

M321
Miao love songs.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Notes.

These songs are all recorded in Document C as follows. Song of a youth and a maiden, (no. 7, page 7). A woman's song, (no. 2, page 4). Song of a woman and a man, (no. 3, page 4). A cautionary song, (no. 4, page 4). Busy bees, (no. 6, page 7).

Song of a youth and a maiden.

Line 14. The word 𠄎 usually has the force of the English definite article, as in line 18, but here, and again in line 19, it is the sign of the vocative case.

Line 19. The exclamation 𠄎̃ is more often used by women than by men. It reinforces what has just been said, hence the translation, “so it is”.

A woman's song.

Line 2. In the Miao manuscript the expression 𠄎𠄎𠄎 has been altered to 𠄎𠄎𠄎. The original reading is probably correct. 𠄎𠄎𠄎 means “bridegroom's family”, and in this context, where a young woman is looking at a particular young man as a possible bridegroom, it is simply a polite way of saying, “your family”. On the other hand it is difficult to see what the altered reading 𠄎𠄎𠄎 could mean.

Line 7. The final word 𠄎° is an exclamation urging the listener to comply with the proposition that has just been made.

Song of a woman and a man.

In the Miao text the following pairs of lines are written as single sentences without punctuation. 1 and 2, 4 and 5, 10 and 11.

Line 11. The word 𠄎̃ means “to break in” a horse for riding, or “to train” an ox for ploughing.

A cautionary song.

Line 1. The final word of this line, 𠄎𠄎, “ragged”, and the final word of line 3, 𠄎𠄎, “hungry”, have been accidentally interchanged in the Miao manuscript.