

Dan Petersen

A ‘Key’ to the Dongba Script? A Re-Appraisal of a Set of Four Dongba Manuscripts, Held by the John Rylands Library

Abstract: From the end of the nineteenth century well into the twentieth century, missionaries, botanists and adventurers travelled extensively in Lijiang and Naxi land in Yunnan, Southwest China. Some became fascinated by the Dongba manuscripts *en passant* and soon first attempts to ‘translate’ their contents were made. This study examines a set of four Dongba manuscripts and two unpublished translations held at the John Rylands Library in Manchester. Material, form, content and the interrelation of these manuscripts is reconstructed. In addition, these manuscripts also reveal specific problems inherent in any attempt at translating the ‘texts’ contained in Dongba manuscripts.

Introduction

The John Rylands Library (JRL) in Manchester holds a collection of 135 Dongba manuscripts acquired from the Botanist George Forrest (1873–1932) and his widow, Harriet C. M. Wallace Traill (1877–1937). Three of these manuscripts, Mo-So 6, 9, and 93, were produced by copying the content of Mo-So 13 and adding to it, thus forming a set of four. As early as 1916, Henry Guppy, Keeper of Manuscripts at the JRL, had observed:

The manuscript referred to [Mo-So 13] was first transcribed and then furnished with an interlinear translation in Chinese characters [Mo-So 6]. A further transcript of both the Mo-So and the Chinese was afterwards made [Mo-So 93], to which was added an English translation of the Chinese version, thus providing us with a key [Mo-So 9] which may prove to be of great service when the other manuscripts in the collection come to be dealt with.¹

Almost fifty years later, in 1965, a note was added to Mo-So 6 by Francis Taylor (1910–2000), Guppy’s successor at the JRL. It refers to a letter from Anthony Jackson, a student who was studying the structure of Dongba rituals for his dissertation in Anthropology:

¹ Guppy 1916, 143.

Mo-So 6: see also 9 and 93

Contains the story about the Twelve Earthly Stems, i.e. the twelve components that go to make up part of the Chinese sexagenary cycle.

It is a copy of a Mo-So text (no 13, which is the original) to which a literal Chinese translation was added at the time of copying ([...] Mr. Anthony Jackson, see letter of 10/2/1965) F. Taylor 15th February 1965.²

In his letter of 10 February 1965, Jackson had further stated that

None of these mss. (6, 9 and 93) are Mo-So texts. MS. 93 is a Chinese copy of ms. 6 which itself is an interlineally glossed copy of a (presumably original) Mo-So text. MS. 9 is simply a compilation of the Mo-So pictographs and Chinese translations used in (the transcription? of) MS. 93. In other words it looks as if MS. 6 was compiled from some source and a literal Chinese translation added at the same time; MS. 9 is a working-book compiled for the production of MS. 93 which is a much better Chinese translation than MS. 6. Both MSS. 9 and 93 are written on Chinese paper it will be observed; MS. 6 had very coarse paper if I remember correctly.³

While Guppy had assumed the order of production to be Mo-So 13 (model), Mo-So 6 (copy with interlineal Chinese translation), Mo-So 93 (copy of Mo-So 6), Mo-So 9 (the ‘key’), Jackson apparently thought that Mo-So 9 (the ‘key’) was produced in order to improve the Chinese translation, resulting in Mo-So 93 as the last one. The shelf marks of the JRL do not provide clues here, since the present running numbers may not reflect the order of accession.⁴ And even if Mo-So 93 was not among the first ones sold to the JRL, Forrest might have simply kept it for himself.⁵

This set of manuscripts has been mentioned more than once in previous research, but an in-depth study is still a desideratum.⁶ Since they are the earliest material evidence for the difficulties encountered when ‘translating’ Dongba ‘texts’,⁷ a closer examination of their features as well as peculiarities of the ‘trans-

² Note on Mo-So 6. John Rylands Library, Manchester 1965. The reference to no. 13 is a later addition written with a different pen.

³ Letter of 10 February 1965, see Gow 2013.

⁴ In most manuscripts with numbers running up to Mo-So 20 capital letters on a small piece of wrapping paper denote the order, but Mo-So 1, Mo-So 14 and Mo-So 15 do not have these tags, perhaps because they have fallen off. Circular tags with jagged edges showing numbers of yet another system are found on e.g. Mo-So 123 and Mo-So 129 (both XI./24, perhaps referring to a set).

⁵ For early Dongba manuscript studies see the contribution by Michael Friedrich in this volume.

⁶ For example, see Li Lincan 1984, 105 and Poupard 2018, 99–101.

⁷ For the Geba-Dongba glossary with French phonetic glosses and translations reproduced in Bacot 1913, see the contribution by Michael Friedrich in this volume, Fig. 5.

lations' may shed new light on the principal limits of such an endeavour. A tentative translation of the Chinese text of Mo-So 6 is appended.

1 Material features

The four manuscripts come in the typical form of Dongba ritual manuscripts: oblong format resembling the Tibetan *pothi* with the ratio between height and width around 1 : 3, but in contrast to the former bound on the left. Some basic features are summarized in Table 1:

Table 1: Codicological features of the four manuscripts, retrieved from the website of the University of Manchester and examination.⁸

	Paper	Size (mm)	Binding	Folios (incl. covers)	Trimmed corners on the right	Remarks
Mo-So 13	Coarse, brown (laid)	84 × 270	Thread, brown; 7 holes	20	yes	Small piece of brown wrapping paper with 'N' on verso of front cover
Mo-So 6	Coarse, grey (laid)	110 × 300	Blue cord (original?); 4 holes	20	yes	Small piece of brown wrapping paper with 'F' on verso of front cover
Mo-So 93	Thin and smooth, light grey	105 × 250	Thread, light grey; 2 holes	21	no	Arabic folio numbers, partially covered by spine; last folio before back cover has only two lines of writing on the recto
Mo-So 9	Thin and smooth, light grey	110 × 255	Two slips of paper, 2 holes for each	11	no	Small piece of brown wrapping paper with 'J' on verso of front cover

⁸ See <https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/view/search?search=SUBMIT&q=Mo-So&-dateRangeStart=&dateRangeEnd=&QuickSearchA=QuickSearchA>, accessed on 14 January 2022.

Coarse paper similar to that of Mo-So 13 and Mo-So 6 is found in most Dongba manuscripts. Li Lincan, who studied and collected them during the 1940s, had reported that the Dongba mostly produced their own paper, but because of a lack of expertise were not able to create a pure white quality. Exposed to the sun and fumigated by smoke and incense, the paper often took the colour of ‘ancient bronze’.⁹ Without material analysis it is impossible to determine the components of the papers, but everything points in the same direction as the few studies undertaken so far: the basic materials are *Wikstroemia* and *Broussonetia papyrifera* (paper mulberry).¹⁰ From scrutiny of eight Dongba manuscripts it has been shown that the oblong format of the folios was produced by cutting larger sheets of paper into four or eight.¹¹ The trimming of corners is common in Dongba manuscripts and may have served the purpose of protecting these vulnerable parts from damage (see Fig. 1).¹²



Fig. 1: Upper right corner of fol. 1' of Mo-So 6.

There are no studies on the bindings of Dongba manuscripts. They greatly vary and range from ‘rough binding’ using paper twists (Mo-So 9) and simple ways of stitching (Mo-So 13) to that of the Chinese ‘thread-bound books’ with the stitches extending over the cut and the back (Mo-So 6).¹³ However, despite the different materials and sewing, stab-stitched binding technique was presumably used for all four manuscripts.¹⁴ The blue cord of Mo-So 6 is also found in Mo-So 18,

⁹ Li Lincan 1984, 427.

¹⁰ For plants used in papermaking, see the contribution of Agnieszka Helman-Ważny and Mengling Cai in this volume.

¹¹ See Harder-Steinhäuser and Jayme 1963; see also the contribution of Agnieszka Helman-Ważny and Mengling Cai in this volume for a recent technical examination.

¹² Trimmed corners have also been found in manuscripts from late first millennium Dunhuang, see Galambos 2020, 35.

¹³ For bindings of Chinese books see Helliwell 1998, see also Obi 2004, 29.

¹⁴ For more on stab-stitched binding, see Helman-Ważny et al. 2020: ‘A stab-stitched binding is

another manuscript held by the JRL, and may point to a common origin (see Figs 2 and 3).¹⁵ In the case of Mo-So 18, the blue-cord binding was clearly done at a late stage, in order to rebind an old manuscript that had lost its covers.

With the exception of Mo-So 93 (see below), it is not clear whether the leaves were bound before or after being written on.



Figs 2 and 3: Bindings of Mo-So 13 and Mo-So 6.

Mo-So 13 is clearly the oldest of the four manuscripts and appears to have been in actual use: the brittle paper has noticeably darkened, small pieces have already come loose (see Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: Fol. 1' of Mo-So 13.

characterised by using a thread-stitch. There are many variations of it, depending on the book's size, the materials used and the local binding tradition. The common denominator, however, is that a thread is pulled through the stabbed holes in the book and wrapped around the "back" of it to produce a spine'.

15 Mo-So 18 is an old one, having been rebound and protected with new covers.

In some places cracks have emerged, and some characters are difficult to identify (Figs 4, 5 and 6). All these features are typical for old manuscripts that have been in use for a certain length of time.



Figs 5 and 6: Upper right corner and lower edge on fol. 1' of Mo-So 13.

Mo-So 6 (Fig. 7) is made of a similar type of paper but had apparently never been used in the traditional way and thus kept its original colour, just as the new covers of Mo-So 18 did.



Fig. 7: Fol. 1' of Mo-So 6.

The paper of Mo-So 93 and Mo-So 9, on the other hand, is thin and of lighter colour, typical for what is usually called 'mulberry paper', providing a much more suitable support for writing (see Fig. 8).



Fig. 8: fol. 1r of Mo-So 93.

