

Fighting The Tiger

[Enter *Sheng*. “Walks along the side of the stage”.

Recites a poem:

For a righteous cause I killed a man,
I've been hiding in Cangzhou for a year now.
This world is full of injustice,
To whom should I turn to display my brave honesty.

(*Speaking*) Surely, I, Wu Song left my hometown. <31, 33 I have stayed long at the residence of Lord Chai, 31,33> thinking of my elder brother all day long. Therefore I must now take farewell and <31, 33 travel to Qinghe District to visit my elder brother 31,33>. I can see Yanggu District now. Let me hurry up! (*Singing*) “*Xin Shui Ling*” <34, 31, 33, 29 What a hard lot Heaven had in store for this hero! 34, 31, 33, 29> <31, 33, 29 My first twenty years passed like a dream. 31, 33, 29> <34, 31, 33, 29 Unable to raise in the world, riding the clouds and roaming through the nine myriads of space, ending up floating about on thousands of waves and ripples of the stormy sea, 34, 31, 33, 29> (*Speaking*) <29 Today I think that I, Wu Song, ah! 29> (*Singing*) <29 it is as if I am <31, 33 wandering about, here today, gone tomorrow. Sun and moon handle my life in vain. 31, 33, 29> (*Speaking*) <29 It seems that I already reached Jingyang Ridge. Look that tavern over there advertised by a wine-banner with the words Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge? What does that mean? 29> Let me go in and ask. “Host!”

[Enter *Chou*.

Chou: “It makes people tipsy three houses away, when a wine jug is opened its fragrance spreads ten miles around! Do you, dear guest, want to drink some wine?”

Sheng: “Yes, indeed!”

Chou: “If so, please come inside and have a seat.”

Sheng: “Please, show me the way!”

Chou: “Dear guest, have a seat, please, let me bring the wine.”

Sheng: “Please come back, host!”

Chou: “What is it, dear guest?”

Sheng: “Let me ask you a question. On that wine-banner is written “Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge”, what is the reason?”

Chou: “Dear guest, there’s something you don’t know. The local wine we brew here is really good, so after three bowls of wine some people, mind you, are not able to cross the Jingyang Ridge.” <2>

Sheng: “Is it that strong? Just bring me the wine! <29, 31, 33 See if *I* can cross the ridge or not after drinking 29, 31, 33> at least ten bowls!”

Chou: “Wow, hah! You talk so big now. Waiter, bring a jug of good wine here!” (*Exit*, then *enters* again.) “The wine is here.”

Sheng: “Pour the wine!” (*Pose* of drinking) “Good wine! Fill up my cup again!”

Chou: “Dear guest, you are just drinking, don’t you want something to go with the wine?”

Sheng: “Host!” (*Singing*) “*Zhe Gui Ling*” <34, 31, 33, 29 No need to roast phoenix or cook dragons. 34, 31, 33, 29> (*Speaking*) Bottom up! Pour the wine again!”

Chou: “No more.”

Sheng: “I only had three bowls, how come there’s no more?”

Chou: “Dear guest, of course you don’t know that this jug only holds three bowls of wine, not one drop more.”

Sheng: “Ah! If you have more wine, just bring me some!”

Chou: “I have only one small jar left.”

Sheng: “Good, hurry up and bring the wine.”

Chou: “Alright, waiter, bring this jar of wine!” (*Exit*, then *enters* again.)

Sheng: “Remove the clay sealing!”

Chou: “Yes, bang, bang, pooh, pooh!”

Sheng: “Goodness, how stupid!”

Chou: “Good fellows cannot not stand sand in the eyes!”

Sheng: “Pour the wine.”

Chou: “Yes,!” (*Pose*) Dear guest, look at my wine here, it’s just like amber!”

Sheng: “Amazing!” (*Singing*)<34, 31, 33, 29 Wine is bubbling in the parrot cup, with a rich shine of amber. 34, 31, 33, 29> (*Pose* of drinking) (*Speaking*) “Good wine! Pour the wine!”

