

**Hua-Miao Archive
Songs and Stories**

Miao Social Life

Old marriage customs and songs about marriage

Songs M301 to M314

Introduction, Translation, Transcription and Notes

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Arranging marriages according to the old customs.

Written by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

By way of introduction to a group of six songs about marriage which he had collected, Wang Ming-ji wrote a short explanatory note which he amplified by further observations inserted in the songs themselves. This material is here brought together. The writer was at pains to point out that things had changed during the years, and some old customs had fallen into disuse, but they did apply to the time when these songs were first sung .

The expression “zi-ghao” had two meanings. It was the name given to the middleman who conducted the marriage arrangements, and it was also the word for the visits for negotiations which the middleman undertook. “A zi-ghao” means “to make marriage arrangements” or “to make a match”.

The Miao used the same sequence of twelve animals as did the Chinese for counting the passage of days or years, so that a “ba-zhu” was strictly a twelve day period. When Wang Ming-ji said “thirteen days”, what he meant was “the thirteenth day”. That is if the middlemen paid their first visit on, say, Dragon-day, their next visit would be on the thirteenth day, namely the next Dragon-day.

It is not quite clear at what point the middlemen would have to make the announcement if the bride was unwilling. Presumably she would refuse to go and meet the bridegroom, and it would then be for the middlemen to go out and break the news to him, and the whole party would have to return home.

The stipulation of an initial stay of two years after marriage did not, apparently, prevent the bride from going home, if that were necessary, to finish the “bridegroom’s gown”. The restriction on her visits was to ensure that the first child would be born in her own new home. It was considered unlucky for a woman to give birth in her parents’ home, and should this happen, elaborate and costly rites of purification had to be performed to remove the pollution, and to carry the child’s spirit to the new home where it properly belonged. If this were not done, the child would not thrive.

The Miao made their own cloth from hemp, so that the “bridegroom’s” gown would be very largely of home grown yarn, spun and woven, dyed and made up by the bride herself. For the decoration and the embroidery work it was necessary to buy some finer red, blue or brown cotton material in the Chinese markets. The presentation of some red material by the bridegroom’s family was an earnest of their good faith and serious intentions.

Arranging marriages according to the old customs

Written by Wang Ming-ji.

To begin with approaches had to be made, and it was necessary to make four such approaches. The time for making the approaches was at intervals of thirteen days. So it was said, “One ba-zhu, one approach excursion”. (A ba-zhu is thirteen days.) Whether the bride was obtained or not, it was necessary to make the four excursions, one approach each ba-zhu.

1. Go and enquire. After this others may not.
2. Go and enquire to get a reply.
3. Go and enquire to get a firm response.
4. Go and fetch the bride.

They would bring the bridegroom to within one li, and send his friends to fetch the bride. If the bride was willing to go, and her mother and father were willing to give her to the bridegroom, then her home people would appoint the bridesmaids to accompany her. When the young men came to fetch the bride, the girls of the village would try to prevent her from going, but her parents, her sisters-in-law and her brothers would ignore them. However, when the bride was fetched, an older person went with her. The bridegroom then would take hold of the bride. With the bridesmaids properly prepared, and the bride willing to go, all would return together for a meal, then they would all depart together.

If the bride was unwilling to go, the middleman would announce that the marriage was off.

In the bridal party there had to be seven women in all, five young women, one matron and, of course, the bride. There had to be five men, including one older man, one head-man, and one nephew who was the “cattle bringer”, the person who brought the cattle back from the bridegroom’s family.

Explanation: When married the bride should go for about two years. The parents on both sides should be equally rich to arrange a marriage. For a marriage there were normally required, one bullock, five goats, and one pig, but provided there were seven animals it would do.

On the bride’s side, it was necessary for her to make the “bridegroom’s gown”. Even though she was already married, the bride had to return to her parents’ home to make this gown, only so would it count as the “bridegroom’s gown”.

M301

3⁵ 3^{nc} Y⁻ L_u ɿ_u Y⁻ ɿ^u Y⁻ ɿ_o.
method of old which arrange marriage.

U_{o6} ɿ_{o6} ɿⁿ S^u.
Wang Ming-ji wrote.

ɿ_o Y⁻ t^r ɿ^u. ̃^u Y⁻
begin make approach. necessary make

Δ^u ɿ^u t^r ɿ^u.
four times approach.

Y⁻ t^r ɿ^u, ɿ_u t^r 'C^u ɿ_u Yⁿ ɿⁿ
make approach, thirteen days is one time

ɿ_u Y⁻
which make

t^r ɿ^u. Y⁻ Lⁿ Ċⁿ ɿ_n ɿ_u, Yⁿ ɿ⁻ ɿ^u
approach. do like this said that, one ba-zhu

ɿ_u Yⁿ
go one

CC_n Yⁿ ɿ⁻ ɿ^u ɿ_u ɿ_u t^r 'C^u. T^u ɿⁿ
occasion. one ba-zhu is thirteen days. get not

T^u C⁵
get bride

̃^u ɿ_u Δ^u CC_n.
necessary go four occasions.

1. S^u ɿ_u C_u. ɿ⁵ ɿ_o L⁻ ɿⁿ t⁵.
first go ask, raise cause others not able.

2. ɿ_u C_u ɿ_o Tⁿ L^u.
go ask cause answer words.

3. ɿ_u C_u ɿ_u T^u L^u.
go ask which get words.

4. ɔ_u ɛ^{no} ɕ^ŋ t̚.
go bring wife finish.

l'ɔ̌ ʋ̌ t- t'' yⁿ ɕɛⁿ ɛ̌ⁿ
bring bridegroom come to one measure road

ɛ^{nc},
completed,

ɔ̌. ʌ^v l- t- ɛ^{no} ɕ^ŋ. ɛ̌- ɔ̌_v ɕ^ŋ
cause friends come fetch bride. if bride

ɛ_v ɔ_u,
willing go,

ɕ^{nc} ʋ_v l- ɛ_v ɔ̌- t'' ʋ̌
mother father also willing give to bridegroom,

y̌- lⁿ
make like

ɕ̌ ʋ_v ɕɔ̌- t̚^r ɕɛ_{nu} ɔ̌. ɕt̚. ɔ_u.
this at home send bridesmaids cause with go

t'' ɔ̌_v y̌- ɔ̌- ɔ_u ɛ^{no} ɕ^ŋ ȳ,
when young men go fetch bride at that time,

ɔ̌-
there are

ɕɔ̌'' ʒ° t- ɕɔ̌̚ ɕ^ŋ ȳ̌ t-
girls village come help bride hold back come.

ɕ^{nc} ʋ_v
mother father

y̌- ɕ^{nc} y̌- ɕ^v t̚ⁿ ȳ̌ ɛ^{no}.
sisters-in-law brothers not take notice so it is.

ʋ^{nc} ɛ^{no}
but fetch

C^ᵗ ɔ- Yⁿ L^ᵑ Y⁻ L_{ᵢᵢ} Cᵀ. ɔ_{ᵢᵢ}
 bride there is one classifier older person with go.

L^ᵑ
 the

C^ᵗ E_n V^{ᵢᵢ} T̄ E^{nc}.
 bride thus bridegroom take hold of completed.

ɔⁿ t^{nc}
 prepare

CE_{nᵢᵢ} 3^{ᵢᵢ} T_ḡ, C^ᵗ E⁻ E_ᵒ ɔ_{ᵢᵢ},
 bridesmaids well finish, bride if willing go,

ᵢ^ᵒ J^ᵑ Yⁿ
 all one

t_{ᵢᵢ} S^r L. C^{ᵢᵢ} V⁻ T_ḡ,
 company return come eat food finish,

Yⁿ t_{ᵢᵢ} L_ᵑ
 one company gone

T_ḡ. C^ᵗ E⁻ Tⁿ E_ᵒ ɔ_{ᵢᵢ} t^r t^r J_{ᵢᵢ}
 finish. bride if not willing go the middleman

T^{ᵢᵢ} Cⁿ T^ᵒ L^ᵒ S^ḡ T_ḡ.
 to this break words away finish.

Tⁿ Cɔ^{ᵢᵢ} E^{ᵢᵢ} Ā J^ᵗ L^ᵑ.
 young women marriage require seven persons.

Ā J^ᵑ
 require five

L^ᵑ Tⁿ Cɔ^{ᵢᵢ}, Yⁿ L^ᵑ
 classifier young women, one classifier

Y⁻ J^ᵒ E^{ᵢᵢ},
 matron marriage,

$\bar{\Lambda}$ L^b C^{nc} \bar{T}' . E_n D^-
 require the bride as well. thus there are

J^{nc} L^b .
 seven classifier.

$Y^- C^u$ E''' $\bar{\Lambda}$ J^b L^b ,
 young men marriage, require five classifier,

T_u Y^n
 then one

$J^n L_{\text{II}} t_{\text{II}}$, Y^n L^b J_u $\bar{f} t_{\text{II}}$,
 older man, one person who is head man,

Y^n L^b J_u
 one person who is

$t^r V_{\text{II}}$ T^u T^- $E=$ T^- $E=$
 nephew the person come cattle. come cattle

J_u V_u Λ_n E''' .
 which are from family marriage.

T_n $C\bar{T}'_{\text{I}}$. Y^- E''' $\bar{\Lambda}$
 say clearly. Making marriage require

S^u D_{II} Y^- C^{nc}
 first go make wife

$L^n J_u$ Y^- J_{III} L_{I} . Y^- S^{δ} C^{nc} V_u
 about two years gone. two sides mother father

T^u D^- E_n
 all have thus

$T^n T^b$ T_{nc} Y^- E''' . Y^- E''' $\bar{\Lambda}$
 equal true make marriage. make marriage require

D^- Y^n
 give one

T_u C^{\sim} , J^b T_u E'_r ,
 classifier cow, five classifier goats,

Yⁿ T_v Cɹ̃.
one classifier pig.

V^{nc} ɹ̃ Ā t_u J^ŋ T_v ɹ̃.
but only require total seven classifier cattle.

C^ŋ J^{nc} Ā Y⁻ Yⁿ L^u ɹ̃'^o
bride hers require make one classifier gown

Ṽ ɹ̃'⁼.
bridegroom new.

L^u ɹ̃'^o Ċ, ɔ_u Y⁻ C^ŋ L_ɛ T_ɛ V^{nc}
the gown this, go make bride gone finish but

Ā S^r
require return

L_o C^{nc} V_u Cɹ̃- Y⁻ ɔ_u,
come mother father house make go,

T⁻ L_{nc} S_o ɹ̃'^o
presently reckon gown

Ṽ ɹ̃'^{nc}. CT^u t^r J^u ɔ_u Ā
bridegroom new. cloth middleman is required

Λ_n T^u ɹ̃^{nc}
family giving

T^u ɔ⁻ ɹ̃'^u t^r t^r J^u ɹ̃^{ɔ̃} ɔ_u ɹ̃'^u
son give for the middleman convey go for

Λ_n T^u ɹ̃^{nc}
family giving

Ct^r, J^{'o} ɔ⁻ CT^u Y⁻ L^u Δ^{ɔ̃} CT^u
daughter knot take cloth embroidery cloth

L^{nc} Y⁻ ɹ̃'^o Ṽ ɹ̃'⁼ ɹ̃_{no}.
red make gown bridegroom new so it is.

M301
Arranging marriages according to the old customs.

Written by Wang Ming-ji.

Notes

This material is in Document B (no. 7, page 32) and in notes following Document B (no. 12, page 37). The style is simple Miao prose as spoken today. The writer carefully avoided using any loan words from Chinese.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 1.

The Woman Bang and the Man Bang-li-byu.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

Like one of Shakespeare's characters, the couple in this song "by contraries execute all things". Their son they send away "to be a bride", and their daughter they keep at home, employed in felling, transporting and erecting timber for a new house. However, when, after a long absence, the son returns with a child and, presumably, though she is not mentioned in the song, his wife, the roles are switched back to normal. The son completes the new house as a place for him to "hang his cross-bow", that is as his home, while the daughter is given a patch of ground on which "to grow hemp", that is hemp to be spun into yarn, and woven into cloth in order to make the bridal outfit and the bridegroom's gown which she will require when she gets married.

At the head of the song Wang Ming-ji inserted a note which explains that "in the beginning it was the man who was the bride". This self-contradictory statement which appears again in lines 8 and 21 presumably means that there was a time when the marriage customs were different, and that the man, rather than the woman, left home to live with the parents-in-law. Such an interpretation is not impossible, but lacking any corroborative evidence, does not appear very likely. It is much simpler to regard the song as just a "once upon a time" story, sung to amuse rather than to instruct. In the translation the problematic statement that the "son went to be a bride" has been glossed over by saying that he went to be married.

The final eight lines of the song are scarcely complimentary to the bride. With heavy sarcasm scorn is poured upon the whole idea that she was a suitable person ever to get married, but does not explain why. This sort of statement, using the same similes, appears to be a convention in marriage songs. Elsewhere, however, despite such disparaging remarks, there was no difficulty in finding a bridegroom. Perhaps the present song has lost a final section describing the daughter's eventual marriage.

Two other points call for some explanation.

1. In line 9 and again in line 35 we are told that first, the daughter, and later, the son was kept at home "to learn the spirits". This expression originally concerned being initiated into the rituals of the clan worship of the ancestors and applied to boys only. A girl, on marriage, joined her husband's clan which would have different rituals. However, the phrase passed into general use and came to mean simply "kept the person at home"
2. Tree trunks, too heavy to be carried, would have to be dragged home using ropes, requiring the organisation of a team of perhaps twenty men. This, presumably, was the task undertaken by the young woman in the song. The exact significance of the three straight beams, which she could not manage, is not clear.

M302
Old Miao songs about marriage. 1.

The Woman Bang and the Man Bang-li-byu.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

From out of scattered sky material came the dome,
For the Woman Bang to come and live.
Woven from scattered earth material came the ranges,
For the Man Bang-li-byu to come and dwell.

- 5 This year we may know,
 Know that the Woman Bang has started marriage arrangements,
 Know that the Man Bang-li-byu has begun wedding preparations.
 Begun preparing for their son to go and be married,
 But they kept their daughter, the grown up young woman, at home.
- 10 This year we may know,
 Know that the woman Bang is about to build a house,
 Know that the man Bang-li-byu is about to build a home.
 So they sent their daughter, the grown up young woman, to go and fell timber,
 And they sent their daughter, the grown up young woman, to go and drag the timber
 in.
- 15 She dragged in pillars from below on the plain,
 She dragged in beams from above in the pass.
 The daughter, the grown up young woman, dragged in,
 Dragged in successfully the various timbers required,
 Except the three beams, the straight beams, from the mountain ridge.
- 20 When others get married they may return,
 But when their son got married he could not come.
 However, when their son did return and reach home,
 They sent their son to go and drag in the timber,
 And he dragged in successfully the three beams, the straight beams, from the
 mountain ridge.
- 25 Then they sent their daughter, the grown up young woman, to go and erect the
 timbers.
 She erected successfully the various timbers required,
 Except the three beams, the straight beams, from the mountain ridge, which she
 could not erect.
- So their son, carrying his baby encircled in his arm,
 Stretching out his hand, went and erected,
- 30 Erected successfully the three beams, the straight beams, from the mountain ridge.
- This year we may know,
 Know that this year the Woman Bang is arranging a marriage,
 Know that this year the Man Bang-li-byu is arranging a wedding

- They are arranging for their daughter, the grown up young woman, to go and be married,
35 But they are keeping their son at home.
- This year we may know,
Know that the Woman Bang has built a house,
Know that the Man Bang-li-byu has built a home.
In fact their son constructed,
40 Constructed the Woman Bang and the Man Bang-li-byu's house.
- The interior of the house provided,
Provided their son with a place to hang his cross-bow,
While the exterior of the house provided,
Provided their daughter, the grown up young woman, with a place for growing hemp.
- 45 Cold water is not the thing to offer to a guest,
Their daughter, the grown up young woman, is not the person to offer in marriage!
Why have the Woman Bang and the Man Bang-li-byu taken,
Taken their daughter, the grown up young woman, and offered her in marriage?
- 50 Wild rice and wild millet are not the seed to plant in a garden,
Their daughter, the grown up young woman, is not the person to plant in a home!
It is wasted effort to sow wild rice and wild millet on good soil,
It is wasted effort to send their daughter, the grown up young woman, on the marriage road!

M302

C_n J^o J^ɤ Λ_ɛ J^ɤ Lⁿ J^ɔ.
the woman Bang man Bang-li-byu.

U_{o6} ɔ_{n6} ɿⁿ S_u.
Wang Ming-ji wrote.

T^{'u} CT^u Jⁿ Cɿ^ɔ ɿ_n Jⁿ L_o,
from sky scattered material arrived sphere,

T^{'u} C_n J^o J^ɤ ɿ_n L_o C^{no}.
for the woman Bang thus come live.

J^{nc} Tⁿ Jⁿ Cɿ^ɔ ɿ_n L_n V_u,
weave earth scattered material arrived ridges,

T^{'u} Λ_ɛ J^ɤ Lⁿ J^ɔ ɿ_n L_o t_u.
for man Bang-li-byu thus come dwell.

5 J_{nu} Ċ t^ɛ L_o J["],
year this able come know,

J["] C_n J^o J^ɤ J^ɥ Y⁻ ɿ["],
know the woman Bang rise make marriage,

J["] Λ_ɛ J^ɤ Lⁿ J^ɔ Lⁿ J_ɔ J^o,
know man Bang-li-byu about begin wedding,

C_ɔ Lⁿ J_ɔ J_o Jⁿ L^ɔ T^u Tⁿ ɿ^ɤ ɔ_u Y⁻
they about begin cause the son go make

C^ɤ.
bride.

ɿ^{'nc} Jⁿ L^ɔ T^u Tⁿ C^{t'} G_u C_{nc} L_u C^{no}
took the daughter girl adult remain

ɿ_{nc} Δ^ɤ.
learn spirits.

10 J_{nu} Ċ t^ɛ L_o J["],
year this able come know,

J'' C_n J^o J^{δ} J^{ζ} t' $CJ-$,
 know the woman Bang rise build house,

J'' Λ_{ζ} J^{δ} L^n J^p J^{ζ} t' C^p .
 know man Bang-li-byu rise build home.

