegroom new so it is.

M301
Arranging marriages according to the old customs.

Written by Wang Ming-ji.

Notes

This material is in Document B (no. 7, page 32) and in notes following Document B (no. 12, page 37). The style is simple Miao prose as spoken today. The writer carefully avoided using any loan words from Chinese.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 1.

The Woman Bang and the Man Bang-li-byu.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

Like one of Shakespeare's characters, the couple in this song "by contraries execute all things". Their son they send away "to be a bride", and their daughter they keep at home, employed in felling, transporting and erecting timber for a new house. However, when, after a long absence, the son returns with a child and, presumably, though she is not mentioned in the song, his wife, the roles are switched back to normal. The son completes the new house as a place for him to "hang his cross-bow", that is as his home, while the daughter is given a patch of ground on which "to grow hemp", that is hemp to be spun into yarn, and woven into cloth in order to make the bridal outfit and the bridegroom's gown which she will require when she gets married.

At the head of the song Wang Ming-ji inserted a note which explains that "in the beginning it was the man who was the bride". This self-contradictory statement which appears again in lines 8 and 21 presumably means that there was a time when the marriage customs were different, and that the man, rather than the woman, left home to live with the parents-in-law. Such an interpretation is not impossible, but lacking any corroborative evidence, does not appear very likely. It is much simpler to regard the song as just a "once upon a time" story, sung to amuse rather than to instruct. In the translation the problematic statement that the "son went to be a bride" has been glossed over by saying that he went to be married.

The final eight lines of the song are scarcely complimentary to the bride. With heavy sarcasm scorn is poured upon the whole idea that she was a suitable person ever to get married, but does not explain why. This sort of statement, using the same similes, appears to be a convention in marriage songs. Elsewhere, however, despite such disparaging remarks, there was no difficulty in finding a bridegroom. Perhaps the present song has lost a final section describing the daughter's eventual marriage.

Two other points call for some explanation.

1. In line 9 and again in line 35 we are told that first, the daughter, and later, the son was kept at home "to learn the spirits". This expression originally concerned being initiated into the rituals of the clan worship of the ancestors and applied to boys only. A girl, on marriage, joined her husband's clan which would have different rituals. However, the phrase passed into general use and came to mean simply "kept the person at home"
2. Tree trunks, too heavy to be carried, would have to be dragged home using ropes, requiring the organisation of a team of perhaps twenty men. This, presumably, was the task undertaken by the young woman in the song. The exact significance of the three straight beams, which she could not manage, is not clear.

M302
Old Miao songs about marriage. 1.

The Woman Bang and the Man Bang-li-byu.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

From out of scattered sky material came the dome,
For the Woman Bang to come and live.
Woven from scattered earth material came the ranges,
For the Man Bang-li-byu to come and dwell.

- 5 This year we may know,
Know that the Woman Bang has started marriage arrangements,
Know that the Man Bang-li-byu has begun wedding preparations.
Begun preparing for their son to go and be married,
But they kept their daughter, the grown up young woman, at home.
- 10 This year we may know,
Know that the woman Bang is about to build a house,
Know that the man Bang-li-byu is about to build a home.
So they sent their daughter, the grown up young woman, to go and fell timber,
And they sent their daughter, the grown up young woman, to go and drag the timber
in.
- 15 She dragged in pillars from below on the plain,
She dragged in beams from above in the pass.
The daughter, the grown up young woman, dragged in,
Dragged in successfully the various timbers required,
Except the three beams, the straight beams, from the mountain ridge.
- 20 When others get married they may return,
But when their son got married he could not come.
However, when their son did return and reach home,
They sent their son to go and drag in the timber,
And he dragged in successfully the three beams, the straight beams, from the
mountain ridge.
- 25 Then they sent their daughter, the grown up young woman, to go and erect the
timbers.
She erected successfully the various timbers required,
Except the three beams, the straight beams, from the mountain ridge, which she
could not erect.
- 30 So their son, carrying his baby encircled in his arm,
Stretching out his hand, went and erected,
Erected successfully the three beams, the straight beams, from the mountain ridge.
- This year we may know,
Know that this year the Woman Bang is arranging a marriage,
Know that this year the Man Bang-li-byu is arranging a wedding

They are arranging for their daughter, the grown up young woman, to go and be
married,
35 But they are keeping their son at home.

This year we may know,
Know that the Woman Bang has built a house,
Know that the Man Bang-li-byu has built a home.
In fact their son constructed,
40 Constructed the Woman Bang and the Man Bang-li-byu's house.

The interior of the house provided,
Provided their son with a place to hang his cross-bow,
While the exterior of the house provided,
Provided their daughter, the grown up young woman, with a place for growing
hemp.

45 Cold water is not the thing to offer to a guest,
Their daughter, the grown up young woman, is not the person to offer in marriage!
Why have the Woman Bang and the Man Bang-li-byu taken,
Taken their daughter, the grown up young woman, and offered her in marriage?

50 Wild rice and wild millet are not the seed to plant in a garden,
Their daughter, the grown up young woman, is not the person to plant in a home!
It is wasted effort to sow wild rice and wild millet on good soil,
It is wasted effort to send their daughter, the grown up young woman, on the
marriage road!

M302

C_n J^o J^ɛ Λ_κ J^ɛ Lⁿ J^p.
 the woman Bang man Bang-li-byu.

U_{o6} ɔ_{n6} Γⁿ S₁₁.
 Wang Ming-ji wrote.

Γ^{'11} CT^v Jⁿ CΓ^p Γ_n Jⁿ L_o,
 from sky scattered material arrived sphere,

Γ^{'11} C_n J^o J^ɛ Γ_n L_o C^{no}.
 for the woman Bang thus come live.

J^{nc} Tⁿ Jⁿ CΓ^p Γ_n L_n V₁₁,
 weave earth scattered material arrived ridges,

Γ^{'11} Λ_κ J^ɛ Lⁿ J^p Γ_n L_o t₁₁.
 for man Bang-li-byu thus come dwell.

5 J₁₁ C̄ t^κ L_o J¹¹,
 year this able come know,

J¹¹ C_n J^o J^ɛ J̄ Y⁻ Γ^{'11},
 know the woman Bang rise make marriage,

J¹¹ Λ_κ J^ɛ Lⁿ J^p Lⁿ J_ɔ J^o,
 know man Bang-li-byu about begin wedding,

C_ɔ Lⁿ J_ɔ J_o Jⁿ L^p T^v Tⁿ C^ɔ ɔ₁₁ Y⁻
 they about begin cause the son go make

C^ɔ.
 bride.

Γ^{'nc} Jⁿ L^p T^v Tⁿ C^{t'}, G_u C_{nc} L₁₁ C^{no}
 took the daughter girl adult remain

Γ_{nc} Δ^ɔ.
 learn spirits.

10 J₁₁ C̄ t^κ L_o J¹¹,
 year this able come know,

J'' C_n J^o J^δ J̄ †' C],
know the woman Bang rise build house,

J'' Λ_ε J^δ Lⁿ J^p J̄ †' [ʔ.
know man Bang-li-byu rise build home.

∩_o Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C†', G_v C_{nc} L_{ii} ∩_{ii} C^o CT'',
cause the daughter girl adult go fell trees,

∩_o Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C†', G_v C_{nc} L_{ii} ∩_{ii} I',
cause the daughter girl adult go drag in

CT'',
trees.

15 I', C[ⁿ J^δ L_o CT^v T^{nc},
drag in posts come below plain,

I', C[ⁿ Λ^b L_o J_n Δ_ε.
drag in rafters come above pass.

Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C†', G_v C_{nc} L_{ii} I',
the daughter girl adult dragged in,

I', [ⁿ ∩_{ii} Y⁻ J^r CT'' L_o C[_{iii}
dragged in nine ten various trees come arrive

T_δ,
finish,

Δ_n C_n †^r T_v C_n
except connector three classifier connector

J^r C[^o CT_o J_n I^b.
straight with above ridge.

20 C_n Y⁻ C_n J⁻ C^o L_o C_n
connector make connector the bride so connector

L_o,
come,

Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C^o Y⁻ C_n J⁻ C^o
the son make connector the bride

J^r t^c L_o.
not able come.

Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C^o Y⁻ C^o T_u T̄ S^r
the son make bride then return come back

L_o t_o,
come reach,

J_o Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C^o Lⁿ D_u D_u I['] CT["],
cause the son going go drag in trees,

I['] C_n t^r T_u Cⁿ T^u Cⁿ
drag in connector three classifier beams beams

J^r C^o C_o C_u T_o.
straight with arrive finish.

25 J_o Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C^t, G_u C_{nc} L_u D_u C^o CT["].
cause the daughter girl adult go erect trees.

D_u C^o Cⁿ J_u Y⁻ J^r CT["] C_o T_o
went erect nine ten various trees stand done

T_o.
finish.

Δ_n C_n t^r T_u Cⁿ T^u Cⁿ
except connector three classifier beams beams

J^r C^o C_o J^r T["].
straight stand not get.

Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C^o J_u T^u Tⁿ G_u 3["] L_u C^o,
the son nursing baby well encircled arm,

J^o Tⁿ C_o D_u C^o,
raised hand with go erect,

30 ʔ̄ tʳ T_v Cʔ̄ⁿ T^u Cʔ̄ⁿ Jʳ Cʔ̄^ʳ
 erected three classifier beams beams straight

 Cʔ̄^p T_ʒ T_ʒ.
 stand done finish.

J_{ni} Ā tʳ L_o Jʳ,
 year this able come know,

Jʳ C_n J^o J^ʒ J_{ni} Y⁻ ʔ̄ʳʳ,
 know the woman Bang year make marriage,

Jʳ Λ_ɛ J^ʒ Lⁿ J^p J_{ni} Y⁻ ʔ̄^o.
 know man Bang-li-byu year make wedding.

ʔ̄^o ʔ̄_o Jⁿ L^ʔ T^u Tⁿ Cʔ̄ʳ, G_v C_{nc} L_{ni} ʔ̄_{ni} Y⁻
 allow cause the daughter girl adult go make

 C^ʳ.
 bride.

35 ʔ̄_o Jⁿ L^ʔ T^u Tⁿ C^ʳ C^{no} ʔ̄_{nc} Δ^ʒ.
 cause the son remain learn spirits.

J_{ni} Ā tʳ L_o Jʳ,
 year this able come know,

Jʳ C_n J^o J^ʒ J_{ni} tʳ^o Cʔ̄-
 know the woman Bang year build house,

Jʳ Λ_ɛ J^ʒ Lⁿ J^p J_{ni} tʳ^o ʔ̄^p.
 know man Bang-li-byu year build home.

Jⁿ L^ʔ T^u Tⁿ C^ʳ tʳ^o,
 the son built,

40 tʳ^o C_n J^o J^ʒ C_n Λ_ɛ J^ʒ Lⁿ J^p
 built the woman Bang the man Bang-li-byu

 C_n J⁻ Cʔ̄-
 connector the house.

J⁻ Cʔ̄- CΔ^{nc} J^p Jʳ ʔ̄^{no} ʔ̄^{nc},
 the house inside in order to put,

ʔ̄^{nc} Jⁿ L^ʔ T^u Tⁿ C^ʳ ʔ̄^{nc} ʔ̄^ʒ tʳ^o.
 put the son place hang cross-bow.

J⁻ C] - J_{||} J^p J^r [°_{nc} [°_{nc},
the house outside in order to put,

[°_{nc} Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C†', G_v C_{nc} L_{||} [°_{nc} T^{||} ɔ̃.
put the daughter girl adult place to hemp.

45 Y^{||} t_{nc} J^r Λ° J⁻ J^p C_n †'
water cold not is the thing connector offer

J['],
guests,

Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C†', G_v C_{nc} L_{||} J^r Λ° J⁻ [̃[̃]
the daughter girl adult not is the seed

C_n †' [°_{nc}.
connector offer marriage.

Y⁻ [°_{nc} C_n J^o J[̃] Λ_s J[̃] Lⁿ J^p [°_{nc},
why the woman Bang man Bang-li-byu take,

[°_{nc} Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C†', G_v C_{nc} L_{||} L_o †'
take the daughter girl adult come offer

[°_{nc}.
marriage.

Λ_v CΔⁿ Λ_v Jⁿ †' J^r Λ° J⁻ [̃[̃] L_{||}
wild rice wild millet not is seed plant

C_L V[̃],
in garden,

50 Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C†', G_v C_{nc} L_{||} J^r Λ° J⁻ [̃[̃] L_{||}
the daughter girl adult not is seed plant

C_L C] -
in house.

J['] C_L Λ_v CΔⁿ Λ_v Jⁿ †' T^{||}
do not waste wild rice wild millet in

Tⁿ C_L,
ground healthy,

J'~ CEn J^n L^b T^u T^n Ct', Gu Cnc L11 T''
do not waste the daughter girl adult on

Ĉ Ĉ''.
road marriage.

M302

Old Miao songs about marriage. 1.

The Woman Bang and the Man Bang-li-byu.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no. 8, page 35).

M303
Old Miao songs about marriage. 2.

Song by the bridegroom's friends

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

The opening line establishes the time of year. The hawthorn came into blossom in May, that is, before the onset of the summer rains.

The wine horns mentioned in the song were from water buffalo. The wide end of the horn where it joined the animal's head was blocked in with wood and sealed with varnish. A hole was bored in through the tip of the horn and fitted with a stopper. The outside of the horn was decorated with a carved pattern and then lacquered. These horns were a convenient way of storing wine and most useful for pouring it into wine cups. They could also be easily carried with a leather thong attached to either end and slung over the shoulder.

The song reflects the old custom, now long discontinued, by which, instead of a rice bowl, each guest had a small basket for his rice or maize-meal. The meat and vegetables were placed in wooden bowls on the table. For eating, each guest was provided with a wooden spoon. The use of chopsticks and pottery basins came at a later date, copied from the Chinese. The duty of the waiters was to ensure that the guests' rice baskets were kept full, and the basins of meat and vegetables, brimming.

M303

Old Miao songs about marriage. 2.

Song by the bridegroom's friends.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

The hawthorn had long been in blossom.
The right time for the old folk to go and eat meat,
Yet there was nothing for the marriage feast.
At a marriage feast you should have sliced white pork!
5 But there was nothing for the wedding feast.
At a wedding feast you should have the best joint of mutton sliced!

But when the next day came, the man, the father sent,
Sent two attendants wearing,
10 Wearing black capes and bearing wine horns
To pour clear wine, waiting at the entrance,
To pour clear wine, waiting at the door,
Welcoming the marriage guests, the wedding guests on arrival.