2 Visual Features

The front cover of Mo-So 9 is blank; the others have title cartouches adorned by a knot. Although the cartouche of Mo-So 13 is severely damaged, it is obvious that Mo-So 6 partially copied it, at the same time adding some Geba characters and a more elaborate design: the cartouche is red, decorated with a Chinese knot in yellow, red, and blue and waving strips in red and blue. Below, a Chinese title of the Dongba characters in the centre is provided: *Dizhi shier shu* 地支十二屬 'The Twelve Animals of the Earthly Branches'. Mo-So 93 in turn copied Mo-So 6, but was perhaps left unfinished, because the outline of the knot looks as if it had been prepared for being coloured (see Figs 9, 10, 11).



Fig. 9: Front cover of Mo-So 13.



Fig. 10: Front cover of Mo-So 6.

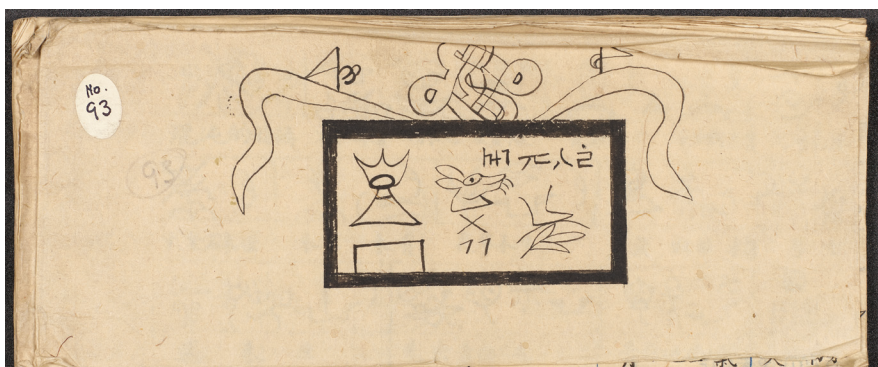


Fig. 11: Front cover of Mo-So 93.

The same impression is conveyed by the first written page of Mo-So 93: While the model lacks an image (see Fig. 8), Mo-So 6 has a coloured drawing of a standing figure at the left, probably representing a Dongba, perhaps the first teacher Dongba Shiluo. He is holding a golden bell in the right hand, showing the Karana mudra for repelling demons with the left hand, and wearing a hat made of fur, probably from the snow leopard, with pheasant feathers (Fig. 12).¹⁶

¹⁶ During the workshop ‘Bonpo Manuscript Culture: Towards a Definition of an Emerging Field’ in March 2016 hosted by the Centre for the Studies of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) in Hamburg, Charles Ramble suggested it may resemble the fur of a snow leopard. The pheasant feathers can be seen in Rock 1952, pt. I, plate xix.



Fig. 12: Illustration on fol. 1^r of Mo-So 6.

Mo-So 93 does not have the figure but instead a blank space at the same position, presumably left for filling in the drawing. Colours are also used in some other places, but apparently without any overall design.

In Mo-So 13, the ruling for the three lines, commonly used in ritual manuscripts, was done freehand and with the same instrument used for writing the characters. In Mo-So 6 and Mo-So 93, however, the ruling for the six lines alternately filled with Dongba and Chinese characters was done in a different way, probably with the help of a ruler and, at least in Mo-So 93, with another writing instrument, perhaps with a pencil. Thus, the latter two appear much more orderly. The vertical dividers, separating cola or verses, are precisely copied from Mo-So 13 to Mo-So 6, while Mo-So 93 has a different division with the dividers first executed in blue, perhaps with a pen, then with another instrument in black.¹⁷

¹⁷ Rock refers to the cells as 'rubrics': 'Each page is divided into three lines and each line into a number of rubrics, and each rubric contains a phrase rather than a single sentence', see Rock 1937, 6.



Fig. 13: Fol. 3^r of Mo-So 93.

Here not only the number of dividers is usually higher than in Mo-So 13 and Mo-So 6, but in some cases, they are clearly employed to facilitate the assignment of the Chinese 'translation' to the Dongba characters, as the 'step' design of some of them shows (see Fig. 13). Another unusual feature are Arabic folio numbers added on the top left corner on the recto pages except folio 1; since they are partially or wholly covered by the spine of the binding, it is not to be excluded that there are more exceptions. For the same reason, it is impossible to say without unbinding whether two-digit numbers were used. The execution of the numbers points to a scribe not trained in writing Arabic numerals (see Fig. 14).

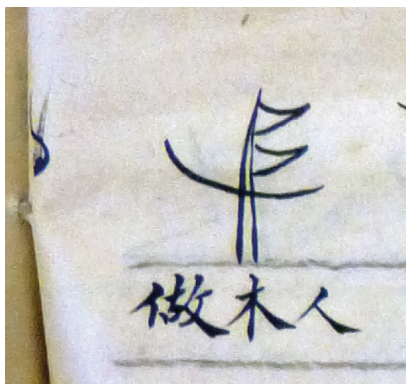


Fig. 14: Folio number '8' on Mo-So 93, fol. 18^r.

For Mo-So 9, a grid with seven cells in each of the three lines per page was created. The cells were alternately filled with a Dongba character and Chinese characters written with the same instrument. The English translations of the Chinese glosses were apparently not provided for in the original layout and were added later. Depending on the space available, they were written between the Chinese lines of one cell or even extending beyond the cell. This suggests that the English translation may not have been intended when writing the Chinese text (see Fig. 15).

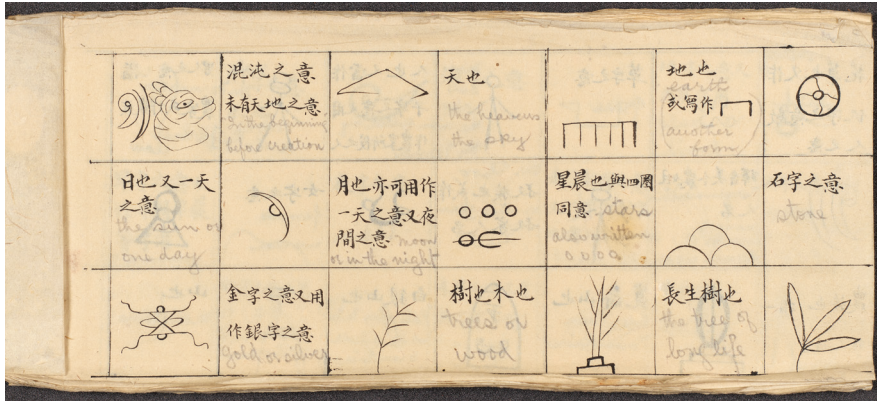


Fig. 15: Fol. 1' of Mo-So 9.

3 Writing

Mo-So 13 and Mo-So 6 were presumably written with a bamboo stylus, the traditional writing instrument of the Dongba. For the other two, it is not possible without further analysis to determine the instrument; it could as well be a brush. The hand of Mo-So 6 does not appear experienced or well-trained, while that of Mo-So 93 is more controlled and experienced; irregularities, however, may be caused by a scribe trained to write Chinese with a brush having to use a stylus. Mo-So 93 and Mo-So 9 are most probably written by the same neat and experienced hand which shares some features with that of Mo-So 6. In addition, Mo-So 9 contains English entries in pencil in the Chinese cells.

4 Mo-So 6: A copy of Mo-So 13 with an Interlineal Translation into Chinese

The Dongba characters of Mo-So 13 were exactly copied onto Mo-So 6, including layout features such as the dividers. The Chinese interlineal text, presumably the translation of a Dongba's recitation or explanation, is matched with the Dongba characters by leaving spaces which correspond more or less to the divisions (see Fig. 16). Due to some inconsistencies and 'mistakes' in the Chinese translation that could derive from someone who is unfamiliar with the Dongba characters and the content of the manuscript, it may be assumed that the two were written by different hands.



Fig. 16: Fol. 1' of Mo-So 6.

A mark derived from the Tibetan *yig mgo* (lit. letter initial) marks the beginning of a section in the Dongba 'text'.¹⁸ These 'heads' are coloured in blue and red (Fig. 15). A small circle repeatedly occurring in the Chinese text (Fig. 17) is a segmentation mark, in most cases corresponding to the 'heads' (see the introduction to the translation in Appendix III).



Fig. 17: Fol. 8° of Mo-So 6.

¹⁸ Li Lincan notes that locals call them 'character head' (*zitou* 字頭) and that it was adapted from the Tibetan 'character head', see Li Lincan 1944, 131 and Li Lincan 2001, 294. He refers to the Tibetan *yig mgo* ཡིག་མགོ་ (Tib. ཡིག་མགོ་) or *mgo yig*, that is used to mark 'the beginning of a text or of a page', see Tournadre and Dorje 2003, 406. It appears on fols 1'1, 6°1, 7°3, 8°3, 10°1 (without colouring), 11°3 (only coloured in red), 12°3, 13°3 (only half of the mark coloured in blue), 14°3, 15°3.

When proper names appear in the Chinese text, they are mostly marked by a line at the top of the characters (in contrast to modern usage), but this was forgotten or only done partially in many cases. This may have resulted from uncertainty about what exactly names are, or simply from carelessness. The Chinese text shows traces of corrections and errors, pointing to the latter.¹⁹

5 Mo-So 93: A refined copy of Mo-So 6

Both the Dongba characters and the Chinese text of Mo-So 93 were copied from Mo-So 6, but with some telling changes. Although the Dongba characters were taken over in exactly the same distribution on the page, Mo-So 93 has more dividers. The intention seems to be to allow easier identification of which Dongba characters are represented by which part of the Chinese translation (see Figs 18 and 19).



Fig. 18: First two lines on fol. 1' of Mo-So 6.

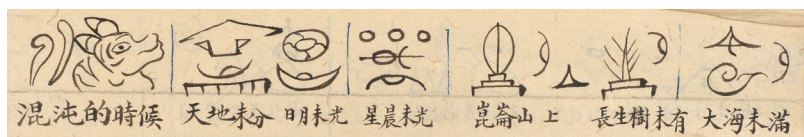


Fig. 19: First two lines on fol. 1' of Mo-So 93.

In addition, the writing of Mo-So 93 is executed with a sense of proportion and harmony (see Fig. 20).

