

M239
Song of the Man from Lord Gyu. (1)

Notes

This song is recorded in Document A (no. 18, page 46).

Line 6. The word C^ɿ, "horse", is missing in Document A.

Lines 7 and 8. These two lines are missing in the Miao text, but they are essential to answer the question posed in line 6. They can, however, be reconstructed with confidence as they must be exactly parallel to lines 4 and 5, and also follow the pattern found elsewhere in the song, e.g. lines 15 to 20.

Line 10. A note in Miao, written in parenthesis at the end of this line, explains that CT^u T^u CT^u T^ɿ ɿ^ɿ means, "afterwards".

Line 12. The word ɿ_u, "ten", is mistakenly written Cɿ_u in the Miao text.

Line 15. A note in Miao at the end of this line says that L^{nc} Δ̄^ɿ means S_ɿ S_ɿ L^{nc} S_ɿ S_ɿ Δ̄^ɿ, "like eagles like vultures".

Line 22. In Document A the final word ɿ_u, "back", is wrongly written S_u.

Lines 24 to 29. As in earlier stanzas, this final stanza is divided into two sections of three lines each, but in the process of transmission the pattern has been disrupted at two points. Lines 25 and 26 have been interchanged, while line 27 has been inserted a second time following line 28.

Line 26. In the Miao text the last three words of this line are ɿⁿ ɿ^{'n} Lⁿ, but, because Document A was written with a Chinese brush pen, the tone positions are generally not to be relied upon. The first word is undoubtedly ɿⁿ and means "road", and ɿ^{'n} Lⁿ must be an expression defining what kind of road it was. However ɿ^{'n} Lⁿ is the name of a simple frame, which revolves on a peg, and is used for winding hemp into skeins. It has no relationship or resemblance whatever to a road. Some emendation to the text is therefore necessary, and there seem to be two possibilities. The expression might originally have read, ɿⁿ C_n Lⁿ, "road thus long time". That is the soldiers "climbed earth-people's road for a long time". This would make reasonable sense, but it is difficult to see how an original C_n could have got changed into ɿ^{'n}. Moreover, the parallel expression in line 29 is ɿⁿ 'C^u ɿ^u, "road stars", that is the road travelled by the stars. This however, so far from being parallel, bears no resemblance at all to "for a long time". Alternatively the phrase might originally have read ɿⁿ ɿ^{'n} L_u. This time, the change to ɿⁿ ɿ^{'n} Lⁿ is minimal, the simple inversion of the vowel sign ^u into ⁿ. ɿⁿ ɿ^{'n} L_u means "road swallows", that is "the road travelled by the swallows". Here the parallelism with line 29 is perfect. The long road, travelled by migratory swallows on earth, is paralleled by the long road, travelled by the stars, in the sky.