The man, the father sent,
15 Sent two skilful waiters,
Two skilful waiters to replenish the food baskets.
“In replenishing the food baskets, do not be hindered,
In replenishing the bowls, do not rest!
20 When tomorrow comes,
And the marriage guests, the wedding guests have eaten their fill,
You too may eat your fill!”

ḅ Ē Ḍⁿ S^{nc} T_o CṬ_u Δⁿ,
pour wine clear waiting beside door,

Y⁻ J^{'-} [^{'"} J^{'-}]^o CḂ_{ni}.
make guests marriage guests wedding arrive.

Λ_ε †^r †^c L_o †^r,
man father able come send,

15 †^r C_n Y⁻ L^ḅ T^u S^ḅ Lⁿ T^u S_s.
send connector two classifier skilled waiters.

C_n Y⁻ L^ḅ T^u S^ḅ Lⁿ T^u S_s CṬ_o.
connector two classifier skilled waiters with

T^ḅ V^ḅ,
replenished baskets,

T^ḅ V^ḅ J^{'-}]_o CḂ_ε,
replenish baskets do not cause stop,

T^ḅ T_u J^{'-} J_o.
replenish bowls do not rest.

J_n C_n †^c L_o S^ḅ,
tomorrow able come away,

20 J^{'-} [^{'"} J^{'-}]^o C["] T_ḅ T_ḅ,
guests marriage guests wedding eat done finish,

Ḍ_n C["] CṬ_o T_ḅ T_ḅ.
you eat with done finish.

M303
Old Miao songs about marriage. 2.
Song by the bridegroom's friends.

Collected by Wang-ming-ji.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no.9, page 34).

M304
Old Miao songs about marriage. 3.

A match-making song.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

Sometimes, before instituting the formal marriage negotiations conducted by middlemen, male members of the two families concerned might meet for some preliminary discussions. These would take place over a drink of wine. During such discussions the virtues of the prospective bride and bridegroom would be extolled by their respective relatives as bargaining counters in their haggling over the marriage settlement. The present song makes the somewhat cynical comment that, if they are really to reach a satisfactory agreement, a considerable quantity of wine will be consumed first! Throughout, the parties concerned are called “the brothers” and “the brothers-in-law”.

A notable feature of the song is the manner in which an exact scheme of parallelism is maintained, line for line and word for word, between the two seven line stanzas.

M304

Old Miao songs about marriage. 3.

A match-making song.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

The sun is shining brightly,
Shining upon jet-black birds that fly to and fro,
Shining upon brothers and brothers-in-law pursuing distant roads,
Shining still on brothers and brothers in law when they come together.
5 Then fill the vessel with clear wine and share it around and drink,
For in drinking clear wine you can never drink enough,
When discussing a marriage or wedding, if, discussing, you would reach an
agreement.

The sun is shining brightly,
Shining upon jet-black birds that fly all around,
10 Shining on brothers and brothers-in-law pursuing separate roads,
Shining still on brothers and brothers-in-law when they meet together.
Then fill the vessel with clear wine and share it around and drink,
For in drinking clear wine you will drink without limit,
When discussing a marriage or wedding, if, discussing, you would reach satisfaction.

M304

ㄘㄩㄥˊ ㄓㄩˋ ㄩˋ ㄊㄜˊ ㄓㄩˋ.
 song which make match.

ㄨㄨㄥˊ ㄨㄥˊ ㄇㄩㄥˊ ㄙㄩˋ.
 Wang Ming-ji wrote.

ㄕㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄕㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ,
 sunshine shine very fine,

ㄕㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄆㄛˋ ㄆㄛˋ ㄌㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄆㄛˋ ㄐㄩˋ ㄐㄩˋ,
 sunshine birds black very fly to and fro,

ㄕㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄕㄩˋ ㄊㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ
 sunshine brothers brothers-in-law situated

 ㄕㄩˋ ㄆㄛˋ,
 roads far,

ㄕㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄕㄩˋ ㄊㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄩˋ ㄊㄩˋ
 sunshine brothers brothers-in-law get

 ㄊㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ.
 come together.

5 ㄘㄩˋ ㄕㄩˋ ㄨㄥˊ ㄙㄩˋ ㄐㄩˋ ㄆㄛˋ ㄊㄩˋ,
 fill wine clear share drink,

ㄊㄩˋ ㄕㄩˋ ㄨㄥˊ ㄙㄩˋ ㄊㄩˋ ㄐㄩˋ ㄊㄩˋ,
 drink wine clear drink not enough,

ㄊㄩˋ ㄕㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄎㄩˋ ㄕㄩˋ ㄓㄨˋ ㄊㄩˋ ㄓㄨˋ
 discuss way marriage way wedding discuss cause

 ㄊㄩˋ.
 get.

ㄕㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄕㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ,
 sunshine shine very fine,

ㄕㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄆㄛˋ ㄆㄛˋ ㄌㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ ㄆㄛˋ ㄐㄩˋ ㄘㄩˋ,
 sunshine birds black very fly all about,

10 $\bar{\text{L}}^{\bar{\text{d}}}$ CT^v $\bar{\text{L}}^{\bar{\text{d}}}$ Tⁿ C^v Vⁿ C^{no} $\bar{\text{L}}^{\bar{\text{n}}}$
 sunshine brothers brothers-in-law situated roads

$\bar{\text{L}}^{\bar{\text{d}}}$,
 wide,

$\bar{\text{L}}^{\bar{\text{d}}}$ CT^v $\bar{\text{L}}^{\bar{\text{d}}}$ Tⁿ C^v Vⁿ T-
 sunshine brothers brothers-in-law come

J^r CE^r,
 meet together.

CTⁿ $\bar{\text{L}}^{\bar{\text{s}}}$ $\text{D}^{\bar{\text{n}}}$ Sⁿ J^r T^v T_{||},
 fill wine clear share drink,

T_{||} $\bar{\text{L}}^{\bar{\text{s}}}$ $\text{D}^{\bar{\text{n}}}$ S^{nc} T_{||} Tⁿ $\bar{\text{L}}^{\bar{\text{d}}}$,
 drink wine clear drink not limit,

T_▷ $\bar{\text{L}}^{\bar{\text{n}}}$ $\text{L}^{\bar{\text{r}}\bar{\text{n}}}$ $\bar{\text{L}}^{\bar{\text{n}}}$ D° T_▷
 discuss way marriage way wedding discuss

D° $\text{CT}^{\bar{\text{r}}}$.
 cause please.

M304
Old Miao songs about marriage. 3.

A match-making song.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no. 10, page 35).

Line 3. In the Miao text the initial \bar{c} ' CT^v, “in the sunshine”, is missing.

Line 4. In the manuscript this line is written twice, for no apparent reason.

Line 9. Following this line the manuscript repeats line 3.

M305
Old Miao songs about marriage. 4.

Song about entertaining the Middleman and the Headman.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

The arrival of two middlemen, one of whom was also a village headman, set the whole household of the prospective bride into a hive of activity, everyone being concerned to make the best possible impression. The bride's father personally supervised the entertainment of the visitors, making sure that they occupied the chief places at the table, that is those remote from the door. Uppermost in his mind was the possibility of a substantial addition to the livestock on his farm, which would result from a successful marriage settlement. The following day the prospective bride's aunt sought further to impress by displaying the garments that the bride would bring with her to her new home. The quantity and quality of these being a sure measure of her industry and skill. The serious negotiations for the marriage were conducted by the men-folk gathered around the open fire after the evening meal, while the women insured that the talks went smoothly by maintaining a more than ample supply of wine. For her part the prospective bride, by assiduous grooming, made sure that every day she was looking her best.

The wine which was used had been fermented and stored in large jars each containing several gallons. When it was required, it was siphoned off using a U-shaped tube made from a length of green bamboo, the internal joints of which had been burnt through with a hot wire. The wine was drawn off into smaller flasks from which the drinking cups were replenished. The metaphors of "fat" and "milk" are used to describe the quality of the wine which the women had made. As the evening wore on, those who were overcome by its potency subsided into slumber beside the fire and had to be dragged back lest sparks or falling embers set their clothing alight.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 4.

Song about entertaining the middleman and the headman.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Who is entertaining a middleman?
The man, the father is entertaining a middleman.
Who is entertaining a headman?
The man, the father is entertaining a headman.

5 He is entertaining the middleman
Together with the headman,
Making them sit in the highest places, because,
Because the man, the father's livestock will be multiplied!

10 The man, the father has reserved,
Reserved the place of honour for whom?
He has reserved it for the middleman.
The man, the father has reserved,
Reserved the chief place for whom?
He has reserved it for the headman.

15 When the next day came,
The middleman and the headman called,
Called the woman, the aunt's name over and over.
The woman, the aunt took the skirts and gowns, and putting them on, went to meet,
To meet the middleman and the headman.

20 The middleman and the headman together went and took them off,
Took them off carefully and laid them out all round.
Then the skirts of the woman, the aunt,
The woman, the aunt collected from all round and carried them away.

25 When the next day came,
The middleman and the headman called,
Called the woman, the aunt's name again and again.
The woman, the aunt took the skirts and aprons, and putting them on, went to meet,
To meet the middleman and the headman.

30 The middleman and the headman forthwith went and took them off,
Took them off carefully and laid them out all round.
Then the aprons of the woman, the aunt,
The woman, the aunt picked up from all round and folded them away.

35 The women's wine jars bubbled clear,
Bubbled with the women's yeast.
The women's wine jars bubbled over on the ground,
Bubbled with the men's wine.
Now take a sprig of bamboo and push it,

Push it into the neck and suck,
Suck the “fat” from the women’s wine jars.

40 But the women’s wine jars threw,
Threw the old folk down by the fire!

So, pull the old folk aside,
Let them lie together on the ground,
Like the ridges there out of doors,
45 On the old folk’s land.

Take a sprig of bamboo and push it,
Push it into the neck and suck,
Suck the “milk” from the women’s wine jars.

Now the middle-aged spoke much,
50 Spoke of the woman’s marriage,
But the women’s wine jars threw,
Threw the middle-aged down by the fire!

So, pull the middle-aged aside,
Let them lie together on the ground,
55 Like the ridges there out of doors,
On the plains of the middle-aged.

When the next day came,
The daughter, the adult young woman rose,
Rose up and combed her hair,
60 Making her hair smooth and flowing.

When the next day came,
The daughter, the adult young woman rose,
Rose up and combed her hair,
Making her hair smooth, smooth indeed.

65 For there will come a day when the daughter, the adult young woman, like,
Like a shadow passing over the crops,
The swaying crops, will go to her marriage.

There will come a day when the daughter, the adult young woman, like,
Like a shadow passing over the harvest,
The swaying harvest will go to her marriage.

M305

C]'']_u †^r †^r J'' †^r ǀ^u †_u.
 song which arrange for middleman arrange for headman.

U_{o6} ɔ_{o6} Cⁿ S_u.
 Wang Ming-ji wrote.

ǀ J^r C_u. †^r †^r J'',
 who with arrange for middleman,

Λ₆ Jⁿ †^r †^r †^r J''.
 man father arrange for middleman.

ǀ J^r C_u. †^r ǀ^u †_u,
 who with arrange for headman,

Λ₆ Jⁿ †^r †^r ǀ^u †_u.
 man father arrange for headman.

5 †^r Jⁿ L^b T^u †^r J''
 arrange for the person middleman

ǀ Jⁿ L^b T^u ǀ^u †_u,
 and the person headman,

C^o]_o. 3_u Yⁿ †ⁿ Jⁿ,
 allow cause sit one top place because,

Jⁿ Λ₆ Jⁿ †^r C₌ C_o. J⁸.
 because man father livestock multiply.

Λ₆ Jⁿ †^r †⁶ L_o. ǀ,
 man father able come clear,

10 ǀ †ⁿ C^{'=} C^{nc} Y⁻ J^r,
 clear place of honour completed for whom,

C^{nc} T^{'u} Jⁿ L^b T^u †^r J'' C_n.
 completed for the person middleman thus.

Λ₆ Jⁿ †^r †⁶ L_o. ǀ,
 man father able come clear,

ǀ †^r ǀ^u C^{nc} Y⁻ J^r,
 clear place at head completed for whom,

Γ^{nc} Γ^{'u} Jⁿ L^b T^u Γ^u t_u Λ_u.
completed for the person headman oh.

15 J_n Γ_n †^c L_o S^δ,
tomorrow able come away,

Jⁿ L^b T^u †^r J^u Jⁿ L^b T^u Γ^u t_u Γ_n D_u T⁻,
the middleman the headman thus did take hold of,

T⁻ J^o Jⁿ D_u C†^r CΓ^{no}, CΓ^{no}.
take hold of woman aunt name over and over.

J^o Jⁿ D_u J^{'c} J^δ T⁻ J^δ Γ^{'o} Jⁿ L^{nc} 'C^δ D_u
woman aunt took skirts gowns all put on went

t_o,
meet,

t_o Jⁿ L^b T^u †^r J^u Jⁿ L^b T^u Γ^u t_u.
meet the person middleman the person headman.

20 Jⁿ L^b T^u †^r J^u Jⁿ L^b T^u Γ^u t_u CΓ_o.
the person middleman the person headman with

D_u Δ_c,
went took off,

Δ_c Lⁿ J^{'n} L_u Γ^o CΓ_n 3^u.
took off all round laid down completely well.

J^o Jⁿ D_u Γ_n Tⁿ J^δ T⁻ Γ_n,
woman aunt thus the skirts thus,

J^o Jⁿ D_u T^u Lⁿ J^{'n} L_u D_n Γ^{no} L_c.
woman aunt get all round connector carry gone.

J_n Γ_n †^c L_o S^δ,
tomorrow able come away,

25 Jⁿ L^b T^u †^r J^u Jⁿ L^b T^u Γ^u t_u Γ_n
the person middleman the person headman thus

D_u T⁻,
did take hold of,

T⁻ J^o Jⁿ D_u C†^r t_u t_u.
take hold of woman aunt name again and again.

J° J° ɔ J'ɛ J° T° T° Y J° L^{nc} 'C̄ ɔ_{||}
woman aunt took skirts aprons all put on went

t_o,
meet,

t_o J° L' T° t^r J_{||} J° L' T° ǀ t_{||}.
meet the person middleman the person headman.

J° L' T° ʒ^r J^{||} J° L' T° ǀ t_{||}
the person middleman the person head man

J J' Δ_ɛ,
forthwith took off,

30 Δ_ɛ L° J' L_{||} C° C_{||} ʒ^{||}.
took off all round laid down completely well.

J° J° ɔ C_n T° J° Y C_n,
woman aunt thus the aprons thus,

J° J° ɔ J'ɛ L° J' L_{||} ɔ_n J' L_ɛ.
woman aunt took all round connector folded gone.