¹⁹ Names have not been completely overlined or it was completely left out in the following instances: fols 5⁴, 6⁶, 6², 10² and 4, 11², 12², 12⁴, 13², 18⁶.

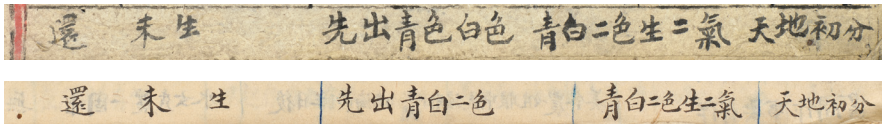


Fig. 20: Comparison of the Chinese text on fol. 1'6 of Mo-So 6/ 93.

Most notable is the correction of mistakes and the improvement of style. A few examples must suffice to document this effort:

Mo-So 93, fol. 8'6 correction

Mo-So 6: 九天天夜

Mo-So 93: 九天九夜

Translation 'Nine days and nine nights'

The mistaken repetition of *tian* 天 ('day') is corrected by writing *jiu* 九 ('nine') instead.

Mo-So 93, fol. 2'4–6: standard character, clarification

Mo-So 6: 生美令叔姊又游海边照見影

Mo-So 93: 生美令叔姊又游海邊照見形影

Translation 'And brought about Meilingshuzi who also went out roaming on the shore to gaze at his reflection.'

In this case, the cursive character *bian* 边 has been replaced by the standard one: 邊; furthermore, by adding the character 形 for *xing* to the one for *ying* 影 ('shadow, image, reflection'), the meaning is specified as referring to the shadow of Meilingshuzi.

Mo-So 93, fol. 3'4: intelligibility

Mo-So 6: 農叔兩家中間隔一天大河矣

Mo-So 93: 農叔兩家中間隔一極大之河

Translation 'An extremely large river separated the two families of Nong and Shu'

Here, unintelligible wording (一天大河) that perhaps betrays a trace of the original Naxi text has been changed into a meaningful phrase by replacing the character for *tian* 天 by the one for *ji* 極.

Mo-So 93 is apparently a clear copy of Mo-So 6, created by a scribe trained in writing decent Chinese. It had perhaps not been finished but was apparently

meant to show a neat-looking and stylistically acceptable Chinese text in close relation to the Dongba characters.

6 Mo-So 9: A Key to Dongba Manuscripts?

Mo-So 9 was obtained through 'the services of a Chinese scholar, who was familiar with the people and their language' and referred to as a key 'that may prove to be of great service when the other manuscripts in the collection come to be dealt with'.²⁰ The 'key' comprises nine folios with Dongba characters, Chinese and English glosses (Fig. 15). While the Dongba-Chinese parts were probably written in one go, the English translations of the Chinese glosses were clearly added later. It is the earliest tri-lingual Dongba character inventory known, containing 168 entries. It covers approximately only 58% of the content of Mo-So 6/93 and may thus have been unfinished, like the latter.²¹ The last entry ('the sign of the 12 Earthly Stems') corresponds to the Dongba title inside the cartouche of Mo-So 6.

In principle, the order of entries follows their appearance in Mo-So 13 and Mo-So 6, but there are many exceptions and inconsistencies (see Fig. 21). A striking example is the fact that the character for negations which already appears five times in the first line, in Mo-So 9 is given only on fol. 2^r. In most cases, there is no discernible reason for such irregularities. Just as Mo-So 93 was a clear copy of Mo-So 6, the scribe may have first produced a draft, perhaps on cards, which were in disorder when he wrote the glossary.



Fig. 21: Mo-So 6 with the order of characters as appearing in Mo-So 9, the 'key'.

²⁰ See Guppy 1916, 142 and 143.

²¹ At least 122 characters were not included in the glossary. In addition, there may still be some unrecognized compounds.

The very first Dongba character in Mo-So 6/93, the ‘head’ mark, only comes on fol. 1^o of Mo-So 9 as number 15 and is glossed here as 譯音美令農姐人名 ‘phonetic rendering: Meilingnongjie, personal name’. This clearly refers to the second occurrence of the ‘head’ in Mo-So 6/93 on fol. 6^o1, where the Chinese text does have this name. The scribe responsible for it probably faithfully represented the translation of the chanted text, not knowing that the ‘head’ was a graphic mark without any spoken equivalent (see Fig. 22).

The English translations of the Chinese glosses were done by someone not very familiar with Literary Chinese and traditional glossing techniques, probably due to superficial knowledge of the language and a lack of serious dictionaries. The above gloss for the ‘head’: ‘phonetic rendering, Meilingnongjie’ is translated as ‘Tseyinmeichin name of ancestor of Farmer clan’: ‘Tseyin (yiyin 譯音, ‘phonetic rendering’) is considered to be part of the name, the name Meilingnongjie is shortened to ‘meichin’, and the last two syllables are translated as if they were representing Chinese words for Farmer clan (*nongzu* 農族) (see Fig. 22). The author obviously mixed up the determinatives and the phonetic elements: *yi* 譯 is transliterated as ‘tse’ (*ze < ze* 擇 or 澤?), *ling* 令 as ‘chin’ (< *jin* 今?) and *jie* 姐 translated as ‘ancestor’ (< *zu* 祖?). Similar mistakes occur more often, for example in 神名韶阿瓦德 ‘name of a deity Shaoawade’, given as ‘chao a ping teh a god’,²² clearly mistaking *wa* 瓦 for *ping* 瓶.



Fig. 22: Fol. 1^o of Mo-So 9.

²² Mo-So 9, fol. 6^o.

Another example for unfamiliarity with traditional Chinese lexicography is a gloss on folio 5' of the Mo-So 9: 'the wood or bush people' for Chinese 木偶木人之意 ('wooden effigy, meaning a man made from wood').

The date of the pencil glosses is not known. Although the hand looks different from the one in Forrest's translation, it cannot be completely excluded that it was him.²³

7 A First Attempt to Translate Mo-So 6

The JRL holds an undated draft translation of the first part of the Chinese text. It was done by George Forrest, as a comparison with a letter signed by him shows.²⁴ Corrections have been made, and words have been crossed out. In addition, notes and alternative translations were added in parentheses. The translation breaks off after page six, corresponding to fol. 4' of Mo-So 13/93. This is precisely the place when the 'story' telling of the etiological myth is followed by the stereotypical formulas referring to ritual actions.

Some indications suggest that the text was translated without the help of the 'key', instead following the Chinese on Mo-So 6/93. The draft contains similar mistakes to those made by the scribe who had glossed Mo-So 9, but not the same ones. This suggest that the translation was done with the help of dictionaries and not the 'key'. In addition, the transliterations are different from those used in the latter, such as 'May-ling-nong-dsu' (美令農族) instead of 'Tseyinmeichin' (譯音美令). In one case the first syllable of a name was not perceived as such: 'Ti-di-mo-ming' for Yushijimouming (于是戟某命). 'Ti' is probably to be understood as a mistaken reading of the character *shi* 是 (< *ti* 題?), showing a similar pattern to Mo-So 9.²⁵

²³ Mueggler describes a multi-layered translation process of Forrest and his assistant Zhao when working on their maps. He argues that the 'inconsistency' of the former's transliterations supports the botanist's 'discomfort with Chinese characters', see Mueggler 2011, 22–23. This and the fact that he used grey and blue pencil on the maps could support the idea that Forrest was working (perhaps together with Zhao) on the translation of the 'key' (grey pencil) and Mo-So 93 (vertical lines on first pages in blue pencil).

²⁴ See the contribution by Michael Friedrich in this volume, p. 294 n. 73.

²⁵ Different transliterations of names are still common, for examples see Appendix I.

8 A full translation of the Chinese text

On 16 March 1965, Anthony Jackson brought a typewritten translation of the Chinese text of Mo-So 6 to Francis Taylor.²⁶ It constitutes a significant improvement on Forrest's translation. Jackson chose the following visual organisation for the translation: the dividers are represented by a slash '/' or a line break. Line breaks in the Chinese text are indicated by a series of hyphens '-----'.

Despite some remaining misunderstandings, e.g. 'Peasant-clan' for Nongzu 農族, and open questions as manifest in alternative translations, e.g. '[...] produced the two breaths (powers?)', the Chinese text was finally translated in a full and already quite faithful version, but it was never published.

A comparison of Jackson's translation with Forrest's not only shows the advance in the understanding of the text, but also an increased attention to the visual organisation of the manuscript. Jackson may have sensed that this was one of the features relating the Chinese translation to the 'original'. The following comparison (Table 2) shows the features of the two translations and demonstrates the improvements made by Jackson that facilitate our understanding of the content and arrangement of the manuscript.

Table 2: The beginning of Forrest's and Jackson's translations of the Chinese text of Mo-So 6.

<i>Mossao book No 1</i> ²⁷	<i>Rylands Mo-Su MSS No. 6</i> ²⁸
Page 1. at the time of chaos, before heaven + earth were divided or the sun + moon gave light or the stars were mani- fest. Before forests grew on [?] around —? ere the Great-sea was full, or the gems of the earth were found, before timber or stone existed or flowers and grass had sprung into life. Before (farmers) existed or male and female were born ²⁹ In the beginning appeared	In the time of chaos/ before heaven and earth were parted/ before sun and moon gave their light/ before stars appeared On top of K'un-lun Mountain/ before the tree of longevity existed/ when the sea was not yet full ----- Before the big golden stone appeared ³⁰ Before trees and stones existed

²⁶ Note by Taylor on the first page of the typescript.

²⁷ Draft translation of Mossao book No. 1, Acc.+Book+XI+f.24b, The University of Manchester, England. The numbers appearing in the translation refer to the pages of Mo-So 6 (and 93).

²⁸ Typewriter translation with note from Francis Taylor: 'Brought by Mr. A. Jackson', March 16, 1965, see Gow 2013.

²⁹ The meaning of this vertical stroke is not clear.

³⁰ Before correction: 'Before the big gold and stone appeared'.

