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Miao songs of being driven from their homeland.
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By Zhang Fei-ran and Yang Zhung-de.

There are very many Miao songs, and of that number we propose to publish three groups. The first is about our expulsion from our homeland. The second group is of songs that are narratives. The third group contains modern songs and those received from external sources. Other songs there are, but we think these three groups the most important. We shall begin with songs of expulsion from the homeland for those friends who are anxious to read of our Miao origins and beginnings. As we have time we will write the narrative songs together with the new songs and those we have received. Of the songs about our expulsion from the homeland, many record the fighting and the seizure of the land, but one group tells where the Miao race began and to what areas it moved. Reading them is of great interest. Sadly the old people who know these songs are few indeed, and we ourselves are growing older and cannot go in search of them. In these circumstances we have simply taken those which the teachers Yang Yung-xing, Wang Ming-ji and Wu Zhung-lie had gathered, and published them. The teacher Yang Yung-xing was collecting these songs for over twenty years. He gathered and arranged them in excellent order, and we have retained his order. That we may recall his efforts and purpose, we have set out the preface to his collection at this point.

A Miao bundle of traditions of the past.

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. These Miao traditions, which we are now remembering begin with those concerning Zhyu-shi-lao at broken rock mountain, through to the Man Li-dao and the Man Cao, whose descendants came to Sao-no, to Weining and to Zhaotung, and on to the present time. Whether earlier or later what the old folk said was remembered only in songs and stories. Miao books began with the documents gathered by Heaven's Nzha-di-ao and Earth's Ngguzai-shao of which, only the tradition is remembered, and there were also those of the time of Ngguzai but they no longer exist. However, there were some folk, who tied knots in a rope as an aid to the memory. Latterly a great many matters remembered only by heart proved incomplete. I regard such matters as of great importance. So beginning in 1932 I have been engaged in writing them out until 1952, and in that interval of twenty years have brought the work to completion. A number of old folk, the teachers, Yang Zhi, Yang Ya-go, Tao Zi-gai, Pan Xie, Zhang Ming, Zhu Zhen-ming, Yang Nggai-xing, Li Nggai-guang and a grandmother from Hmao-zu-mu sang the songs and they were written down. Then with the help of the teacher Wang Ming-ji, they were sorted, the earlier from the later and set in order. I did a further complete check and made up a book by which we can remember. This book is named, "A Miao bundle of traditions from the past".

In compiling this volume my thought is that I wish to help everyone to get to know Miao traditions of the past so I have used the old script for writing it. If, within, the

wording is incomplete, letters are written incorrectly, or any matters are not clear, it is hoped that all may be corrected and made good. It is in my mind that, later, I would like to compile another volume, written in the new script which would be clearer than this book of songs in the old script. In this book there are some twenty-one numbers. Counting individual items, they number thirty-one.

1952. 10. 23. Yang Yung-xing at Shimenkan

Following Yang Yung-xing's thought, at this time we considered using the new Miao script for our publication. But not everyone is conversant with the new script, in fact not many people know it. Accordingly we have used the old script. Here in our region these songs are just not available. We had to rely on a copy sent to us by a friend in Beijing, so that if these songs are not republished there is a danger that they may be lost altogether. We are conscious that this publication is not fully accurate, that there are many places where we have made mistakes. We trust that our readers will clarify and amend them.

In issuing this volume we decided to call it "Miao songs of expulsion from the homeland" because these matters from the past are all preserved in the songs. The songs were sung by one group or old folk to instruct another, and in no case were they written in a book, consequently they read like stories. In days gone by the Miao were like 'ploughing oxen and like pack horses'. They were like 'ragged corn'; they resembled an 'orphaned calf'; there was no end to their bitter affliction; their heart-break was extreme. This is the truth, but now with the Communist Party to help and guide times are good. We must use all our efforts to encourage and teach our own children to concentrate on their studies, and to copy that wisdom and the knowledge which is universally acclaimed. So shall we resemble mature grain stored safely in the loft, and a strong bull which lows three times.

In publishing these songs we have received much help from the teachers Yang Zhung-xing, Zhu Xiao-gang, Zhu Kai-fen and other friends. We here thank them all.

1981.7 Zhang Fei-ran, Yang Zhung-de in Weining.