C_n J° 'G^v L° C_{no} C_J^{||} ɔⁿ S^{nc},
connector women wine jars bubbled clear,

C_J^{||} C_n J° ɔ_n J⁻ S^{ɔ̄}.
bubbled connector women plural liquid yeast.

35 C_n J° 'G^v L° C_{no} C_J^{||} J° Tⁿ,
connector women wine jars bubbled on the ground,

C_J^{||} C_n Λ_ɛ ɔ_n J⁻ C̄^{nc}.
bubbled connector men plural liquid wine.

C_t⁻ T_ɛ C_n ɔ_{||} C^{'no},
sprig bamboo thus did push through,

C^{'no} Δ̄ L° C_J^{||} J^r C_{no} C_t,
push through neck in order to suck,

C_t C_n J° 'G^v J° C_{no} J⁻ 'G^v Δ°.
suck connector women wine jars the jars fat.

- 40 C_n J^o 'G^u Lⁿ E_{no} J^{''},
connector women wine jars struck down,
J^{''} Lⁿ J⁻ L_n S^δ CT^u T^ε.
struck down the old folk away edge fire.
CT_v Lⁿ J⁻ L_n S^δ J⁻ CT_n,
pull the old folk away aside,
J_o CT_δ CT_o CT_δ J^r Tⁿ,
cause go together go on the ground,
CT_o CT^u Tⁿ CT_δ T_ε,
with ridges out,
- 45 Tⁿ 'D^{''} J⁻ L_n Tⁿ.
the Miao old folk land.
CT⁻ T_ε E_n D_o E^{'no},
sprig bamboo thus did push through,
E^{'no} Δ Lⁿ CJ^{''} J^r E^{no} CT_v,
push through neck in order to suck,
CT_v C_n J^o 'G^u Lⁿ E_{no} J⁻ 'G^u Dⁿ.
suck connector women wine jars the jars milk.
†^r Γ^δ J⁻ L_n T_n L^u E^{''},
middle aged said words many,
- 50 J_n C_n J^o D_n Jⁿ E^{''}.
said connector woman her marriage.
C_n J^o 'G^u Lⁿ E_{no} J^{''},
connector women wine jars struck down,
J^{''} †^r Γ^δ J⁻ L_n S^δ CT^u T^ε.
struck down middle aged away edge fire.
CT_v †^r Γ^δ J⁻ L_n S^δ J⁻ CT_n,
pull middle aged away aside,
J_o CT_δ CT_o CT_δ J^r Tⁿ,
cause go together go on the ground,
- 55 CT_o CT^u Tⁿ CT_δ T_ε,
with ridges out,

3^r Γ^δ J⁻ L₁₁ CT_δ.
middle aged plains.

J_n E_n †^c L_o S^δ,
tomorrow able come away,

J_o Jⁿ L^ʔ T^u Tⁿ Ct', G_u C_{nc} L₁₁
cause the person daughter young woman adult

§
J,
get up,

§
J J⁻ J^ʔ CT_o CE_r Γ'',
get up arise with comb head,

60 J_o Γ'' CA_{nc} Γ'' J⁻ CA_s.
cause head smooth head flowing.

J_n E_n †^c L_o S^δ,
tomorrow able come away,

J_o Jⁿ L^ʔ T^u Tⁿ Ct', G_u C_{nc} L₁₁
cause the person daughter young woman adult

§
J,
get up,

§
J J⁻ J^ʔ L_o CE_r Γ'',
get up arise come comb head,

J_o Γ'' CA_{nc} Γ'' CA_{nc} L_{nc}.
cause head smooth head very smooth.

65 D- 'C^u Jⁿ L^ʔ T^u Tⁿ Ct', G_u
there is day the person daughter young woman

C_{nc} L₁₁ CT_o,
adult with,

CT_o Δ_o E_{no} J⁻ Ct'' J'',
with shadow crops,

J'' Λⁿ Tⁿ Λ_o L_c J^u E'''.
crops waving gone to marriage.

ɔ- 'C^u Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ Ct', G_u
there is day the person daughter young woman

C_{nc} L_{ii} Ct_o,
adult with

Ct_o Δ_o [C^{no} J^r Ctⁱⁱ L_{ii},
with shadow harvest,

70 L_{ii} Λⁿ Tⁿ Λ_o L_ε J^u]_o.
harvest waving gone to wedding.

M305
Old Miao songs about marriage. 4.

Song about entertaining the middleman and the headman.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no. 11, page 35).

Line 1. In the manuscript the word ㄘㄥ is missing. It has been restored here to maintain the proper balance with the parallel line 3.

Lines 5, 6 and 7. These lines have been strung together into a single long sentence in the Miao manuscript.

Line 8. There appears to have been some disruption of the text by which this line was moved to a place following line 11. This upsets the poetic balance of lines 9 to 14, where lines 9, 10 and 11 are exactly balanced by lines 12, 13 and 14. The sense and symmetry of the whole passage is restored when line 8 is returned to its rightful place following line 7.

Line 18. The last two words of this line, ㄉㄨ ㄊ, "went to meet", have disappeared from the manuscript, and with them the whole of the next line. The proper sense of the passage and the parallelism with the next stanza require their restoration.

Line 25. The Miao text omits ㄘㄥ ㄉ ㄊ, "thus did take hold of", at the end of this line. It has been restored to preserve the parallelism with line 16.

Line 27. The expression ㄐㄛ ㄐㄥ ㄉ, "aunt", has been incorrectly written ㄐㄛ ㄊ ㄉ here and again in line 32. In the manuscript this line stops at the word ㄘ, and is followed by a repetition of the whole line with the words ㄉ ㄊ added at the end.

Line 32. Following the second section of the song, lines 15 to 32 the Miao manuscript inserts the following lines:

Λㄘ ㄐㄥ ㄊ ㄊ ㄌ ㄊ,
man father able come arrange for,

ㄊ ㄊ ㄐ ㄘ ㄩ ㄐ,
arrange for place at bottom completed for whom,

ㄘ ㄊ ㄊ ㄊ ㄐ ㄌ.
completed for the middleman oh.

The man, the father entertained,
And kept the lowest place for whom?
He kept it for the middleman.

These lines seem to be entirely out of place. They do not connect with either the section that precedes them or with that which follows. If they belong anywhere it is in section one, lines 1 to 14, for it is there that the places at table are described. Moreover they do not preserve the poetic pattern. Throughout the song a mention of the middleman is always balanced with a mention of the headman. Here the latter has disappeared altogether. However the chief problem is that these lines contradict directly what has been said before. Far from being welcomed and given the place of honour, the middleman is here snubbed and insulted by having to sit in the lowest seat. Why this sudden change of attitude? There is no hint of a reason anywhere in the song, and the final section implies that the middleman's mission was ultimately accomplished. A marriage was indeed arranged. The conclusion seems to be that these three lines are in fact an intrusion into the text, and would be better left out, but where and how they originated remains unexplained.

Lines 49 and 50. In the manuscript these two lines follow line 52. However discussion of the projected marriage must have taken place before the men subsided, dead drunk, on to the floor.

M306

Old Miao songs about marriage. 5.

Song of collecting livestock from the bridegroom's family.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

A note at the end of this song says that it was “a song of complaint because the cattle and pigs were not big enough”. The marriage arrangements had all been worked out by the middleman, including the number of animals to be given by the bridegroom's family to the bride's family. When, however, the marriage procession arrived, and the “headman”, that is the leader of the party, asked about the settlement of livestock, he received only an evasive reply. It was the duty of the younger brother to collect the beasts, and the bridegroom's family, knowing that the animals were of inferior quality, tried to hand them over to the young man, in the hope that, being inexperienced he would not demur. The song is evidence that they did not, in fact, get away with it. In a further note at the end of the song Wang Ming-ji explained that in such circumstances the matter would have to be settled by an additional payment of money or wine.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 5.

Song of collecting livestock from the bridegroom's family.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Who has arranged for the middleman?
The man, the father has arranged for the middleman.
Who has arranged a marriage?
The man, the father has arranged a marriage.

5 He has arranged for three bridesmaids at the marriage,
 And he has arranged for three brothers at the marriage.

 He has arranged for three bridesmaids at the marriage,
 Each wearing her leg bands properly adjusted.
 He has arranged for three brothers at the marriage,
10 Each wearing his silk gown, the brightest garment.

 The brightest garments had woven braids,
 The flowing garments had woven tassels,
 Woven tassels all properly knotted,
 Woven braids all useful and fitting,
15 To accompany the daughter the adult young woman.

 When the next day came,
 As we followed one another,
 Crossing the plain, in our opinion, our appearance,
 Our appearance was worthy
20 Worthy from the outset of the marriage,
 But we collected a marriage cow only the size of a deer!

 As we followed one another,
 Crossing the plain, in our opinion, our appearance,
 Our appearance was worthy,
25 Worthy from the outset of the marriage,
 But we collected a marriage sheep only the size of a small rabbit!

 When the next day came,
 The headman would collect,
 Collect the daughter, the adult young woman's worth,
30 But the headman could not collect it.

 Then for the daughter,
 The debt was collected by the younger brother.
 He collected for the marriage a piglet only as big as a small rat!
 He collected for the marriage a kid only as big as a small rabbit!

10 'C̄ C'° C_v J^δ Tⁿ V_v,
wearing gowns silk garments brightest,

J^δ Tⁿ V_v J^r J^{nc} 6^δ.
garments brightest together weave braid.

J^δ Jⁿ L₋ J^r J^{nc} J^r,
garments flowing together weave tassels,

J^{nc} J^r †^r C_{ni} †_v.
weave tassels knotted properly.

J^{nc} 6^δ †^r C_{ni} T_n.
weave braid useful fitting.

15 CT_o Jⁿ L^β T^v Tⁿ C†', G_v C_{nc} L_{ii} D_{ii}.
with the daughter young woman adult go.

J_n C_n †^c L_o S^δ,
tomorrow able come away,

Jⁿ †^o Jⁿ L⁻ J^β,
we follow our backs,

Jⁿ C₋ Tⁿ T^{nc} Jⁿ L⁻ 3^δ,
we looked ground level our appearance,

Jⁿ L⁻ 3^δ 3₋ 3^δ C_v CT^β,
our appearance appearance is worth,

20 CT^β C^{'''} Tⁿ J^o Lⁿ J_β J⁻ J^o L_o,
worth marriage from beginning come,

T₋ Tⁿ C^{'''} Tⁿ J^o C_v †_i J_i.
collect get marriage cow deer.

Jⁿ †^o Jⁿ Lⁿ J^β,
we follow our backs,

Jⁿ C₋ Tⁿ T^{nc} Jⁿ L⁻ 3^δ,
we looked ground level our appearance,

Jⁿ L⁻ 3^δ 3₋ 3^δ C_v CT^β,
our appearance appearance is worth,

25 CT^β C^{'''} Tⁿ J^o Lⁿ J_β J⁻ J^o L_o,
worth marriage from beginning come,

T₁ T'' [''' T^n]° Λ^δ G₁ L̄.
collect get marriage sheep small rabbit.

J_n C_n t^ε L_o S^δ,
tomorrow able come away,

J^n L' T^u Γ t₁₁ T₁,
the headman collected,

T₁ J^n L' T^u T^n C t', G_u C_{nc} L₁₁ C J',
collected the daughter young woman adult worth,

30 J^n L' T^u Γ t₁₁ T₁ J^r T''.
the headman collected not get.

T₁ T''' J^n L' T^u T^n C t',
then for the daughter,

C C^r J^n L' C^u J^- T_r T₁,
debt the brother youngest collected,

T₁ T'' [''' T^n]° G₁ C J^- L^-
collected get marriage small pig as big as

G₁ C^δ,
small rat,

T₁ T'' [''' T^n]° G₁ Γ', L^-
collected get marriage small goat as big as

G₁ L̄.
small rabbit.

M306
Old Miao songs about marriage. 5

Song of collecting livestock from the bridegroom's family.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no. 12, page 37)

Line 13. Following this line the Miao manuscript inserts,

J ^{nc}	J ⁿ L ^ʔ	T ^u T ⁿ C ⁺ '	G _u	C _{nc} L _{ii}
weave	the	daughter	young woman	adult

In this sentence the “young woman” is the direct object of the verb “to weave”, which is a nonsense in Miao as it is in English. Moreover, whatever it may mean, the line is out of place at this point, since lines 11 to 14 form a complete, properly balanced stanza without it. Thus, either the line must be deleted as an intrusion into the text, or amended and repositioned to make it fit the context. The second alternative has been chosen for the following reason. All the elaborate arrangements described in the preceding lines were to provide the bride with an escort worthy of the occasion. The six young people, suitably dressed for the part, were to accompany her to her new home, and the lines which follow describe what an impressive sight they were as they passed along the road. However, it is nowhere actually stated in the song that these folk, in all their finery, were escorting a bride, and it may be that this indeed was the purpose of the line under discussion. So if the initial word J^{nc}, “weave”, is removed as having been copied by mistake from lines 11 to 14, and the words CT_o, “with”, and ɔ_{ii}, “go”, are added to the beginning and end of the line respectively, then it will read,

CT _o	J ⁿ L ^ʔ	T ^u T ⁿ C ⁺ '	G _u	C _{nc} L _{ii}	ɔ _{ii}
with	the	daughter	young woman	adult	go

That is, “to go with the daughter, the adult young woman”. If, now, this amended line is inserted as line 15, the meaning of the whole of the first half of the song will be clarified.

M307

Old Miao songs about marriage. 6.

Song about serving breakfast.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

In this song all had gone well with the marriage, and the bridal party was about to return home. The “bridegroom’s gown”, presented by the bride to her husband, had brought credit to both families, and, though the matter is not mentioned, presumably no fault was found with the cattle of the marriage settlement. Now on the morning of their departure, led by the bridegroom himself, the family pressed gifts of food and wine upon their guests, and offered lavish provision for the journey home.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 6.

Song about serving breakfast

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

The maiden stitched linen, the maiden stitched a gown,
Stitched it for the mature, forthcoming youth, his bridegroom's gown,
Stitched it for the mature, forthcoming youth, a gown, ample and full.

5 She stitched it, a flowing garment, a credit to her family.
She stitched it, a garment falling in folds, a credit to his family.

Let the mature, forthcoming youth go and replenish the food baskets.
In replenishing the food baskets do not be hindered,
In replenishing the basins do not rest.

10 The serving lads were laughing,
Laughing and smiling as they waited,
Waited upon the marriage party hand and foot.

“Open the mouth of your bag and let us fill it,
Fill it with white rice for you to carry and show,
Show to your children at home!”

15 “Bring your flask and let us fill it,
Fill it with clear wine for you to carry and show,
Show to your old people at home!”

