

“Flowing Stream”

Traditional

“Flowing Stream” is a folk song of the Yunnan Province in southwestern China, a region that is a melting pot of rich local cultures and traditions. Sharing borders with Vietnam, Burma, and Laos, the province is home to roughly 25 indigenous groups, including members of the Farmers’ Chorus of the Yunnan Province, who are drawn from the Miao ethnic community in the remote mountain village of Xiaoshuijing.

The song “Flowing Stream” relates the legend of a beautiful village girl who falls in love with a young traveling horseman. On the night of his departure they pledge their everlasting love. Every night she sings this song by the river, in the hope that the sound will carry over the mountains for her love to hear. One year later she receives a jade bracelet, with the message that the



horseman has left her for another woman and he has sent her the bracelet as a farewell. Unwilling to believe the story, she remains unwed, and a decade later she learns that her young lover had died in the mountains soon after he left her village. The jade bracelet was to have been her wedding gift.

— *Courtesy of Farmer’s Chorus of the Yunnan Province*

Members of the Farmers’ Chorus of the Yunnan Province

Translation

“Flowing Stream”

Ah —
The moon is glistening,
glistening ...
I thought of my AhGe [beloved] in the deep
mountains.
Ge is like the moon, gliding in the sky,
in the sky ...
Ge — Ge — Ge —
The stream runneth under the mountain,
purling.

Ah —
The moon is dappling half the slope,
dappling half the slope ...
I think of my AhGe when I see
the moon.
A billowing breeze is sent up the slope,
up the slope ...
Ge — Ge — Ge —
Can you hear AhMei
chiming for AhGe?!