Chou: “Dear guest, you had three bowls first, just now you have finished another two bowls, you really can drink five gallons of wine!”

Sheng: “Host! (*Singing*) <34, 31, 33, 29 I didn’t realize that five gallons of wine will sober you up! 34, 31, 33, 29> (*Pose of drinking*) (*Speaking*) Bottom up, pour the wine!”

Chou: “Dear guest, you had three bowls at first, now is already another three bowls, together there are six bowls.”

Sheng: “Host! (*Singing*) <34, 31, 33, 29 Three cups after another will work wonders!”
34, 31, 33, 29> (*Pose of drinking*) (*Speaking*) “Bottom up!”

Chou: “Dear me! Be careful with my wine jar.” <3>

Sheng: “Pour the wine!”

Chou: “Dear guest, wine is not good for you, you drink when you feel like it, don’t force yourself if you can’t drink more.”

Sheng: “Host, you can’t compare *me* with other people. (*Singing*) <34, 31, 33, 29 Why do you need to worry? 34, 31, 33, 29> (*Speaking*) Pour the wine.”

Chou: “Dear guest, there’s not much left. (*Pose of sheng*) My goodness!”

Sheng: “Host, bring the bill!”

Chou: Oh, the bill! First you drank one jug, later you finished one jar, one jug plus one jar, that is in total 0.3675 silver ounces.

Sheng: That’s not much. Dear me! Wait a bit, I guess after the long journey there’s not much left from the traveling money Lord Chai gave to me. Host, can *I* leave this bundle here and pick it up another day?”

Chou: “Dear guest, do you mean to leave it as a pawn?”

Sheng: “What a shame!”

Chou: <29 “What’s your surname dear guest?”

Sheng: “Wû.”

Chou: “Lu.”

Sheng: “Wû.”

Chou: “Oh, Wû.”

Sheng: “My god, Wû.”29>

Chou: “Oh, it’s Wû, Wû, Wû, no wonder¹ you like to fight [*wu*]. (*Pose*) Hey, waiter, bring the bill for Mr. Wû, this bundle is pawned to cover 0.3675 silver ounces!”

Sheng: “What a shame. (*Singing*) <31, 33, 29 I feel ashamed to have so little money. 31, 33, 29> (*Speaking*) It’s not dark yet, let me get on my way and climb the ridge.”

Chou: “Ah, dear guest, where are you heading to?”

Sheng: “Jingyang Ridge,”

Chou: “Dear guest, you can’t go there.”

Sheng: “Why not?”

Chou: “There’s something you don’t know, dear guest. <33, 29 Recently there has arrived this tiger with slanting eyes and white forehead, 33, 29> <28 blocking the road and killing people 28> on our Jingyang Ridge, don’t know how many of those travelers have been eaten by it. Therefore <33, 29 the local magistrate has ordered to put notices 33, 29>, warning that single travelers are not allowed to travel alone. Moreover, you drank too much wine today, dear guest. If you continue to climb up

¹ *Guai wu dao*, Suzhou dialect?

there and are swallowed by that old beast, with no trace,² would it not be terribly sad?”

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Sheng: <34, 31, 33, 29 “Had you not brought the wild tiger into the conversation, I might not have wanted to leave. 34, 31, 33, 29> <31, 33, 29 But since you have mentioned this tiger killing people, 31, 33, 29> *I think I’m definitely going.*”

Chou: “No, you can’t.”

Sheng: “Let go!(*Singing*) <31, 33, 29 I cannot hold my towering rage and I am in a great hurry to leave.” 31, 33, 29>

Chou: “No, you can’t.”

Sheng: “Let go!” (*Chou exit.*) (*Singing*) <31, 33, 29 While this sunset is fading, I am drunk, with drowsy eyes. 31, 33, 29> (*Speaking*) It’s getting dark now, I had better hurry up. Where is the tiger? Where is the tiger? (*Exit*)

[A tiger running over the stage.