20 “You do not have anything for,
For the marriage party to eat on the way home,
Now do take some white rice for,
For the marriage party to eat on the way home!”

25 “You do not have anything for,
For the marriage party to eat on the way back,
Now do take some white rice for,
For the marriage party to eat on the way back!”

M307

C]'']^u T^ɔ [',. U_{n6} ɔ_{n6} [ⁿ S_{''}.
 song which serving breakfast. Wang Ming-ji wrote.

C]'' Ṣ ɔ^ɔ C]'' Ṣ [',^o,
 maiden sewed hemp maiden sewed gown,

Ṣ C]'']^u C]'']_ɔ [',^o
 sewed youth mature youth forthcoming gown

Ṿ [',^ɛ,
 bridegroom,

Ṣ C]'']^u C]'']_ɔ [',^o
 sewed youth mature youth forthcoming gown

]_o ɓ^o.
 cause big.

S^ɛ]_o]^ɔ]ⁿ L T^ɔ Δ'^u
 Sewed cause garment flowing give face

[',^{''},
 bride's family,

5 Ṣ]_o]^ɔ Lⁿ V_o T^ɔ Δ'^u
 sewed cause garment curving give face

]^o.
 bridegroom's family.

]_o C]'']^u C]'']_ɔ C]'_ɔ T^ɔ
 cause youth mature youth forthcoming go serve

V^ɔ,
 baskets,

T^ɔ V^ɔ][']]_o C]'_ɛ,
 serve baskets do not cause stop,

T^ɔ T_{nc}][']]_o J_o.
 serve basins do not cause rest.

C]'' Δ^ɛ †^ɛ L_o Δ_o,
 youths serving able come laugh,

- 10 Δ. Ct'^u Δ. Ct'^r t₋,
laughing and smiling waited upon,
- t₋ [ʼʼ Tⁿ]_o. J⁻ Å C]^ø J⁻ Å Tⁿ.
waited upon marriage by arm by hand.
- ɔ⁻ ɔ_n C[ⁿⁱ 'C^ø L_o Jⁿ CT_n,
take your mouth bag come we fill,
- CT_n V⁻ CΔⁿ Ct'^{nc} L_{nc} ɔ_n T^r J'^p,
fill cooked rice white you carry show,
- J'^p L̄ Tⁿ Λ_{ii} L_ε J_v C]-,
show children gone at home,
- 15 ɔ⁻ [ɔ_n J'ⁱⁱ L_o Jⁿ CT_n,
take thus pot come we fill,
- CT_n [̄^{nc} ɔⁿ S^{nc} L_o T^r J'^p,
fill wine clear come carry show,
- J'^p Lⁿ J⁻ L_{ii} L_ε J_v [ʼ^p.
show old folk gone at home.
- J^r Tⁱⁱ C_n J̄ J^r T'ⁱⁱ,
not get connector anything for,
- T'ⁱⁱ [ʼʼ Tⁿ]^o Cⁱⁱ t_o C]-.
for marriage eat reach home.
- 20 ɔ⁻ C]_i [̄^{no} Ct'^{nc} L_{nc} T'ⁱⁱ,
take meat white for,
- T'ⁱⁱ [ʼʼ Tⁿ]^o Cⁱⁱ t_o C]-.
for marriage eat reach home.
- J^r Tⁱⁱ C_n J̄ J^r T'ⁱⁱ,
not get connector anything for,
- T'ⁱⁱ [ʼʼ Tⁿ]^o Cⁱⁱ t_o [ʼ^{nc}.
for marriage eat reach place.
- ɔ⁻ V⁻ CΔⁿ Ct'^{nc} L_{nc} T'ⁱⁱ,
take cooked rice white for,
- 25 T'ⁱⁱ [ʼʼ Tⁿ]^o Cⁱⁱ t_o [ʼ^{nc}.
for marriage eat reach place.

M307
Old Miao songs about marriage. 6.

Song about serving breakfast.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no. 13, page 38)

Line 19. In the manuscript the expression $\square'' \top^{\circ}$, “the wedding party”, is replaced by $\top'' \square'' \top'' \square^{\circ}$, “the wedding guests”. However, this reading is not repeated in the balancing lines which follow, that is in lines 21, 23 and 25, and is probably, therefore, a mistake.

M308
Old Miao songs about marriage. 7.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin

Introduction.

The marriage songs, for the most part, say nothing about the reactions of either the bride or the bridegroom. In this song the latter is not even mentioned, but we are told that when the bride saw the marriage party arriving she trembled. Whether this was from fear or excitement is not revealed.

The Miao were not potters. For generations now they have used earthenware basins and bowls bought from the Chinese at local markets. However the old songs reflect a time when rice was eaten from small individual baskets of woven bamboo, using, not chopsticks, but spoons carved from wood. Vegetables and meat were contained in wooden bowls set on low tables, and wine was drunk from small bowls, perhaps two inches in diameter, also carved from wooden blocks. In this song we are told that new rice baskets were provided and the wine cups were also new and “thin”, that is, finely carved.

The connection between the final section from line 60 and the rest of the song is a little obscure. The suggestion seems to be that, though their daughter has now left home, life for the parents had to go on, so they returned to the daily tasks of driving the cattle and sheep out to pasture. Nevertheless families related by marriage should keep in touch even though separated by considerable distances.

M308
Old Miao songs about marriage. 7.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

- 5 The stars circle the sky,
And cold water circles the earth,
But cold water is not the thing to offer to a guest,
And the daughter, the adult young woman is not,
Is not the person to offer in marriage!
- Who, on the bride's side, initiated the marriage?
The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, initiated the marriage.
Who, on the bridegroom's side initiated the wedding?
The woman, the aunt, initiated the wedding.
- 10 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, have caught,
Caught the fattened chicken in order to kill it,
And they have called in the old folk to determine a time.
- They have determined a time and determined a season, but when?
They have determined a time and determined a season in,
15 In Dragon month or Rabbit month,
And on the fifteenth day.
- The middleman having eaten,
Eaten the chicken and drunk the broth,
The visit for fetching the bride was agreed.
- 20 The proposed time has come,
We hear it is today,
Today the marriage party is coming from yonder,
From yonder the marriage party will make its winding way,
So people from all around will be watching.
- 25 The door of the woman, the mother, and the man, the father,
The outer door, the door of planks, faced which way?
It faced directly toward the sunrise,
It faced directly toward the clump of variegated bamboo.
- 30 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, have opened,
Opened the door of planks for the arrival of the marriage party.
The way was very smooth as though paved with silver,
The way was very smooth as though the threshold were gold.
- 35 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, first arranged,
Arranged for two attendants to go out with lighted torches.
The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, next arranged,
Arranged for two youths bearing wine horns to go and pour wine.
- So the two attendant youths went and poured wine,

Pouring clear wine they mingled with the guests,
Pouring clear wine they mixed with the guests.

40 The daughter, the adult young woman, saw it all,
And the daughter, the adult young woman, trembled.

The marriage party came, and the marriage party drank,
Drank well the clear wine from fine cups.

45 The marriage party came, and the marriage party drank,
Drank well the clear wine from new cups.

The man, the father, replenished,
Replenished well the new baskets with white rice,
Replenished well the basins with white pork.

50 So the marriage party came and the marriage party ate,
Ate an evening meal of hot rice before departing,
Ate an evening meal of white pork before departing.

The woman, the mother, grieved,
Grieved for the woman, the mother's, daughter,
The daughter, the adult young woman,
55 As she arose and left the shelter of the door,
As she departed from the shelter of the home.

The bridegroom's family also grieved,
Grieved for the bridegroom's family, their fine long horned ox,
Their long horned ox which had crossed over, but would not be driven back.

60 When the next day came,
Very early in the morning,
The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, drove out,
Drove out the fine cattle and horses on to the plain,
Drove out the fine cattle and horses to graze,
65 Drove out the jostling sheep and goats to pasture.

Now those people arranged with their in-laws,
And those folk came from their place,
For those folk had remembered.

70 We might not take along a pig, if the journey is long,
But, though the journey is long, we must remember to meet our in-laws.

M308

Ȳ 'ɔ̄" Cɔ̄" Ȳ L̄" ɔ̄u Ȳ C'". J̄ng t̄o.
 Miao song old which make marriage. number seven.

'C̄^u ɔ̄^u ɔ̄'̄n L̄" CT̄^u,
 stars encircle sky,

Ȳ" t̄_{nc} ɔ̄'̄n L̄" t̄'̄=,
 water cold encircle earth,

Ȳ" t̄_{nc} J̄^r Λ° J̄⁻ L̄^p C_n
 water cold not is kind of thing connector

t̄'̄ J̄⁻
 offer guests,

J̄ⁿ L̄^b T̄^u T̄ⁿ C t̄', G_u C_{nc} L̄" J̄^r Λ°,
 the daughter young woman adult not is,

5 J̄^r Λ° J̄⁻ L̄^p C_n t̄'̄ C'".
 not is kind of person connector offer marriage.

C_n J̄ J̄^r C^{no} J̄_b C'".
 connector who situated begin marriage,

J̄^o J̄ⁿ C^{nc} Λ_s [C^{no} J̄ⁿ t̄^r C^{no} J̄_b C'".
 woman mother man father situated begin marriage.

C_n J̄ J̄^r C^{no} J̄_b J̄^o,
 connector who situated begin wedding,

J̄^o J̄ⁿ ɔ̄_l C^{no} J̄_b J̄^o.
 woman aunt situated begin wedding.

10 L̄^o J̄ⁿ C^{nc} Λ_s [C^{no} J̄ⁿ t̄^r L̄_l ɔ̄_l C_{nl},
 woman mother man father have caught,

C_{nl} J̄ⁱ J̄_o V̄_{ll} t̄^s L̄_o T̄_l.
 caught chicken see official able come kill.

Ī^u L̄ⁿ J̄⁻ L̄" T̄⁻ C̄ Cⁿⁱ.
 call old folk come reckon time.

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r L_o J^{'b},
 woman mother man father have opened,

30 J^{'b} Δ^u J⁻ T_u T^{''} [']^{''} C[_{ni}].
 opened door planks for marriage arrive.

[̂] CΔ_z CΔ_z C_n T['] C^{nc},
 road very smooth connector paved silver,

[̂] CΔ_z CΔ_z C_n C[_{ni}] J^u.
 road very smooth connector arrived gold.

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r C_o L_o S^u t^r
 woman mother man father did come first arrange

T^{''},
 get,

t^r T^{''} C_n Y⁻ L^b b_o
 arrange get connector two classifier young men

[no] Lⁿ Y_u C[_z] T^ς T^{''}.
 attendants go light torches.

35 J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r C_o L_o S^u t^r
 woman mother man father did come first arrange

T^{''},
 get,

t^r T^{''} C_n Y⁻ L^b C[_{ni}]
 arrange get connector two classifier youths

[no] J^r J^u C[_z] b_o [̂]
 carry wine horns go pour wine.

C_n Y⁻ L^b b_o C[_{ni}]
 connector two classifier young men youths

[no] Lⁿ Λ_u C[_z] b_o [̂],
 attendants went pour wine,

b_o [̂] Jⁿ S^{nc} L_o J^r J_o,
 poured wine clear come mingle,

b_o [̂] Jⁿ S^{nc} L_o J^r J_o.
 poured wine clear come mix.

40 Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C†', G_u C^{nc} L_u L D_u J_o,
the daughter young woman adult had seen,

Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_u T'' C^{'b} C^{'b}.
the daughter young woman adult trembled.

C'' T- L C'' T_u,
marriage came also marriage drank,

T_u C^{nc} Dⁿ S^{nc} 3'' J^{'o} C_{nc}.
drank wine clear well cups thin.

C'' T- C_n C'' T_u,
marriage came thus marriage drank,

45 T_u C^{nc} Dⁿ S^{nc} 3'' J^{'o} C^{'=}.
drank wine clear well cups new.

Λ_ε C^{no} Jⁿ †^r L D_u T^u,
man father has filled up,

T^u CΔⁿ C C^{'nc} L_{nc} 3'' V^δ C^{'=},
filled up rice white well baskets new,

T^u C†^r C†^r C^{no} C†^{'nc} L_{nc} 3'' C†_u T_u.
filled up meat pig white well within basins.

C'' T- L C'' C'',
marriage came also marriage ate,

50 C'' J^{'o} CΔⁿ J^r 3_r C†_o L_ε T_δ,
ate supper rice hot with gone finish,

C'' J^{'o} C†^r C†^r C^{no} C†_{nc} L_{nc} C†_o L_ε T_δ.
ate supper meat pig white with gone finish.

C_n J_u J^{'o} Jⁿ C^{nc} C^{'-},
thus was woman mother grieved for,

C^{'-} J^{'o} Jⁿ C^{nc} Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C†^r,
grieved for woman mother the daughter,

Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_u,
the daughter young woman adult,

55 J^ε J^{'b} C_n C†^u Δ'',
rose up left thus shelter door,

3" CT'" E_n C† E^.
well depart thus shelter home.

E_n J_u E'" T^n J^o E'^-,
thus was bridegroom family grieved for,

E'^- E'" T^n J^o 3" C^~ J^u L^n V_ξ CT'^ξ,
grieved for bridegroom family good ox long horn,

C^~ J^u L^n V_ξ CT'^ξ T_n L_o J_· S^r T'_s.
ox long horn cross over come not return drive.

60 J_n E_n t^ξ L_o S^ξ,
tomorrow able come away,

S^ξ CT^u E^no T- J^n C†,
morning bring come early,

J^o J^n C^nc Λ_ξ E^no J^n t^r T'_s,
woman mother man father drove out,

T'_s C^~ C^b J^- C_· C^T_u C^T_ξ,
drove out cattle horses fine outside plain,

T'_s C^~ C^b J^- C_· C^T_u E^- T̄,
drove out cattle horses fine outside grazing,

65 T'_s Λ^ξ E'^r CT_n J^n CT^- L_o E^- CE^no.
drove out sheep goats jostling come pasture.

t" C^b t^r C^b J^n C^u,
those people arranged relatives,

t" L^b T- t" J' T^n
those folk came from their place,

t" L^b t" CE^no
those folk they remember.

70 Ė Δ^n J^r Λ^o J^- L^p C_n E^ξ C^J̄,
road far not is the thing connector lead pig,

\bar{E}^n Δ^n C_n $\bar{\Lambda}$ L^n CE^{no} T- CE^r
road far connector must us remember come meet

C^u .
relatives.

M308
Old Miao songs about marriage. 7.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 1, page 1).