J_o J^n L^p T^u T^n Ct' , G_u C_{nc} $L_{||}$ $D_{||}$ $C\overset{\circ}{T}$ CT'' ,
 cause the daughter girl adult go fell trees,

J_o J^n L^p T^u T^n Ct' , G_u C_{nc} $L_{||}$ $D_{||}$ I' ,
 cause the daughter girl adult go drag in

CT'' .
 trees.

15 I' , CE^n J^{δ} L_o CT^u T^{nc} ,
 drag in posts come below plain,

I' , CE^n Λ^p L_o J_n Δ_{ζ} .
 drag in rafters come above pass.

J^n L^p T^u T^n Ct' , G_u C_{nc} $L_{||}$ I' ,
 the daughter girl adult dragged in,

I' , C^n $J_{||}$ Y^- J^r CT'' L_o $CE_{n||}$
 dragged in nine ten various trees come arrive

T_{δ} ,
 finish,

Δ_n C_n t^r T_u C_n
 except connector three classifier connector

J^r CE^{δ} CT_o J_n I^p .
 straight with above ridge.

20 C_n Y^- C_n J^- C^{δ} L C_n
 connector make connector the bride so connector

L_o ,
 come,

Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C^o Y⁻ C_n J⁻ C^o
the son make connector the bride

J^r t^c L_o.
not able come.

Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C^o Y⁻ C^o T_u T̄ S^r
the son make bride then return come back

L_o t_o,
come reach,

J_o Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C^o Lⁿ D_u D_u I['] CT["],
cause the son going go drag in trees,

I['] C_n t^r T_u Cⁿ T^v Cⁿ
drag in connector three classifier beams beams

J^r C^o C_o C_u T_o.
straight with arrive finish.

25 J_o Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C t['] G_u C_u L_u D_u C^o CT["].
cause the daughter girl adult go erect trees.

D_u C^o Cⁿ J_u Y⁻ J^r CT["] C_o T_o
went erect nine ten various trees stand done

T_o.
finish.

A_n C_n t^r T_u Cⁿ T^v Cⁿ
except connector three classifier beams beams

J^r C^o C_o J^r T["].
straight stand not get.

Jⁿ L^b T^v Tⁿ C^o J_o T^v Tⁿ G_o 3["] L_u C^o,
the son nursing baby well encircled arm,

J^o Tⁿ C_o D_u C^o,
raised hand with go erect,

30 ㄱᄃ ㅊᄃ ㅌᄃ ㄱㄱᄃ ㅌᄃ ㄱㄱᄃ ㅈᄃ ㄱㄱᄃ
 erected three classifier beams beams straight

 ㄱㄱᄃ ㅌᄃ ㅌᄃ.
 stand done finish.

ㅈᄃᄃ ㅅᄃ ㅊᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ,
 year this able come know,

ㅈᄃᄃ ㄱᄃ ㅈᄃ ㅈᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ ㅍᄃ ㅅᄃᄃ,
 know the woman Bang year make marriage,

ㅈᄃᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅈᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅈᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ ㅍᄃ ㅅᄃ.
 know man Bang-li-byu year make wedding.

ㅅᄃᄃ ㅈᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅌᄃ ㅌᄃ ㅊᄃᄃ, ㅍᄃ ㄱᄃᄃ ㄴᄃᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ ㅍᄃ
 allow cause the daughter girl adult go make

 ㄱᄃᄃ.
 bride.

35 ㅈᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅌᄃ ㅌᄃ ㄱᄃᄃ ㄱᄃᄃ ㄱᄃᄃ ㄷᄃᄃ.
 cause the son remain learn spirits.

ㅈᄃᄃ ㅅᄃ ㅊᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ,
 year this able come know,

ㅈᄃᄃ ㄱᄃ ㅈᄃ ㅈᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ ㅊᄃᄃ ㄱㅈᄃᄃ,
 know the woman Bang year build house,

ㅈᄃᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅈᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅈᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ ㅊᄃᄃ ㅅᄃᄃ.
 know man Bang-li-byu year build home.

ㅈᄃᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅌᄃ ㅌᄃ ㄱᄃᄃ ㅊᄃᄃᄃ,
 the son built,

40 ㅊᄃᄃᄃ ㄱᄃ ㅈᄃ ㅈᄃ ㄱᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅈᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅈᄃ
 built the woman Bang the man Bang-li-byu

 ㄱᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ ㄱㅈᄃᄃ.
 connector the house.

ㅈᄃᄃ ㄱㅈᄃᄃ ㄱㅈᄃᄃᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ ㄱᄃᄃᄃ ㄱᄃᄃᄃ,
 the house inside in order to put,

ㄱᄃᄃᄃ ㅈᄃᄃ ㄴᄃ ㅌᄃ ㅌᄃ ㄱᄃᄃ ㄱᄃᄃᄃᄃ ㄱᄃᄃ ㅅᄃᄃᄃ.
 put the son place hang cross-bow.

J⁻ C[-] J_u J³ J^r [°_{no} [°_{nc},
the house outside in order to put,

[°_{nc} Jⁿ L³ T^v Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_u [°_{nc} Tⁿ ɔ̃.
put the daughter girl adult place to hemp.

45 Yⁿ †_{nc} J^r Λ^o J⁻ J³ C_n †'
water cold not is the thing connector offer

J⁻,
guests,

Jⁿ L³ T^v Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_u J^r Λ^o J⁻ [̃^o
the daughter girl adult not is the seed

C_n †' [°_{nc}.
connector offer marriage.

Y⁻ [°_{nc} C_n J^o J³ Λ_s J³ Lⁿ J³ [°_{nc},
why the woman Bang man Bang-li-byu take,

[°_{nc} Jⁿ L³ T^v Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_u L_o †'
take the daughter girl adult come offer

[°_{nc}.
marriage.

Λ_u CΔⁿ Λ_u Jⁿ †' J^r Λ^o J⁻ [̃^o L_u
wild rice wild millet not is seed plant

C_u V₃,
in garden,

50 Jⁿ L³ T^v Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_u J^r Λ^o J⁻ [̃^o L_u
the daughter girl adult not is seed plant

C_u C[-].
in house.

J⁻ C_u Λ_u CΔⁿ Λ_u Jⁿ †' Tⁿ
do not waste wild rice wild millet in

Tⁿ C_u,
ground healthy,

J'~ C E_n J^n L^b T^u T^n C t', G_u C_nc L_|| T''
do not waste the daughter girl adult on

ⁿ
[]''.
road marriage.

M302

Old Miao songs about marriage. 1.

The Woman Bang and the Man Bang-li-byu.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no. 8, page 35).

M303
Old Miao songs about marriage. 2.

Song by the bridegroom's friends

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

The opening line establishes the time of year. The hawthorn came into blossom in May, that is, before the onset of the summer rains.

The wine horns mentioned in the song were from water buffalo. The wide end of the horn where it joined the animal's head was blocked in with wood and sealed with varnish. A hole was bored in through the tip of the horn and fitted with a stopper. The outside of the horn was decorated with a carved pattern and then lacquered. These horns were a convenient way of storing wine and most useful for pouring it into wine cups. They could also be easily carried with a leather thong attached to either end and slung over the shoulder.

The song reflects the old custom, now long discontinued, by which, instead of a rice bowl, each guest had a small basket for his rice or maize-meal. The meat and vegetables were placed in wooden bowls on the table. For eating, each guest was provided with a wooden spoon. The use of chopsticks and pottery basins came at a later date, copied from the Chinese. The duty of the waiters was to ensure that the guests' rice baskets were kept full, and the basins of meat and vegetables, brimming.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 2.

Song by the bridegroom's friends.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

- The hawthorn had long been in blossom.
 The right time for the old folk to go and eat meat,
 Yet there was nothing for the marriage feast.
 At a marriage feast you should have sliced white pork!
 5 But there was nothing for the wedding feast.
 At a wedding feast you should have the best joint of mutton sliced!
- But when the next day came, the man, the father sent,
 Sent two attendants wearing,
 10 Wearing black capes and bearing wine horns
 To pour clear wine, waiting at the entrance,
 To pour clear wine, waiting at the door,
 Welcoming the marriage guests, the wedding guests on arrival.
- The man, the father sent,
 15 Sent two skilful waiters,
 Two skilful waiters to replenish the food baskets.
 "In replenishing the food baskets, do not be hindered,
 In replenishing the bowls, do not rest!
 20 When tomorrow comes,
 And the marriage guests, the wedding guests have eaten their fill,
 You too may eat your fill!"

M303

\ddot{V} $J^n \text{ } \ddot{C}'^u$ I'^u . U_{n6} $\mathcal{D}_{n6} \text{ } \ddot{C}^n$ S_{11} .
 bridegroom friends sang. Wang Ming-ji wrote.

$\ddot{t} \text{ } J^r \text{ } C\Delta_n$ $J^r \text{ } C\Delta_n$ L^n ,
 hawthorn blossoming late,

\mathcal{Z}'' $J^- \text{ } L_{11}$ $\mathcal{D}_{11} \text{ } C''$ CJ' ,
 good old folk go eat meat,

J^r T'' C_n $J^- \text{ } J^r$ T'' CJ' \ddot{C}'' .
 not got connector anything toward meat marriage.

$C\ddot{t}_u$ CJ' $C\ddot{t}_o$ CJ^- \ddot{C}^{n6} $C\ddot{t}'_{nc} \text{ } L_{nc}$ T''
 slice meat with pig carry white toward

CJ' \ddot{C}'' .
 meat marriage.

5 J^r T'' C_n $J^- \text{ } J^r$ T'' CJ' \mathcal{J}° ,
 not got connector anything toward meat wedding,

$C\ddot{t}_u$ Λ° $T^n \text{ } \mathcal{J}_{11}$ T'' CJ' \mathcal{J}° .
 slice sheep back toward meat wedding.

$\mathcal{J}_n \text{ } \ddot{C}_n$ \ddot{t}° L_o S° ,
 tomorrow able come away,

Λ_\circ $\mathcal{J}^n \text{ } \ddot{t}^r$ \ddot{t}° L_o \ddot{t}^r ,
 man father able come send,

\ddot{t}^r C_n Y^- L° $\mathcal{L}^- \text{ } \ddot{C}^{n6} \text{ } L^n \text{ } \Lambda_n$
 send connector two classifier attendants

CJ^- ,
 wearing,

10 CJ^- \ddot{C}° Δ^u $L^n \text{ } \mathcal{D}_{11}$ \mathcal{J}_1 $\mathcal{J}^n \text{ } T_\circ$,
 wearing capes black going bearing wine horns,

\mathcal{L}^n \ddot{C}° $\mathcal{D}^n \text{ } S^{nc}$ T_o $\ddot{t}' \text{ } C\ddot{C}^\circ$,
 pour wine clear waiting entrance,

\bar{b} \bar{c} \bar{d} \bar{s} \bar{t} . $\bar{c}\bar{t}_u$ $\bar{\Delta}$,
pour wine clear waiting beside door,

\bar{y} \bar{j}' \bar{c}'' \bar{j}' \bar{j}^o $\bar{c}\bar{e}_{III}$.
make guests marriage guests wedding arrive.

$\bar{\Lambda}_c$ \bar{t}^r \bar{t}^c \bar{L}_o \bar{t}^r ,
man father able come send,

15 \bar{t}^r \bar{C}_n \bar{y} \bar{L}^b $\bar{T}^u \bar{S}^{\delta} \bar{L}^n \bar{T}^u \bar{S}_s$.
send connector two classifier skilled waiters.

\bar{C}_n \bar{y} \bar{L}^b $\bar{T}^u \bar{S}^{\delta} \bar{L}^n \bar{T}^u \bar{S}_s$ $\bar{c}\bar{t}_o$.
connector two classifier skilled waiters with

\bar{T}^b \bar{V}^{δ} ,
replenished baskets,

\bar{T}^b \bar{V}^{δ} \bar{j}' \bar{j}_o $\bar{c}\bar{c}_c$,
replenish baskets do not cause stop,

\bar{T}^b \bar{T}_u \bar{j}' \bar{j}_o .
replenish bowls do not rest.

$\bar{j}_n \bar{c}_n$ \bar{t}^c \bar{L}_o \bar{S}^{δ} ,
tomorrow able come away,

20 \bar{j}' \bar{c}'' \bar{j}' \bar{j}^o \bar{C}'' \bar{T}_{δ} \bar{T}_{δ} ,
guests marriage guests wedding eat done finish,

\bar{d}_n \bar{C}'' $\bar{c}\bar{t}_o$ \bar{T}_{δ} \bar{T}_{δ} .
you eat with done finish.

M303
Old Miao songs about marriage. 2.
Song by the bridegroom's friends.

Collected by Wang-ming-ji.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no.9, page 34).

M304
Old Miao songs about marriage. 3.

A match-making song.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

Sometimes, before instituting the formal marriage negotiations conducted by middlemen, male members of the two families concerned might meet for some preliminary discussions. These would take place over a drink of wine. During such discussions the virtues of the prospective bride and bridegroom would be extolled by their respective relatives as bargaining counters in their haggling over the marriage settlement. The present song makes the somewhat cynical comment that, if they are really to reach a satisfactory agreement, a considerable quantity of wine will be consumed first! Throughout, the parties concerned are called “the brothers” and “the brothers-in-law”.

A notable feature of the song is the manner in which an exact scheme of parallelism is maintained, line for line and word for word, between the two seven line stanzas.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 3.

A match-making song.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

5 The sun is shining brightly,
Shining upon jet-black birds that fly to and fro,
Shining upon brothers and brothers-in-law pursuing distant roads,
Shining still on brothers and brothers in law when they come together.
Then fill the vessel with clear wine and share it around and drink,
For in drinking clear wine you can never drink enough,
When discussing a marriage or wedding, if, discussing, you would reach an
agreement.

10 The sun is shining brightly,
Shining upon jet-black birds that fly all around,
Shining on brothers and brothers-in-law pursuing separate roads,
Shining still on brothers and brothers-in-law when they meet together.
Then fill the vessel with clear wine and share it around and drink,
For in drinking clear wine you will drink without limit,
When discussing a marriage or wedding, if, discussing, you would reach satisfaction.

M304

Cɿ" ɿ_u Y⁻ t^r ɿ".
song which make match.

U_{o6} ɿ_{n6} ɿⁿ S_u.
Wang Ming-ji wrote.

ɿ̌' CT_u ɿ̌' CT" CT_r,
sunshine shine very fine,

ɿ̌' CT_u Δ^{ɿ̌} Δ^u Lⁿ Cɿ^{nc} Λ^{ɿ̌} J^r J₋,
sunshine birds black very fly to and fro,

ɿ̌' CT_u ɿ̌ Tⁿ C^u V" C^{no}
sunshine brothers brothers-in-law situated

ɿ̌ⁿ Δⁿ,
roads far,

ɿ̌' CT_u ɿ̌ Tⁿ C^u V" T"
sunshine brothers brothers-in-law get

Tⁿ ɿ̌_n.
come together.

5 CT_n ɿ̌^{nc} ɿ̌ⁿ S^{nc} J^r ɿ̌^u ɿ̌_u,
fill wine clear share drink,

ɿ̌_u ɿ̌^{nc} ɿ̌ⁿ S^{nc} ɿ̌_u J^r t_u,
drink wine clear drink not enough,

T_{ɿ̌} ɿ̌ⁿ ɿ̌^{no} ɿ̌ⁿ ɿ̌^o T_{ɿ̌} ɿ̌_o.
discuss way marriage way wedding discuss cause

T".
get.

ɿ̌' CT_u ɿ̌' CT" CT_r
sunshine shine very fine,

ɿ̌' CT_u Δ^{ɿ̌} Δ^u Lⁿ Cɿ^{nc} Λ^{ɿ̌} J^r Cɿ_n,
sunshine birds black very fly all about,

10 $\tilde{C}' CT^u$ $\tilde{C} T^n$ $C^u V''$ C^{no} \tilde{C}
 sunshine brothers brothers-in-law situated roads

\tilde{C} ,
 wide,

$\tilde{C}' CT^u$ $\tilde{C} T^n$ $C^u V''$ T-
 sunshine brothers brothers-in-law come

J^r C \tilde{C} ^r,
 meet together.

CT_n \tilde{C} $\mathcal{D}^n S^n$ J^r Γ^u $\Gamma_{||}$,
 fill wine clear share drink,

$\Gamma_{||}$ \tilde{C} $\mathcal{D}^n S^{nc}$ $\Gamma_{||}$ Γ^n $\bar{\Gamma}$,
 drink wine clear drink not limit,

T_p \tilde{C} \tilde{C}'^{nu} \tilde{C} \mathcal{D}^o T_p
 discuss way marriage way wedding discuss

\mathcal{D}_o $C\bar{T}'$.
 cause please.

M304
Old Miao songs about marriage. 3.

A match-making song.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no. 10, page 35).

Line 3. In the Miao text the initial $\overset{\delta}{\text{L}}' \text{CT}^v$, “in the sunshine”, is missing.

Line 4. In the manuscript this line is written twice, for no apparent reason.

Line 9. Following this line the manuscript repeats line 3.

M305
Old Miao songs about marriage. 4.

Song about entertaining the Middleman and the Headman.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

The arrival of two middlemen, one of whom was also a village headman, set the whole household of the prospective bride into a hive of activity, everyone being concerned to make the best possible impression. The bride's father personally supervised the entertainment of the visitors, making sure that they occupied the chief places at the table, that is those remote from the door. Uppermost in his mind was the possibility of a substantial addition to the livestock on his farm, which would result from a successful marriage settlement. The following day the prospective bride's aunt sought further to impress by displaying the garments that the bride would bring with her to her new home. The quantity and quality of these being a sure measure of her industry and skill. The serious negotiations for the marriage were conducted by the men-folk gathered around the open fire after the evening meal, while the women insured that the talks went smoothly by maintaining a more than ample supply of wine. For her part the prospective bride, by assiduous grooming, made sure that every day she was looking her best.

The wine which was used had been fermented and stored in large jars each containing several gallons. When it was required, it was siphoned off using a U-shaped tube made from a length of green bamboo, the internal joints of which had been burnt through with a hot wire. The wine was drawn off into smaller flasks from which the drinking cups were replenished. The metaphors of "fat" and "milk" are used to describe the quality of the wine which the women had made. As the evening wore on, those who were overcome by its potency subsided into slumber beside the fire and had to be dragged back lest sparks or falling embers set their clothing alight.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 4.