Enter Sheng. (*Speaking*) I drank some wine in a tavern, and the host told me that there is a fierce tiger, blocking the road and killing people. Obviously that is a big lie!

(*Singing*) I’m holding a cudgel, I’m holding a cudgel, step by step I press forward,³ there is a long way ahead. The mountain path is rough and it’s difficult to find the path. (The tiger roars) My! I heard the tiger’s roar.

[The tiger *enters*. *Pose* of fighting.

(*Singing*) “*Yan Er Luo*” <34, 31, 29 Watching from here—its hairy body looks strong

² *Chituo zimo*, Suzhou dialect?

³ *Wuxia lu*, Suzhou dialect?

and fierce. (*Pose* of fighting) Now this wolf-teeth cudgel of mine got broken first! Here am I, dodging back and forth for ever. That damned monster is flaunting its claws and baring its teeth. 31, 33, 29> (*Singing*) “*De Sheng Ling*” ! I’m dodging back and forth. <31, 33, 29 When I dodge, 31, 33, 29> <34, 31, 33, 29 it turns round and jumps into the air. In the twinkling of an eye it loses the track. This is surely a man-slaughtering tiger. 34, 31, 33, 29> <31, 29 so enemies will we become! 31, 29> <34, 31, 33, 29 If you want to display your prowess, then your blows must come down with a weight of a thousand pounds. 34, 31, 33, 29> <31, 33, 29 Today you have come to the end of the road. How much it resembles the flowers that can not bloom for more than a hundred days, the flowers can not bloom for more than a hundred days. 31, 33, 29> (*Grabbing the tiger, pose* of beating the tiger to death)

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(*Speaking*) The big beast is dead, let me drag it to the side. (*Pose*) Let me get on my way down the ridge! (Roar of a tiger) Good gracious! Wait a bit, over there I see a whole lot of these big beasts coming out! This is the end of *me*, Wu Song! (*Singing*) “*Gu Mei Jiu*” <31, 33, 29 I can only fight the evening wind with my last energy, fight the evening wind with my last energy! 31, 33, 29>

[*Voice from backstage*: “Hey! Who is there?”

Sheng: <31, 33, 29 They are not tigers! (*Singing*) Those are moving with two legs! 31, 33, 29>

[*Jing* and *mo* enters.

Jing and mo: “Who are you?”

Sheng: (*Singing*) “I come from Qinghe District and my name is Wu Song.”

Jing and mo: “You are *in fact* a strong fellow, Mr Wu! Have you seen the big beast?”⁴

Sheng: “I already killed it.”

Jing and mo: “You killed the big beast with your bare fists? We don’t believe you.”

Sheng: “Follow me to that place and have a look.”⁵

Jing and mo: “He actually has killed it! How did you manage to kill the big beast, strong fellow Wu?”

Sheng: “Listen to me everybody. <31, 33, 29 Allow me to say it was indeed ferocious. While prowling in the thicket, it was already awe-inspiring. When it sprang, it was like a mountain falling down. When it swung its tail, it was like a sharp steel knife upright in the air. Its mighty roar could scare a thousand people away. Even from a distance ordinary people would feel like being hurt already. With my guts and great strength, I managed to finish off that big beast with my bare fists. 31, 33, 29>

Jing and mo: Wow, good fellow, what a hero!

Sheng: (*Singing*) Well! <31, 33, 29Let everyone praise me then! 31, 33, 29>

Jing and mo: Strong fellow Wu, please follow us to the district office to ask for a reward.

Sheng: Okay, carry the tiger, we go together.

Jing and mo: Let’s go!

Sheng: Let’s go! (*Exeunt* together)

⁴ *Ke ceng*... indicating question, Suzhou dialect?

⁵ *Napang* that place, Suzhou dialect?

戲曲，崑曲，打虎

11 Drama, Kunqu, Fighting the Tiger, Feng Yining translation, revised VB 22 June 06

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