In the Miao manuscript this song is set out as a piece of continuous writing. Generally the punctuation indicates how the lines should be divided, but at a number of points a passage simply runs on as though it were a single long sentence. This is the case with lines 4 and 5, lines 14, 15 and 16, lines 18 and 19, lines 25 and 26, and lines 57, 58 and 59.

M309
Old Miao songs about marriage. 8.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Introduction

The father of the young woman in this song and the man who was hoping that she might become his future daughter-in-law, are both called “the man, the father”. The confusion is somewhat mitigated by the fact that throughout the song the two men are kept apart, and, in addition, the young woman’s father is always accompanied by his wife, while the prospective mother-in-law, and, for that matter, the prospective bridegroom do not appear at all. For the sake of clarity in the translation, however, “the man her father”, and “the woman her mother” are used for the prospective bride’s parents.

The story behind the song seems to be that the appearance of skeins of yarn drying in the sun on the fence around the vegetable plot could not but draw comment from the neighbours. Moreover, the quality and the quantity of the yarn were sure indications of the skill and application of the maker. This talk reached the ears of a man on the look out for a good daughter-in-law, and he at once set to work to produce the livestock necessary to celebrate a marriage and to pay the marriage settlement. Before any official approach had been made through a middleman, however, the girl’s family let it be known that they were not interested. It is quite possible that this was not a final rejection, but simply a bargaining ploy, since the prospective father-in-law responded by arranging with a relative, whether one of his or one of theirs is not clear, to invite the girl’s parents to a meal in his house and presumably do a little special advocacy. As an added incentive, the relative chosen was one who had the reputation of being a very good cook! Whether this manoeuvre was successful, we are not told.

M309
Old Miao songs about marriage. 8.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

- 5 With her smooth hands the girl had joined the hemp strands,
And now the weather came out fine and good,
Just right for the girl to carry her skeins to the river.
Very soon the girl's skeins, the girl's yarn was hanging,
Hanging to dry in the garden plot.
- 10 Now the man, the father had heard,
Heard about that daughter, the adult young woman,
And the man, the father, mated his ewes for breeding,
And mated a pair of spotted pigs.
So the man, the father, made arrangements,
Mating all the flocks and herds.
- 15 But the woman, her mother, and the man, her father were of one mind,
There would be no discussion of their daughter, the adult young woman.
For regarding their daughter, the adult young woman,
The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, were adamant.
- 20 They grieved that their daughter, the adult young woman
Might rise and leave the shelter of the door.
They grieved that their daughter, the adult young woman
Might rise and quit the shelter of the house.
- 25 So the man, the father, arranged,
Arranged with a relative, one who could cook.
And the relative came and the relative called,
Called the woman, her mother, and the man, her father, to share hospitality in the
house.
The relative came and the relative made,
Made the woman, her mother, and the man, her father, share hospitality in the home.

M309

Y⁻ 'ɔ'' Cɔ'' Y⁻ L₁₁ ɔ_u Y⁻ ɛ'''. Λ_n t_o.
 Miao song old which make marriage. number eight

Cɔ'' Tⁿ ɔ_o J^r C_{n11} Tⁿ J_{nc} CT⁻,
 girl hands smooth hands join hemp,

ɛ''^ɔ CT^u †^c L_o ʒ'',
 fine weather able come good,

ʒ'' Cɔ'' T_r ɽ^p L_c CT^u Δⁿ.
 good girl carry skeins gone edge stream.

Cɔ'' ɽ^p Cɔ'' S^o ɛ^ɔ,
 girl skeins girl yarn hung,

5 ɛ^ɔ Lⁿ ɔⁿ Cɛ^r, Tⁿ Tⁿ Cɛ^r V^ɔ.
 hung quickly in the garden plot.

Λ_c ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ †^r ɛ_n ɔ_l 'C^o,
 man father thus did hear,

'C^o ɔⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L₁₁.
 heard the daughter young woman adult.

Λ_c ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ †^r CT_l C^{nc} Λ^ɔ L_o ɛ^{nc} ɛ^ɔ,
 man father mated ewes come breeding,

CT_l Cɔ⁻ Cɛ^r Lⁿ ɛ^{nc} Yⁿ Cɛ_{nc}
 mated pigs spotted one pair.

10 Λ_c ɛ^{no} Lⁿ †^r ɛ_n ɔ_l †^r,
 man father thus did arrange,

CT_l C_v C^b J⁻ C_l L_o J^b J_l.
 mated cattle horses many come all constantly.

J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} Λ_c ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ †^r †^r J^r T^{'nc} S^{nc},
 woman mother man father pair together heart,

Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L₁₁ J^r T^{'n} L^u,
 the daughter young woman adult not for words,

Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_{ii}
the daughter young woman adult

15 J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [^{no} Jⁿ †^r D₋ E['] E_u.
woman mother man father were unwilling.

E['] Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_{ii} E_n,
grieved the daughter young woman adult thus,

ξ J^b E_n C^{||} Δ^{||}.
rise go away thus shelter door.

E['] Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_{ii} E_n,
grieved the daughter young woman adult thus,

ξ CT^{'''} E_n C^{||} E[~].
rise leave thus shelter home.

20 Λ_ς [^{no} Jⁿ †^r E_n D₋ †^r,
man father thus did arrange,

†^r T^u Λ_n T^u Y⁻ CT^{'b},
arranged person relative person cook,

Λ_n T⁻ L₋ Λ_n I^{'u},
relative came also relative called,

I^{'u} J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [^{no} Jⁿ †^r Y⁻ J^u C] -,
called woman mother man father welcome house,

Λ_n T⁻ L₋ Λ_n Y⁻,
relative came also relative made,

25 Y⁻ J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [^{no} Jⁿ †^r J⁻ J^u E[?].
made woman mother man father welcome home.

M309
Old Miao songs about marriage. 8.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 2, page 2).

The following pairs of lines are written as single sentences in the Miao text. 4 and 5, 16 and 17, 18 and 19.

Line 17. The expression $\overset{\zeta}{\text{J}} \text{J}^{\flat}$, “rise and go away” in this line and the corresponding expression $\overset{\zeta}{\text{J}} \text{CT}^{\flat}$, “rise and leave” in line 19 are missing in the Miao text, but without them the lines do not make sense. They have been restored by reference to previous and subsequent songs where the expressions also occur.

Line 21. A note in the text explains that $\text{T}^{\flat} \text{Y}^{\flat} \text{CT}^{\flat}$ means a person who prepares the meat and vegetable dishes at a meal.

Line 23. A note in the text gives the meaning of $\text{Y}^{\flat} \text{J}^{\flat} \text{C}\square$ - as “to cause to rest in the house”, that is to extend hospitality. Presumably the parallel expression, $\text{J}^{\flat} \text{J}^{\flat} \text{C}^{\flat}$ in line 25 has a similar meaning.

M310
Old Miao songs about marriage. 9.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Introduction

In this song, the bride's parents, reluctant to allow her to go, but unwilling to turn a good offer down, refused to commit themselves. In the face, however, of a very persuasive middleman, they eventually agreed to leave the final decision to the bride. Fortunately she was in no doubt what she wanted to do.

The text is a little confusing in that it uses exactly the same formula, "the woman, the mother, and the man, the father," for the parents of both bridegroom and bride. Up to, and including, line 17 it refers to the former, while line 18 and thereafter, it refers to the latter. In translation, in order to make a clear distinction, the bride's parents are described as "the woman, her mother, and the man, her father".

In naming the months of the year the Miao adopted the same cycle of twelve animals as used by the Chinese. These are, of course, months of the lunar calendar. Mentioned in this song are Horse-month which is the second month, Sheep-month which is the third month, Rat-month which is the eighth month, Ox-month which is the ninth month, Rabbit-month which is the eleventh month and Dragon-month which is the twelfth-month. The new year usually began in late January or early February.

M310
Old Miao songs about marriage. 9.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

With winter past and warm weather coming,
People were at their farming early,

So, come Sheep-month and Horse-month,
The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, began
5 Raising all kinds of crops and filling the land,
Planting millet broadcast and filling the place.

Come Ox-month and Rat-month,
All the crops of broadcast millet ripened,
Ripened golden yellow, an excellent harvest.

10 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, discussed and debated,
Discussed a marriage union,
Discussed a marriage bond.

Then the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, arranged,
Arranged for the middleman to go till he reached,
15 Reached the in-laws' family home.

The middleman opened his mouth, opened his lips, and asked,
Asked that the daughter, the adult young woman might come and be,
Be daughter-in-law for the woman, the mother, and the man, the father.

But the woman, her mother, and the man, her father grieved,
20 Grieved that their daughter
Should arise and leave the shelter of the door,
Should arise and quit the shelter of the home.

She was such an attractive person,
The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, would not give an answer.
25 But the middleman was undaunted,
He kept arguing vigorously until nearly midnight.

The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, whispered together then said,
"All right, let our daughter, the adult young woman reply".
Thus it was she who replied to the middleman's proposal.

30 So when the next day came,
Early, as soon as it grew light,
The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, returned,
Returned word for the middleman to convey to the in-laws,
Who thus received the woman, her mother, and the man, her father's response.

35 The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, fed,
Fed the fattened chicken in preparation for the marriage,

And fed the spotted pig in preparation for the wedding.
The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, called,
Called the neighbours to come,
40 To come and determine a time and determine a date,
And they settled on Dragon-month and Rabbit-month.

The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, arranged,
Arranged for cooks to prepare the meat and vegetable dishes,
And they called people to come and cook the rice.

45 They called the children to come and wait upon the guests,
And called the daughters, the adult young women, to come and carry water.
They called the old folk to come and eat meat,
The called the old folk to come and drink wine.
So they called their relatives to come and congratulate the bride.

M310

Y⁻ 'D'' C[]'' Y⁻ L_{||}]_u Y⁻ C'''. Cⁿ t_o.
 Miao song old which make marriage. number nine.

CT_v C'' C'''' L_ς CT_v j̇ L_o,
 winter passed gone weather warm come,

CΔ^{nc} Tⁿ T^ɔ C^ɔ Y⁻ J'' C^o.
 world people made farming early.

D_ɛ t_o Λ^ɛ C_{no} Tⁿ C^ɔ L_n,
 did reach sheep bring the horse month,

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς C_{no} Jⁿ t^r J_ɔ Y⁻ J''.
 woman mother man father began make farming.

5 Y⁻ T'' Cⁿ Tⁿ]_{||} C̄ J'' C_n J̄^u
 made get nine the ten kinds crops thus filled

Tⁿ,
 land,

D_ɛ C_{no} Jⁿ t̄' J⁻ C⁻ C_n J̄^u C''^{nc}.
 did plant millet scattered thus filled place.

D_ɛ t_o C^v C_{no} Tⁿ C_ɛ L_n,
 did reach ox bring the rat month,

t^r- ʒ_ɛ J'' Jⁿ t̄' J⁻ C⁻ D_ɛ J̄,
 all kinds crops millet scattered did ripen,

J̄ C_n V_ɛ V_u ʒ'' Λ₋ Λ^ɔ.
 ripened thus yellow very good outstanding.

10 J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς C_{no} Jⁿ t^r C_t T_{||} J^r C_t T^v,
 woman mother man father discussed and discussed,

C_t Lⁿ T^v C_L t₋ C''',
 discussed with join marriage,

C_t Lⁿ T^v C_n t₋ J^o.
 discussed connector join wedding.

J° J° C^{nc} Λ_ς [°^{no} J° t^r D_δ t^r,
woman mother man father did arrange,

t^r J° L^b T^u t^r J^u [°_n D₋ D_u J^r C_n t_o,
arrange the middleman thus did go until reach,

15 t_o J° L^b [°^u T° J° C₋.
reach the in-laws family house.

J° L^b T^u t^r J^u D_δ [°^δ C_{[°^{nu}} [°^δ L_o C_u,
the middleman did open mouth open lips ask,

C_u J° L^b T^u T° C_t^r, G_u C_{nc} L_u L_o Y⁻,
ask the daughter young woman adult come make,

Y⁻ J° J° C^{nc} Λ_ς [°^{no} J° t^r D_n
make woman mother man father plural

T^u C_δ
daughter-in-law.

J° J° C^{nc} Λ_ς [°^{no} J° t^r t^ς L_o [°⁻,
woman mother man father able come grieve,

20 [°⁻ J_u J° L^b T^u T° C_t^r, [°_n,
grieve that the daughter thus,

J_u J^b [°_n C_t^u Δ^u,
rise leave thus shelter door,

J_u C_T^u [°_n C_t^u [°^u.
rise go away thus shelter home.

Y⁻ [°_n [°_n 3^δ J° 3₋ Λ_z T_n J_i,
body thus appearance elegant,

J° J° C^{nc} Λ_ς [°^{no} J° t^r L₋ D₋ Tⁿ.
woman mother man father did not answer.

25 J° L^b T^u t^r J^u J^r T^u t_δ,
the middleman not ashamed,

D_δ T^u [°_n 3^o C_T_δ Ā t_o T_δ 'D^o.
did use thus strength argue will reach midnight

J° J° C^{nc} Λ_ς [°^{no} J° t^r C_t^r T^u C_t^r T^u T_n,
woman mother man father whisper and whisper said,

L^u ɔ^u ɔ_o ɟⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C^t, G_u C_{nc} L_u Tⁿ.
just cause the daughter young woman adult reply.

ɔ_ɛ Tⁿ ɟⁿ L^b T^u t^r ɟⁿ C_n L_o L^u.
did reply the middleman connector words.

30 ɟ_n ɔ_u ɟⁿ ɟ_n t^ɛ L_o S^{ɔ̄},
thus was tomorrow able come away,

S^{ɔ̄} ɟ_n ɟⁿ V_o T- C^t,
daybreak come early,

ɟ_o ɟⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ ɟ^{no} ɟⁿ t^r ɟ_n ɔ_u S^r,
woman mother man father thus did return,

S^r C_n L_o L^u Tⁿ ɟⁿ L^b T^u t^r ɟⁿ ɟ^{no}
returned connector word for the middleman carry

Tⁿ ɟⁿ
to in-laws,

ɟ_n ɔ_u ɟⁿ Tⁿ ɟ^o Tⁿ ɟ_o ɟⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ ɟ^{no} ɟⁿ t^r
thus was in-laws got woman mother man father

L^u.
word.

35 ɟ_o ɟⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ ɟ^{no} ɟⁿ t^r ɔ_ɛ ɟ^u,
woman mother man father did feed,

ɔ_ɛ ɟ^u ɟ^r ɟ_o V_u L_o T^u ɟⁿ,
did feed chicken see ruler come pay marriage,

ɔ_ɛ ɟ^u ɟ^r ɟ^r Lⁿ L_o T^u ɟ^o.
did feed pig spotted come pay wedding.