Song about entertaining the middleman and the headman.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Who is entertaining a middleman?
The man, the father is entertaining a middleman.
Who is entertaining a headman?
The man, the father is entertaining a headman.

5 He is entertaining the middleman
 Together with the headman,
 Making them sit in the highest places, because,
 Because the man, the father's livestock will be multiplied!

10 The man, the father has reserved,
 Reserved the place of honour for whom?
 He has reserved it for the middleman.
 The man, the father has reserved,
 Reserved the chief place for whom?
 He has reserved it for the headman.

15 When the next day came,
 The middleman and the headman called,
 Called the woman, the aunt's name over and over.
 The woman, the aunt took the skirts and gowns, and putting them on, went to meet,
 To meet the middleman and the headman.

20 The middleman and the headman together went and took them off,
 Took them off carefully and laid them out all round.
 Then the skirts of the woman, the aunt,
 The woman, the aunt collected from all round and carried them away.

25 When the next day came,
 The middleman and the headman called,
 Called the woman, the aunt's name again and again.
 The woman, the aunt took the skirts and aprons, and putting them on, went to meet,
 To meet the middleman and the headman.

30 The middleman and the headman forthwith went and took them off,
 Took them off carefully and laid them out all round.
 Then the aprons of the woman, the aunt,
 The woman, the aunt picked up from all round and folded them away.

35 The women's wine jars bubbled clear,
 Bubbled with the women's yeast.
 The women's wine jars bubbled over on the ground,
 Bubbled with the men's wine.
 Now take a sprig of bamboo and push it,

Push it into the neck and suck,
 Suck the “fat” from the women’s wine jars.

40 But the women’s wine jars threw,
 Threw the old folk down by the fire!

So, pull the old folk aside,
 Let them lie together on the ground,
 Like the ridges there out of doors,
 45 On the old folk’s land.

Take a sprig of bamboo and push it,
 Push it into the neck and suck,
 Suck the “milk” from the women’s wine jars.

Now the middle-aged spoke much,
 50 Spoke of the woman’s marriage,
 But the women’s wine jars threw,
 Threw the middle-aged down by the fire!

So, pull the middle-aged aside,
 Let them lie together on the ground,
 55 Like the ridges there out of doors,
 On the plains of the middle-aged.

When the next day came,
 The daughter, the adult young woman rose,
 Rose up and combed her hair,
 60 Making her hair smooth and flowing.

When the next day came,
 The daughter, the adult young woman rose,
 Rose up and combed her hair,
 Making her hair smooth, smooth indeed.

65 For there will come a day when the daughter, the adult young woman, like,
 Like a shadow passing over the crops,
 The swaying crops, will go to her marriage.

There will come a day when the daughter, the adult young woman, like,
 Like a shadow passing over the harvest,
 The swaying harvest will go to her marriage.

M305

CJ" J_u † † J" † † t_u.
 song which arrange for middleman arrange for headman.

U_{o6} D_{o6} Cⁿ S_u.
 Wang Ming-ji wrote.

J̄ J^r C_T. † † J",
 who with arrange for middleman,

Λ₆ Jⁿ † † † J".
 man father arrange for middleman.

J̄ J^r C_T. † † † t_u,
 who with arrange for headman,

Λ₆ Jⁿ † † † t_u.
 man father arrange for headman.

5 † Jⁿ L^b T^v † J"
 arrange for the person middleman

J̄ Jⁿ L^b T^v † t_u,
 and the person headman,

C^o J_o 3_u Yⁿ †ⁿ Jⁿ,
 allow cause sit one top place because,

Jⁿ Λ₆ Jⁿ † C₌ C_o J^o.
 because man father livestock multiply.

Λ₆ Jⁿ † †⁶ L_o J̄,
 man father able come clear,

10 J̄ †ⁿ C^{'=} C^{nc} Y⁻ J^r,
 clear place of honour completed for whom,

C^{nc} T^{'u} Jⁿ L^b T^v † J" C_u.
 completed for the person middleman thus.

Λ₆ Jⁿ † †⁶ L_o J̄,
 man father able come clear,

J̄ † †^u C^{nc} Y⁻ J^r,
 clear place at head completed for whom,

Γ^{nc} Γ'' $J^n L^b$ T^u $\Gamma'' t_{11}$ $\Lambda_{..}$
 completed for the person headman oh.

15 $J_n \Gamma_n$ t^c L_o S^{δ} ,
 tomorrow able come away,

$J^n L^b$ $T^u t^r J''$ $J^n L^b$ $T^u \Gamma'' t_{11}$ Γ_n \mathcal{D}_- T^- ,
 the middleman the headman thus did take hold of,

T^- J^o $J^n \mathcal{D}_-$ $C t^r$ $C \Gamma^{no}$, $C \Gamma^{no}$.
 take hold of woman aunt name over and over.

J^o $J^n \mathcal{D}_-$ J'_c $J^{\delta} T^-$ $J^{\delta} \Gamma'^o$ $J^n L^{nc}$ $'C^{\delta}$ \mathcal{D}_{11}
 woman aunt took skirts gowns all put on went

t_o ,
 meet,

t_o $J^n L^b$ T^u $t^r J''$ $J^n L^b$ T^u $\Gamma'' t_{11}$.
 meet the person middleman the person headman.

20 $J^n L^b$ T^u $t^r J''$ $J^n L^b$ T^u $\Gamma'' t_{11}$ $C \Gamma_o$.
 the person middleman the person headman with

\mathcal{D}_{11} Δ_c ,
 went took off,

Δ_c $L^n J'_n L_{11}$ Γ^o $C \Gamma_n$ $3''$.
 took off all round laid down completely well.

J^o $J^n \mathcal{D}_-$ Γ_n T^n $J^{\delta} T^-$ Γ_n ,
 woman aunt thus the skirts thus,

J^o $J^n \mathcal{D}_-$ T'' $L^n J'_n L_{11}$ \mathcal{D}_n Γ^{no} L_c .
 woman aunt get all round connector carry gone.

$J_n \Gamma_n$ t^c L_o S^{δ} ,
 tomorrow able come away,

25 $J^n L^b$ T^u $t^r J''$ $J^n L^b$ T^u $\Gamma'' t_{11}$ Γ_n
 the person middleman the person headman thus

\mathcal{D}_- T^- ,
 did take hold of,

T^- J^o $J^n \mathcal{D}_-$ $C t^r$ $t_{11} t_{11}$.
 take hold of woman aunt name again and again.

J° $J^n \mathcal{D}_-$ J'_{ζ} $J^{\delta} T^=$ $T^n \dot{Y}$ $J^n L^{nc}$ $'C^{\delta}$ $\mathcal{D}_{||}$
 woman aunt took skirts aprons all put on went

t_{\circ} ,
 meet,

t_{\circ} $J^n L^{\flat}$ T^u $t^r J_{||}$ $J^n L^{\flat}$ T^u $\overset{||}{\Gamma} t_{||}$.
 meet the person middleman the person headman.

$J^n L^{\flat}$ T^u $3^r J''$ $J^n L^{\flat}$ T^u $\overset{||}{\Gamma} t_{||}$
 the person middleman the person head man

$\overset{\zeta}{J} J^{\flat}$ Δ_{ζ} ,
 forthwith took off,

30 Δ_{ζ} $L^n J'_n L_{||}$ \mathcal{L}° $C\mathcal{L}_n$ $3''$.
 took off all round laid down completely well.

J° $J^n \mathcal{D}_-$ \mathcal{L}_n T^n $J^{\delta} \dot{Y}$ \mathcal{L}_n ,
 woman aunt thus the aprons thus,

J° $J^n \mathcal{D}_-$ J'_{ζ} $L^n J'_n L_{||}$ \mathcal{D}_n $\overset{J}{J}'$ L_{ζ} .
 woman aunt took all round connector folded gone.

C_n J° $'G^u L^n \mathcal{L}_{no}$ CJ'' $\mathcal{D}^n S^{nc}$,
 connector women wine jars bubbled clear,

CJ'' C_n J° \mathcal{D}_n J^- S^{δ} .
 bubbled connector women plural liquid yeast.

35 C_n J° $'G^u L^n \mathcal{L}_{no}$ CJ'' $J^n T^n$,
 connector women wine jars bubbled on the ground,

CJ'' C_n Λ_{ζ} \mathcal{D}_n J^- $\overset{nc}{\mathcal{L}}$.
 bubbled connector men plural liquid wine.

Ct^- T_{ζ} \mathcal{L}_n \mathcal{D}_- \mathcal{L}'^{no} ,
 sprig bamboo thus did push through,

\mathcal{L}'^{no} $\bar{\Delta} L^n CJ''$ $J^r \mathcal{L}_{no}$ Ct_u ,
 push through neck in order to suck,

Ct_u C_n J° $'G^u J^n \mathcal{L}_{no}$ J^- $'G^u$ Δ° .
 suck connector women wine jars the jars fat.

- 40 C_n J^o 'G^u Lⁿ C_{no} J^{'u},
connector women wine jars struck down,
- Lⁿ J⁻ L_u S^δ CT^u T^ε.
struck down the old folk away edge fire.
- Lⁿ J⁻ L_u S^δ J⁻ CT_u,
pull the old folk away aside,
- CT_u CT_u CT_u J^r Tⁿ,
cause go together go on the ground,
- CT_u CT^u Tⁿ CT_u T_ε,
with ridges out,
- 45 Tⁿ 'ɔ["] J⁻ L_u Tⁿ.
the Miao old folk land.
- T_ε C_n ɔ_u C^{'no},
sprig bamboo thus did push through,
- C^{'no} Δ Lⁿ C^J" J^r C_{no} C_{tu},
push through neck in order to suck,
- C_{tu} C_n J^o 'G^u Lⁿ C_{no} J⁻ 'G^u ɔⁿ.
suck connector women wine jars the jars milk.
- †^r Γ^δ J⁻ L_u ɳ_n L^u C^{nu},
middle aged said words many,
- 50 ɳ_n C_n J^o ɔ_n ɳⁿ C^{'u}.
said connector woman her marriage.
- C_n J^o 'G^u Lⁿ C_{no} J^{'u},
connector women wine jars struck down,
- J^{'u} †^r Γ^δ J⁻ L_u S^δ CT^u T^ε.
struck down middle aged away edge fire.
- CT_u †^r Γ^δ J⁻ L_u S^δ J⁻ CT_u,
pull middle aged away aside,
- ɳ_o CT_u CT_u CT_u J^r Tⁿ,
cause go together go on the ground,
- 55 CT_u CT^u Tⁿ CT_u T_ε,
with ridges out,

3^r ɣ^δ ɣ⁻ L_{II} CT_δ.
middle aged plains.

J_n C_n †^ε L_o S^δ,
tomorrow able come away,

J_o Jⁿ L^ɔ T^υ Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_{II}
cause the person daughter young woman adult

J,
get up,

J^ε J⁻ J^ɔ CT_o C_{Cr} ɣ'',
get up arise with comb head,

60 J_o ɣ'' CΔ_{nc} ɣ'' J⁻ CΔ_o.
cause head smooth head flowing.

J_n C_n †^ε L_o S^δ,
tomorrow able come away,

J_o Jⁿ L^ɔ T^υ Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_{II}
cause the person daughter young woman adult

J,
get up,

J^ε J⁻ J^ɔ L_o C_{Cr} ɣ'',
get up arise come comb head,

J_o ɣ'' CΔ_{nc} ɣ'' CΔ_{nc} L_{nc}.
cause head smooth head very smooth.

65 ɔ- 'C^υ Jⁿ L^ɔ T^υ Tⁿ C†', G_u
there is day the person daughter young woman

C_{nc} L_{II} CT_o,
adult with,

CT_o Δ_o C_{no} J⁻ C†'' J'',
with shadow crops,

J'' Λⁿ Tⁿ Λ_o L_ε J^υ C'''.
crops waving gone to marriage.

ɔ- 'C^u Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ Ct', G_u
 there is day the person daughter young woman

C_{nc} L_u Ct_o,
 adult with

Ct_o Δ₋ [^{no} J⁻ Ct["] L_u,
 with shadow harvest,

70 L_u Λⁿ Tⁿ Λ_o L_ɛ J^u ɔ_o.
 harvest waving gone to wedding.

M305
Old Miao songs about marriage. 4.

Song about entertaining the middleman and the headman.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no. 11, page 35).

Line 1. In the manuscript the word ㄘㄢ is missing. It has been restored here to maintain the proper balance with the parallel line 3.

Lines 5, 6 and 7. These lines have been strung together into a single long sentence in the Miao manuscript.

Line 8. There appears to have been some disruption of the text by which this line was moved to a place following line 11. This upsets the poetic balance of lines 9 to 14, where lines 9, 10 and 11 are exactly balanced by lines 12, 13 and 14. The sense and symmetry of the whole passage is restored when line 8 is returned to its rightful place following line 7.

Line 18. The last two words of this line, ㄉㄨ ㄘ, "went to meet", have disappeared from the manuscript, and with them the whole of the next line. The proper sense of the passage and the parallelism with the next stanza require their restoration.

Line 25. The Miao text omits ㄘㄢ ㄉㄢ ㄘ, "thus did take hold of", at the end of this line. It has been restored to preserve the parallelism with line 16.

Line 27. The expression ㄐㄣ ㄐㄢ ㄉ, "aunt", has been incorrectly written ㄐㄣ ㄘㄢ ㄉ here and again in line 32. In the manuscript this line stops at the word 'ㄘ', and is followed by a repetition of the whole line with the words ㄉㄢ ㄘ added at the end.

Line 32. Following the second section of the song, lines 15 to 32 the Miao manuscript inserts the following lines:

ㄱㄣ ㄐㄢ ㄘ ㄘ ㄱ. ㄘ,
man father able come arrange for,

ㄘ ㄘㄢ ㄐ ㄘ ㄘㄢ ㄐ,
arrange for place at bottom completed for whom,

ㄘ ㄘ ㄘ ㄘ ㄐ ㄱ.
completed for the middleman oh.

The man, the father entertained,
And kept the lowest place for whom?
He kept it for the middleman.

These lines seem to be entirely out of place. They do not connect with either the section that precedes them or with that which follows. If they belong anywhere it is in section one, lines 1 to 14, for it is there that the places at table are described. Moreover they do not preserve the poetic pattern. Throughout the song a mention of the middleman is always balanced with a mention of the headman. Here the latter has disappeared altogether. However the chief problem is that these lines contradict directly what has been said before. Far from being welcomed and given the place of honour, the middleman is here snubbed and insulted by having to sit in the lowest seat. Why this sudden change of attitude? There is no hint of a reason anywhere in the song, and the final section implies that the middleman's mission was ultimately accomplished. A marriage was indeed arranged. The conclusion seems to be that these three lines are in fact an intrusion into the text, and would be better left out, but where and how they originated remains unexplained.

Lines 49 and 50. In the manuscript these two lines follow line 52. However discussion of the projected marriage must have taken place before the men subsided, dead drunk, on to the floor.

M306

Old Miao songs about marriage. 5.

Song of collecting livestock from the bridegroom's family.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

A note at the end of this song says that it was “a song of complaint because the cattle and pigs were not big enough”. The marriage arrangements had all been worked out by the middleman, including the number of animals to be given by the bridegroom's family to the bride's family. When, however, the marriage procession arrived, and the “headman”, that is the leader of the party, asked about the settlement of livestock, he received only an evasive reply. It was the duty of the younger brother to collect the beasts, and the bridegroom's family, knowing that the animals were of inferior quality, tried to hand them over to the young man, in the hope that, being inexperienced he would not demur. The song is evidence that they did not, in fact, get away with it. In a further note at the end of the song Wang Ming-ji explained that in such circumstances the matter would have to be settled by an additional payment of money or wine.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 5.

Song of collecting livestock from the bridegroom's family.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Who has arranged for the middleman?
The man, the father has arranged for the middleman.
Who has arranged a marriage?
The man, the father has arranged a marriage.

5 He has arranged for three bridesmaids at the marriage,
And he has arranged for three brothers at the marriage.

He has arranged for three bridesmaids at the marriage,
Each wearing her leg bands properly adjusted.
He has arranged for three brothers at the marriage,
10 Each wearing his silk gown, the brightest garment.

The brightest garments had woven braids,
The flowing garments had woven tassels,
Woven tassels all properly knotted,
Woven braids all useful and fitting,
15 To accompany the daughter the adult young woman.

When the next day came,
As we followed one another,
Crossing the plain, in our opinion, our appearance,
Our appearance was worthy
20 Worthy from the outset of the marriage,
But we collected a marriage cow only the size of a deer!

As we followed one another,
Crossing the plain, in our opinion, our appearance,
Our appearance was worthy,
25 Worthy from the outset of the marriage,
But we collected a marriage sheep only the size of a small rabbit!

When the next day came,
The headman would collect,
Collect the daughter, the adult young woman's worth,
30 But the headman could not collect it.

Then for the daughter,
The debt was collected by the younger brother.
He collected for the marriage a piglet only as big as a small rat!
He collected for the marriage a kid only as big as a small rabbit!

M306

C]'']_v T₋ [= C]⁻ Δ⁻ Λ_n Γ'''.
 song which collect cattle pig go to family marriage.

U₀₆ D_{n6} Γⁿ S₁₁.
Wang Ming-ji wrote.

$\bar{J} J^r \quad \quad \quad \dagger^r \quad \quad \quad \dagger^r J''.$
 who arranged for middleman.

$\Lambda_{\varsigma} \quad \supset^{\mathfrak{n}} \mathfrak{t}^{\mathfrak{r}} \quad \mathfrak{t}^{\mathfrak{r}} \quad \mathfrak{t}^{\mathfrak{r}} \mathbb{J}''.$
 man father arranged for middleman.

J J^r C.L. t^r L''.

who with arranged for marriage.

Λς ɹⁿ t^r ɕɿ. t^r ɿ''.

man father with arranged for marriage.

5	† ^r	‡ ⁿ	C _n	† ^r	3 _s	‡ ⁿ C‡ ⁿ
	arranged for	get	connector	three	kinds	maidens
	C ^{''} ,					
	marriage,					

† ^r	T ^{''}	C _n	† ^r	3 ₃	T ⁻ C ^u
arranged for	get	connector	three	kinds	brothers

['''.
 marriage.