Table 2 (continued)

<i>Mossao book No 1²⁷</i>	<i>Rylands Mo-Su MSS No. 6²⁸</i>
the two colours green + white, these two colours produced two vapours. (2) heaven + (2) earth were then divided, heaven + earth begat the Great Spirit and afterwards begat <u>low-a-wa+de</u> , and then begat <u>Ti-di-mo-ming</u> along with <u>May-ling-nong-dsu</u> (or father agriculture). The farmers had a white heaven and earth, sun, moon + stars gave forth their light, mountains, rivers, + sea were green and white (i.e. clear). The fathers of agriculture travelled over the sea, and saw its aspect. In the night he desired a companion who would help him during the day. [...]	Before flowers and plants grew-Before the Peasant-clan and Shu-clan existed Men and women ----- were not yet born First appeared the blue colour and the white colour/ the blue and white colours produced the two breaths (powers?) Heaven and Earth began to part ³¹ Heaven and Earth gave birth to the Big God (Supreme God?)/ later on gave birth to Shao-a-wa-teh Again gave birth to Yü-shih-chi-mou-ming Afterwards gave birth to Mei-ling-nung-chieh/ The Peasant-clan's heaven and earth were both white (or clear) ----- Their sun, moon and stars were all bright Their mountains, rivers and seas were all clear/ Mei-ling-nung-chieh travelled to the sea-side and found his image (in the water)/ he wished to have a company in the night ----- He wished to have a working company in the morning

9 Conclusion: Lessons to be learned

In a nutshell, the four manuscripts and the two efforts at translation presented here exemplify the problems of translating Dongba 'texts'. Since these manuscripts stand at the threshold between a living tradition and its transformation into an object of commercial and scholarly interests, they allow a glimpse into a world already nearly gone when all ritual activities of the Dongba were banned after 1949.

³¹ Before correction: 'Heaven and Earth were then parted'.

We do not know why Mo-So 13 was selected for the bilingual version of Mo-So 6. Neither do we know who the ‘Chinese scholar’ was, who either translated the verbal performance of a Dongba directly into Chinese or relied on an interpreter first rendering the ritual language into colloquial Naxi. Whether the bilingual version of Mo-So 6 was commissioned by Forrest or produced by the unknown scholar for other reasons, will remain a mystery, like the reasons for producing the ‘clear copy’ contained in Mo-So 93 and the glossary of Mo-So 9. The stylistic refinement of the Chinese text of Mo-So 93 does not point to a European patron, but rather to an effort to address a Chinese-reading audience.

It is clear, however, that Forrest used Mo-So 6 and 93 for his partial draft translation. Jackson was certainly right in saying that Mo-So 6, 93 and 9 were not ‘Mo-So texts’, probably meaning that these manuscripts were not ‘original’ or ‘authentic’ in the sense that they were not used for ritual purposes, but were produced as tools for deciphering and understanding Dongba ‘texts’. Since these texts were primarily stored in the individual Dongba’s memory, translating them not only meant transferring a specific content into other languages, but also transforming a memorized text which would be recited whenever required, with a certain degree of variance, into a written, stable text. In principle, thus, there are five steps:

1. The verbal, ephemeral performance of a memorized text in the ritual language of the individual Dongba;
2. The ephemeral translation of this text into colloquial Naxi as spoken by the translator, usually being the Dongba himself;
3. The ephemeral translation of this text into spoken Chinese;
4. The recording of this text in written Chinese, and
5. The translation of this text into written English.

In some cases, steps 3 and 4 may have been enacted by the same person. Even twenty years after Forrest had sold his first batch of Dongba manuscripts to the JRL, when Joseph F. Rock (1884-1962) was working on his translations, the process was still much the same in principle:

First, [the Dongba] He Huating copied each page of the pictographic text in his elegant hand. Then he recited the text for Rock to transcribe with the idiosyncratic orthography he invented for this purpose. Third, he dictated a summary translation of each line of the recited text in colloquial Naxi to Li Shichen or He Guangyi. Li or He translated this into Chinese, and Rock rendered their Chinese into elegant English. Fourth, the translation doubled back, plunging into the pictographs with blocs of text that mapped out each rubric.³²

32 Mueggler 2011, 268.

The anonymous Chinese scholar, Forrest and Rock all tried to relate their stages of the translation to the 'original' version they assumed to be found in the manuscripts. The evident contradiction between assuming that the manuscripts contained the *primary* witnesses of texts and complaining about the nature of the 'hieroglyphic' or 'pictographic' script that did *not* record complete texts apparently failed to prompt methodological reflections. The primacy of the mental, unstable text is acknowledged and lamented by Rock on more than one occasion:

The pictographic writing of the ¹Na-²khi is a mnemonic one; only one, two, or three syllables of a phrase consisting of eighteen or twenty or more are written, the rest has to be supplied from memory. The ²dto-³mbas in ancient days were afraid that the common people would learn to read, should the entire text be written out, so they decided to write only a few syllables of each phrase; this has now acted as a boomerang, and much of what has to be read into a sentence has now been forgotten, and very few indeed are the ²dto-³mbas who can read a text twice exactly the same. Sometimes they use a different phraseology but with the meaning being the same. Furthermore, if a ²dto-³mba is confronted with a manuscript written by a ²dto-³mba from another district, he will read it as he has been taught by his father, *i.e.*, he will remember the text of his book and read pictographs not occurring in the text, omitting such as are written, in other words: he will read from memory the particular copy of the manuscript he had left in his home, rather than the one put before him.³³

Before 1916, at the time when Mo-So 6, 93 and 9 were produced, there existed neither a standard Naxi language nor dictionaries of its varieties, not to mention the ritual language of the Dongba which was only understood by the Dongba, if at all. Since most of the active Dongba lived in villages away from the bustling town of Lijiang and spoke only their local variant of Naxi, interpreters were needed to translate the colloquial Naxi into Chinese, so-called Yunnan Mandarin, which in turn served as the source for translation into a European language – just as Bacot had already reported in 1913. As a rule, most of the Dongba characters could somehow be related to the translation texts, but without a Dongba or at least intimate knowledge of the ritual tradition it was close to impossible to 'translate' the manuscripts' content. The very idea of a key thus had to fail, because even knowledge of the possible words written by the characters would not allow 'reading' a 'text'. To take just the first divisions of Mo-So 13/6/93 as an example: using the 'key', the translation reads:

at the time of chaos heaven place not earth sun moon stars not Kuenluen Mountains not
[character not in 'key'] tree of long life not [character not in 'key'] sea not stone gold not

³³ Rock 1948, 2–3.

tree stone not [character not in 'key'] flowers leaves place not Mr Farmer Mr Schoo not place
male female [character not in 'key'] elm [animal head] dwell [?] place not [...]

The recurring combination of 'place' and 'not' does not make sense; the 'key' is simply wrong here.³⁴ But even without mistakes, consequent application of the 'key' will result in an – incomplete – chain of semantic atoms which would require much more effort to be turned into a natural-language text than in the case of glossaries of spoken languages. The monotonous sequence of the characters most probably did not correspond to the actual performance of the Dongba, as the Chinese text of Mo-So 6 shows:

At the time of chaos, Heaven and Earth were not divided yet, sun and moon did not shine yet, the stars and celestial bodies had not made their appearances yet,| on Kunlun Mountain the Tree of Longevity was not there yet, the Great Ocean was not full and great yet, great metals and rocks had not appeared yet,| trees and stones did not exist yet,| flowers and plants did not grow yet,| Nongzu and Shuzu did not exist yet,| men and women were not born yet.³⁵

Of course, the scribe could have 'improved' the enunciated version, but this again would only demonstrate that it is close to impossible to get beyond the written translation.

This first documented attempt to translate a Dongba text is revealing, because it not only allows us to reconstruct the translation process in some detail, but also provides clues to its inherent problems. Even more important, however, is the fact that it bears witness to the different degrees of variance involved and created by the very process: proper names in Naxi were difficult to identify and could be rendered in many different ways, depending on the pronunciation of the Dongba, the understanding of the translators and their individual ways of handling their writing systems. At the end of this process, the outcome may have differed from the original word as well as from transliterations undertaken by others, thus preventing identification of deities and places in different texts. On the other hand, these translation activities were always done in an artificial setting. Without the ritual actions many aspects of the texts would remain obscure. This may explain why the Chinese translation does not allow a clear distinction between the narrative part of the etiological myth and the one immediately referring to the performance.

³⁴ The character given as 'place' actually means t'v³³ 'to come forth', see Li Lincan 2001, 213–214, #1158.

³⁵ See Appendix III for a complete translation.

Acknowledgements

From 31 May to 1 June 2018, I was given the opportunity to access the Dongba manuscript collection in the Special Collections Reading Room of the John Rylands Library in Manchester. This was made possible through organizational and financial support by the Centre for the Studies of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) at the University of Hamburg to which I would like to express my deepest appreciation. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Elizabeth Gow of John Rylands Library and the staff on-site for helping me in every possible way during my stay. Furthermore, I am deeply indebted to Agnieszka Helman-Ważny (CSMC) for her unwavering support. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Charles Ramble (École Pratique des Hautes Études) for his vital alterations and revisions of the translation. The contributions and suggestions made by the attendees of the Bon and Naxi workshops (2016-2019 and 2022) held at the CSMC, have been both invaluable and stimulating in the process.

References

Primary sources

- Images (except Mo-So 13) can be accessed through the University of Manchester *Library Digital Collections* website (<https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet>).
- Manchester, JRL, Rylands Collection, Mo-So MS 6.
- Manchester, JRL, Rylands Collection, Mo-So MS 9.
- Manchester, JRL, Rylands Collection, Mo-So MS 13.
- Manchester, JRL, Rylands Collection, Mo-So MS 93.
- Manchester, JRL, Rylands Collection, Uncatalogued: 'Draft translation of Mossao book No. 1', Acc. Book XI f.24b.
- Manchester, JRL, Rylands Collection, Uncatalogued: 'Letter from Elise Scharfen to George Forrest', Acc. Book XI f.24a.
- Picture credits: all JRL/UManchester

Secondary literature

- Bacot, Jacques (1913), *Les Mo-so: Ethnographie des Mo-so, leurs religions, leur langue et leur écriture. Avec les Documents historiques et géographiques relatifs à Li-kiang par Ed. Chavannes*, Leiden: Brill.
- Galambos, Imre (2020), *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture: End of the First Millenium* (Studies in Manuscript Cultures, 22), Berlin: De Gruyter.