ɟ_o ɟⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ ɟ^{no} ɟⁿ t^r ɟ_n ɔ_u I^u,
woman mother man father thus did call,

I^u ɟ_n ɟⁿ ɟ^r ɟⁿ ɟ^o T-,
called thus neighbours come,

40 ɔ_ɛ T- ɟ̄ ɟⁿ ɟ̄ C_{nu},
did come reckon time reckon date,

ɟ̄ Tⁿ ɟ̄_ɛ ɟ^{no} Tⁿ ɟ̄ l_n.
reckon get dragon bring the rabbit month.

L° ɟ̃ⁿ Cⁿᶜ λₛ [ⁿᵒ] ɟ̃ⁿ †ʳ [ₙ] ɔ̃ †ʳ [ₙ],
woman mother man father thus did arrange thus,

ɔ̃ₓ †ʳ Tᵛ λₙ Tᵛ Y⁻ CT'ᵑ,
did arrange person cook meat and vegetables,

ɔ̃ₓ I'ᵛ [ₙ] ɔ̃⁻ ɟ̃ⁿ ᵛ T- ʒ̃ [ᵛ].
did call thus those cook rice.

45 I'ᵛ [̄ Tⁿ λᵢᵢ T- Tₒ J° J'⁻ [ₙ].
called children come wait upon guests thus.

I'ᵛ ɟ̃ⁿ Lᵑ Tᵛ Tⁿ CT', Gᵤ Cₙᶜ Lᵢᵢ T-
called the daughters young women adult come

Tₓ Y".
carry water.

I'ᵛ Lⁿ J⁻ Lᵢᵢ T- C" CT',
call old folk come eat meat,

I'ᵛ Lⁿ J⁻ Lᵢᵢ T- ɽᵢᵢ [̄.
call old folk come drink wine.

ɔ̃ₓ I'ᵛ [ₙ] Cᵑ [ⁿ] [̄ᵑ T- L Cᵑ [ₙ].
did call thus relatives come praise bride thus.

M310
Old Miao songs about marriage. 9.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 3, page 2).

The following pairs of lines appear as single long sentences in the Miao text, 13 and 14, 17 and 18, 35 and 36, 40 and 41.

Line 43. A note in the text gives the meaning of the expression $T^u \Lambda_n T^u Y^- CT'^p$ as, “people who cook meat and vegetables”.

Line 44. A similar note gives the meaning of $\mathcal{D}^- \mathcal{J}^n \check{V} T^- \mathfrak{Z} \mathcal{C}^u$ as, “people who cook the rice”.

M311
Old Miao songs about marriage. 10.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin

Introduction.

Miao spinning wheels, constructed of bamboo, made a distinctive squeaking sound as they turned. The interior of the houses being rather dark, spinning was regularly done out of doors, and the sound could carry a considerable distance. In the present song, the persistent squeaking of the spinning wheel alerted the prospective parents-in law that there was an industrious, and therefore very desirable prospective bride in the vicinity.

When the middleman arrived, the young woman's parents at first refused to let her go, and the reason given was that "her body was not worn out". The word used is that which is regularly employed to describe knives or hoes, which have been worn away by constant use. The heavy labour which Miao women had to do in the home and in the fields resulted in premature ageing and a shortened life expectancy. The expression as used here means that the young woman was still strong and capable of hard work, and therefore her parents decided that she should "lay hold of the spirits". The reference is to the spirits of her parents' ancestors, and the meaning is that she should remain within her own family. Once married her obligation to these ancestors ceased, as she became a member of her husband's family.

The young woman, however, was determined to go, and the in-laws soon discovered that they had a "great bee" in their midst. Constantly busy herself, and organising everyone else, she took charge of the domestic arrangements, reorganised the farm, and even got an extension built on to the house.

M311
Old Miao songs about marriage. 10.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

- Who had a daughter early?
The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, had a daughter early,
And the woman, the mother, and the man, the father,
Their daughter, the adult young woman, grew,
5 Grew to maturity and was fully trained,
- She had grown to maturity and was spinning,
Spinning hemp, and the squeaking of the wheel
Carried as far as the in-law's land,
For there the in-laws heard it.
- 10 So the in-laws arranged,
Arranged for the middleman to come,
To come and ask the woman, the mother, and the man, the father,
That the daughter, the adult young woman, might go,
Go to the in-laws as their daughter-in-law,
15 But the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, were unwilling.
- The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, grieved,
Grieved that the daughter, the adult young woman,
Looking so well and being so capable,
Being so capable, should rise and leave the shelter of the home.
- 20 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, grieved,
Grieved that the daughter the adult young woman,
Looking so well, and being so capable,
Being so capable, should rise and quit the shelter of the door.
- 25 So at first the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, decided,
Decided that the daughter, the adult young woman should hold fast,
Hold fast the ancestral spirits of the woman, the mother and the man, the father.
But the daughter, the adult young woman could not hold fast,
So they let the daughter the adult young woman go,
Go as the in-laws' daughter-in-law.
- 30 She went to the in-laws like a great bee, like a great wild bee!
She took charge of the in-laws' water and meal tubs setting them firm,
She took charge of the in-laws' farmlands with diligence,
And she set up the in-laws' homestead making it spacious within and without.

M311

Y⁻ 'ɔ'' Cɔ'' Y⁻ L_{||} ɔ_v Y⁻ ɛ'''. ɔ_{||} t_o.
 Miao song old which make marriage. number ten.

C_n ɔ̄ J^r ɛ^{nc} Ct', Ct̄,
 who received daughter early,

J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ε ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ t^r ɛ^{nc} Ct', Ct̄.
 woman mother man father received daughter early.

J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ε ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ t^r ɔ_n,
 woman mother man father plural,

Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ Ct', G_v C^{nc} L_{||} b^o,
 the daughter young woman adult grew,

5 b^o CT_v ɔⁿ CT_s CT_o ɔⁿ CT_s,
 grew well developed well trained,

b^o CT_v ɔⁿ CT_s ɛ_n ɔ_l ɛ'',
 grew well developed thus did spin,

ɛ'' CT⁻ Ct̄ 3. 3.,
 spun hemp sound squeaking,

ɔ_ε Ct̄ Δ⁻ ɛ'' Tⁿ ɔ^o Tⁿ,
 did sound go to in-laws land,

ɛ_n ɔ_v ɛ'' Tⁿ ɔ^o ɛ_n ɔ_l 'C̄.
 thus was in-laws thus did hear.

10 ɛ'' Tⁿ ɔ^o ɛ_n ɔ_l t^r,
 in-laws thus did arrange,

ɔ_l t^r Jⁿ L^b T^v t^r J'' ɛ_n ɔ_l T⁻,
 did arrange the middleman thus did come,

T⁻ C_v J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ε ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ t^r ɔ_n,
 come ask woman mother man father plural,

Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ Ct', G_v C^{nc} L_{||} ɔ_{||},
 the daughter young woman adult go,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ.
go make in-laws daughter-in-law.

15 ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ.
woman mother man father unwilling.

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
woman mother man father able come grieve,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
grieve that the daughter young woman adult,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
body appearance body not worn out,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ.
body not worn out rise leave thus shelter home.

20 ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
woman mother man father able come grieve,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
grieve that the daughter young woman adult,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
body appearance body not worn out,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
body not worn out rise quit thus shelter door.

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
woman mother man father did first allow,

25 ᵛᵛᵛ
allow cause the daughter young woman adult thus

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
did take hold,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ.
take hold woman mother man father spirits.

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ
the daughter young woman adult take hold not

ᵛᵛᵛ.
get.

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ. ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ, ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ
did allow cause the daughter young woman adult

ᵛᵛᵛ,
go.

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
go make in-laws daughter-in-law,

30 ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛᵛ.
go make in-laws great bee great wild bee.

ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ
did take hold in-laws plural water tub meal tub

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
stand firm,

ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ
did take hold in-laws plural farm land thus

ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
diligently,

ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ- ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛᵛ
did set up in-laws plural house plural place

ᵛᵛ- ᵛᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ.
have spaciousness thus.

M311
Old Miao songs about marriage. 10.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 4, page 3).

Lines 12, 13 and 14. In the Miao text these line are written as a single long sentence without any punctuation.

Line 17. The word 𑄎, “that”, is missing in the Miao manuscript. It must be restored to maintain the parallelism with line 21.

Lines 19 and 23. The form of the two four-line stanzas comprised in lines 16 to 23 requires that lines 19 and 23 should be exactly parallel to one another. To achieve this, line 23 must be restored by adding the first three words, 𑄎 𑄎 𑄎, which have been lost in Document F. However, the main textual problem with these lines is that both have also lost the main operative verb, and as they stand, neither makes good sense. Literally they read, “the parents were grieved that their daughter in the prime of her youth shelter of the home”. Fortunately the song is here using a conventional form of words which also occurs in several other marriage songs. By reference to these the missing verbs can be restored with confidence by adding 𑄎 𑄎, “rise leave” in line 19, and 𑄎 𑄎, “rise go away” in line 23.

M312
Old Miao songs about marriage. 11.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Introduction.

In this song the mothers of the prospective bridegroom and bride are called respectively, “the woman, the aunt” and “the woman, the mother”. The two fathers are not distinguished, both are “the man, the father”, but since neither ever appears without his wife, there is no confusion.

Having arrived on his third visit, the middleman was entitled to an answer one way or the other. By failing to give one, the parents could expect to be put under some pressure. Their problem was that they did not want to lose their particularly talented daughter, but if they refused, would another suitor come forward, and would he be any more acceptable? Moreover, time was a significant factor. Families preferred their daughters-in-law to be younger rather than older.

There are a number of isolated points, which call for some comment.

1. The Miao word “cha”, which in common speech more often takes the form “cha-cha”, has a range of meanings from a casual, “Oh dear, what a pity!” to a sincere expression of grief.
2. The “gown of longing” was the bridegroom’s gown, made for him by the bride before the marriage, as tradition required.
3. The “hlu-nza-nzyu” was the most highly regarded pattern of the Miao tribal costume. It was also the most difficult to make.
4. The Yi-bang was the great river which flowed through the ancient homeland from which the Miao were driven by the Chinese.
5. The claim that the young woman could write Chinese characters is remarkable. Before 1904 when the missionaries began to open schools in Miao villages, very few Miao boys had an opportunity to learn to read and write Chinese, while for a girl to be literate was virtually unheard of.
6. The Miao did not use animal milk in their food, so that the complaint at the end of the song must mean that the gifts brought by the in-laws, lavish though they may have been, were incommensurate even with the milk of their daughter’s babyhood.

M312
Old Miao songs about marriage. 11.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

- This year we may know,
Know that the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father, had arranged,
Had arranged for the middleman to go till he reached,
Reached the in-laws' home.
- 5 The middleman opened his mouth, opened his lips and asked,
Asked that the eldest daughter of woman the mother, and the man, the father, might
come,
Come as the daughter-in-law of the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father.
- But the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, recalled,
Recalled that bringing up sons and daughters was no easy matter.
- 10 It required much labour and hard work,
So the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, gave no answer.
- The middleman made three visits, as custom required.
He remained seated in the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's room,
Pressing the case with persistence all night till dawn was breaking,
- 15 And the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, could make no further excuse.
- The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, discussed in whispers, then said,
"Well then, let the daughter, the adult young woman go,
Go as the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father's daughter-in-law.
- This year we may know,
- 20 Know that the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father, have received,
Have received word from the woman, the mother, and the man, the father.
- So the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father fed,
Fed the fattened chicken to prepare for the marriage,
And fed the spotted pig to prepare for the wedding.
- 25 They called the neighbours, who came,
Came to fix the time, to fix the date for the marriage.
They fixed it for the fifth of Dragon month or Rabbit month.
- Then the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father, arranged,
Arranged for the middleman to return again, and he reached,
- 30 Reached the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's home,
To tell them the propitious date clearly,
Namely the fifth of Rabbit month.
- The marriage party came, threading its way,
Threading its way along the winding road.
- 35 The marriage party came carrying,
Carrying meat and meal all cooked and ready, so they arrived.

But the woman, the mother, and the man, the father grieved,
Grieved for the daughter, the adult young woman,
In appearance so good looking.

40 They grieved for the daughter, the adult young woman,
So able, so skilful with her hands.
Able and skilful with her hands to do what?
Able and skilful with her hands to make costumes.

45 She had made the daughter, the adult young woman's "gown of longing".
She had made costumes, the hlu-nza-nzyu, with a pattern of stripes,
She had made costumes, the hlu-nza-nzyu, gathered with nine threads.
She had made skirts of fine material with coloured strips set side by side,
Set like the rice fields, the long, flat fields on the plain of the Yi-bang river.

50 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, grieved,
Grieved for the daughter, the adult young woman,
So able, so skilful with her hands.

55 She was able and skilful with her hands to do what?
She was able and skilful with her hands to write.
She could write Chinese characters distinguishing them in order,
And matters concerning the Chinese she could write out correctly.

So the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, declared,
That the meat and the meal that the in-laws had brought,
Bore no comparison even with the baby milk the woman, the mother, and the man,
the father, had provided.

Thus it is ended.

M312

Y⁻ 'D^u" C^u" Y⁻ L^u]_u Y⁻ C^u".]_u Yⁿ t_o.
 Miao song old which make marriage. number eleven.

J_{nu} C̄ t^c L_o J^u,
 year this able come know,

D₈ J^u J^o]ⁿ D_u Λ_c [°^{no}]ⁿ t^r [n D_u
 did know woman aunt man father thus did

t^r,
 arrange,

t^r C_n Yⁿ L^b T^u t^r J^u [n
 arrange connector one classifier middleman thus

D_u D_u J^r C_n t_o,
 did go till reach,

D₈ t_o Jⁿ L^b [°^u Tⁿ J^o C^u.
 did reach the in-laws house.

5 Jⁿ L^b T^u t^r J^u D₈ [°⁸ C^u" [°⁸ L^o C_u,
 the middleman did open mouth open lips ask,

C_u J^o]ⁿ C^{nc} Λ_c [°^{no}]ⁿ t^r D_n C^t,
 ask woman mother man father plural daughter

J⁻ l^o L_o,
 eldest come,

L_o T^u" J^o]ⁿ D_u Λ_c [°^{no}]ⁿ t^r D_n Y⁻
 come for woman aunt man father plural make

C⁸.
 daughter-in-law.

J^o]ⁿ C^{nc} Λ_c [°^{no}]ⁿ t^r [°²,
 woman mother man father recalled,

[°² t_o J^u T^u J^u C^t, J^r L_n]_u,
 recalled reach rear son rear daughter not easy,

10 D₈ C^u[n [n Δ⁸ [n 3_o T̄.
 did expend thus work thus labour hard.

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r J^r Tⁿ L^u.
woman mother man father not answer words.