† ^r	T ⁿ	C _n	† ^r	3 ₃	T ⁿ C ⁿ
arranged for	get	connector	three	kinds	maidens
C ⁿ ,					
marriage,					

Γ'' $\Gamma' \subset \Gamma''$ \dagger^r $\mathbb{I}^n \dagger_v$.
wearing leg bands arranged properly.

† ^r	T ^u	C _n	† ^r	3 ₃	T ⁻ C ^u
arranged for	get	connector	three	kinds	brothers
<p>□^u,</p> <p>marriage,</p>					

10 'C̄ C'° C_u J^δ Tⁿ V_u,
wearing gowns silk garments brightest,

J^δ Tⁿ V_u J^r J^{nc} 6^δ.
garments brightest together weave braid.

J^δ Jⁿ L₋ J^r J^{nc} J^r,
garments flowing together weave tassels,

J^{nc} J^r †^r C_{nu} †_u.
weave tassels knotted properly.

J^{nc} 6^δ †^r C_u T_n.
weave braid useful fitting.

15 CT_o Jⁿ L^δ T^u Tⁿ C†', G_u C_{nc} L_u C_u.
with the daughter young woman adult go.

J_n C_n †^c L_o S^δ,
tomorrow able come away,

Jⁿ †^o Jⁿ L⁻ J^δ,
we follow our backs,

Jⁿ C₋ Tⁿ T^{nc} Jⁿ L⁻ 3^δ,
we looked ground level our appearance,

Jⁿ L⁻ 3^δ 3₋ 3^δ J_u CT^δ,
our appearance appearance is worth,

20 CT^δ C'° Tⁿ J^o Lⁿ J_o J⁻ J^o L_o,
worth marriage from beginning come,

T₋ Tⁿ C'° Tⁿ J^o C_u †_u J_u.
collect get marriage cow deer.

Jⁿ †^o Jⁿ Lⁿ J^δ,
we follow our backs,

Jⁿ C₋ Tⁿ T^{nc} Jⁿ L⁻ 3^δ,
we looked ground level our appearance,

Jⁿ L⁻ 3^δ 3₋ 3^δ J_u CT^δ,
our appearance appearance is worth,

25 CT^δ C'° Tⁿ J^o Lⁿ J_o J⁻ J^o L_o,
worth marriage from beginning come,

T₁ T'' [''' T' J° Λ^δ G₁ L̄.
 collect get marriage sheep small rabbit.

J_n C_n t^ε L_o S^δ,
 tomorrow able come away,

J' L' T^υ Γ t₁₁ T₁,
 the headman collected,

T₁ J' L' T^υ T' C t', G_υ C_{nc} L₁₁ C J',
 collected the daughter young woman adult worth,

30 J' L' T^υ Γ t₁₁ T₁ J^r T''.
 the headman collected not get.

T₁ T''' J' L' T^υ T' C t',
 then for the daughter,

CE^r J' L' C^υ J⁻ T_r T₁,
 debt the brother youngest collected,

T₁ T'' [''' T' J° G₁ C J⁻ L⁻
 collected get marriage small pig as big as

G₁ C^δ,
 small rat,

T₁ T'' [''' T' J° G₁ Γ^r L⁻
 collected get marriage small goat as big as

G₁ L̄.
 small rabbit.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 5

Song of collecting livestock from the bridegroom's family.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no. 12, page 37)

Line 13. Following this line the Miao manuscript inserts,

J ^{nc}	J ⁿ L [˥]	T ^u T ⁿ C ⁺ ʼ,	G _u	C _{nc} L _{ii}
weave	the	daughter	young woman	adult

In this sentence the “young woman” is the direct object of the verb “to weave”, which is a nonsense in Miao as it is in English. Moreover, whatever it may mean, the line is out of place at this point, since lines 11 to 14 form a complete, properly balanced stanza without it. Thus, either the line must be deleted as an intrusion into the text, or amended and repositioned to make it fit the context. The second alternative has been chosen for the following reason. All the elaborate arrangements described in the preceding lines were to provide the bride with an escort worthy of the occasion. The six young people, suitably dressed for the part, were to accompany her to her new home, and the lines which follow describe what an impressive sight they were as they passed along the road. However, it is nowhere actually stated in the song that these folk, in all their finery, were escorting a bride, and it may be that this indeed was the purpose of the line under discussion. So if the initial word J^{nc}, “weave”, is removed as having been copied by mistake from lines 11 to 14, and the words CT_o, “with”, and ɔ_{ii}, “go”, are added to the beginning and end of the line respectively, then it will read,

CT _o	J ⁿ L [˥]	T ^u T ⁿ C ⁺ ʼ,	G _u	C _{nc} L _{ii}	ɔ _{ii}
with	the	daughter	young woman	adult	go

That is, “to go with the daughter, the adult young woman”. If, now, this amended line is inserted as line 15, the meaning of the whole of the first half of the song will be clarified.

M307

Old Miao songs about marriage. 6.

Song about serving breakfast.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Introduction.

In this song all had gone well with the marriage, and the bridal party was about to return home. The “bridegroom’s gown”, presented by the bride to her husband, had brought credit to both families, and, though the matter is not mentioned, presumably no fault was found with the cattle of the marriage settlement. Now on the morning of their departure, led by the bridegroom himself, the family pressed gifts of food and wine upon their guests, and offered lavish provision for the journey home.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 6.

Song about serving breakfast

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

The maiden stitched linen, the maiden stitched a gown,
Stitched it for the mature, forthcoming youth, his bridegroom's gown,
Stitched it for the mature, forthcoming youth, a gown, ample and full.

5 She stitched it, a flowing garment, a credit to her family.
She stitched it, a garment falling in folds, a credit to his family.

Let the mature, forthcoming youth go and replenish the food baskets.
In replenishing the food baskets do not be hindered,
In replenishing the basins do not rest.

10 The serving lads were laughing,
Laughing and smiling as they waited,
Waited upon the marriage party hand and foot.

“Open the mouth of your bag and let us fill it,
Fill it with white rice for you to carry and show,
Show to your children at home!”

15 “Bring your flask and let us fill it,
Fill it with clear wine for you to carry and show,
Show to your old people at home!”

20 “You do not have anything for,
For the marriage party to eat on the way home,
Now do take some white rice for,
For the marriage party to eat on the way home!”

25 “You do not have anything for,
For the marriage party to eat on the way back,
Now do take some white rice for,
For the marriage party to eat on the way back!”

M307

C□" J^u T^{ɔ̃} ɿ'. U_{n6} ɔ_{n6} ɿⁿ S₁₁.
 song which serving breakfast. Wang Ming-ji wrote.

C□" Ṣ ɔ̃^{ɔ̃} C□" Ṣ ɿ'^o,
 maiden sewed hemp maiden sewed gown,

Ṣ Cɿ₁₁ J^u Cɿ₁₁ J_{ɔ̃} ɿ'^o
 sewed youth mature youth forthcoming gown

Ṿ ɿ'⁼,
 bridegroom,

Ṣ Cɿ₁₁ J^u Cɿ₁₁ J_{ɔ̃} ɿ'^o
 sewed youth mature youth forthcoming gown

J_o ɿ^o.
 cause big.

Ṣ' J_o J^{ɔ̃} Jⁿ L₁ T^{ɔ̃} Δ'^u
 Sewed cause garment flowing give face

ɿ'^u,
 bride's family,

5 Ṣ J_o J^{ɔ̃} Lⁿ V_o T^{ɔ̃} Δ'^u
 sewed cause garment curving give face

J^o.
 bridegroom's family.

J_o Cɿ₁₁ J^u Cɿ₁₁ J_{ɔ̃} Cɿ_{ɔ̃} T^{ɔ̃}
 cause youth mature youth forthcoming go serve

V^{ɔ̃},
 baskets,

T^{ɔ̃} V^{ɔ̃} J^{'-} J_o Cɿ_ɿ,
 serve baskets do not cause stop,

T^{ɔ̃} T_{n6} J^{'-} J_o J_o.
 serve basins do not cause rest.

Cɿ₁₁ Δ⁼ †^ɿ L_o Δ_o,
 youths serving able come laugh,

- 10 Δ. C t' u Δ. C t' r t.,
 laughing and smiling waited upon,
- t. [' " T ^] . J - Λ C J ^ J - Λ T ^ .
 waited upon marriage by arm by hand.
- D - D _ n C [n u ' C ^ L . J ^ C T _ n ,
 take your mouth bag come we fill,
- C T _ n V - C Δ ^ n C t' _ n c L _ n c D _ n T ^ r J' ^ ,
 fill cooked rice white you carry show,
- J' ^ [T ^ Λ u L _ c J _ u C] - ,
 show children gone at home,
- 15 D - [_ n J' " L . J ^ C T _ n ,
 take thus pot come we fill,
- C T _ n [^ D ^ S ^ c L . T ^ r J' ^ ,
 fill wine clear come carry show,
- J' ^ L ^ J - L u L _ c J _ u [^ .
 show old folk gone at home.
- J ^ r T " C _ n J J ^ r T' " ,
 not get connector anything for,
- T' " [' " T ^] ^ C " t . C] - .
 for marriage eat reach home.
- 20 D - C J ^ [^ o C t' _ n c L _ n c T' " ,
 take meat white for,
- T' " [' " T ^] ^ C " t . C] - .
 for marriage eat reach home.
- J ^ r T " C _ n J J ^ r T' " ,
 not get connector anything for,
- T' " [' " T ^] ^ C " t . [' ^ c .
 for marriage eat reach place.
- D - V - C Δ ^ n C t' _ n c L _ n c T' " ,
 take cooked rice white for,
- 25 T' " [' " T ^] ^ C " t . [' ^ c .
 for marriage eat reach place.

M307
Old Miao songs about marriage. 6.

Song about serving breakfast.

Collected by Wang Ming-ji.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document B (no. 13, page 38)

Line 19. In the manuscript the expression 𐏃'𐏃 𐏃'𐏃 𐏃°, “the wedding party”, is replaced by 𐏃'𐏃 𐏃'𐏃 𐏃'𐏃 𐏃°, “the wedding guests”. However, this reading is not repeated in the balancing lines which follow, that is in lines 21, 23 and 25, and is probably, therefore, a mistake.

M308
Old Miao songs about marriage. 7.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin

Introduction.

The marriage songs, for the most part, say nothing about the reactions of either the bride or the bridegroom. In this song the latter is not even mentioned, but we are told that when the bride saw the marriage party arriving she trembled. Whether this was from fear or excitement is not revealed.

The Miao were not potters. For generations now they have used earthenware basins and bowls bought from the Chinese at local markets. However the old songs reflect a time when rice was eaten from small individual baskets of woven bamboo, using, not chopsticks, but spoons carved from wood. Vegetables and meat were contained in wooden bowls set on low tables, and wine was drunk from small bowls, perhaps two inches in diameter, also carved from wooden blocks. In this song we are told that new rice baskets were provided and the wine cups were also new and “thin”, that is, finely carved.

The connection between the final section from line 60 and the rest of the song is a little obscure. The suggestion seems to be that, though their daughter has now left home, life for the parents had to go on, so they returned to the daily tasks of driving the cattle and sheep out to pasture. Nevertheless families related by marriage should keep in touch even though separated by considerable distances.

M308
Old Miao songs about marriage. 7.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

- The stars circle the sky,
And cold water circles the earth,
But cold water is not the thing to offer to a guest,
And the daughter, the adult young woman is not,
5 Is not the person to offer in marriage!
- Who, on the bride's side, initiated the marriage?
The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, initiated the marriage.
Who, on the bridegroom's side initiated the wedding?
The woman, the aunt, initiated the wedding.
- 10 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, have caught,
Caught the fattened chicken in order to kill it,
And they have called in the old folk to determine a time.
- They have determined a time and determined a season, but when?
They have determined a time and determined a season in,
15 In Dragon month or Rabbit month,
And on the fifteenth day.
- The middleman having eaten,
Eaten the chicken and drunk the broth,
The visit for fetching the bride was agreed.
- 20 The proposed time has come,
We hear it is today,
Today the marriage party is coming from yonder,
From yonder the marriage party will make its winding way,
So people from all around will be watching.
- 25 The door of the woman, the mother, and the man, the father,
The outer door, the door of planks, faced which way?
It faced directly toward the sunrise,
It faced directly toward the clump of variegated bamboo.
- The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, have opened,
30 Opened the door of planks for the arrival of the marriage party.
The way was very smooth as though paved with silver,
The way was very smooth as though the threshold were gold.
- The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, first arranged,
Arranged for two attendants to go out with lighted torches.
35 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, next arranged,
Arranged for two youths bearing wine horns to go and pour wine.
- So the two attendant youths went and poured wine,

Pouring clear wine they mingled with the guests,
Pouring clear wine they mixed with the guests.

40 The daughter, the adult young woman, saw it all,
And the daughter, the adult young woman, trembled.

The marriage party came, and the marriage party drank,
Drank well the clear wine from fine cups.
The marriage party came, and the marriage party drank,
45 Drank well the clear wine from new cups.

The man, the father, replenished,
Replenished well the new baskets with white rice,
Replenished well the basins with white pork.

50 So the marriage party came and the marriage party ate,
Ate an evening meal of hot rice before departing,
Ate an evening meal of white pork before departing.

The woman, the mother, grieved,
Grieved for the woman, the mother's, daughter,
The daughter, the adult young woman,
55 As she arose and left the shelter of the door,
As she departed from the shelter of the home.

The bridegroom's family also grieved,
Grieved for the bridegroom's family, their fine long horned ox,
Their long horned ox which had crossed over, but would not be driven back.

60 When the next day came,
Very early in the morning,
The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, drove out,
Drove out the fine cattle and horses on to the plain,
Drove out the fine cattle and horses to graze,
65 Drove out the jostling sheep and goats to pasture.

Now those people arranged with their in-laws,
And those folk came from their place,
For those folk had remembered.

70 We might not take along a pig, if the journey is long,
But, though the journey is long, we must remember to meet our in-laws.

M308

Y⁻ 'ɔ^u Cɔ^u Y⁻ L^u ɔ^u Y⁻ ɕ^{'u}. J_ŋ t_o.
Miao song old which make marriage. number seven.

'C^u ɔ^u ɔ^{'n} L^u CT^u,
stars encircle sky,

Y^u t_{nc} ɔ^{'n} L^u t^{'=},
water cold encircle earth,

Y^u t_{nc} J^r Λ^o J⁻ L^ɔ C_n
water cold not is kind of thing connector

t^o
offer guests,

Jⁿ L^ɔ T^u Tⁿ C^t, G_u C_{nc} L^u J^r Λ^o,
the daughter young woman adult not is,

5 J^r Λ^o J⁻ L^ɔ C_n t^o ɕ^{'u}.
not is kind of person connector offer marriage.

C_n J⁻ J^r C^{no} J_ɔ ɕ^{'u},
connector who situated begin marriage,

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɕ [C^{no} Jⁿ t^r C^{no} J_ɔ ɕ^{'u}.
woman mother man father situated begin marriage.

C_n J⁻ J^r C^{no} J_ɔ J^o,
connector who situated begin wedding,

J^o Jⁿ ɔ_ɪ C^{no} J_ɔ J^o.
woman aunt situated begin wedding.

10 L^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɕ [C^{no} Jⁿ t^r L_ɪ ɔ_ɪ [C_{ni},
woman mother man father have caught,

[C_{ni} J^t J_o V_u t^ɕ L_o T⁻.
caught chicken see official able come kill.

I^{'u} Lⁿ J⁻ L^u T⁻ ĩ Cⁿⁱ.
call old folk come reckon time.

\bar{C} C^{ni} \bar{C} C_{ni} T'' T''' T_{so} ,
 reckon time reckon season at when,

\bar{C} C^{ni} \bar{C} C_{ni} T'' ,
 reckon time reckon season at,

15 T'' 3^{so} C^{no} T^n \bar{L} L_n ,
 at dragon bring the rabbit month,

L^n D_{ni} S^{nc} J_{ni} J' .
 going high fifteen.

J' L' T^{u} t^{r} J'' L_{so} D_{so} C'' ,
 the middleman has eaten,

C'' L^{u} J' CT' \bar{S} L^{u} J' J'' ,
 eaten the chicken meat drunk the chicken broth,

L_{so} D_{so} T_n CT^{n} J^{n} CT'' .
 has fixed the visit to fetch the bride.

20 C^{ni} C_{ni} CT_{so} t_{so} ,
 time thought of reached,

$'C^{\circ}$ \bar{C} L_n $'\text{D}^{\circ}$ C^- .
 hear for this reason as today.

$'\text{D}^{\circ}$ C^- C'' T^- J^{n} T^{n} \bar{Y} ,
 today marriage comes yonder there,

C'' \bar{C}' C_n L^{n} V_{so} J^{n} T^{n} ,
 marriage makes its way thus winding yonder,

\bar{C} T_{so} J^{n} L_{so} J^{r} C^{no} D^{so} .
 for this reason all around have a look.

25 J° J^{n} C^{nc} Λ_{so} C^{no} J^{n} t^{r} J^- Δ'' ,
 woman mother man father door,

Δ'' J' Δ'' J^- T_{so} T° C'^{nc} T_{so} ,
 door outer door planks face toward place what,

T° T'_{so} T° S^{so} $'C^{\text{u}}$ T^- ,
 face toward clear side sun come,

T° T'_{so} T° $C\text{J}^{\circ}$ $C\Delta_{\text{ni}}$ T_{so}
 face toward clear clump coloured bamboo.

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r L_ι J^{'b},
 woman mother man father have opened,

30 J^{'b} Δ^u J⁻ T_υ T^{'u} [']^u C[_u].
 opened door planks for marriage arrive.

[ⁿ] CΔ_z CΔ_z C_n Tⁱ C^{nc},
 road very smooth connector paved silver,

[ⁿ] CΔ_z CΔ_z C_n C[_u] J^u.
 road very smooth connector arrived gold.

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r C_ι L_ο S^u t^r
 woman mother man father did come first arrange

T^u,
 get,

t^r T^u C_n Y⁻ L^b b_ι
 arrange get connector two classifier young men

[no] Lⁿ Y_u CT_z T^ς T^u.
 attendants go light torches.

35 J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [no] Jⁿ t^r C_ι L_ο S^u t^r
 woman mother man father did come first arrange

T^u,
 get,

t^r T^u C_n Y⁻ L^b CT_u
 arrange get connector two classifier youths

[no] J^r J^u CT_z bⁿ [̂]
 carry wine horns go pour wine.

