

Preface to Miao songs and stories.

Document E.

By Yang Yung-xing.

Water has its springs, trees have their roots, people have their forebears, among them those who were able and those who were wise. But with regard to us Miao, from the time that we crossed the Ndu-na-yi-mo until the present, several thousand years of history, we have had no written records at all. We simply remembered by heart, made stories to tell and songs to sing to inform the people who came after. However, the time was long, we did not always understand clearly or remember very well, so that the songs were incomplete and many things that happened, much that was spoken was being abandoned or thrown away. This being the situation, at Zhaotung, in 1932, we persuaded the old folk to sing the stories of the past, to explain clearly and write them down in order to make a record.

This volume of songs is not compiled just as a study book for young people. Our thought was that we must know the happenings of old and the words of the past, for only so can the wisdom and knowledge and the sayings of our forebears be preserved for future generations.

The old people used to have an expression, “A matter for a knot in the rope”. This was because, apart from making songs to sing and stories to tell, as a reminder they would put a knot in the rope. We have followed this and called the present book, “Miao songs and stories, a knotted rope of tradition”.

1949, the first of the eighth month, written by Yang Yung-xing at Hmao-a-zhyu-kao.