Jⁿ L^b T^u t^r Jⁿ D_δ Y⁻ C_n t^r Jⁿ
the middleman did make connector three times

Y⁻ J_u T_{nc}.
made was right.

D_δ 3_u C^{no} J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r D_n
did sit remain woman mother man father plural

J^δ [v],
room,

[n] J_u Yⁿ 'D^o CT_s Ā S^δ CT_u Ā'.
thus was one night persistent want dawn clear.

15 J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r Λ_n J^r Tⁿ,
woman mother man father make excuse not get,

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r C^tr Tⁿ C^tr T^u T_n [n],
woman mother man father whisper argue said thus,

L^u D^u [o] J_o Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C^tr, G_u C_{nc} L_u
just let cause the daughter young woman adult

D_u,
go,

D_u Y⁻ J^o Jⁿ D_u Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r D_n
go make woman aunt man father plural

C^b T_δ.
daughter-in-law finish.

J_{nu} Ā t^c L_o Jⁿ,
year this able come know,

20 D_δ Jⁿ J^o Jⁿ D_u Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r [n] D_u Tⁿ,
did know woman aunt man father thus did get,

Tⁿ J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r D_n L_o L^u.
get woman mother man father plural the word.

J^o Jⁿ D_u Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r D_δ J^u,
woman aunt man father did feed,

ᵛᵛᵛ Y⁻ Tⁱ ᵛᵛ Tⁱ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
did make get thus skirts cotton fix

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
coloured patches go side by side,

Y⁻ ᵛᵛ Sᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
make cause like thus plain country Yi-bang

Vᵛ Lᵛᵛ Vᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ
rice fields fields flat long.

ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
woman mother man father thus did grieve,

50 ᵛᵛ
grieved that the daughter young woman adult,

ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
thus the hand able the hand skilful,

ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
hand able hand skilful hand do what.

ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
hand able hand skilful hand write paper.

ᵛᵛ Sᵛ Tᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
did write get Ruling Race plural the words

ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
separate have order,

55 Sᵛ Tᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
write out Ruling Race plural affairs thus have

ᵛᵛᵛ.
method.

ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
woman mother man father able come say thus,

ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ ᵛᵛ
thus was in-laws plural meat plural meal which

ᵛᵛ Tᵛ,
carry come,

M312
Old Miao songs about marriage. 11.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no.5, page 3).

Line 8. This line and line 9 are written as a single long sentence in the Miao text.

M313
Old Miao songs about marriage. 12.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Introduction.

An explanatory note at the beginning of the manuscript reads, “A girl went as a bride to a family where she suffered much hardship, hence this song”. This statement is not quite correct inasmuch as the girl was not yet a bride. Throughout the song she is never given the usual title accorded to brides, “nggu nie lao”, “the adult young woman”, that is one of marriageable age, but is described as “the girl, the child”, that is she was still too young to be married.

What seems to have happened was that this young girl was betrothed to a boy of about her own age, and was taken to live in his home. Her parents received gifts of food and wine in exchange for their daughter, whose position in her new home was, however, little better than that of a slave. She was required to undertake tasks, which were simply beyond her strength. An adult could carry sufficient water at one time to keep the water butt in the house topped up, but that was more than the child could manage. Likewise the pounding of millet, which was carried out in a mortar carved out of a block of stone, using an iron pestle, much too heavy for a child to handle effectively.

The advantages of this arrangement to the prospective parents-in-law in terms of a source of cheap labour in the home, are obvious. However, when the actual marriage took place there would still be a marriage settlement to be paid. Until that time the girl remained a member of her own family, and the parents in law were responsible to them for her well-being. This explains why, when the child committed suicide because of the ill treatment she had received, the in-laws were liable for a payment to her family in lieu of the marriage settlement, which would not now be forthcoming. The girl’s family came, therefore, not simply to view the grave, but to collect their dues, and they drove away a young animal, which, apart from his fully trained ploughing ox, was probably the most valuable asset the farmer possessed.

M313
Old Miao songs about marriage. 12

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

- Who was it desired clear wine to drink,
And who was it desired meat to eat?
The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, desired,
Desired the man Jio-gha-su's wine to drink,
5 And the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, desired,
Desired the man Jio-gha-su's meat to eat.
- So the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, took,
Took the daughter, the child, and betrothed her,
Betrothed her into the family of the man Jio-gha-su.
10 Thus the daughter, the child, arose and went,
Went yonder to carry fresh water for the man Jio-gha-su.
- But from first thing in the morning the man Jio-gha-su scolded,
Scolded the daughter, the child, for not carrying enough water to fill the tub.
Every day the man Jio-gha-su cursed,
15 Cursed the daughter, the child, till she wished to die.
- The man Jio-gha-su made,
Made the daughter, the child, go and pound millet.
But the man Jio-gha-su scolded,
Scolded the daughter, the child, declaring,
20 That the pounded millet was coarse.
- The daughter, the child, went out to pasture the cattle,
But when the friends of the daughter, the child, raised,
Raised their voices in song,
The daughter, the child, raised,
25 Raised her voice and wept.
- The daughter, the child, could not remain there,
And the daughter, the child, arose to go. So she rose up,
She arose to go, and returning, she came back and reached,
Reached the outskirts of the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's place.
- 30 The daughter, the child, looked around and about,
And she looked at the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's door.
Then the daughter, the child, opened,
Opened the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's door,
But, opening it she did not allow it to rattle.
- 35 When the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, rose,
Arose to go, they came and saw,
Saw the daughter, the child, standing there,
Standing at the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's door.

The woman, the mother, opened her mouth and asked,
 40 “What is the reason for your coming?”
 The daughter, the child, answered her,
 “Of the man Jio-gha-su’s meat and meal,
 And of the man Jio-gha-su’s water and wine, does much remain?”

Then the man, the father began to scold,
 45 Scold the daughter, the child, to make her return.
 The daughter, the child, said,
 That the daughter, the child, could not stay there,
 But the man, the father would not listen.

The man, the father scolded,
 50 Scolded the daughter, the child, to make her return.
 So the daughter, the child, went till she reached,
 Went and reached the man Jio-gha-su’s place youder.

The man Jio-gha-su made,
 Made the daughter go to carry water,
 55 But the man Jio-gha-su scolded,
 Scolded the daughter, the child, for not carrying enough to fill the tub.

The man Jio-gha-su made,
 Made the daughter, the child, go and pound millet,
 But the man Jio-gha-su complained,
 60 Complained that the daughter, the child,
 Her pounded millet was coarse.

Every day the man Jio-gha-su scolded,
 Scolded the daughter, the child, till she wished to hang herself.

When the daughter, the child, went to carry water,
 65 And the daughter, the child’s friends raised,
 Raised their voices and sang,
 The daughter, the child, raised,
 Raised her voice and wept.

So the daughter, the child, took,
 70 Took a girdle and looped it,
 Looped it in the man Jio-gha-su’s loft.
 So the daughter, the child, died.

The man Jio-gha-su took,
 Took the daughter, the child, and buried her.
 75 Then the man Jio-gha-su sent back,
 Sent back word of the daughter, the child,
 Yonder to the woman, the mother, and the man, the father.

Thus the daughter, the child,
 Her relations and cousins, with their mothers and fathers all got to hear,
 80 And the daughter, the child,

Her relations and cousins, with the woman, the mother, and the man, the father all
arrived together,
Arrived yonder at the man Jio-gha-su's place.

The man Jio-gha-su escorted,
Escorted the relations and cousins with the woman, the mother, and the man, the
father,
85 Escorted them till they reached,
Reached the daughter, the child's burial place.

The relations and cousins with the woman, the mother and the man, the father
Looked carefully around and about,
Examining the daughter, the child's grave.

90 At the foot of the grave of the daughter, the child, there stood,
Stood only a clump of reeds,
And at the head of the grave of the daughter, the child, there stood,
Stood only a clump of wormwood.

The woman, the mother, and the man, the father
95 Walked around the whole area,
And the relations and cousins with the woman, the mother and the man, the father,
Within the area took possession,
Took possession of the man Jio-gha-su's partly trained ox.

So they returned and reached,
100 Reached the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's home.
Then the woman, the aunt, opened her mouth, opened her lips and said,

“When others go as brides, they may return,
When others go as brides they may come back,
But when the daughter, the child, went,
105 Went as a bride, she could not return,
Went as a bride, she could not come back”.

Thus it is ended.

M313

Y' 'D'' C]'' Y' L'']u Y' E'''.]u Y' t°.
 Miao song old which make marriage. number twelve.

C_n J̄ J^r C[^{'s} Ę Dⁿ S^{nc} ɳ,
 connector who liked wine clear drink,

C_n J̄ J^r C[^{'s} C]'ⁱ C''.
 connector who liked meat eat.

J^o]ⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [°^{no}]ⁿ t^r C[^{'s},
 woman mother man father liked,

C[^{'s} Λ_ς [°^{no} J̄ Š^u D_n Ę ɳ.
 liked man Jio-gha-su plural wine drink.

5 J^o]ⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [°^{no}]ⁿ t^r C[^{'s},
 woman mother man father liked,

C[^{'s} Λ_ς [°^{no} J̄ Š^u D_n C]'ⁱ C''.
 liked man Jio-gha-su plural meat eat.

J^o]ⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [°^{no}]ⁿ t^r E'_κ,
 woman mother man father took,

D_δ E'_κ C]'' D_n J̄ C]'' G⁻ Λ_u [n D₋
 did take girl daughter girl child thus did

J̄,
 betroth,

J̄ T'' Λ_ς [°^{no} J̄ Š^u Λ_n L_ς t'' T''.
 betrothed for man Jio-gha-su family gone yonder.

10 C]'' D_n J̄ [n C]'' G⁻ Λ_u J̄ L^ʔ J̄ C]'' J^r C_n
 girl daughter thus girl child arose to go until

D_u,
 went,

D_u T_r Λ_ς [°^{no} J̄ Š^u D_n Y'' Dⁿ S^{nc}
 went carry man Jio-gha-su plural water clear

L_ς t'' T''.
 gone yonder.

ᶏ Cᶑ ᐱᶑ [ᶎᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑ ᶑ,
rise early man Jio-gha-su scolded,

ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᐱᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ
scolded girl daughter girl child carry water

ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ.
not fill tub.

ᐱᶑ [ᶎᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ,
man Jio-gha-su day day cursed,

15 Cᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᐱᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ.
cursed girl daughter girl child to road die.

ᐱᶑ [ᶎᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ,
man Jio-gha-su did cause,

ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᐱᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ.
cause girl daughter girl child go pound millet.

ᐱᶑ [ᶎᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ,
man Jio-gha-su able come scold,

ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ [ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᐱᶑ [ᶑᶑ,
did scold thus girl daughter girl child thus,

20 ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑᶑ.
pound millet have coarse.

[ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᐱᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᐱᶑ
thus was girl daughter girl child went pasture

[ᶑᶑ,
cattle,

Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᐱᶑ ᶑᶑ ᐱᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ,
girl daughter girl child friends raised,

[ᶑᶑ [ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ,
raised thus voice sound song,

Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ Cᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᐱᶑ [ᶑᶑ,
girl daughter girl child raised,

25 [ᶑᶑ [ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ ᶑᶑ.
raised thus voice sound cry.

C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' Ǧ⁻ ʌ_{||} C^{no} J^r T^{''}.
girl daughter girl child remain not get.

C]'' ɔⁿ ǰ C]'' Ǧ⁻ ʌ_{||} ǰ J^ʔ ǰ CT^{'''} ʃ_n ɔ₋
girl daughter girl child arose to go thus did

ǰ.
rise.

ǰ J^ʔ ǰ CT^{'''} ʌ_{||} ǰ Lⁿ S^r ǰ L_o t_o,
arose to go then returned came back reached,

t_o J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ς ʃ^{no} Jⁿ t^r ɔ_n J⁻ J^ʔ T^{''}.
reached woman mother man father plural locality.

30 C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' Ǧ⁻ ʌ_{||} ʌ_{||} Jⁿ L^ʔ J^r ʃ^{no} ɔ^ʔ,
girl daughter girl child all around observed,

ɔ^ʔ T^{''} J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ς ʃ^{no} Jⁿ t^r ɔ_n Tⁿ
observed to woman mother man father plural the

J⁻ ʌ^{''}.
door.

C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' Ǧ⁻ ʌ_{||} J^r C_n J^ʔ,
girl daughter girl child opened,

J^ʔ ʃ_n J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ς ʃ^{no} Jⁿ t^r ʌ^{''},
opened thus woman mother man father door,

J^ʔ ʃ_n ʌ^{''} J⁻ ʃ^{no} J^ʔ ʃ^{no} C^o.
opened thus door time did not shake noise.

35 J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ς ʃ^{no} Jⁿ t^r ǰ,
woman mother man father rose,

ǰ J^ʔ ǰ CT^{'''} L_o J^r C_n J_o,
arose to go come saw,

J_o C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' Ǧ⁻ ʌ_{||} ʃ_n ɔ₋ ǰ,
saw girl daughter girl child thus did stand,

ǰ J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ς ʃ^{no} Jⁿ t^r ɔ_n Tⁿ J⁻ ʌ^{''}.
stand woman mother man father plural the door.

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} ɔ_ʔ J^ʔ C[^{no} t^ς L_o C_u ʃ_n,
woman mother did open mouth able come ask thus

40 [ɤ ɤ [̄ Jʳ Ā [ɤ L̄.
you reason you what that you come.

[ɤ]ʳ ɔ̄ J [ɤ]ʳ ǂ̄ Λʳ Jʳ ɤ̄ Tʳ,
girl daughter girl child made answer,

T_{nc} J̄. Λ_ɤ [̄ Jʳ Š̄ ɔ̄ [ɤ]ʳ ɔ̄
query see man Jio-gha-su plural meat plural

Jʳ,
meal,

Λ_ɤ [̄ Jʳ Š̄ ɔ̄ Yʳ ɔ̄ [̄ Jʳ
man Jio-gha-su plural water plural wine still

ɤ̄ [̄.
remain much.

Λ_ɤ [̄ Jʳ †ʳ J̄ Jʳ J̄ [ɤ]ʳʳ L̄,
man father arose to go scold,

45 L̄ J̄. [ɤ]ʳ ɔ̄ J [ɤ]ʳ ǂ̄ Λʳ Ī Sʳ Jʳ.
scold cause girl daughter girl child return.

[ɤ]ʳ ɔ̄ J [ɤ]ʳ ǂ̄ Λʳ ʳ,
girl daughter girl child said,

[ɤ]ʳ ɔ̄ J [ɤ]ʳ ǂ̄ Λʳ ɤ̄ Jʳ Tʳ.
girl daughter girl child remain not get.

