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Genesis According to the Miao People

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Introductory Note:

The Miao tribes, or as it is spelled in most encyclopedias "Miautso," at one time occupied most of inland China south of the Yangtze River, but have been gradually driven into the mountains of the southwest by the better-armed and better-organized Chinese. The Miao of our section claim to have been driven out of Kiangsi Province.

The Miao traditions are very precise, as compared with those of many primitive peoples, because they are not only handed down in metrical form, but, also, they are in couplets, in which the same or similar meaning is expressed in different wording, so that the second sentence acts as a definition of the first, where it might otherwise not be clear. This is very much like one form of Hebrew poetry - an example of which is found in Psalm 21:1,2.

The Translation

The Creation

*On the day God created the heavens and earth.
On that day He opened the gateway of light.
In the earth then He made heaps of earth and of stone.
In the sky He made bodies, the sun and the moon.
In the earth He created the hawk and the kite.
In the water created the lobster and fish.
In the wilderness made He the tiger and bear,
Made verdure to cover the mountains,
Made forest extend with the ranges,
Made the light green cane,
Made the rank bamboo.*

Man

*On the earth He created a man from the dirt.
Of the man thus created, a woman He formed.
Then the Patriarch Dirt made a balance of stones.
Estimated the weight of the earth to the bottom. (Note 1)
Calculated the bulk of the heavenly bodies.*

*And pondered the ways of the Deity, God.
The Patriarch Dirt begat Patriarch Se-teh.
The Patriarch Se-Teh begat a son Lusu.
And Lusu had Gehlo and he begat Lama.
The Patriarch Lama begat the man Nuah.
His wife was the Matriarch Gaw Bo-lu-en.
Their sons were Lo Han, Lo Shen and Jah-hu. (Note 2)
So the earth began filling with tribes and with families.
Creation was shared by the clans and the peoples.*

The World Wicked

*These did not God's will nor returned His affection.
But fought with each other defying the Godhead.
Their leaders shook fists in the face of the Mighty
Then the earth was convulsed to the depth of three strata.
Rending the air to the uttermost heaven.
God's anger arose till His Being was changed;
His wrath flaring up filled His eyes and His face.
Until He must come and demolish humanity.
Come and destroy a whole world full of people.*

The Flood

*So it poured forty days in sheets and in torrents.
Then fifty-five days of misting and drizzle.
The waters surmounted the mountains and ranges.
The deluge ascending leapt valley and hollow.
An earth with no earth upon which to take refuge!
A world with no foothold where one might subsist!
The people were baffled, impotent and ruined,
Despairing, horror stricken, diminished and finished.
But the Patriarch Nuah was righteous.
The Matriarch Gaw Bo-lu-en upright.
Built a boat very wide.
Made a ship very vast.
Their household entire got aboard and were floated,
The family complete rode the deluge in safety.
The animals with him were female and male.
The birds went along and were mated in pairs.
When the time was fulfilled, God commanded the waters.
The day had arrived, the flood waters receded.
Then Nuah liberated a dove from their refuge,
Sent a bird to go forth and bring again tidings.
The flood had gone down into lake and to ocean;
The mud was confined to the pools and the hollows.
There was land once again where a man might reside;*

*There was a place in the earth now to rear habitations.
Buffalo then were brought, an oblation to God,
Fatter cattle became sacrifice to the Mighty.
The Divine One then gave them His blessing;
Their God then bestowed His good graces.*

Babel

*Lo-han then begat Cusah and Mesay. (Note 3)
Lo-shan begat Elan and Nga-shur.
Their offspring begotten became tribes and peoples;
Their descendants established encampments and cities.
Their singing was all with the same tunes and music;
Their speaking was all with the same words and language.
Then they said let us build us a very big city;
Let us raise unto heaven a very high tower.
This was wrong, but they reached this decision;
Not right, but they rashly persisted.
God struck at them then, changed their language and accent.
Descending in wrath, He confused tones and voices.
One's speech to the others who hear him has no meaning;
He's speaking in words, but they can't understand him.
So the city they builded was never completed;
The tower they wrought has to stand thus unfinished.
In despair then they separate under all heaven,
They part from each other the globe to encircle. (Note 4)
They arrive at six corners and speak the six languages.*

Miao Genealogy

*The Patriarch Jahphu got the center of nations. (Note 5)
The son he begat was the Patriarch Go-men.
Who took him a wife called the Matriarch Go-yong.
Their grandson and his wife both took the name Tutan.
Their descendants are given in order as follows:
Patriarch Gawndan Mew-wan,
Matriarch Cawdan Mew-jew;
Patriarch Jenku Dawvu, Matriarch Jeneo Boje;
Patriarch Gangen Newang (wife not given);
Patriarch Seageweng, Matriarch Maw gueh.
Their children, eleven in number, was each the head of a family.
Five branches became the Miao nation.
Six families joined with the Chinese.*

The story continues through many more pages, telling of the separation of the Chinese and Miao; their travels and demon worship, their division into families.

The Miao at funerals and weddings recite the ancestry of the principal or principals clear back to Adam. Their frequent use of it may account for its accuracy.

Notes:

1. The Miao say that on the bottom of the bottom of the earth is a land of dwarfs.
2. Note the similarity of some of these names to those in the Bible account: Seth, Lamech, Noah, Ham, Shem, and Japheth.
3. Note the similarity:
 - Ham's descendants: *Bible* Cush, Mizram; *Miao* Cusah, Mesay
 - Shem's descendants: *Bible* Elam, Asshur; *Miao* Elan, Nga shur
4. The literal translation here is: "They parted went live encircle world ball." The Miao know nothing of the world being round, so this passage seems to indicate the perfect knowledge of the original man - Devolution instead of Evolution.
5. From this we see that they trace their ancestry from Japheth and Gomer, which makes them of the Indo-European stock.

The Miao did not originally worship idols, but learned this from the Chinese after having been subdued by them. This poem, which is learned by heart and transmitted from generation to generation, is translated and brought to you with the hope that you will be inspired to PRAY MUCH for these people. They evidently once knew the true God. Pray that they may learn to know Him as Father, and Jesus, whom He has sent to be the Way back to Him.

Editor's Comments:

This remarkable account of creation and the flood apparently has been handed down generation after generation from the ancestors of the Miao tribespeople in the mountains of southwest China, for they possessed this legend before they met missionaries. It was translated into English by a missionary, Ernest Truax, who spent most of his life working for the Lord among these people. He sent me the story many years ago, before *Acts & Facts* began publication. Recently, Mr. James Honeyman also acquired a copy and sent it to me. He also was able to find the address of Mrs. Ellen Truax, widow of the missionary, and make contact with her.

Mrs. Truax has now copyrighted the translation and has graciously given us permission to publish it as an "Impact" article, so that Christians everywhere could become aware of this amazing record, and also could pray for the Miao people as Mr. Truax desired.

Although many legends of creation and the flood have been preserved, only a few have included the story of Babel and the post-flood dispersion. This is surely one of the most Bible-like of all these traditions, and bears significant independent testimony to the truth of the record in Genesis. Even though we have been unable so far to locate anyone who can confirm the authenticity of the Miao tradition or the accuracy of its translation, it clearly has the ring of truth about it and we can believe it is authentic until someone can prove otherwise. Its differences from the Biblical account clearly

show its source was not directly from the Bible or early Christian missionaries (if any), but its similarities are so striking as to imply that it came from the same original source - namely, the events themselves!

In any case, it is certainly of sufficient importance to warrant sharing it with our readers. If anyone has any additional information about the Miao tradition, or their history in general, we would be pleased to hear from them.

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