C_n Y⁻ L^b b_ι CT_u
 connector two classifier young men youths

[no] Lⁿ Λ_u CT_z bⁿ [̂],
 attendants went pour wine,

bⁿ [̂] Jⁿ S^{nc} L_ο J^r J_ι,
 poured wine clear come mingle,

bⁿ [̂] Jⁿ S^{nc} L_ο J^r J_ι.
 poured wine clear come mix.

- 40 Jⁿ L^ʔ T^u Tⁿ C⁺ʔ, G_u C^{nc} L_u L ɔ_u ɔ_u,
the daughter young woman adult had seen,
- Jⁿ L^ʔ T^u Tⁿ C⁺ʔ, G_u C_{nc} L_u Tⁿ [ʔ^ʔ [ʔ^ʔ.
the daughter young woman adult trembled.
- [ʔⁿ T⁻ L_u [ʔⁿ ɽ_u,
marriage came also marriage drank,
- ɽ_u [ʔ^{nc} ɔⁿ S^{nc} ʔⁿ ɔ^o C_{nc}.
drank wine clear well cups thin.
- [ʔⁿ T⁻ [ʔ_n [ʔⁿ ɽ_u,
marriage came thus marriage drank,
- 45 ɽ_u [ʔ^{nc} ɔⁿ S^{nc} ʔⁿ ɔ^o [ʔ^ʔ.
drank wine clear well cups new.
- Λ_u [ʔ^{nc} ɔⁿ t^r L ɔ_u ɽ_u,
man father has filled up,
- ɽ_u CΔⁿ C[ʔ^{nc} L_{nc} ʔⁿ V^ʔ [ʔ^ʔ,
filled up rice white well baskets new,
- ɽ_u C[ʔ^r C[ʔ⁻ [ʔ^{nc} C⁺ʔ_{nc} L_{nc} ʔⁿ C[ʔ_u T_u.
filled up meat pig white well within basins.
- [ʔⁿ T⁻ L_u [ʔⁿ Cⁿ,
marriage came also marriage ate,
- 50 Cⁿ ʔ^o CΔⁿ ɽ⁻ ʔ_r C[ʔ_o L_u T_ʔ,
ate supper rice hot with gone finish,
- Cⁿ ʔ^o C[ʔ^r C[ʔ⁻ [ʔ^{nc} C⁺ʔ_{nc} L_{nc} C[ʔ_o L_u T_ʔ.
ate supper meat pig white with gone finish.
- [ʔ_n ɽ_u ɽ^o ɽⁿ C^{nc} [ʔ⁻,
thus was woman mother grieved for,
- [ʔ⁻ ɽ^o ɽⁿ C^{nc} ɽⁿ L^ʔ T^u Tⁿ C⁺ʔ_i,
grieved for woman mother the daughter,
- Jⁿ L^ʔ T^u Tⁿ C⁺ʔ, G_u C_{nc} L_u,
the daughter young woman adult,
- 55 ɽ_u ɽ^ʔ [ʔ_n C⁺ʔ Δⁿ,
rose up left thus shelter door,

3" CT'" E_n C[†] E[~].
 well depart thus shelter home.

E_n J_u E'" Tⁿ J° E',
 thus was bridegroom family grieved for,

E' E'" Tⁿ J° 3" C[~] J^u Lⁿ V_ε CT'^ε,
 grieved for bridegroom family good ox long horn,

C[~] J^u Lⁿ V_ε CT'^ε T_n L_o J_o S^r T'_o.
 ox long horn cross over come not return drive.

60 J_n E_n †^ε L_o S^z,
 tomorrow able come away,

S^z CT_u E^{no} T₋ Jⁿ C[†],
 morning bring come early,

J° Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ε E^{no} Jⁿ †^r T'_o,
 woman mother man father drove out,

T'_o C[~] C^o J₋ C₋ CT_u CT_z,
 drove out cattle horses fine outside plain,

T'_o C[~] C^o J₋ C₋ CT_u E⁻ T̄,
 drove out cattle horses fine outside grazing,

65 T'_o Λ^z E^r CT_n Jⁿ CT₋ L_o E⁻ CE^{no}.
 drove out sheep goats jostling come pasture.

†ⁿ C^o †^r C^o Jⁿ C^u,
 those people arranged relatives,

†ⁿ L^o T₋ †ⁿ J^o Tⁿ
 those folk came from their place,

†ⁿ L^o †ⁿ CE^{no}
 those folk they remember.

70 Eⁿ Δⁿ J^r Λ° J₋ L^o C_n E^z CJ₋,
 road far not is the thing connector lead pig,

\bar{C}^n	Δ^n	C_n	$\bar{\Lambda}$	L^n	CE^{no}	T-	CE^r
road	far	connector	must	us	remember	come	meet

C^u .
relatives.

M308
Old Miao songs about marriage. 7.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 1, page 1).

In the Miao manuscript this song is set out as a piece of continuous writing. Generally the punctuation indicates how the lines should be divided, but at a number of points a passage simply runs on as though it were a single long sentence. This is the case with lines 4 and 5, lines 14, 15 and 16, lines 18 and 19, lines 25 and 26, and lines 57, 58 and 59.

M309
Old Miao songs about marriage. 8.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Introduction

The father of the young woman in this song and the man who was hoping that she might become his future daughter-in-law, are both called “the man, the father”. The confusion is somewhat mitigated by the fact that throughout the song the two men are kept apart, and, in addition, the young woman’s father is always accompanied by his wife, while the prospective mother-in-law, and, for that matter, the prospective bridegroom do not appear at all. For the sake of clarity in the translation, however, “the man her father”, and “the woman her mother” are used for the prospective bride’s parents.

The story behind the song seems to be that the appearance of skeins of yarn drying in the sun on the fence around the vegetable plot could not but draw comment from the neighbours. Moreover, the quality and the quantity of the yarn were sure indications of the skill and application of the maker. This talk reached the ears of a man on the look out for a good daughter-in-law, and he at once set to work to produce the livestock necessary to celebrate a marriage and to pay the marriage settlement. Before any official approach had been made through a middleman, however, the girl’s family let it be known that they were not interested. It is quite possible that this was not a final rejection, but simply a bargaining ploy, since the prospective father-in-law responded by arranging with a relative, whether one of his or one of theirs is not clear, to invite the girl’s parents to a meal in his house and presumably do a little special advocacy. As an added incentive, the relative chosen was one who had the reputation of being a very good cook! Whether this manoeuvre was successful, we are not told.

M309
Old Miao songs about marriage. 8.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

- With her smooth hands the girl had joined the hemp strands,
And now the weather came out fine and good,
Just right for the girl to carry her skeins to the river.
Very soon the girl's skeins, the girl's yarn was hanging,
5 Hanging to dry in the garden plot.
- Now the man, the father had heard,
Heard about that daughter, the adult young woman,
And the man, the father, mated his ewes for breeding,
And mated a pair of spotted pigs.
10 So the man, the father, made arrangements,
Mating all the flocks and herds.
- But the woman, her mother, and the man, her father were of one mind,
There would be no discussion of their daughter, the adult young woman.
For regarding their daughter, the adult young woman,
15 The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, were adamant.
- They grieved that their daughter, the adult young woman
Might rise and leave the shelter of the door.
They grieved that their daughter, the adult young woman
Might rise and quit the shelter of the house.
- 20 So the man, the father, arranged,
Arranged with a relative, one who could cook.
And the relative came and the relative called,
Called the woman, her mother, and the man, her father, to share hospitality in the
house.
- The relative came and the relative made,
25 Made the woman, her mother, and the man, her father, share hospitality in the home.

M309

Y⁻ 'ɔ^u Cɿ^u Y⁻ L^u ɿ^u Y⁻ ɿ^u. Λⁿ t^o.
Miao song old which make marriage. number eight

Cɿ^u Tⁿ ɿ^o J^r C^{nu} Tⁿ J^{nc} CT⁻,
girl hands smooth hands join hemp,

ɿ^{'ɔ̃} CT^u t^ɛ L^o ʒ^u,
fine weather able come good,

ʒ^u Cɿ^u T^r ɿ^p L^ɛ CT^u Δⁿ.
good girl carry skeins gone edge stream.

Cɿ^u ɿ^p Cɿ^u S^o ɿ^{ɔ̃},
girl skeins girl yarn hung,

5 ɿ^{ɔ̃} Lⁿ ɿⁿ Cɿ^r T^u Tⁿ Cɿ^r V^{ɔ̃}.
hung quickly in the garden plot.

Λ^ɛ ɿ^{no} ɿⁿ t^r ɿⁿ ɿ^o 'ɕ^o,
man father thus did hear,

'ɕ^o ɿⁿ L^{ɔ̃} T^u Tⁿ Cɿ^r, ɿ^o C^{nc} L^u.
heard the daughter young woman adult.

Λ^ɛ ɿ^{no} ɿⁿ t^r CT⁻ C^{nc} Λ^{ɔ̃} L^o ɿ^{nc} ɿ^{ɔ̃},
man father mated ewes come breeding,

CT⁻ Cɿ⁻ Cɿ^r Lⁿ ɿ^{nc} Yⁿ Cɿ^{nc}
mated pigs spotted one pair.

10 Λ^ɛ ɿ^{no} Lⁿ t^r ɿⁿ ɿ^o t^r,
man father thus did arrange,

CT⁻ C^u C^{ɔ̃} J⁻ C⁻ L^o J^{ɔ̃} J^o.
mated cattle horses many come all constantly.

J^o ɿⁿ C^{nc} Λ^ɛ ɿ^{no} ɿⁿ t^r t^r J^r T^{'nc} S^{nc},
woman mother man father pair together heart,

ɿⁿ L^{ɔ̃} T^u Tⁿ Cɿ^r, ɿ^o C^{nc} L^u J^r T^{'u} L^u,
the daughter young woman adult not for words,

$J^n L^b$ $T^u T^n C^t$, G_u $C_{nc} L_{II}$
 the daughter young woman adult

- 15 J^o $J^n C^{nc}$ Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ D_- $E'^- E_u$.
 woman mother man father were unwilling.

E'^- $J^n L^b$ $T^u T^n C^t$, G_u $C_{nc} L_{II}$ E_n ,
 grieved the daughter young woman adult thus,

$J J^b$ E_n C^t Δ'' .
 rise go away thus shelter door.

E'^- $J^n L^b$ $T^u T^n C^t$, G_u $C_{nc} L_{II}$ E_n ,
 grieved the daughter young woman adult thus,

$J C^t''$ E_n C^t E^v .
 rise leave thus shelter home.

- 20 Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ E_n D_- t^r ,
 man father thus did arrange,

t^r T^u Λ_n T^u $Y^- C^t''$,
 arranged person relative person cook,

Λ_n T^- L_- Λ_n I'^u ,
 relative came also relative called,

I'^u J^o $J^n C^{nc}$ Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ $Y^- J^v$ CJ^- ,
 called woman mother man father welcome house,

Λ_n T^- L_- Λ_n Y^- ,
 relative came also relative made,

- 25 Y^- J^o $J^n C^{nc}$ Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ $J^- J^v$ $E^?$.
 made woman mother man father welcome home.

M309
Old Miao songs about marriage. 8.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 2, page 2).

The following pairs of lines are written as single sentences in the Miao text. 4 and 5, 16 and 17, 18 and 19.

Line 17. The expression $\overset{\zeta}{J} \text{ } \text{J}^{\flat}$, “rise and go away” in this line and the corresponding expression $\overset{\zeta}{J} \text{ } \text{CT}'$, “rise and leave” in line 19 are missing in the Miao text, but without them the lines do not make sense. They have been restored by reference to previous and subsequent songs where the expressions also occur.

Line 21. A note in the text explains that $\text{T}^{\flat} \text{ } \text{Y}^{\flat} \text{ } \text{CT}'^{\flat}$ means a person who prepares the meat and vegetable dishes at a meal.

Line 23. A note in the text gives the meaning of $\text{Y}^{\flat} \text{ } \text{J}^{\flat} \text{ } \text{C}\text{J}$ - as “to cause to rest in the house”, that is to extend hospitality. Presumably the parallel expression, $\text{J}^{\flat} \text{ } \text{J}^{\flat} \text{ } \text{C}^{\flat}$ in line 25 has a similar meaning.

M310
Old Miao songs about marriage. 9.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Introduction

In this song, the bride's parents, reluctant to allow her to go, but unwilling to turn a good offer down, refused to commit themselves. In the face, however, of a very persuasive middleman, they eventually agreed to leave the final decision to the bride. Fortunately she was in no doubt what she wanted to do.

The text is a little confusing in that it uses exactly the same formula, "the woman, the mother, and the man, the father," for the parents of both bridegroom and bride. Up to, and including, line 17 it refers to the former, while line 18 and thereafter, it refers to the latter. In translation, in order to make a clear distinction, the bride's parents are described as "the woman, her mother, and the man, her father".

In naming the months of the year the Miao adopted the same cycle of twelve animals as used by the Chinese. These are, of course, months of the lunar calendar. Mentioned in this song are Horse-month which is the second month, Sheep-month which is the third month, Rat-month which is the eighth month, Ox-month which is the ninth month, Rabbit-month which is the eleventh month and Dragon-month which is the twelfth-month. The new year usually began in late January or early February.

M310
Old Miao songs about marriage. 9.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

- With winter past and warm weather coming,
People were at their farming early,
- So, come Sheep-month and Horse-month,
The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, began
5 Raising all kinds of crops and filling the land,
Planting millet broadcast and filling the place.
- Come Ox-month and Rat-month,
All the crops of broadcast millet ripened,
Ripened golden yellow, an excellent harvest.
- 10 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, discussed and debated,
Discussed a marriage union,
Discussed a marriage bond.
- Then the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, arranged,
Arranged for the middleman to go till he reached,
15 Reached the in-laws' family home.
- The middleman opened his mouth, opened his lips, and asked,
Asked that the daughter, the adult young woman might come and be,
Be daughter-in-law for the woman, the mother, and the man, the father.
- But the woman, her mother, and the man, her father grieved,
20 Grieved that their daughter
Should arise and leave the shelter of the door,
Should arise and quit the shelter of the home.
- She was such an attractive person,
The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, would not give an answer.
25 But the middleman was undaunted,
He kept arguing vigorously until nearly midnight.
- The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, whispered together then said,
"All right, let our daughter, the adult young woman reply".
Thus it was she who replied to the middleman's proposal.
- 30 So when the next day came,
Early, as soon as it grew light,
The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, returned,
Returned word for the middleman to convey to the in-laws,
Who thus received the woman, her mother, and the man, her father's response.
- 35 The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, fed,
Fed the fattened chicken in preparation for the marriage,

And fed the spotted pig in preparation for the wedding.
The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, called,
Called the neighbours to come,
40 To come and determine a time and determine a date,
And they settled on Dragon-month and Rabbit-month.

The woman, her mother, and the man, her father, arranged,
Arranged for cooks to prepare the meat and vegetable dishes,
And they called people to come and cook the rice.

45 They called the children to come and wait upon the guests,
And called the daughters, the adult young women, to come and carry water.
They called the old folk to come and eat meat,
The called the old folk to come and drink wine.
So they called their relatives to come and congratulate the bride.

M310

Y⁻ 'ɔ^u Cɿ^u Y⁻ L^u ɿ^u Y⁻ C^{'u}. Cⁿ t^o.
Miao song old which make marriage. number nine.

CT^u C^{'u} C^{'nu} L_ɿ CT^u j^o L_o,
winter passed gone weather warm come,

CΔ^{nc} Tⁿ T^ɔ C^ɔ Y⁻ J^u C^t.
world people made farming early.

ɔ_ɿ t^o Λ^ɿ C_{no} Tⁿ C^ɔ L_n,
did reach sheep bring the horse month,

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɿ C_{no} Jⁿ t^r J_ɔ Y⁻ J^u.
woman mother man father began make farming.

5 Y⁻ T^u Cⁿ Tⁿ ɿ^u C^ɔ J^u Cⁿ j^u
made get nine the ten kinds crops thus filled

Tⁿ,
land,

ɔ_ɿ C_{no} Jⁿ t['] J⁻ C^ɿ C^ɿ C_n j^u C^{'nc}.
did plant millet scattered thus filled place.

ɔ_ɿ t^o C^u C_{no} Tⁿ C_ɿ L_n,
did reach ox bring the rat month,

t['] ɿ_ɿ J^u Jⁿ t['] J⁻ C^ɿ C^ɿ ɔ_ɿ j^u,
all kinds crops millet scattered did ripen,

j^u C_n V_ɿ V_u ɿ^u Λ_ɿ Λ^ɿ.
ripened thus yellow very good outstanding.

10 J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɿ C_{no} Jⁿ t^r Ct_ɔ T_u J^r Ct_ɔ T^u,
woman mother man father discussed and discussed,

Ct_ɔ Lⁿ T^u C_ɿ t_ɿ C^{'u},
discussed with join marriage,

Ct_ɔ Lⁿ T^u C_n t_ɿ J^o.
discussed connector join wedding.

J° J° C^{nc} Λ_ς [°_{no} J° t^r D₈ t^r,
 woman mother man father did arrange,

t^r J° L^b T^v t^r J° [°_n D₋ D_{||} J^r C_n t_o,
 arrange the middleman thus did go until reach,

15 t_o J° L^b [°''' T° J° C]°.
 reach the in-laws family house.

J° L^b T^v t^r J° D₈ [°^δ C[°_{||} [°^δ L_o C_v,
 the middleman did open mouth open lips ask,

C_v J° L^b T^v T° C t^r, G_v C_{nc} L_{||} L_o Y⁻,
 ask the daughter young woman adult come make,

Y⁻ J° J° C^{nc} Λ_ς [°_{no} J° t^r D_n
 make woman mother man father plural

T^v C^g
 daughter-in-law.

J° J° C^{nc} Λ_ς [°_{no} J° t^r t^ς L_o [°',
 woman mother man father able come grieve,

20 [°' J_v J° L^b T^v T° C t^r, [°_n,
 grieve that the daughter thus,

J J^b [°_n C t^r Δ'',
 rise leave thus shelter door,

J C T''' [°_n C t^r [°^v.
 rise go away thus shelter home.

Y⁻ [°_n [°_n 3^δ J° 3₋ Λ_z T_n J_i,
 body thus appearance elegant,

J° J° C^{nc} Λ_ς [°_{no} J° t^r L₋ D₋ T°.
 woman mother man father did not answer.

