

M103
Song of the creation of the world.

Sung by Tao Zi-gai.

Notes

This song is recorded in Document E (no. 14, page 37), Document K (no. 1/2, page 3), Document L (no. 2, page 5) and Document N (no. 5/1, page 356).

Title . This was clearly not part of the original text of the song but has been supplied by the editors of the documents. Document E has, $\text{C}\text{J}'' \text{J}_v \text{†}_r \text{C}\Delta^{\text{nc}} \text{T}^n$, "Song of the creation of the world". Document K reads, $\text{C}\text{J}'' \text{J}_v \text{†}_r \text{C}\Delta^{\text{nc}} \text{T}^n \text{C}^{\text{r}} \text{T}^n \text{J}_v \text{C}$, "Song of the creation of the world and all things". Document L has a slight variation, $\text{C}\text{J}'' \text{J}_v \text{†}_r \text{C}\text{T}^v \text{T}^n \text{C}^{\text{r}} \text{T}^n \text{J}_v \text{C}$, "Song of the creation of sky and earth and all things". Document N reads, "Ngaox gul ndaot njib daox deuk ndux", "Song of fashioning the sky from copper".

Line 7. In Document E , $\text{C}\text{T}_v \text{L}^n$, "Moon-youth" has been changed to $\text{T}_v \text{L}^n$ and attached to the phrase that follows to read, $\text{T}_v \text{L}^n \text{J}^n \text{L}_o$, "in circles".

Line 9. Document E omitted the third word T_v . This has been corrected in Documents K, L and N.

Line 9. The compilers of Document L misread the sixth word Δ'' as $\Delta' \circ$. The writing in Document K which they were copying has been confused at this point by printing on the other side of the page coming right through.

Line 11. This line is missing in Documents L and N. This destroys the poetic construction whereby lines 8, 9, 10 and 11 are exactly parallel to lines 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Line 13. The first four words of this line, $\text{T}'' \text{C}_n \text{J}^n \text{C}\text{E}^{\text{no}}$, "the mountains of Gi-njio", in Document E were altered in Document K and subsequent documents to $\text{T}_v \text{C}^{\text{r}} \text{T}^n \text{E}^{\text{no}}$ which could mean literally, "get here land bearing ---". In this case lines 12 and 13 would mean:-

"Caused in the world, mountains with rocks and cliffs,
Becoming here ridges going upward".

However, in line 18 there is a further reference to $\text{C}\Delta^{\text{nc}} \text{T}^n \text{T}^v \text{C}^v \text{T}'' \text{C}\text{E}^{\text{no}}$ i.e. "the people's Njio mountains", so that the text of Document E is to be preferred.

Line 15. All the earlier documents have the word CT^o , "gorge", written incorrectly as T_o . It has been corrected in Document N.

Line 19. Document K and all subsequent documents omit $\text{Y}^- \text{T}^{\text{r}}$ at the beginning of this line and attach the remainder of the line to the end of line 18. This, however,

unbalances the lines, and the loss of the verb Y⁷ destroys the proper connection with line 20.

Line 21. Documents K and L have read the expression CΔ₃ CΔⁿ CΔ₃ CΔ_o, "to flow smoothly", as CΔ₃ Δⁿ CΔ₃ CΔ_o. The mistake has been corrected in Document N.

Line 24. In Document E this line, together with the first two words of line 25 were missed out and the remainder of line 25 added to the end of line 23.

Line 28. All the documents omit C□ⁿ 'C^u' in this line. It has been added to the present text because in none of the cosmological songs which mention the heavenly bodies are the sun and moon ever separated. They always occur either in conjunction or in parallel lines or parallel stanzas. It is virtually certain that the omission of the sun in this line was an early scribal error.

Lines 31-38. In all the documents of the Miao text lines 34 and 37 are missing. Quite clearly the absence of these lines not only destroys the parallelism in the construction of the section, but also leaves the meaning incomplete. The variant readings in the later documents do nothing but confuse the situation further. Fortunately Tao Zi-gai used virtually the same lines in the song about the setting in order of earth and sky, and there the section is complete. It has therefore been possible to restore the missing lines in this song with absolute confidence.

Line 42. Document L, followed by Document N, misread ㄌ^o, "big" in this line as ㄌ_o, "come".

Line 43. In Document E the word ㄌⁿ, the second time it occurs in the line, has been omitted. Subsequent documents have corrected the error.