- Ge Agan 戈阿幹 (= He Chongren 和崇仁) (2008), 'Hei bai zhanzheng yu "hei bai zhi shuo"' 《黑白战争》与“黑白之说”, in Bai Gengsheng 白庚勝 (ed.), *Ge Agan Naxixue lunji* 戈阿幹納西學論集, (Naxixue congshu), Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 347-352.
- Gow, Elizabeth (2013), *Mo-So mss provenance etc.*, John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, print-out (4 pages).
- Guppy, Henry (1916), 'Library Notes and News: Manuscripts in the Mo-so Language', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 3/2-3: 142-143.
- Harders-Steinhäuser, Marianne and Georg Jayme (1963), 'Untersuchung des Papiers acht verschiedener alter Nakhi-Handschriften auf Rohstoff und Herstellungsweise', in Wolfgang Voigt (ed.), *J. F. Rock: The Life and Culture of the Nakhi Tribe of the China-Tibet Borderland* (Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, Supplementband, 2), Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 54-70.
- He Shicheng 和士成 and He Limin 和力民 (1989), 'Dong Shu zhanzheng' 懂術戰爭, in He Zhenwen 和振文 (ed.), *Naxiyu dongba guji yizhu (san)* 納西東巴古籍譯註 (三) (Yunnan shaoshu minzu guji yicong), Yunnan: Yunnan minzu chubanshe, 1-104.
- Helliwell, David (1998), 'The Repair and Binding of Old Chinese Books: Translated and Adapted for Western Conservators', *The East Asian Library Journal*, 8/1: 27-149.
- Helman-Ważny, Agnieszka, Volker Grabowsky, Direk Injan and Khamvone Boulyaphonh (2020), 'The Techniques and Materials Used in Making Lao and Tai Paper Manuscripts', *manuscript cultures*, 15 [= Oliver Hahn, Volker Märgner, Ira Rabin and H. Siegfried Stiehl (eds), *Natural Sciences, Technology and Informatics in Manuscript Analysis*]: 133-162.
- Li Lincan 李霖燦 (1944), *Mosuo xiangxing wenzi zidian* 麼些象形文字字典, Sichuan: Guoli zhongyang bowuyuan choubeichu.
- Li Lincan 李霖燦 (1984), 'Mosuoren de ganzhi jishi' 麼些人的干支紀時, in *Mosuo yanjiu lunwenji* 麼些研究論文集, Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 113-125.
- Li Lincan 李霖燦 (2001), *Naxizu xiangxing biao yin wenzi zidian* 納西象形表音文字字典, Yunnan: Yunnan minzu chubanshe.
- Mueggler, Erik (2011), *The Paper Road: Archive and Experience in the Botanical Exploration of West China and Tibet*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Obi, Lucia (2004), 'Hinweise für den Benutzer', in Thomas Höllmann, Michael Friedrich, Wolfgang Voigt, Dieter George, und Hartmut-Ortwin Feistel (eds), *Handschriften der Yao*, Teil 1: *Bestände der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München Cod. Sin. 147 bis Cod. Sin. 1045*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 23-36.
- Poupard, Duncan (2018), 'The Lady from Lijiang: Contextualising a Forgotten Missionary Translator of Southwest China', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 94/2: 95-114.
- Rock, J. F. (1937), 'Studies in Na-khi Literature', *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 37: 1-120.
- Rock, J. F. (1948), 'The ²Muan ¹Bpö Ceremony or the Sacrifice to Heaven as Practiced by the ¹Na-²khi', *Monumenta Serica*, 13: 1-160.
- Rock, J. F. (1952), *The Na-khi Nāga Cult and Related Ceremonies*, Part I, Rome: Instituto Italiano per Il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.
- Rock, J. F. (1963), *A ¹Na-²Khi – English Encyclopedic Dictionary*, vol. 1, Rome: Instituto Italiano per Il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.
- Rock, J. F. (1972), *A ¹Na-²Khi – English Encyclopedic Dictionary*, vol. 2: *Gods, Priests, Ceremonies, Stars, Geographical Names*, Rome: Instituto Italiano per Il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

Tournadre, Nicolas and Sangda Dorje (2003). *Manual of Standard Tibetan: Language and Civilization: Introduction to Standard Tibetan (Spoken and Written) Followed by an Appendix on Classical Literary Tibetan*, Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications.

Yang Shiguang 楊世光 (2008), ‘Dongba zhanzheng shi shi’ 東巴戰爭史詩, in Bai Gengsheng 白庚勝 (ed.), *Yang Shiguang Naxixue lunji* 楊世光納西學論集 (Naxixue congshu), Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 74–78.

Appendix I: Names of Deities in Different Sources

Table 3: Comparison of transliterations from Ge Agan 2008, Li Lincan 1984, Li Lincan 2001, Rock 1963, Rock 1972, and Yang Shiguang 2008.

Mo-So 6	J. F. Rock	Others	Explanations
農族 Nongzu	¹ Ddu (Rock 1963, 54 and 277)	東主Dongzhu (Yang Shiguang 2008, 74)	Short form for Meiling-nongjie (see below)
叔族 Shuzu	² Müaŋ- ³ llü- ¹ ssu- ² ndzĩ (Rock 1972, 286)	術主Shuzhu (Yang Shiguang 2008, 74)	Short form for Meilings-huzi (see below)
韶啊瓦德 Shaoawade	¹ Ssaw- ² yi- ² wüa- ² de (Rock 1972, 21) and ² Na- ¹ dshi ¹ Ssaw- ² yi- ² wüa- ² de (Rock 1972, 15)	sa ³³ ru ⁵⁵ wε ³³ dε ³³ and 薩利威登Saliweideng (Li Lincan 2001, 345)	‘The supreme deity of the 1Na-2khi pantheon.’ (Rock 1972, 21)
美令農姐 Meilingnongjie	² Müaŋ- ³ llü- ¹ ddu- ² ndzĩ (Rock 1963, 277)	米利東主Milidongzhu (Yang Shiguang 2008, 75) and 某利敦孜Mou-lidunzi (Li Lincan 1984, 115)	Milidongzhu is the one safeguarding the sun and moon. (Yang Shiguang 2008, 75)
美令叔子 Meilingshuzi	² Müaŋ- ³ llü- ¹ ssu- ² ndzĩ (Rock 1972, 286)	米利術主Milishuzhu (Yang Shiguang 2008, 75)	Milishuzhu, the black demon king in charge of the black sky and black earth. (Yang Shiguang 2008, 75)
處長戟某命 Chuzhangji-mouming	¹ Ts’u- ³ chwua ² gyi- ² mun (Rock 1963, 461), and ² Ts’u- ³ dzhwua- ² gyi- ² mun- 3mi (Rock 1937,)	tɕ’v ⁵⁵ tɕwa ³³ dʒi ³³ mo ³³ and 茨爪金姆 Cizhuajinmu (Li Lincan 2001, 348)	Meilingnongjie’s wife. ‘Female deity’s name. [...] The first deity to open the land of the Dragon King.’ (Li Lincan 2001, 348)

Table 3 (continued)

Mo-So 6	J. F. Rock	Others	Explanations
苟鏡毛 Goujingmao	² Müaŋ- ³ da- ² gkü- ¹ zaw- ¹ na- ¹ muŋ (Rock 1972, 287)	ṣv ³¹ mi ⁵⁵ kw ³³ za ³¹ na ³¹ mo ³³ and Shunügengraonamu 術女更饒那姆 (Li Lincan 2001, 322)	Meilingshuzi's wife. 'Name of demon'. (Li Lincan 2001, 322)
仲格 Zhongge	² Dtër- ¹ gko (Rock 1972, 176–183)	多格 Duoge (Ge Agan 2008, 350)	'Protective tutelary spirits [...] There are 360 of them and they take precedence over the ² Yu- ¹ ma [...]' (Rock 1972, 176)
亞毛 Yamao	² Yu- ¹ ma (Rock 1972, 184–195)	優瑪 Youma (Yang Shiguang 2008, 76 and Ge Agan 2008, 350)	360 protective spirits (Rock 1972, 184)
於是鵝首 Yushieshou	¹ Yi- ³ shi- ² ō- ² zo (Rock 1972, 229)	i ³¹ ṣw ⁵⁵ bo ³³ nɔzo ³³ (Li Lincan 2001, 330)	The Dongba of Meiling- nongjie (Rock 1972, 229)

Appendix II: Comparison of Translations

In the table below, the translation by Joseph Rock of an etiological myth that is part of many 'texts' is juxtaposed with the one provided by the present author in Appendix III. It shows that Rock has included a considerable number of comments in his translation. Although this may have been done to help with the comprehension of the content, their lengthiness and many details detract from the translated text itself. Parts in italics are Rock's comments, while the translation is given in bold font.

Table 4: Comparison of Rock 1937, 14–15 and 'Translation of the Chinese text of Mo-So 6'.