25 J° L^b T^v t^r J° J^r T^{'s} t₈,
 the middleman not ashamed,

D₈ T''' [°_n 3° C T₅ Ā t_o T₈ 'D°.
 did use thus strength argue will reach midnight

J° J° C^{nc} Λ_ς [°_{no} J° t^r C t^r' T° C t^r' T^v J_n,
 woman mother man father whisper and whisper said,

L^u ɔ^u ɔ. Jⁿ L^b T^u Tⁿ C⁺, G_u C_{nc} L_u Tⁿ.
just cause the daughter young woman adult reply.

ɔ₈ Tⁿ Jⁿ L^b T^u t^r Jⁿ C_n L_o L^u.
did reply the middleman connector words.

30 [C_n ɔ_u Jⁿ [C_n t⁺ L_o S^{ɔ̃},
thus was tomorrow able come away,

S^{ɔ̃} [C_n Jⁿ V_o T- C^o t⁺,
daybreak come early,

J_o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [C_{no} Jⁿ t^r [C_n ɔ_u S^r,
woman mother man father thus did return,

S^r C_n L_o L^u T^{'''} Jⁿ L^b T^u t^r Jⁿ [C_{no}
returned connector word for the middleman carry

T^{'''} [C^{'''}
to in-laws,

[C_n ɔ_u [C^{'''} Tⁿ J^o Tⁿ J_o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [C_{no} Jⁿ t^r
thus was in-laws got woman mother man father

L^u.
word.

35 J_o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [C_{no} Jⁿ t^r ɔ₈ J^u,
woman mother man father did feed,

ɔ₈ J^u J['] J_o V_u L_o T^u [C^{'''},
did feed chicken see ruler come pay marriage,

ɔ₈ J^u C^J C^r Lⁿ L_o T^u J^o.
did feed pig spotted come pay wedding.

J_o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ς [C_{no} Jⁿ t^r [C_n ɔ_u I^{'u},
woman mother man father thus did call,

I^{'u} [C_n Jⁿ 3^r Jⁿ 3^o T-,
called thus neighbours come,

40 ɔ₈ T- Ē [Cⁿ Ē C_{nu},
did come reckon time reckon date,

Ē Tⁿ 3₈ [C_{no} Tⁿ Ē L_n.
reckon get dragon bring the rabbit month.

L° ɔ̃ⁿ Cⁿᵃ Λₛ [ⁿᵒ ɔ̃ⁿ tʳ [ₙ ɔ̃ tʳ [ₙ,
 woman mother man father thus did arrange thus,

ɔ̃ₓ tʳ Tᵛ Λₙ Tᵛ Y⁻ CTʳ,
 did arrange person cook meat and vegetables,

ɔ̃ₓ I'ᵛ [ₙ ɔ̃⁻ ɔ̃ⁿ V T- 3̃ [ᵛ.
 did call thus those cook rice.

45 I'ᵛ L̄ Tⁿ Λᵢᵢ T- Tₒ J° J'⁻ [ₙ.
 called children come wait upon guests thus.

I'ᵛ ɔ̃ⁿ Lᵑ Tᵛ Tⁿ Ctʳ, Gᵤ Cₙᵃ Lᵢᵢ T-
 called the daughters young women adult come

Tᵣ Y".
 carry water.

I'ᵛ Lⁿ J⁻ Lᵢᵢ T- C" CTʳ,
 call old folk come eat meat,

I'ᵛ Lⁿ J⁻ Lᵢᵢ T- ɿᵢᵢ [̃.
 call old folk come drink wine.

ɔ̃ₓ I'ᵛ [ₙ Cᵑ [ⁿ [̃ᶻ T- L Cᵑ [ₙ.
 did call thus relatives come praise bride thus.

M310
Old Miao songs about marriage. 9.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 3, page 2).

The following pairs of lines appear as single long sentences in the Miao text, !3 and 14, 17 and 18, 35 and 36, 40 and 41.

Line 43, A note in the text gives the meaning of the expression $T^u \Lambda_n T^u Y^- CT'^{\geq}$ as, “people who cook meat and vegetables”.

Line 44. A similar note gives the meaning of $\mathcal{D}^- \mathcal{I}^n \check{V} T^- \overset{n}{\mathfrak{Z}} \mathcal{L}^u$ as, “people who cook the rice”.

M311
Old Miao songs about marriage. 10.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin

Introduction.

Miao spinning wheels, constructed of bamboo, made a distinctive squeaking sound as they turned. The interior of the houses being rather dark, spinning was regularly done out of doors, and the sound could carry a considerable distance. In the present song, the persistent squeaking of the spinning wheel alerted the prospective parents-in law that there was an industrious, and therefore very desirable prospective bride in the vicinity.

When the middleman arrived, the young woman's parents at first refused to let her go, and the reason given was that "her body was not worn out". The word used is that which is regularly employed to describe knives or hoes, which have been worn away by constant use. The heavy labour which Miao women had to do in the home and in the fields resulted in premature ageing and a shortened life expectancy. The expression as used here means that the young woman was still strong and capable of hard work, and therefore her parents decided that she should "lay hold of the spirits". The reference is to the spirits of her parents' ancestors, and the meaning is that she should remain within her own family. Once married her obligation to these ancestors ceased, as she became a member of her husband's family.

The young woman, however, was determined to go, and the in-laws soon discovered that they had a "great bee" in their midst. Constantly busy herself, and organising everyone else, she took charge of the domestic arrangements, reorganised the farm, and even got an extension built on to the house.

M311
Old Miao songs about marriage. 10.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

- Who had a daughter early?
The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, had a daughter early,
And the woman, the mother, and the man, the father,
Their daughter, the adult young woman, grew,
5 Grew to maturity and was fully trained,
- She had grown to maturity and was spinning,
Spinning hemp, and the squeaking of the wheel
Carried as far as the in-law's land,
For there the in-laws heard it.
- 10 So the in-laws arranged,
Arranged for the middleman to come,
To come and ask the woman, the mother, and the man, the father,
That the daughter, the adult young woman, might go,
Go to the in-laws as their daughter-in-law,
15 But the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, were unwilling.
- The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, grieved,
Grieved that the daughter, the adult young woman,
Looking so well and being so capable,
Being so capable, should rise and leave the shelter of the home.
- 20 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, grieved,
Grieved that the daughter the adult young woman,
Looking so well, and being so capable,
Being so capable, should rise and quit the shelter of the door.
- 25 So at first the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, decided,
Decided that the daughter, the adult young woman should hold fast,
Hold fast the ancestral spirits of the woman, the mother and the man, the father.
But the daughter, the adult young woman could not hold fast,
So they let the daughter the adult young woman go,
Go as the in-laws' daughter-in-law.
- 30 She went to the in-laws like a great bee, like a great wild bee!
She took charge of the in-laws' water and meal tubs setting them firm,
She took charge of the in-laws' farmlands with diligence,
And she set up the in-laws' homestead making it spacious within and without.

M311

Y⁻ 'ɔ" Cɔ" Y⁻ L_{||} ɔ_u Y⁻ ɛ'" . ɔ_{||} t_o.
Miao song old which make marriage. number ten.

C_n ɔ̃ J^r ɛ^{nc} Cɬ', C^oɬ,
who received daughter early,

J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ t^r ɛ^{nc} Cɬ', C^oɬ.
woman mother man father received daughter early.

J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ t^r ɔ_n,
woman mother man father plural,

Jⁿ L^ɔ T^u Tⁿ Cɬ', ɛ_u C^{nc} L_{||} ɓ^o,
the daughter young woman adult grew,

5 ɓ^o CT_u ɔⁿ CT_ɔ CT_o ɔⁿ CT_ɔ,
grew well developed well trained,

ɓ^o CT_u ɔⁿ CT_ɔ ɛ_n ɔ_{||} ɛ',
grew well developed thus did spin,

ɛ' CT⁻ C^oT 3. 3.,
spun hemp sound squeaking,

ɔ_ɛ C^oT Δ⁻ ɛ'" Tⁿ ɔ^o Tⁿ,
did sound go to in-laws land,

ɛ_n ɔ_u ɛ'" Tⁿ ɔ^o ɛ_n ɔ_{||} 'C^o.
thus was in-laws thus did hear.

10 ɛ'" Tⁿ ɔ^o ɛ_n ɔ_{||} t^r,
in-laws thus did arrange,

ɔ_{||} t^r Jⁿ L^ɔ T^u t^r Jⁿ ɛ_n ɔ_{||} T⁻,
did arrange the middleman thus did come,

T⁻ ɛ_u J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ t^r ɔ_n,
come ask woman mother man father plural,

Jⁿ L^ɔ T^u Tⁿ Cɬ', ɛ_u C^{nc} L_{||} ɔ_{||},
the daughter young woman adult go,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ.
go make in-laws daughter-in-law.

15 ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ.
woman mother man father unwilling.

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
woman mother man father able come grieve,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
grieve that the daughter young woman adult,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
body appearance body not worn out,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ.
body not worn out rise leave thus shelter home.

20 ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
woman mother man father able come grieve,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
grieve that the daughter young woman adult,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
body appearance body not worn out,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
body not worn out rise quit thus shelter door.

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
woman mother man father did first allow,

25 ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ
allow cause the daughter young woman adult thus

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ,
did take hold,

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ.
take hold woman mother man father spirits.

ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ ᵛᵛᵛ
the daughter young woman adult take hold not

ᵛᵛᵛ.
get.

ᵛ₈ ᵛ° ᵛ₆ ᵛⁿ ᵛᵇ ᵛᵘ ᵛⁿ ᵛᵗ', ᵛᵤ ᵛₙᵇ ᵛᵢᵢ
 did allow cause the daughter young woman adult

ᵛᵢᵢ,
 go.

ᵛᵢᵢ ᵛ⁻ ᵛ'ᵢᵢ ᵛⁿ ᵛ° ᵛᵇ,
 go make in-laws daughter-in-law,

30 ᵛᵢᵢ ᵛ⁻ ᵛ'ᵢᵢ ᵛⁿ ᵛ° ᵛ⁻ ᵛₙᵇ ᵛᵤ ᵛ⁻ ᵛₙᵇ ᵛᵗᵇ.
 go make in-laws great bee great wild bee.

ᵛᵤ ᵛ̄ ᵛ'ᵢᵢ ᵛⁿ ᵛ° ᵛₙ ᵛ'ᵢᵢ ᵛᵢᵢ ᵛ'ᵢᵢ ᵛᵇ
 did take hold in-laws plural water tub meal tub

ᵛᵤᵇ ᵛⁿ ᵛᵗᵢ,
 stand firm,

ᵛᵤ ᵛ̄ ᵛ'ᵢᵢ ᵛⁿ ᵛ° ᵛₙ ᵛ⁻ ᵛᵇ ᵛ⁻ ᵛₙᵇ ᵛₙ
 did take hold in-laws plural farm land thus

ᵛ⁻ ᵛᵤᵇ,
 diligently,

ᵛᵤ ᵛᵇ ᵛ'ᵢᵢ ᵛⁿ ᵛ° ᵛₙ ᵛᵤᵇ- ᵛₙ ᵛ'ₙᵇ
 did set up in-laws plural house plural place

ᵛ⁻ ᵛᵤᵇ ᵛᵗ'ᵢᵢ ᵛₙ.
 have spaciousness thus.

M311
Old Miao songs about marriage. 10.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 4, page 3).

Lines 12, 13 and 14. In the Miao text these line are written as a single long sentence without any punctuation.

Line 17. The word 𑜁𑜪, “that”, is missing in the Miao manuscript. It must be restored to maintain the parallelism with line 21.

Lines 19 and 23. The form of the two four-line stanzas comprised in lines 16 to 23 requires that lines 19 and 23 should be exactly parallel to one another. To achieve this, line 23 must be restored by adding the first three words, 𑜁𑜪 𑜁𑜪 𑜁𑜪, which have been lost in Document F. However, the main textual problem with these lines is that both have also lost the main operative verb, and as they stand, neither makes good sense. Literally they read, “the parents were grieved that their daughter in the prime of her youth shelter of the home”. Fortunately the song is here using a conventional form of words which also occurs in several other marriage songs. By reference to these the missing verbs can be restored with confidence by adding 𑜁𑜪 𑜁𑜪, “rise leave” in line 19, and 𑜁𑜪 𑜁𑜪, “rise go away” in line 23.

M312
Old Miao songs about marriage. 11.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Introduction.

In this song the mothers of the prospective bridegroom and bride are called respectively, “the woman, the aunt” and “the woman, the mother”. The two fathers are not distinguished, both are “the man, the father”, but since neither ever appears without his wife, there is no confusion.

Having arrived on his third visit, the middleman was entitled to an answer one way or the other. By failing to give one, the parents could expect to be put under some pressure. Their problem was that they did not want to lose their particularly talented daughter, but if they refused, would another suitor come forward, and would he be any more acceptable? Moreover, time was a significant factor. Families preferred their daughters-in-law to be younger rather than older.

There are a number of isolated points, which call for some comment.

1. The Miao word “cha”, which in common speech more often takes the form “cha-cha”, has a range of meanings from a casual, “Oh dear, what a pity!” to a sincere expression of grief.
2. The “gown of longing” was the bridegroom’s gown, made for him by the bride before the marriage, as tradition required.
3. The “hlu-nza-nzyu” was the most highly regarded pattern of the Miao tribal costume. It was also the most difficult to make.
4. The Yi-bang was the great river which flowed through the ancient homeland from which the Miao were driven by the Chinese.
5. The claim that the young woman could write Chinese characters is remarkable. Before 1904 when the missionaries began to open schools in Miao villages, very few Miao boys had an opportunity to learn to read and write Chinese, while for a girl to be literate was virtually unheard of.
6. The Miao did not use animal milk in their food, so that the complaint at the end of the song must mean that the gifts brought by the in-laws, lavish though they may have been, were incommensurate even with the milk of their daughter’s babyhood.

M312
Old Miao songs about marriage. 11.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

- This year we may know,
Know that the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father, had arranged,
Had arranged for the middleman to go till he reached,
Reached the in-laws' home.
- 5 The middleman opened his mouth, opened his lips and asked,
Asked that the eldest daughter of woman the mother, and the man, the father, might
come,
Come as the daughter-in-law of the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father.
- But the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, recalled,
Recalled that bringing up sons and daughters was no easy matter.
10 It required much labour and hard work,
So the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, gave no answer.
- The middleman made three visits, as custom required.
He remained seated in the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's room,
Pressing the case with persistence all night till dawn was breaking,
15 And the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, could make no further excuse.
- The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, discussed in whispers, then said,
"Well then, let the daughter, the adult young woman go,
Go as the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father's daughter-in-law.
- This year we may know,
20 Know that the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father, have received,
Have received word from the woman, the mother, and the man, the father.
- So the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father fed,
Fed the fattened chicken to prepare for the marriage,
And fed the spotted pig to prepare for the wedding.
- 25 They called the neighbours, who came,
Came to fix the time, to fix the date for the marriage.
They fixed it for the fifth of Dragon month or Rabbit month.
- Then the woman, the aunt, and the man, the father, arranged,
Arranged for the middleman to return again, and he reached,
30 Reached the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's home,
To tell them the propitious date clearly,
Namely the fifth of Rabbit month.
- The marriage party came, threading its way,
Threading its way along the winding road.
35 The marriage party came carrying,
Carrying meat and meal all cooked and ready, so they arrived.

But the woman, the mother, and the man, the father grieved,
Grieved for the daughter, the adult young woman,
In appearance so good looking.

- 40 They grieved for the daughter, the adult young woman,
So able, so skilful with her hands.
Able and skilful with her hands to do what?
Able and skilful with her hands to make costumes.

- 45 She had made the daughter, the adult young woman's "gown of longing".
She had made costumes, the hlu-nza-nzyu, with a pattern of stripes,
She had made costumes, the hlu-nza-nzyu, gathered with nine threads.
She had made skirts of fine material with coloured strips set side by side,
Set like the rice fields, the long, flat fields on the plain of the Yi-bang river.

- 50 The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, grieved,
Grieved for the daughter, the adult young woman,
So able, so skilful with her hands.

- 55 She was able and skilful with her hands to do what?
She was able and skilful with her hands to write.
She could write Chinese characters distinguishing them in order,
And matters concerning the Chinese she could write out correctly.

So the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, declared,
That the meat and the meal that the in-laws had brought,
Bore no comparison even with the baby milk the woman, the mother, and the man,
the father, had provided.

Thus it is ended.

M312

Y⁻ 'ɔ" Cɔ" Y⁻ L" ɔ_u Y⁻ ɛ'". ɔ" Yⁿ t_o.
Miao song old which make marriage. number eleven.

J_{nu} Ċ t^ɛ L_o J",
year this able come know,

ɔ_ɛ J" J^o ɔⁿ ɔ₋ Λ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ t^r ɛ_n ɔ₋
did know woman aunt man father thus did

t^r,
arrange,

t^r C_n Yⁿ L^ɔ T^u t^r J" ɛ_n
arrange connector one classifier middleman thus

ɔ₋ ɔ" J^r C_n t_o,
did go till reach,

ɔ_ɛ t_o Jⁿ L^ɔ ɛ' Tⁿ J^o Cɔ₋.
did reach the in-laws house.

5 Jⁿ L^ɔ T^u t^r J" ɔ_ɛ ɛ^ɔ Cɛ" ɛ^ɔ L^o C_u,
the middleman did open mouth open lips ask,

C_u J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ t^r ɔ_n C^t,
ask woman mother man father plural daughter

J⁻ L^o L_o,
eldest come,

L_o T' J^o ɔⁿ ɔ₋ Λ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ t^r ɔ_n Y⁻
come for woman aunt man father plural make

C^ɔ.
daughter-in-law.

J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɔⁿ t^r ɛ^ɔ,
woman mother man father recalled,

ɛ^ɔ t_o J" T^u J" C^t, J^r L_n ɔ",
recalled reach rear son rear daughter not easy,

10 ɔ_ɛ Cɛ_n ɛ_n Δ^ɔ ɛ_n 3_o T̄.
did expend thus work thus labour hard.

J^o $J^n C^{nc}$ Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ J^r T^n L^u .
 woman mother man father not answer words.

$J^n L^v$ $T^u t^r J''$ \mathcal{D}_δ Y^- C_n t^r J''
 the middleman did make connector three times

Y^- J_u T_{nc} .
 made was right.