Λ_ɤ [̄ Jʳ †ʳ ɔ̄ [ɤ]ʳ Tʳ.
man father did refuse answer.

Λ_ɤ [̄ Jʳ †ʳ L̄,
man father scolded,

50 L̄ J̄. [ɤ]ʳ ɔ̄ J [ɤ]ʳ ǂ̄ Λʳ Ī Sʳ Jʳ.
scolded cause girl daughter girl child return.

[ɤ]ʳ ɔ̄ J [ɤ]ʳ ǂ̄ Λʳ ɔ̄ ɔ̄ Jʳ ɤ̄ †̄,
girl daughter girl child did go until reach,

ɔ̄ †̄ Λ_ɤ [̄ Jʳ Š̄ ɔ̄ †ʳ Tʳ.
went reach man Jio-gha-su plural yonder.

Λ_ɤ [̄ Jʳ Š̄ [̄,
man Jio-gha-su allowed,

□° ㄐ。 □□" ㄋ_n ㄐ □□" ㄍ⁻ ㄏ₁₁ □□,
allowed caused girl daughter girl child go

ㄌ_r ㄩ"
carry water.

55 ㄏ₄ □^{no} ㄐ⁻ ㄑ^u ㄌ⁻,
man Jio-gha-su scolded,

ㄌ⁻ □_n ㄐ_u □□" ㄋ_n ㄐ □□" ㄍ⁻ ㄏ₁₁ □□,
scolded thus that girl daughter girl child

ㄌ_r ㄩ" ㄐ^r ㄐ^u ㄊ^u."
carried water not fill tub.

ㄏ₄ □^{no} ㄐ⁻ ㄑ^u □°,
man Jio-gha-su allowed,

□° ㄐ。 □□" ㄋ_n ㄐ □□" ㄍ⁻ ㄏ₁₁ □□,
allowed caused girl daughter girl child go

ㄌ⁻ ㄩ"
pound millet.

ㄏ₄ □^{no} ㄐ⁻ ㄑ^u ㄌ_n □_n ㄊ⁻,
man Jio-gha-su said as follows,

60 ㄌ_n □_n □□" ㄋ_n ㄐ^b □□₁₁ ㄍ⁻ ㄏ₁₁ □_n,
said thus girl daughter girl child thus,

ㄌ⁻ ㄩ" ㄋ⁻ ㄩ⁻ □⁺."
pounded millet have coarse.

ㄏ₄ □^{no} ㄐ⁻ ㄑ^u 'ㄔ^u 'ㄔ^u ㄌ⁻,
man Jio-gha-su day day scolded,

ㄌ⁻ □□" ㄋ_n ㄐ □□" ㄍ⁻ ㄏ₁₁ ㄊ^u ㄏ^o □^u.
scolded girl daughter girl child to hang herself.

□□" ㄋ_n ㄐ □□" ㄍ⁻ ㄏ₁₁ □□, ㄌ_r ㄩ",
girl daughter girl child went carry water,

65 □□" ㄋ_n ㄐ □□" ㄍ⁻ ㄏ₁₁ ㄐ^o ㄏ^u ㄐ^o ㄌ⁻ □^o,
girl daughter girl child friends raised,

□^o □_n ㄐ^b ㄐ⁻ □^o □□",
raised thus voice sound song,

ꞑꞑ" ꞑꞑ ꝑ ꞑꞑ" ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ,
girl daughter girl child raised,

ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ.
raised thus voice sound wept.

ꞑꞑ" ꞑꞑ ꝑꝑ ꞑꞑ" ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ,
girl daughter girl child thus did take,

70 ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ,
did take thus girdle able come loop,

ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑꝑ,
looped in man Jio-gha-su plural loft,

ꞑꞑ" ꞑꞑ ꝑꝑ ꞑꞑ" ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ.
girl daughter girl child died gone finish.

ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ,
man Jio-gha-su took thus,

ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꞑꞑ" ꞑꞑ ꝑꝑ ꞑꞑ" ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ.
did take girl daughter girl child buried gone.

75 ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ,
man Jio-gha-su thus did return,

ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꞑꞑ" ꞑꞑ ꝑꝑ ꞑꞑ" ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ
returned word to girl daughter girl child thus

ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ.
woman mother man father gone yonder.

ꞑꞑ" ꞑꞑ ꝑꝑ ꞑꞑ" ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ,
girl daughter girl child thus,

ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ.
relatives cousins mothers fathers with get hear.

80 ꞑꞑ" ꞑꞑ ꝑꝑ ꞑꞑ" ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ,
girl daughter girl child thus,

ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑ
relatives cousins woman mother man father with

ꝑꝑꝑ ꝑꝑꝑꝑꝑ,
came arrived,

CE_{ni} Λ_ε [° J̄ Š̄ L_ε t' T".
arrived man Jio-gha-su gone yonder.

Λ_ε [° J̄ Š̄ I'̄,
man Jio-gha-su led,

I'̄,]ⁿ C³]ⁿ C^u]^o]ⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ε [°]ⁿ t',
led relatives cousins woman mother man father,

85 ɔ̄₈ I'̄, ɔ̄_{ii} J^r C_n t_o,
did lead go until reach,

t_o C]'' ɔ̄_n J̄ C]'' G⁻ Λ_{ii} C₃ J̄ ɔ̄³ T".
reach girl daughter girl child her burial place.

]ⁿ C³]ⁿ C^u]^o]ⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ε [°]ⁿ t' [n,
relatives cousins woman mother man father thus,

ʌ_i]ⁿ L₃ J^r [° ɔ̄³,
all around observed,

ɔ̄³ T'' C]'' ɔ̄_n J̄ C]'' G⁻ Λ_{ii} C₃
observed at girl daughter girl child her

̄
J C t³ T".
grave.

90 C]'' ɔ̄_n J̄ C]'' G⁻ Λ_{ii} Δ'' Tⁿ C t³ [n ɔ̄_i
girl daughter girl child door grave thus did

t^ε,
stand,

t^ε T'' C_n Yⁿ t_{ii} C]̄³ Lⁿ T''
stand get connector one clump reeds,

C]'' ɔ̄_n J̄ C]'' G⁻ Λ_{ii} Ĩ'' Tⁿ C t³ [n ɔ̄_i
girl daughter girl child head grave thus did

t^ε,
stand,

t^ε T'' C_n Yⁿ t_{ii} J̄ Š̄ C^ε.
stand get connector one clump wormwood.

]^o]ⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ε [°]ⁿ t' ɔ̄₈ ɔ̄⁻,
woman mother man father did take,

95 ɔ̄ ɛ_n V̄^{ɔ̄} Tⁿ CT^u Ĵ̄' ɔ_u ɔ_u,

took thus surroundings whatever went went,

ɟ̄ⁿ C^{ɔ̄} ɟ̄ⁿ C^u ɟ̄^o ɟ̄ⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_u ɛ^{no} ɟ̄ⁿ †^r ɛ_n,

relatives cousins woman mother man father thus,

ɔ̄ V̄^{ɔ̄} Tⁿ CT^u ɛ_n ɔ̄_u Tⁿ,

took surroundings thus did get,

Tⁿ ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} Ĵ̄^u S̄ Lⁿ Ĵ̄ C^u.

get man Jio-gha-su partly trained ox.

ɬ_u Ĵ̄^o Lⁿ S^r Ĵ̄^o L_o †_o,

then returned came back reached,

100 †_o ɟ̄^o ɟ̄ⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɟ̄ⁿ †^r ɟ̄ⁿ CΔ^o Cɟ̄ⁿ.

reached woman mother man father inside house.

ɛ_n ɟ̄_u ɟ̄^o ɟ̄ⁿ ɔ̄_u ɛ^{ɔ̄} Cɟ̄ⁿ ɛ^{ɔ̄} L^o

thus was woman aunt opened mouth opened lips

ɟ̄_n,

said,

C_n Y⁻ ɛ_n C_n ɟ̄⁻ C^{ɔ̄} ɛ_n C_n

others make thus others the bride thus others

Ĵ̄^o,

return,

C_n Y⁻ ɛ_n C_n ɟ̄⁻ C^{ɔ̄} ɛ_n C_n

others make thus others the bride thus others

L_o,

come,

Cɟ̄ⁿ ɔ̄_n Ĵ̄^o Cɟ̄ⁿ G⁻ ʌ_u Y⁻ ɛ_n,

girl daughter girl child make thus,

105 Y⁻ ɛ_n C_n ɟ̄⁻ C^{ɔ̄} ɟ̄^r †^ɛ Ĵ̄^o,

make thus connector the bride not able return,

Y⁻ ɛ_n C_n ɟ̄⁻ C^{ɔ̄} ɟ̄^r †^ɛ L_o.

make thus connector the bride not able come.

ɛ_n ɟ̄ⁿ ɔ̄_o CT_u.

thus ended.

M313
Old Miao songs about Marriage. 12.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 6, page 4).

Line 3. In Document F this line is joined to line 4 in a single long sentence. The same is true of lines 5 and 6.

Line 3. The name $\Lambda_{\epsilon} \text{ } \square^{\text{no}} \text{ } \text{J}^{-} \text{ } \overset{\text{u}}{\text{S}}$ has exactly the same form as the name $\Lambda_{\epsilon} \text{ } \square^{\text{no}} \text{ } \square^{\text{n}} \text{ } \text{t}^{\text{r}}$. There is no doubt that the latter means, “the man, the father”, and in this, and a number of other songs, it has been so translated. The meaning of the former name is not so clear. Λ_{ϵ} is “man”, and \square^{no} in this context is a conjunction, but nowhere does the context suggest the meaning of $\text{J}^{-} \text{ } \overset{\text{u}}{\text{S}}$, and the name does not occur in other songs. In fact $\text{J}^{-} \text{ } \overset{\text{u}}{\text{S}}$ is the name used for a temporary hut of poles and rough thatch erected in the fields as a shelter from which to guard the ripening harvest. The name may therefore refer to the quality or condition of the man’s house, and so might be translated, “the man, the hovel dweller”, but it is safer simply to transliterate it as “the man Jio-gha-su”.

Line 63. A note in the Miao text explains that $\Delta^{\text{s}} \text{ } \text{C}\Delta^{\text{u}}$ means “to hang one’s self”.

M314

Old Miao songs about marriage. 13.

Song of the old folk who had no children.

Transcribed by Yang-yung-xin.

Introduction.

In the elaborate similes used in this song there is artistry of considerable merit, but at the same time an element of enigma, which the listener must interpret for himself. The earth banks mentioned in the first of the two pictures of open landscape, are those which separate rice fields, and are curved because they follow the contours of the land. The absence of trees in both pictures describes an ageing couple bereft of children. Since they are called “the mother” and “the father”, the assumption is that they did have children, but had lost them.

The second pair of similes concern wild animals which have found themselves trapped, the wild cat in a grain store and the fox in a fenced garden, where both were faced with starvation because they could not eat the grain and the vegetables which they found there. So, not having a son, the man felt himself trapped, and saw his food supply dwindling. Though he still had the land he was progressively less able to farm it. The water used in a Miao household was carried by the women. With no daughter to undertake this task, the woman too felt trapped. As her own strength failed she faced an increasing problem with the supply of water for the needs of the home.

In the third pair of similes the cawing of the crow reflects an idea, common in Miao stories, that this cry is one of frustration and dejection.

M314

Old Miao songs about marriage. 13.

Song of the old folk who had no children.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Good level land produced a good plain,
And good level land produced good rice fields.

5 The curving earth banks stood on the level plain,
But on the curving earth banks stood no planted tree,
Likewise the man, the father, had no son.

The man, the father, was like,
Like a wild cat clinging to a partition,
A wild cat which could not eat grain.
So was the man, the father, anxious about his food supply.

10 The mountain stood in open mountain country,
But on the mountain stood no lacquer tree,
Likewise the woman, the mother, had no daughter.

15 The woman, the mother, was like,
Like a fox trapped in a garden,
A fox which could not eat grass.
So was the woman, the mother, anxious about her water supply.

The man, the father, was like an ailing magpie,
And the woman, the mother, was like a cawing crow.

M314

Y⁻ L₁₁ ɔ_v Tⁿ ɔ- T^u C†', Cɔ^u.
 old folk who not have children song.

ʒ^u T^{nc} T_ɛ ʒ^u Cɬ_ɛ,
 good level land produces good plain,

ʒ^u T^{nc} T_ɛ ʒ^u L^{nc},
 good level land produces good rice fields.

J⁻ C^{ɔ̃} Lⁿ V_o t_ɛ Cɬ_ɛ T^{nc},
 earth banks curving stand plain level land,

J⁻ C^{ɔ̃} Lⁿ V_o J^r t_ɛ CT^u Λ_v,
 earth banks curving not stand tree planted,

5 Λ_ɛ [n^o ɔⁿ t^r J^r ɔ- T^u.
 man father not have son.

Λ_ɛ [n^o ɔⁿ t^r S_ɔ,
 man father resembled,

S_ɔ C^u ɔ_n Δ_n ʒ^{nc} ɔ_o Cɬ^{ɔ̃}.
 resembled wild cat clinging by claws partition.

C^u ɔ_n Δ_n J^r t_ɛ C^u J^u,
 wild cat not able eat grain,

Λ_ɛ [n^o ɔⁿ t^r V_ɔ C_n J^{ɔ̃}.
 man father desired greatly connector food.

10 T^u t_ɛ T^u Tⁿ T^o,
 mountain stand mountain country open,

T^u J^r t_ɛ CT^u t^o,
 mountain not stand tree lacquer,

J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} J^r ɔ- C†'.
 woman mother not have daughter.

J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} S_ɔ,
 woman mother resembled,

S₃ C" J⁻ T₃ J₁ V⁸ E'°,
resembled fox caught garden,

15 C" J⁻ T₃ J^r †⁶ C" CJ³,
fox not able eat grass,

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} V₃ C_n Y".
woman mother desired greatly connector water.

Λ₆ E^{no} Jⁿ †^r S₃ C" Jⁿ CE₁ E₁₁,
man father resembled magpie weak,

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} S₃ C" Lⁿ Y⁻ J⁻.
woman mother resembled crow cawing.

M314

Old Miao songs about marriage. 13.

Song of the old folk who had no children.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 19, page 20).

Lines 6 and 7. In the Miao text these lines appear as a single long sentence. The same applies to lines 12 and 13.

Lines 8 and 15. These lines are strictly parallel. The word 𑜁𑜪, “able” which is missing in line 8 has been restored by reference to line 15. A copyist’s error has also interchanged the two final words, “grain” and “grass” in these two lines.

Lines 10 and 11. These lines are written as a single sentence in the Miao text.