J. F. Rock 1937, 14–15	Translation of Mo-So 6, fols 1'2–2'2
<p>'[...] 3) ²Ha-¹ddü ³o-¹p'ër (Plate X) (the great god with the white bones), he caused to appear ²Ö-¹gko-²aw-¹gko (this deity is indicated by the Tibetan character ཨ, the Na-khi representation of the Tibetan character stands for the name of their perhaps supreme deity of which no pictures nor description exist in Na-khi manuscripts. The dto-mba are not very consistent, sometimes ²Ö-¹gko-²aw-¹gko is placed first and from him all other deities originated, sometimes, as in this case, ²Ha-¹ddü ³o-¹p'ër is placed first, and again the deity ¹Ssaw-²yi-²wua-²de, this latter deity is said to have meditated on ²Ö, or rather ཨ in Tibetan [that is the first great cause], whereupon ²Ö-¹gko-²aw-¹gko became a reality). And from him came forth ¹Ssaw-²yi-²wua-²de, and from him ²Muan -³llü-¹du-²ndzi the two latter caused to appear a white heaven and a white earth, 2nd line:</p>	<p>'[...] Heaven and Earth brought forth the Supreme Deity, after that Shaoawade [moreover Yushijimou-ming,] and furthermore Meiling-nongjie. Nongzu possessed White Heaven and White Earth. Sun, moon and stars shone luminous. Mountains, rivers and lakes were clear and white. </p>
<p>1) a white sun, moon, stars and ¹zaw or planets, and there also came forth a white lake.</p>	
<p>2) One day ²Muan -³llü-¹du-²ndzi¹ walked to ¹Du ³khü-¹p'ër, the white lake of Du (his own lake Du); there he saw his reflection in the water; in the evening he thought of a companion (a wife), and in the morning he thought of a son.</p>	<p>Meilingnongjie went out roaming on the shore to gaze at his reflection. At night he longed to have a partner,</p>
<p>3) He longed for a companion to help him in farming and in tending his flock of sheep (he can be seen working the land, and the grain is sprouting, the character for ²lv= stone or rock is used as a phonetic, and read in the third tone ³lv means a shepherd. The three last characters are: the upper a musk deer read ²lä, the second a pig read ¹bu, and the third fire read ²mi; all three serve as phonetics only and are read ²lä ¹bu ²mi meaning to wish for, long for as a companion).</p>	<p>during the daytime while working, he wanted to have a partner. </p>
<p>4) From ²Muan -³llü-¹du-²ndzi's mouth came forth white foam, 3d line:</p>	
<p>1) from his eyes came forth tears (he wept), and his flesh turned blue and yellow, he gathered his tears and the foam from his mouth and threw them into the lake (this part is indicated in the last rubric of the second line).</p>	<p>Meilingnongjie had tears in his eyes, from his body flesh was released into the ocean.</p>

Table 4 (continued)

J. F. Rock 1937, 14–15	Translation of Mo-So 6, fols 1'2–2'2
2) After three nights something nice came gradually to the surface, and something bad went down.	
3) After three nights in the early morning, there came forth a brilliant water maid, scintillating and moving.	After three days a beautiful mermaid came about and had no one to give her a name.
4) There was no one to give her a name, so he called her ² Ts'u- ³ dzhwua- ² gyi- ² mun- ³ mi. (<i>The word ³mi read in the third tone means simply female.</i>)	She named herself Chuzhangji-mouming.
5) The two then became one family, and there were born to them nine sons who dwelled in nine houses (<i>that is, they established nine households of their own</i>). Page 6, 1st line	Thereupon the two lived in the same house. During working, he had a partner and when he planned matters, he had a partner as well. Husband and wife prayed for raising nine sons and for establishing nine families. [...]'
1) Nine (<i>it should read seven</i>) daughters were born to them, and they dwelt in nine (<i>seven is correct</i>) lands (<i>daughters are given in marriage and become scattered, hence each one lived in a different place</i>). [...]'	

Appendix III: Translation of the Chinese text of Mo-So 6

Introduction

In Mo-So 6 and other Dongba manuscripts the Tibetan *yig mgo* ‘initial’ or ‘head’ letter appears frequently. The content of Mo-So 13 is divided into ten parts by them. In the Chinese text, a Chinese punctuation mark, was occasionally added, extending the *yig mgo* by four. After observation of the initials, three more are proposed (see Table 5, items 4, 5, and 9). The English translation in the Appendix was then arranged accordingly.

Table 5: Positions of the initials inside the Chinese and Dongba in 'Mo-So 6'.

	position	type
1	1'2–2'4	☯
2	2'4–2'4	0
3	2'4–3'4	0
4	3'4–5'2	x
5	5'2–6'2	x
6	6'2–7'2	☯
7	7'4–8'4	☯
8	8'4–9'4	☯0
9	9'4–10'2	x
10	10'2–11'4	☯0
11	11'4–12'4	☯0
12	12'4–13'4	☯0
13	13'4–14'4	☯0
14	14'4–15'4	☯0
15	15'4–16'4	☯0
16	16'4–17'6	0
17	17'6–19'2	0

However, the overall content can also be roughly divided into the following three sections:

1. Etiological myths of the Universe, Nong, Shu, the 'Fight Between Black and White'³⁶ (short), Twelve Earthly Branches and *shengxiao* 生肖.³⁷ (1–4)
2. Birth of Nong's sons in concordance with the *shengxiao*, their respective Twelve Earthly Branches, and successful defeat of the enemy. (5–16)
3. Offerings, creating effigies, end. (17)

³⁶ The myth that is nowadays called 'Fight Between Black and White' is only briefly alluded to in Mo-So 6. See Ge Agan 2008, 347–352 for a modern synopsis; for a 'complete' translation, see He Shicheng and He Limin 1989.

³⁷ The origin story of the positions of the *shengxiao* and their concordance with the Earthly Branches is also found in Li Lincan 1984, 114–117. Li quoted from *Shi er shengxiao chongke jingdian* 十二生肖冲剋經典 'Book About the Mutual Beneficial and Disadvantageous (Combinations) of the Twelve Shengxiao'. Whereas in his version Moulidunzi 某利敦孜 (in Mo-So 6 transliterated Meilingnongjie) assigns the positions, in Mo-So 6 this is done by Mingjubenma 名居本馬.

The twelve parts of the second section only differ in some details and in principle repeat the same Chinese text for each one of the twelve animals. Because of the prevailing interest in Dongba ‘literature’, the ritual context of Dongba ‘texts’ is often overlooked. The Chinese text of Mo-So 6 starts with the relevant myths and then proceeds to the ritual acts. It has passages that:

1. list the emergence of deities (Fol. 1^v2):

Heaven and Earth brought forth the Supreme Deity, after that Shaoawade| moreover Yushijimouming,| and furthermore Meilingnongjie. Nongzu possessed White Heaven and White Earth.|

2. deal with the assignment of positions (Fol. 4^v4–4^v6):

The Heavenly Deity Mingjubenma pointed with the hand and spoke:| You twelve animals that are conflicting need not argue. I assign separate positions to you:| Let Yin and Mao take position in the east,| let Si and Wu take position in the south, [...]

3. explain rituals (Fol. 5^v4–5^v6):

Rice, the Five Treasures, the Five Precious Objects, butter, cypress leaves were used. The ritual objects were taken, burned with fire, and sacrificed to Painengcai, Wonihong and Dounengxi. In front of the deities, they reported (their deeds).| Furthermore, nine sorts of wooden figures were used, and ten dough people with ox-heads were made. They were sent off on nine paths.

4. contain descriptions of ritual objects and the way they are made (Fol. 18^v6–18^v2):

All (of their) grains (are used) to build dough figures. Metal serves as the body. Pearls serve as the eyes. A red flag serves as the tongue. Conch shell serves as the teeth. Corals serve as the heart. The dough figures are able to laugh, the wooden figures can jump.

For the translation, ambiguities had to be resolved. For example, it is uncertain whether the descriptions of the last part (making various effigies and offerings to deities of the cardinal points) describe actions within the ritual or are mere descriptions. Moreover, there are several possibilities for the agents of certain acts. This was decided according to the consequential context: ‘Since the Shu Family was made to leave, the Nong Family only had their young son to leave and request Yushieshou to make invocations.’³⁸ It is implied in the first sequence

³⁸ Fol. 5^v2-5^v4

that it must be the sons who request Yushieshou for aid. The sons were chosen as agents and added in parentheses. It can be assumed that after Yushieshou was successfully called, the subsequent invocations are performed by the family and the sons but now with the support of Yushieshou. For this, the passive voice was used. With the effigies that are made in this sequence, it may well be that the so-called 'Duo' demons (*duogui* 垛鬼) are exorcised.

To transfer the vertical dividers from the level of the Dongba, bars have been added to the translation: |.

Translation of the Chinese text of Mo-So 6

Front cover^r

The Twelve Animals³⁹ of the Earthly Branches

Front cover^v

Sticker that reads 'F', a previous signature mark glued onto the page.⁴⁰

Fols 1'2–2'4

At the time of chaos, Heaven and Earth were not divided yet, sun and moon did not shine yet, the stars and celestial bodies had not made their appearances yet,| on Kunlun Mountain the Tree of Longevity was not there yet, the Great Ocean was not full and great yet, great metals and rocks had not appeared yet,| trees and stones did not exist yet,| flowers and plants did not grow yet,| Nongzu and Shuzu did not exist yet,| men and women were not born yet.| At first, Black and White colour came about, the two colours Black and White were producing two (kinds of) Qi.| And Heaven and Earth initially split. Heaven and Earth brought forth the Supreme Deity, after that Shaoawade| moreover Yushijimouming,| and furthermore Meilingnongjie. Nongzu possessed White Heaven and White Earth.| Sun, moon and stars shone bright.| Mountains, rivers and lakes were clear and white.| Meilingnongjie went out roaming on the shore to gaze at his reflection. At night he longed to have a partner, during the daytime while working, he wanted to have a partner.| Meilingnongjie had tears in his eyes, from his body he released flesh into the ocean. After three days| a beautiful mermaid came about and had no one to give her a name. She named herself Chuzhangjimouming.| Thereupon the two lived in the same house. During working, he had a partner and when he planned matters, he had a partner as well.| Husband and wife prayed for raising nine sons

³⁹ Lit.: 'attributes' of the Earthly Branches, a technical term for the animals of the zodiac.

⁴⁰ It is probably a former inventory number of the manuscript. The letter 'F' is corresponding to today's no. 6 of the collection.

and for establishing nine families.| (And they prayed) for raising nine daughters and establishing nine families. O|

Fol. 2'4–2'4

Furthermore, it happened that Black colour turned into Black Heaven and Earth, into Black Sun, Black Moon, Black Stars, and Great Black Ocean.| And brought about Meilingshuizi who also went out roaming on the shore to gaze at his reflection. At night he longed to have a partner. In the early morning when getting up for work he wanted to have a partner.| Meilingshuizi also had tears in his eyes, and released flesh from his body into the ocean.| After three days another mermaid came about and named herself Goujingmao. The two started a family. During working he had a partner, when he planned matters, he had a partner. Husband and wife in this family wished to raise nine sons, establishing nine families. (And they wished for) bringing up nine daughters and establishing nine families.