\mathcal{D}_δ $\mathcal{Z}_{||}$ C^{no} J^o $J^n C^{nc}$ Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ \mathcal{D}_n
 did sit remain woman mother man father plural

$J^\delta [^\sim$,
 room,

C_n J_u Y^n $'\mathcal{D}^o$ CT_s $\bar{\Lambda}$ $S^\delta CT^u$ $\bar{\Delta}'$.
 thus was one night persistent want dawn clear.

15 J^o $J^n C^{nc}$ Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ Λ_n J^r T'' ,
 woman mother man father make excuse not get,

J^o $J^n C^{nc}$ Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ $CT^r T'' CT^r T^u$ J_n C_n ,
 woman mother man father whisper argue said thus,

$L^u \mathcal{D}^u$ $[^o$ J_o $J^n L^v$ $T^u T^n CT'$, G_u $C_{nc} L_{||}$
 just let cause the daughter young woman adult

$\mathcal{D}_{||}$,
 go,

$\mathcal{D}_{||}$ Y^- J^o $J^n \mathcal{D}_-$ Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ \mathcal{D}_n
 go make woman aunt man father plural

$C^{\frac{3}{8}}$ $T_{\frac{3}{8}}$.
 daughter-in-law finish.

$J_{n||}$ \bar{C} t^s L_o J'' ,
 year this able come know,

20 \mathcal{D}_δ J'' J^o $J^n \mathcal{D}_-$ Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ C_n \mathcal{D}_- T'' ,
 did know woman aunt man father thus did get,

T'' J^o $J^n C^{nc}$ Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ \mathcal{D}_n L_o L^u .
 get woman mother man father plural the word.

J^o $J^n \mathcal{D}_-$ Λ_s $[^{no} J^n t^r$ \mathcal{D}_δ J^u ,
 woman aunt man father did feed,

ɔ̌ ʃ tʰ ʃ. v. l. tʰ tʰʰ,
 did feed chicken see official come pay marriage,

D_{δ} J^{u} L_n CJ^- $\text{C}\text{E}^{\text{r}}$ L^{n} L_o T^{u} J° ,
 did feed thus pig spotted come pay wedding,

25 ɔ̃ l'ʊ ɛ_n ʒ^r ɛ_n ʒ^o T-,
 did call neighbours come,

D_δ T- Ē' C_{ni} Ē' C_{ni} J_u Y⁻
 did come reckon time reckon date which make

[",
marriage,

ᠳᠤᠰ ᠯᠢᠰᠢᠨ ᠠᠳᠤᠨ ᠵᠤᠳᠤᠭᠤᠨ ᠰᠤᠨᠠᠭᠤᠨ ᠲᠤᠨᠠᠭᠤᠨ ᠯᠤᠨᠠᠭᠤᠨ ᠮᠤᠨ

did reckon at dragon bring the rabbit month

$S^{nc} \vdash \Gamma_n$.
fifth thus.

J° $\text{J}^{\text{n}} \text{J}$ Λ_{ς} $[\text{no}]^{\text{n}} \text{t}^{\text{r}}$ L_{v} t^{r} ,
 woman aunt man father then arranged,

↑ ^r	J ⁿ L ^s	T ^v ↑ ^r J ⁿ	T _v	↑ ^o L ⁿ S ^r	↑ ^o D
arranged	the	middleman	then	return	went back

$J^r C_n$ t_o ,
till reach,

30 ɔ̃ t̃ ɲ̃ ɲ̃ⁿ ɕ̃^{nc} ʌ̃ [̃^{no} ɲ̃ⁿ t̃^r ɕ̃]-,
 did reach woman mother man father house,

D_δ D⁻ C_n 3'' C_n 3'' C_n 7_n J² CT',
 did take thus good time good date tell clear,

[_n] _u	› _δ	† _o	̄	l _n	c _n
thus	was	did	reach	rabbit	month	connector

S^{nc} J^b [n.
fifth thus.

\bar{C}'' T- L- \bar{C}'' \bar{C}'
 marriage party came also marriage party travelled,

\mathfrak{D}_8 $\overset{\circ}{\mathfrak{C}}'$ \mathfrak{C}_n $\overset{n}{\mathfrak{C}}$ $\mathfrak{L}_n \vee_0$ \mathfrak{C}_n \mathfrak{D}_- \mathfrak{T}_-
 did travel thus road winding thus did come.

35 ʔʰ T- L- ʔʰ ʔr,
 marriage party came also marriage party carried,

 ɔ̌ ʔr ʔn Cɟʰ ʔr ʔʰ ʔʰ ʔʰ
 did carry thus meat carry meal all cooked ready

 Cʔn
 arrived.

 ʔo ʔn Cnc ʌs ʔno ʔn tʰ tʰ Lo ʔʰ,
 woman mother man father able come grieve,

 ʔʰ ʔʰ ʔn Lʰ ʔʰ ʔn Cɟʰ, ɕu Cnc Lʱ,
 grieve the daughter young woman adult,

 ʔn ʔʰ ʔn ǯ ǯ ʔʰ ǯ Cɟʱ.
 thus the body appearance to good looking.

40 ʔʰ ʔʰ ʔu ʔn Lʰ ʔʰ ʔn Cɟʰ, ɕu Cnc Lʱ,
 grieve that the daughter young woman adult,

 ʔn ʔʰ ʔn tʰ ʔʰ ʔn Cɟnc,
 thus the hand able the hand skilful,

 ʔn tʰ ʔn Cɟnc ʔn Y- ʔʰ,
 hand able hand skilful hand do what,

 ʔn tʰ ʔn Cɟnc ʔn Y- ʔʰ.
 hand able hand skilful hand make costume.

 Y- ʔʰ ʔn Lʰ ʔʰ ʔn Cɟʰ, ɕu Cnc Lʱ ɔ̌n
 make get the daughter young woman adult the

 ʔʰo Cɟ, Snc,
 garment longing,

45 ɔ̌ Y- ʔʰ ʔʰo ʔʰ Cɟ- Cɟ- Cɟʱ
 did make get garments costume nza-nzyu patterned

 Y- ʔ̌,
 striped,

 ɔ̌ Y- ʔʰ ʔʰo ʔʰ Cɟ- Cɟ- ʔ
 did make get garments costume nza-nzyu gathered

 ʔʰ Cɟʰ.
 nine threads.

ᵐ	CTᵐ	ᵐ	ᵐ C ^{nc}	Λ _ς	ᵐ ᵐ ᵐ	ᵐ	ᵐ
not	worth	woman	mother	man	father	plural	liquid

ᵐ	ᵐ.
milk	thus.

ᵐ	ᵐ ᵐ CT..
thus	ended

M312
Old Miao songs about marriage. 11.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no.5, page 3).

Line 8. This line and line 9 are written as a single long sentence in the Miao text.

M313
Old Miao songs about marriage. 12.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Introduction.

An explanatory note at the beginning of the manuscript reads, “A girl went as a bride to a family where she suffered much hardship, hence this song”. This statement is not quite correct inasmuch as the girl was not yet a bride. Throughout the song she is never given the usual title accorded to brides, “nggu nie lao”, “the adult young woman”, that is one of marriageable age, but is described as “the girl, the child”, that is she was still too young to be married.

What seems to have happened was that this young girl was betrothed to a boy of about her own age, and was taken to live in his home. Her parents received gifts of food and wine in exchange for their daughter, whose position in her new home was, however, little better than that of a slave. She was required to undertake tasks, which were simply beyond her strength. An adult could carry sufficient water at one time to keep the water butt in the house topped up, but that was more than the child could manage. Likewise the pounding of millet, which was carried out in a mortar carved out of a block of stone, using an iron pestle, much too heavy for a child to handle effectively.

The advantages of this arrangement to the prospective parents-in-law in terms of a source of cheap labour in the home, are obvious. However, when the actual marriage took place there would still be a marriage settlement to be paid. Until that time the girl remained a member of her own family, and the parents in law were responsible to them for her well-being. This explains why, when the child committed suicide because of the ill treatment she had received, the in-laws were liable for a payment to her family in lieu of the marriage settlement, which would not now be forthcoming. The girl's family came, therefore, not simply to view the grave, but to collect their dues, and they drove away a young animal, which, apart from his fully trained ploughing ox, was probably the most valuable asset the farmer possessed.

M313
Old Miao songs about marriage. 12

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

- Who was it desired clear wine to drink,
And who was it desired meat to eat?
The woman, the mother, and the man, the father, desired,
Desired the man Jio-gha-su's wine to drink,
5 And the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, desired,
Desired the man Jio-gha-su's meat to eat.
- So the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, took,
Took the daughter, the child, and betrothed her,
Betrothed her into the family of the man Jio-gha-su.
10 Thus the daughter, the child, arose and went,
Went yonder to carry fresh water for the man Jio-gha-su.
- But from first thing in the morning the man Jio-gha-su scolded,
Scolded the daughter, the child, for not carrying enough water to fill the tub.
Every day the man Jio-gha-su cursed,
15 Cursed the daughter, the child, till she wished to die.
- The man Jio-gha-su made,
Made the daughter, the child, go and pound millet.
But the man Jio-gha-su scolded,
Scolded the daughter, the child, declaring,
20 That the pounded millet was coarse.
- The daughter, the child, went out to pasture the cattle,
But when the friends of the daughter, the child, raised,
Raised their voices in song,
The daughter, the child, raised,
25 Raised her voice and wept.
- The daughter, the child, could not remain there,
And the daughter, the child, arose to go. So she rose up,
She arose to go, and returning, she came back and reached,
Reached the outskirts of the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's place.
- 30 The daughter, the child, looked around and about,
And she looked at the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's door.
Then the daughter, the child, opened,
Opened the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's door,
But, opening it she did not allow it to rattle.
- 35 When the woman, the mother, and the man, the father, rose,
Arose to go, they came and saw,
Saw the daughter, the child, standing there,
Standing at the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's door.

The woman, the mother, opened her mouth and asked,
 40 “What is the reason for your coming?”
 The daughter, the child, answered her,
 “Of the man Jio-gha-su’s meat and meal,
 And of the man Jio-gha-su’s water and wine, does much remain?”

Then the man, the father began to scold,
 45 Scold the daughter, the child, to make her return.
 The daughter, the child, said,
 That the daughter, the child, could not stay there,
 But the man, the father would not listen.

The man, the father scolded,
 50 Scolded the daughter, the child, to make her return.
 So the daughter, the child, went till she reached,
 Went and reached the man Jio-gha-su’s place youder.

The man Jio-gha-su made,
 Made the daughter go to carry water,
 55 But the man Jio-gha-su scolded,
 Scolded the daughter, the child, for not carrying enough to fill the tub.

The man Jio-gha-su made,
 Made the daughter, the child, go and pound millet,
 But the man Jio-gha-su complained,
 60 Complained that the daughter, the child,
 Her pounded millet was coarse.

Every day the man Jio-gha-su scolded,
 Scolded the daughter, the child, till she wished to hang herself.

When the daughter, the child, went to carry water,
 65 And the daughter, the child’s friends raised,
 Raised their voices and sang,
 The daughter, the child, raised,
 Raised her voice and wept.

So the daughter, the child, took,
 70 Took a girdle and looped it,
 Looped it in the man Jio-gha-su’s loft.
 So the daughter, the child, died.

The man Jio-gha-su took,
 Took the daughter, the child, and buried her.
 75 Then the man Jio-gha-su sent back,
 Sent back word of the daughter, the child,
 Yonder to the woman, the mother, and the man, the father.

Thus the daughter, the child,
 Her relations and cousins, with their mothers and fathers all got to hear,
 80 And the daughter, the child,

Her relations and cousins, with the woman, the mother, and the man, the father all
arrived together,
Arrived yonder at the man Jio-gha-su's place.

The man Jio-gha-su escorted,
Escorted the relations and cousins with the woman, the mother, and the man, the
father,
85 Escorted them till they reached,
Reached the daughter, the child's burial place.

The relations and cousins with the woman, the mother and the man, the father
Looked carefully around and about,
Examining the daughter, the child's grave.

90 At the foot of the grave of the daughter, the child, there stood,
Stood only a clump of reeds,
And at the head of the grave of the daughter, the child, there stood,
Stood only a clump of wormwood.

The woman, the mother, and the man, the father
95 Walked around the whole area,
And the relations and cousins with the woman, the mother and the man, the father,
Within the area took possession,
Took possession of the man Jio-gha-su's partly trained ox.

So they returned and reached,
100 Reached the woman, the mother, and the man, the father's home.
Then the woman, the aunt, opened her mouth, opened her lips and said,

"When others go as brides, they may return,
When others go as brides they may come back,
But when the daughter, the child, went,
105 Went as a bride, she could not return,
Went as a bride, she could not come back".

Thus it is ended.

M313

Y⁻ 'ɔ" Cɔ" Y⁻ L" ɔ_u Y⁻ ɛ'". ɔ" Y⁻ t_o.
Miao song old which make marriage. number twelve.

C_n J̄ J^r Cɛ'ʰ ɛ̇ ɔⁿ S^{nc} ɿ,
connector who liked wine clear drink,

C_n J̄ J^r Cɛ'ʰ Cɿ' C".
connector who liked meat eat.

J^o ɿⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ [ʰ^{no} ɿⁿ t^r Cɛ'ʰ,
woman mother man father liked,

Cɛ'ʰ Λ_ɛ [ʰ^{no} J̄^u Š ɔ_n ɛ̇ ɿ.
liked man Jio-gha-su plural wine drink.

5 J^o ɿⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ [ʰ^{no} ɿⁿ t^r Cɛ'ʰ,
woman mother man father liked,

Cɛ'ʰ Λ_ɛ [ʰ^{no} J̄^u Š ɔ_n Cɿ' C".
liked man Jio-gha-su plural meat eat.

J^o ɿⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ɛ [ʰ^{no} ɿⁿ t^r ɛ'ʰ_{nc},
woman mother man father took,

ɔ_ɛ ɛ'ʰ_{nc} Cɔ" ɔ_n J̄^u Cɔ" ɛ⁻ Λ" [ʰ_n ɔ₋
did take girl daughter girl child thus did

J̄⁻,
betroth,

J̄⁻ T'" Λ_ɛ [ʰ^{no} J̄^u Š Λ_n L_ɛ t'" T".
betrothed for man Jio-gha-su family gone yonder.

10 Cɔ" ɔ_n J̄^u [ʰ_n Cɔ" ɛ⁻ Λ" J̄^u L^u J̄^u Cɿ'" J^r C_n
girl daughter thus girl child arose to go until

ɔ",
went,

ɔ" T_r Λ_ɛ [ʰ^{no} J̄^u Š ɔ_n Y" ɔⁿ S^{nc}
went carry man Jio-gha-su plural water clear

L_ɛ t'" T".
gone yonder.

ᵚ Cᵒ Λᵛ [ᵐ J⁻ Ṣ L⁻,
 rise early man Jio-gha-su scolded,

L⁻ C]ⁿ ɔₙ ᵚ C]ⁿ Ḡ⁻ Λᵢ Tᵣ J⁻ Yⁿ
 scolded girl daughter girl child carry water

Jᵣ ᵚ T'ⁿ.
 not fill tub.

Λᵛ [ᵐ J⁻ Ṣ 'Cᵛ 'Cᵛ C[ᵛ,
 man Jio-gha-su day day cursed,

15 C[ᵛ C]ⁿ ɔₙ ᵚ C]ⁿ Ḡ⁻ Λᵢ Tⁿ Ē T..
 cursed girl daughter girl child to road die.

Λᵛ [ᵐ J⁻ Ṣ ɔₓ]ₒ,
 man Jio-gha-su did cause,

]ₒ C]ⁿ ɔₙ ᵚ C]ⁿ Ḡ⁻ Λᵢ C]ᵛ Ē' ᵒ'.
 cause girl daughter girl child go pound millet.

Λᵛ [ᵐ J⁻ Ṣ tᵛ Lₒ L⁻,
 man Jio-gha-su able come scold,

ɔₓ L⁻ [ₙ C]ⁿ ɔₙ ᵚ C]ⁿ Ḡ⁻ Λᵢ [ₙ,
 did scold thus girl daughter girl child thus,

20 Ē' ᵒ' ɔ- Y⁻ C†'ᵣ.
 pound millet have coarse.

[ₙ]ᵛ C]ⁿ ɔₙ ᵚ C]ⁿ Ḡ⁻ Λᵢ C]ᵛ Λᵢ
 thus was girl daughter girl child went pasture

[ᵛ,
 cattle,

C]ⁿ ɔₙ ᵚ C]ⁿ Ḡ⁻ Λᵢ]ⁿ Λ⁻]ⁿ L [ᵛ,
 girl daughter girl child friends raised,

[ᵛ [ₙ Jᵛ J⁻ Sᵛ C]ⁿ,
 raised thus voice sound song,

C]ⁿ ɔₙ ᵚ C]ⁿ Ḡ⁻ Λᵢ [ᵛ,
 girl daughter girl child raised,

25 [ᵛ [ₙ Jᵛ J⁻ Sᵛ C̄.
 raised thus voice sound cry.

C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u C^{no} ʃ^r T''.
 girl daughter girl child remain not get.

C]'' ɔⁿ ǰ C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u ǰ ǰ^ɔ ǰ CT''' ɛ_n ɔ₋
 girl daughter girl child arose to go thus did

ǰ.
 rise.

ǰ ǰ^ɔ ǰ CT''' ɬ_u ǰ^o ʌⁿ S^r ǰ^o ʌ_o ɬ_o,
 arose to go then returned came back reached,

ɬ_o ʃ^o ʃⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ʃⁿ ɬ^r ɔ_n ʃ⁻ ǰ^ɔ T''.
 reached woman mother man father plural locality.

30 C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u ɬ_u ʃⁿ ʌ^ɔ ʃ^r ɛ^{no} ɔ^ɔ,
 girl daughter girl child all around observed,

ɔ^ɔ ɬ'' ʃ^o ʃⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ʃⁿ ɬ^r ɔ_n Tⁿ
 observed to woman mother man father plural the

ʃ⁻ ʌ''.
 door.

C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u ʃ^r C_n ʃ^ɔ,
 girl daughter girl child opened,

ʃ^ɔ ɛ_n ʃ^o ʃⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ʃⁿ ɬ^r ʌ'',
 opened thus woman mother man father door,

ʃ^ɔ ɛ_n ʌ'' ʃ⁻ ɛⁿ ʃ⁻ ɛ^{no} C^o.
 opened thus door time did not shake noise.