Fols 2'4–3'4

O| Nongzu went to the Upper Region,| Shuzu went to the Lower Region.| Nongzu dwelled in the Upper Region| and Shuzu dwelled in the Lower Region.| White flowers grew in the Upper Region,| black flowers bloomed in the Lower Region.| The Nong dwelled in the Nong Region| and the Shu dwelled in the Shu Region, in that generation.| The Nong Family had good deeds in mind. The Shu Family had evil wishes in mind.| When the Nong Family raised livestock| the Shu Family wished to kill it| and when the Nong Family had drink and food| the Shu Family desired to take the food.| Everything the Nong Family brought about, the Shu Family desired to destroy.| The Shu Family did not come to the realm of the Nong Family.| The Nong Family cultivated good thoughts and performed virtuous deeds. (They) used butter, cypress leaves and five sorts of grain, reported their (deeds) to Heaven and sacrificed to it. The Heavenly Deities Zhongge and Yamao, 360 (of them) came down.| To the right side of the Kunlun Mountain, Heaven, Earth, sun, moon and stars, all were white. (Zhongge and Yamao) made the Nong Family dwell there.| On the left side of Kunlun Mountain, Heaven, Earth, sun, moon and stars were all black. The Shu Family was made to dwell there at this place.| Nong and Shu were commanded to separate their dwellings, (so far that even) birds could not reach each other.| An extremely large river separated the two families of Nong and Shu.|

Fols 3'4–5'2

Moreover, it is said: 'The water of the big river is long and wide. If someone can cross it, let him dwell on the first position of the Earthly Branches. Ox called out: "I can".| Ox waded across, Rat followed Ox and treacherously bit Ox's tail. In pain, Ox shook its tail.| Ox could not cross the stream, but Rat for its part could cross it. Hereafter Horse wished to wade through. Rat said: "Horse has a fire face, it must not take the second position| because Zi and Wu are conflicting".| After Rat, Ox went across, then Tiger, Hare, Dragon,| Serpent, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Chicken, Dog and Pig| could cross the river one after the other.| Zi and Wu are conflicting, Chou and Wei are conflicting, Yin and Shen are conflicting,| Mao and You are conflicting, Chen and Xu are conflicting, Si and Hai are conflicting.| The Heavenly Deity Mingjubenma pointed with the hand and spoke:| "You twelve animals that are conflicting need not argue. I assign separate positions to you:| Let Yin and Mao take position in the east,| let Si and Wu take position in the south, let Shen and You take position in the west,| let Hai and Zi take position in the north,| let Chen and Xu take position in Heaven,| let Chou and Wei take position on Earth."| The Twelve Animals of the Earthly Branches between Heaven and Earth came about that way.'

Fols 5'2–6'2

Meilingnongjie came about on the White Silver Mountain.| Chuzhangjimouming came about at the coast of the Black Ocean.| Husband and wife lived together| and raised a son; they did not know (the position of) Jupiter in that year and month.| They went and looked at the Tree of Longevity: the leaves resembled the shape of a rat;| (they) wished to name (him) Rat. Black Horse and Rat fought over the position of Jupiter and came to the place of the Nong Family.| Since the Shu Family was made to leave, the Nong Family only had their young son to leave and request Yushieshou to make invocations. Rice, the Five Treasures, the Five Precious Objects, butter, cypress leaves were used. The ritual objects were taken, burned with fire, and sacrificed to Painengcai, Wonihong and Dounengxi. In front of the deities, they reported (their deeds).| Furthermore, nine sorts of wooden figures were used, and ten dough people with ox-heads were made. They were sent off on nine paths.| In the year of the Rat in front of Jupiter, wood from Bai [or Bo] was used to make human figures and they were sent off. Furthermore, rat and horse shaped (figures) were taken and sent off.| Yushieshou made invocations nine days and nine nights. The wives of the Nong Family prayed for seven days and seven nights, causing the destruction of the enemy family's walls and the drying-out of the pond. After that, the crowing of their roosters and the barking of their dogs were not heard anymore.| In the generation of Meilingnongjie, the

son was called Rat.| Behind him fires from the South came and opposed him, all of them were finally suppressed.| (There were) many descendants (that came here-after), thus their mind was soothed, (and they were) prosperous. They loved that the water was far-reaching.| Afterwards, on the day the Nong Family's grown-up son named Rat was married, behind his back fires came and those who opposed him were all suppressed.| He hoped for his descendants to become prosperous, wealthy and strong.|○

Fols 6^v2–7^v2

Meilingnongjie continued to inhabit the White Silver Mountain and Chuzhangjimouming continued to inhabit the shore of the Black Ocean. In the following year, they raised another son.| Again, they did not know (the position of Jupiter) in that year and in that month.| They looked at Tree of Longevity. In that year, the leaves resembled the shape of an ox; (they) named the son of Nong Ox. As Shuzi heard of it,| he ordered a black sheep to (come) and be (the Nong Family's) enemy.| Furthermore, the Nong Family requested Yushieshou to make invocations. Rice, the Five Treasures, the Five Precious Objects, nine sorts of wood were used, and made into the shape of men. Furthermore, (they) made ten dough figures and sent them off.| In the year Chou, in front of Jupiter, the wood of the Yushu was used to build human figures. The Ox changed into the shape of a sheep and was sent off.| Yushieshou made invocations for nine days and nine nights. The wooden figures were tranquil and stopped on the clay hill.| For seven days and nights the wives of the whole family sent curses to the enemy kingdom. Rooster and dog did not stay. (The curses) destroyed the enemy city.| The son of Nong, (born in) the year Chou, had defeated the enemies behind him in advance. (The descendants) became wealthy and noble, lived a long life, and stayed healthy. Later on, the son of the year Chou got married,| and he did not have enemies behind him; they had been defeated in advance. (The following descendants) were peaceful and lucky, and wished to be wealthy and powerful.

Fols 7^v4–8^v4

In the family of Meilingnongjie, they raised another son.| They did not know (the position of Jupiter) in that year and in that month.| Again, they looked at the Tree of Longevity and the leaves resembled the shape of a tiger; (they) named him Tiger.| As Shujie heard of it, (he) ordered a red monkey to come, to be (the Nong Family's) enemy and go to the place of the Nong Family.| Once again, the (sons in the) Nong Family requested Yushieshou (to make invocations). Rice, the Five Treasures and the Five Precious Objects were used.| And nine sorts of wood were used to make| nine figures of men, ten dough figures. The heads of oxen were

taken, and sent off on nine ways. In the year Yin, in front of Jupiter, the wooden figures were used. The Tiger changed into the shape of a monkey and was sent off.| Yushieshou made invocations nine days and nights, the wooden figures stopped on the mountain. The wives of the Nong Family sent curses for seven days and nights to the enemy territory.| (They) destroyed the embankment and the palace. Rooster and hound were not heard.| The son of Nong, (born in) the year Yin, did not have enemies behind him; they had been defeated in advance.| (The descendants) lived peaceful and were auspicious, (they) became rich and strong.| Later on, the son of the year Yin got married.| Behind him, there were no enemies; they had been defeated in advance;| their heir flourished and became wealthy and noble.

Fols 8°4–9°4

O| In the family of Meilingnongjie they raised another son and they did not know (the position of) Jupiter in that year and in that month.| They looked at the Tree of Longevity and the leaves resembled the shape of a hare; the Nong named him Hare. When the Shu heard (of what) the Nong were speaking (of), they ordered a black chicken to come and be (the Nong Family's) enemy.| Again, the (sons in the) Nong Family requested Yushieshou to pray. Rice, the Five Treasures and the Five Precious Objects were used. And nine sorts of wood were taken and human figures were made out of it, ten dough figures and nine kinds of the heads from their live-stock were made and sent off.| In the year Mao, in front of Jupiter, the wood of the Huangji was used to build wooden men. The Hare transformed into the shape of a chicken and was sent off. (They) wished to destroy the enemy's embankment and royal palace. Rooster and dog have not been heard.| The son of Nong, (born in) the year Mao, did not have enemies behind him; they had been defeated in advance. The later generations thrived, flourished and became wealthy.| Later on, the son of Nong, (born in) the year Mao, got married, and he did not have enemies behind him; they had been defeated in advance.| (His) descendants flourished, and became wealthy and noble.|

Fols 9°4–10°2

In the Nong Family they raised another son and they looked at the Tree (of Longevity). The leaves resembled the shape of a dragon; (they) named him Dragon. As the Shu Family heard of it, they ordered a black dog to come and be (the Nong Family's) enemy (and go to) the Nong Family.| Furthermore, (the sons in the Nong Family) requested Yushieshou to make invocations. Rice, the Five Treasures and the Five Precious Objects were used.| Then nine wooden figures, ten dough figures and heads of oxen were taken and sent off.| In the year Chen, in front of Jupiter,

Suancao was used to make figures of men. The Dragon changed into the shape of a dog and was sent off.| Yushieshou prayed for nine days and nine nights. The wooden figures stopped on the clay hill. For seven days and seven nights the wives of the whole family sent curses to the enemy kingdom and destroyed it.| (That) caused (them) to no longer hear roosters and dogs. The son of Nong, (born in) the year Chen, had enemies behind him, who had been defeated in advance. (The descendants) were tranquil and lucky, wealthy, and noble. Later on, when the son of the year Chen got married, he did not have enemies behind him; they had been defeated in advance.| (They) were prosperous, and (thus) the descendants became wealthy.

Fols 10'2–11'4

O| Meilingnongjie continued inhabiting the White Silver Mountain.| They raised another son and they did not know (the position of) Jupiter in that year and in that month.| Again, they looked at the Tree of Longevity and the leaves resembled the shape of a serpent;| (they) named the son of Nong Serpent. When the Shu Family heard of it, they ordered a black pig to come and be (the Nong Family's) enemy.| Furthermore, the (sons in the) Nong Family requested Yushieshou to pray. Rice, the Five Treasures and the Five Precious Objects were used,| nine wooden men, ten dough figures, and the heads of nine kinds of their livestock were used. In the year of the Serpent, in front of Jupiter, the wooden figures were used. The Serpent changed into the shape of a pig and was sent off.| (Yushieshou) prayed for nine days and nine nights. The wooden figures stopped ashore. For seven days and seven nights the wives of the whole family sent curses to the enemy region. (That) destroyed the embankment and palace. Rooster and dog were not heard of.| The son of Nong, (born in) the year Si, had defeated (in advance) all those who became hostile behind him. (They) were prosperous, (thus) the descendants became wealthy and noble.| When the son of Nong, (born in) the year Si, got married, and he did not have enemies behind him; they had been defeated in advance.| The prosperous descendants were rich and noble.|

Fols 11'4–12'4

O In the Nong Family they raised another son| and again, they did not know (the position of) Jupiter in that year and in that month. Once more, they looked at| the Tree of Longevity and the leaves resembled the shape of a horse; (they) named him Horse. When the Shu Family heard of it, they ordered a black rat to come and be (the Nong Family's) enemy. Furthermore, the (sons in the) Nong Family requested Yushieshou to pray. Rice, the Five Treasures and the Five Precious Objects were

used.| Then, nine wooden figures were used and ten dough figures, nine heads of oxen were made and seen off. In front of Jupiter, in the year Wu, wooden figures were used. The Horse changed into the shape of a rat and was seen off.| Yushieshou prayed for nine days and nine nights. The wooden figures stopped ashore.| For seven days and seven nights the wives of the whole family sent curses and destroyed the enemy kingdom. Rooster and hound were not seen nor heard.| The son of Nong, (born in) the year Wu, had enemies behind him, (but) all of them had been defeated (in advance). They were flourishing, (thus) they were prosperous and noble.| Later on, the son of Nong, (born in) the year (Si), got married, and he did not have enemies behind him; they had been defeated in advance. They were prosperous, (thus) the descendants became wealthy and noble and their minds peaceful.|

Fols 12^v4–13^v4

○ Meilingnongjie raised another son. They did not know (the position of) Jupiter in that year and that month. Again, they looked at the Tree of Longevity and the leaves resembled the shape of a sheep; (they) named their son Sheep. As the Shu Family heard of it, they ordered a black ox to come to their land and be hostile (against the Nong Family). Once again, the (sons in the) Nong Family requested Yushieshou to make invocations. Rice, the Five Treasures and the Five Precious Objects were used.| Nine wooden figures, ten dough figures with the heads of oxen were made and seen off.| In the year Wei, in front of Jupiter, wooden figures were made. The Sheep changed into a shape of an ox and was seen off.| Yushieshou made invocations nine days and nine nights. The wooden figures stopped on the clay hill.| Seven days and seven nights the wives of the whole family sent curses| and destroyed the enemy region. Rooster and dog were not heard. The son of Nong, (born in) the year Wei, enemies came behind him,| (but) all of them had been defeated (in advance). (Therefore) the descendants were prosperous.| Later on, the son of the year Wei got married; he did not have enemies behind him; they had been defeated in advance.| They were prosperous, (thus) the descendants were wealthy and powerful.|

Fols 13^v4–14^v4

○ The Nong Family raised another son. Again, they did not know (the position of) Jupiter in that year and that month.| Once more, they looked at the Tree of Longevity and the leaves resembled the shape of a monkey; they picked (his) name and called him Monkey.| When the Shu Family heard of it, once again, they ordered a black tiger to come to (the Nong Family's) sphere and be (their) enemy. Furthermore, the (sons in the) Nong Family requested Yushieshou to pray. Rice,

the Five Treasures and the Five Precious Objects was used. And nine wooden figures, ten dough figures and nine sorts of dried heads of nine kinds of their live-stock were made and seen off.| In the year Shen, in front of Jupiter, the wooden figures were used. The Monkey changed into the shape of a tiger and was seen off. (Yushieshou) prayed for nine days and nine nights. The wooden figures stopped on the clay hill.| Seven days and seven nights the wives of the whole family sent curses| and destroyed the enemy region. Rooster or dog were not heard. Behind the son of the Nong Family of the year Shen enemies (came), (but) all of them had been defeated in advance.| Later on, the son of the year Shen got married, and did not have enemies behind him; they had been defeated in advance.| (They) were prosperous, thus the descendants were wealthy and noble.|

Fols 14^v4–15^v4

○ In the family of Meilingnongjie they raised another son and they did not know (the position of) Jupiter in that year and that month.| Again, they looked at the Tree of Longevity and the leaves resembled the shape of a chicken; (they) named him Chicken. As the Shu Family heard of that, they ordered a black hare to come and be (the Nong Family's) enemy.| The (sons in the) Nong Family requested Yushieshou to make invocations. Rice, the Five Treasures and the Five Precious Objects were used|, and nine sorts (of wood), nine (?), nine figures of men and ten dough figures, dried heads from livestock were used and seen off.| In front of Jupiter, in the year You, the wooden figures were used. The Chicken changed into the shape of a hare and was seen off.| Eshou prayed for nine days and nights. Seven days and seven nights (the wives of) the whole family sent curses and destroyed the enemy region. The wooden figures stopped at the coastline. Rooster and dog were not heard. The son of the year Hou did not have enemies behind him. All had been defeated (in advance). (They) were prosperous, thus the descendants became wealthy and noble.| Later on, when the son of the year You got married, he did not have enemies behind him; they had been defeated in advance. (They) were prosperous, thus the descendants became wealthy and noble|

Fols 15^v4–16^v4

○ In the family of Meilingnongjie, another son was raised. They did not know (the position of) Jupiter in that year and that month. Again, they looked at the Tree of Longevity. The leaves were shaped like a dog; (they) named him Dog. As the woman of Shu heard of what the Nong said, they ordered a black dragon to be (their) enemy.| Furthermore, the (sons in the) Nong Family requested Yushieshou to pray. Rice, the Five Treasures and the Five Precious Objects were used.| And nine wooden figures and ten dough figures and nine kind of heads and horns

from their livestock were used and sent off. In the year Xu, in front of Jupiter, the wooden figures were used. The Dog changed into the shape of a dragon and was sent off. Eshou prayed for nine days and nine nights. The wooden figures stopped on the clay hill. Seven days and seven nights the wives of the whole family sent curses and destroyed the enemy's embankment. Rooster or dog were not heard. The son of the year Xu, had defeated (in advance) all those who became hostile behind him. (There were) many descendants, thus the descendants became wealthy and noble. Later on, when the son of the year Xu got married, he did not have enemies behind him; they had been defeated in advance. (They) were prosperous, thus the descendants were wealthy and noble.

Fols 16'4–17'6

The Nong Family raised another son and they did not know (the position of) Jupiter in that year and that month. Again, they looked at the Tree of Longevity and the leaves resembled the shaped of a pig; (they) named him Pig. As the Shu Family heard of that, they ordered a black serpent to come and be (their) enemy. Furthermore, the (sons in the) Nong Family requested Yushieshou to pray. Rice, the Five Treasures and the Five Precious Objects were used. And nine wooden figures and ten dough figures and heads and horns of their livestock were used and sent off. The Pig changed into a serpent. Yushieshou prayed for nine days and nine nights. Seven days and seven nights the wives of the whole family sent curses and destroyed the enemy region. The crow of the rooster and the barking of the dog were not heard.

Fols 17'6–19'2

○ White Deity of Eastern Wood, Dark Deity of Southern Fire, Black Deity of Western Gold, Yellow Deity of Northern Water, Central Earth Deity. (The sons in the Nong Family) requested (Yushieshou) to pray. (He prayed) for nine (days and nine nights). Rice, the Five Treasures and the Five Precious Objects, cypress leaves and butter, sacrifices of one kind of colour were used, and burned with fire. Painicai, Gaonengwu, Wonihou - in front of numerous deities, (they) made the offering and ended (it). The younger sons were ordered to take care of this. The year Zi, in front of Jupiter, wood of the Shuibai [or Shuibo] is used to make wooden figures. The year Chou in front of Jupiter, wood of the Yushu is used to make wooden figures. The year Yin wood of the Lingmu [or Lengmu] is used to make wooden figures. The year Mao, in front of Jupiter, wood of the Huangji is used to make wooden figures. The year Chen, in front of Jupiter, Suancao is used to make straw figures. The year Si, in front of Jupiter, wood of the Heici is used. The year Wu wood of the Tangerine is used to make wooden figures. The year

Wei, in front of Jupiter, wood of the Wutong is used to make wooden figures.| The year Shen, in front of Jupiter, Huangli is used (to make) wooden figures.| The year You, in front of Jupiter, grass from the Shoucao is used to make straw figures.| The year Xu, in front of Jupiter, Zhenzhu wood is used to make wooden figures.| In the year Hai, in front of Jupiter, the Gougecao is used to make straw figures.| (There are) Twelve Earthly Branches, (there are) twelve kinds of straw and wood figures,| places: (there are) Nine Regions, Seven Regions, Five Regions, Four Regions. All (of their) grains (are used) to build dough figures. Metal serves as the body. Pearls serve as the eyes. A red flag serves as the tongue. Conch shell serves as the teeth. Corals serve as the heart. The dough figures are able to laugh, the wooden figures can jump. They were sent off to the enemy region.| Yushieshou prayed for nine days and nine nights.| Seven days and seven nights the wives of the whole family sent curses to the enemy region. The enemy's rooster and dog were not heard.| The whole family of Meilingnongjie had enemies behind them; (they were) like flames. All of them were suppressed. From then, (there were) many descendants (that) came hereafter. They became wealthy, noble and their minds were soothed. The water flowed (until) the pond was filled. Everything had worked out according to their wishes.|

Back cover

Blank