35 ʃ^o ʃⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ʃⁿ ɬ^r ǰ,
 woman mother man father rose,

ǰ ǰ^ɔ ǰ CT''' ʌ_o ʃ^r C_n ʃ_o,
 arose to go come saw,

ʃ_o C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u ɛ_n ɔ₋ ǰ,
 saw girl daughter girl child thus did stand,

ǰ ʃ^o ʃⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ʃⁿ ɬ^r ɔ_n Tⁿ ʃ⁻ ʌ''.
 stand woman mother man father plural the door.

ʃ^o ʃⁿ C^{nc} ɔ_ɔ ʃ^ɔ Cɛⁿ ɬ^ɛ ʌ_o C_u ɛ_n,
 woman mother did open mouth able come ask thus

- 40 E_3 C_3 E_3 $\bar{\text{T}} \text{J}^r$ $\bar{\text{C}}$ E_3 L_0 .
you reason you what that you come.
- CJ'' $\text{D}_n \text{J}$ CJ'' $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{11}$ $\text{J}^r \text{C}_n \text{T}^n$,
girl daughter girl child made answer,
- T_{nc} J_0 Λ_4 $[\text{no} \text{J}^- \text{S}^u]$ D_n CT^r D_n
query see man Jio-gha-su plural meat plural
- J^p ,
meal,
- Λ_4 $[\text{no} \text{J}^- \text{S}^u]$ D_n Y'' D_n $[\text{nc}]$ $\bar{\text{T}}^r$
man Jio-gha-su plural water plural wine still
- C^{no} $[\text{nc}]$.
remain much.
- Λ_4 $[\text{no} \text{J}^n \text{t}^r]$ $\text{J} \text{J}^p \text{J} \text{CT}''$ L^- ,
man father arose to go scold,
- 45 L^- J_0 CJ'' $\text{D}_n \text{J}$ CJ'' $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{11}$ $\bar{\text{T}} \text{S}^r \text{J}^p$.
scold cause girl daughter girl child return.
- CJ'' $\text{D}_n \text{J}$ CJ'' $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{11}$ T_n ,
girl daughter girl child said,
- CJ'' $\text{D}_n \text{J}$ CJ'' $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{11}$ C^{no} J^r T'' .
girl daughter girl child remain not get.
- Λ_4 $[\text{no} \text{J}^n \text{t}^r]$ D_8 CT^- T^n .
man father did refuse answer.
- Λ_4 $[\text{no} \text{J}^n \text{t}^r]$ L^- ,
man father scolded,
- 50 L^- J_0 CJ'' $\text{D}_n \text{J}$ CJ'' $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{11}$ $\bar{\text{T}} \text{S}^r \text{J}^p$.
scolded cause girl daughter girl child return.
- CJ'' $\text{D}_n \text{J}$ CJ'' $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{11}$ $\text{D}_8 \text{D}_{11}$ $\text{J}^r \text{C}_n$ t_0 ,
girl daughter girl child did go until reach,
- D_{11} t_0 Λ_4 $[\text{no} \text{J}^- \text{S}^u]$ D_n $\text{t}'' \text{T}''$.
went reach man Jio-gha-su plural yonder.
- Λ_4 $[\text{no} \text{J}^- \text{S}^u]$ $[\text{C}_0]$,
man Jio-gha-su allowed,

[°]_0 $\text{C]}''$ $\text{ɔ}_n \text{ } \overset{\text{˘}}{\text{J}}$ $\text{C]}''$ $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{\text{H}}$ CJ_3
 allowed caused girl daughter girl child go

L_r Y'' .
 carry water.

55 Λ_{S} $\text{[}^\circ \text{J}^- \overset{\text{˘}}{\text{S}}$ L^- ,
 man Jio-gha-su scolded,

L^- [_n]_0 $\text{C]}''$ $\text{ɔ}_n \text{ } \overset{\text{˘}}{\text{J}}$ $\text{C]}''$ $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{\text{H}}$
 scolded thus that girl daughter girl child

L_r Y'' J^r $\overset{\text{˘}}{\text{J}}$ T''' .
 carried water not fill tub.

Λ_{S} $\text{[}^\circ \text{J}^- \overset{\text{˘}}{\text{S}}$ [° ,
 man Jio-gha-su allowed,

[°]_0 $\text{C]}''$ $\text{ɔ}_n \text{ } \overset{\text{˘}}{\text{J}}$ $\text{C]}''$ $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{\text{H}}$ CJ_3
 allowed caused girl daughter girl child go

$\overset{\text{˘}}{\text{L}}'$ $\overset{\text{˘}}{\text{t}}'$
 pound millet.

Λ_{S} $\text{[}^\circ \text{J}^- \overset{\text{˘}}{\text{S}}$ I_n $\text{[}_n \text{ T}^-$,
 man Jio-gha-su said as follows,

60 I_n [_n $\text{C]}''$ $\text{ɔ}_n \text{ } \overset{\text{˘}}{\text{J}}$ $\text{C]}''$ $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{\text{H}}$ [_n ,
 said thus girl daughter girl child thus,

$\overset{\text{˘}}{\text{L}}'$ $\overset{\text{˘}}{\text{t}}'$ ɔ^- $\text{Y}^- \text{Ct}''$.
 pounded millet have coarse.

Λ_{S} $\text{[}^\circ \text{J}^- \overset{\text{˘}}{\text{S}}$ $'\text{C}^\text{v}$ $'\text{C}^\text{v}$ L^- ,
 man Jio-gha-su day day scolded,

L^- $\text{C]}''$ $\text{ɔ}_n \text{ } \overset{\text{˘}}{\text{J}}$ $\text{C]}''$ $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{\text{H}}$ $\text{T}'' \Delta^\text{z} \text{C}\Delta^\text{v}$.
 scolded girl daughter girl child to hang herself.

$\text{C]}''$ $\text{ɔ}_n \text{ } \overset{\text{˘}}{\text{J}}$ $\text{C]}''$ $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{\text{H}}$ CJ_3 L_r Y'' ,
 girl daughter girl child went carry water,

65 $\text{C]}''$ $\text{ɔ}_n \text{ } \overset{\text{˘}}{\text{J}}$ $\text{C]}''$ $\text{G}^- \Lambda_{\text{H}}$ $\text{I}^\text{n} \Lambda^\text{v} \text{I}^\text{n} \text{L}$ [^z ,
 girl daughter girl child friends raised,

[^z [_n I^v $\text{I}^- \text{C}\overset{\text{˘}}{\text{I}}$ $\text{C]}''$,
 raised thus voice sound song,

C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u ɛ[̂],
 girl daughter girl child raised,

ɛ[̂] ɛ_n ɰ[̂] ɰ⁻ ʈɪ̌ ʈ̌.
 raised thus voice sound wept.

C]'' ɔ_n ǰ[̂] C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u ɛ_n ɔ_̂ ɛ'_{ns},
 girl daughter girl child thus did take,

70 ɔ_̂ ɛ'_{ns} ɛ_n ɂ⁻ ǰ⁻ ʋ⁻ ɰ[̂] ɭ_o ʌ'_o,
 did take thus girdle able come loop,

ʌ'_o ɰ'' ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɰ⁻ ʂ^u ɔ_n ʈɰ'[̂],
 looped in man Jio-gha-su plural loft,

C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u ɰ₋ ɭ_ɛ ɰ_̂.
 girl daughter girl child died gone finish.

ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɰ⁻ ʂ^u ɛ'_{ns} ɛ_n,
 man Jio-gha-su took thus,

ɔ_̂ ɛ'_{ns} C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u ɰ₋ ʈɰ_o ɭ_ɛ.
 did take girl daughter girl child buried gone.

75 ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɰ⁻ ʂ^u ɛ_n ɔ₋ ʂ^r,
 man Jio-gha-su thus did return,

ʂ^r ɭ_o ɭ^u ɰ'' C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u ɛ_n
 returned word to girl daughter girl child thus

ɰ_o ɰⁿ ʈ^{nc} ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɰⁿ ɰ^r ɭ_ɛ ɰ'' ɰ''.
 woman mother man father gone yonder.

C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u ɛ_n,
 girl daughter girl child thus,

ɰⁿ ʈ[̂] ɰⁿ ʈ^u ɰⁿ ʈ^{nc} ɰⁿ ʋ_u ʈɰ_o ɰ'' 'ʈ̌.
 relatives cousins mothers fathers with get hear.

80 C]'' ɔ_n ǰ C]'' ǂ⁻ ʌ_u ɛ_n,
 girl daughter girl child thus,

ɰⁿ ʈ[̂] ɰⁿ ʈ^u ɰ_o ɰⁿ ʈ^{nc} ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} ɰⁿ ɰ^r ʈɰ_o.
 relatives cousins woman mother man father with

ɰ⁻ ʈɛ_{nu},
 came arrived,

CE_{ni} Λ_ε [° J^u Š L_ε t' T".
 arrived man Jio-gha-su gone yonder.

Λ_ε [° J^u Š I',
 man Jio-gha-su led,

I', Jⁿ C^o Jⁿ C^u J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ε [° Jⁿ t',
 led relatives cousins woman mother man father,

85 J_ε I', J_{ni} J^r C_n t_o,
 did lead go until reach,

t_o C]'' J_n J^o C]'' G⁻ Λ_{ni} C_o J⁻ J^o T".
 reach girl daughter girl child her burial place.

Jⁿ C^o Jⁿ C^u J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ε [° Jⁿ t' [n,
 relatives cousins woman mother man father thus,

T_u Jⁿ L_o J^r [° J_ε,
 all around observed,

J_ε T" C]'' J_n J^o C]'' G⁻ Λ_{ni} C_o
 observed at girl daughter girl child her

J^o C t_ε T".
 grave.

90 C]'' J_n J^o C]'' G⁻ Λ_{ni} Δ" Tⁿ C t_ε [n J_o
 girl daughter girl child door grave thus did

t^ε,
 stand,

t^ε T" C_n Yⁿ t_{ni} C] J^o Lⁿ T"
 stand get connector one clump reeds,

C]'' J_n J^o C]'' G⁻ Λ_{ni} I^o Tⁿ C t_ε [n J_o
 girl daughter girl child head grave thus did

t^ε,
 stand,

t^ε T" C_n Yⁿ t_{ni} J⁻ Š C^ε T_o.
 stand get connector one clump wormwood.

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} Λ_ε [° Jⁿ t' J_ε J⁻,
 woman mother man father did take,

- 95 ɔ̃ ɛ_n Ṽ Tⁿ CT^u Ĵ' ɔ_u ɔ_u,
 took thus surroundings whatever went went,
- Jⁿ C^{ɔ̃} Jⁿ C^u J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_u ɛ^{no} Jⁿ t^r ɛ_n,
 relatives cousins woman mother man father thus,
- ɔ̃ Ṽ Tⁿ CT^u ɛ_n ɔ̃ Tⁿ,
 took surroundings thus did get,
- Tⁿ ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} J⁻ S̃ Lⁿ Ĵ C^u.
 get man Jio-gha-su partly trained ox.
- ɬ_u Ĵ Lⁿ S^r Ĵ L_o t_o,
 then returned came back reached,
- 100 t_o J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} ʌ_ɛ ɛ^{no} Jⁿ t^r J⁻ CΔ^o C]̃.
 reached woman mother man father inside house.
- ɛ_n J_u J^o Jⁿ ɔ̃ ɛ̃ C]̃ ɛ̃ L^o
 thus was woman aunt opened mouth opened lips
- ɬ_n,
 said,
- C_n Y⁻ ɛ_n C_n J⁻ C^{ɔ̃} ɛ_n C_n
 others make thus others the bride thus others
- Ĵ,
 return,
- C_n Y⁻ ɛ_n C_n J⁻ C^{ɔ̃} ɛ_n C_n
 others make thus others the bride thus others
- L_o,
 come,
- C]̃ ɔ_n Ĵ C]̃ ɠ⁻ ʌ_u Y⁻ ɛ_n,
 girl daughter girl child make thus,
- 105 Y⁻ ɛ_n C_n J⁻ C^{ɔ̃} J^r t^ɛ Ĵ,
 make thus connector the bride not able return,
- Y⁻ ɛ_n C_n J⁻ C^{ɔ̃} J^r t^ɛ L_o.
 make thus connector the bride not able come.
- ɛ_n Jⁿ ɔ̃ C]̃.
 thus ended.

M313
Old Miao songs about Marriage. 12.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 6, page 4).

Line 3. In Document F this line is joined to line 4 in a single long sentence. The same is true of lines 5 and 6.

Line 3. The name $\Lambda_{\varsigma} \text{ } \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ } \text{ }^{-} \text{ }^{\text{u}} \text{ } \text{ }^{\text{u}}$ has exactly the same form as the name $\Lambda_{\varsigma} \text{ } \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ } \text{ }^{\text{n}} \text{ } \text{ }^{\text{r}}$. There is no doubt that the latter means, “the man, the father”, and in this, and a number of other songs, it has been so translated. The meaning of the former name is not so clear. Λ_{ς} is “man”, and ° in this context is a conjunction, but nowhere does the context suggest the meaning of $\text{ }^{-} \text{ }^{\text{u}}$, and the name does not occur in other songs. In fact $\text{ }^{-} \text{ }^{\text{u}}$ is the name used for a temporary hut of poles and rough thatch erected in the fields as a shelter from which to guard the ripening harvest. The name may therefore refer to the quality or condition of the man’s house, and so might be translated, “the man, the hovel dweller”, but it is safer simply to transliterate it as “the man Jio-gha-su”.

Line 63. A note in the Miao text explains that $\Delta^{\text{5}} \text{ } \text{ }^{\text{u}} \Delta^{\text{u}}$ means “to hang one’s self”.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 13.**Song of the old folk who had no children.**

Transcribed by Yang-yung-xin.

Introduction.

In the elaborate similes used in this song there is artistry of considerable merit, but at the same time an element of enigma, which the listener must interpret for himself. The earth banks mentioned in the first of the two pictures of open landscape, are those which separate rice fields, and are curved because they follow the contours of the land. The absence of trees in both pictures describes an ageing couple bereft of children. Since they are called “the mother” and “the father”, the assumption is that they did have children, but had lost them.

The second pair of similes concern wild animals which have found themselves trapped, the wild cat in a grain store and the fox in a fenced garden, where both were faced with starvation because they could not eat the grain and the vegetables which they found there. So, not having a son, the man felt himself trapped, and saw his food supply dwindling. Though he still had the land he was progressively less able to farm it. The water used in a Miao household was carried by the women. With no daughter to undertake this task, the woman too felt trapped. As her own strength failed she faced an increasing problem with the supply of water for the needs of the home.

In the third pair of similes the cawing of the crow reflects an idea, common in Miao stories, that this cry is one of frustration and dejection.

Old Miao songs about marriage. 13.

Song of the old folk who had no children.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Good level land produced a good plain,
 And good level land produced good rice fields.

The curving earth banks stood on the level plain,
 But on the curving earth banks stood no planted tree,
 5 Likewise the man, the father, had no son.

The man, the father, was like,
 Like a wild cat clinging to a partition,
 A wild cat which could not eat grain.
 So was the man, the father, anxious about his food supply.

10 The mountain stood in open mountain country,
 But on the mountain stood no lacquer tree,
 Likewise the woman, the mother, had no daughter.

The woman, the mother, was like,
 Like a fox trapped in a garden,
 15 A fox which could not eat grass.
 So was the woman, the mother, anxious about her water supply.

The man, the father, was like an ailing magpie,
 And the woman, the mother, was like a cawing crow.

M314

Y⁻ L_u ɔ_u Tⁿ ɔ⁻ T^u C⁺ʼ, Cɔ^u.
old folk who not have children song.

ʒ^u T^{nc} T_ɛ ʒ^u Cɬ_ɛ,
good level land produces good plain,

ʒ^u T^{nc} T_ɛ ʒ^u L^{nc},
good level land produces good rice fields.

J⁻ C^ɛ Lⁿ V_o t_ɛ Cɬ_ɛ T^{nc},
earth banks curving stand plain level land,

J⁻ C^ɛ Lⁿ V_o J^r t_ɛ CT^u Λ_u,
earth banks curving not stand tree planted,

5 Λ_ɛ [n^o ɔⁿ t^r J^r ɔ⁻ T^u.
man father not have son.

Λ_ɛ [n^o ɔⁿ t^r S_ɔ,
man father resembled,

S_ɔ C^u ɔ_n Δ_n ʒ^{nc} ɔ_o Cɬ^ɛ.
resembled wild cat clinging by claws partition.

C^u ɔ_n Δ_n J^r t_ɛ C^u J^u,
wild cat not able eat grain,

Λ_ɛ [n^o ɔⁿ t^r V_ɔ C_n J^ɔ.
man father desired greatly connector food.

10 T^u t_ɛ T^u Tⁿ T^o,
mountain stand mountain country open,

T^u J^r t_ɛ CT^u t^ʼ,
mountain not stand tree lacquer,

J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} J^r ɔ⁻ C⁺ʼ_u.
woman mother not have daughter.

J^o ɔⁿ C^{nc} S_ɔ,
woman mother resembled,

S₃ C" J⁻ T₃ J₁ V⁸ L',
 resembled fox caught garden,

15 C" J⁻ T₃ J^r †⁶ C" CJ³,
 fox not able eat grass,

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} V₃ C_n Y".
 woman mother desired greatly connector water.

Λ₆ L^{no} Jⁿ †^r S₃ C" Jⁿ CL₁ L₁₁,
 man father resembled magpie weak,

J^o Jⁿ C^{nc} S₃ C" Lⁿ Y⁻ J⁻.
 woman mother resembled crow cawing.

M314

Old Miao songs about marriage. 13.

Song of the old folk who had no children.

Transcribed by Yang Yung-xin.

Notes.

This song is recorded in Document F (no. 19, page 20).

Lines 6 and 7. In the Miao text these lines appear as a single long sentence. The same applies to lines 12 and 13.

Lines 8 and 15. These lines are strictly parallel. The word 𑜋𑜨, “able” which is missing in line 8 has been restored by reference to line 15. A copyist’s error has also interchanged the two final words, “grain” and “grass” in these two lines.

Lines 10 and 11. These lines are written as a single sentence in the Miao text.

