

說唱文學，山東快書，武松和老虎，黃楓，趙連甲，根據相聲“武松打虎”改編
48 Performance literature, Shandong fast tale, 'Wu Song and the Tiger' by Huang Feng and Zhao Lianjia,
adapted from the cross talk "Wu Song fights the tiger", Hu Juan trans, revised VB 15 February 06

Wu Song and the Tiger

Once there was a theatre troupe,
good at one piece only,
Wu Song Fights the Tiger they played quite well,
the audience was always plentiful.
Wu Song was acted by Zhang San,
the tiger was acted by Li Si.¹
The two of them performed the whole play.
Every single movement must be well coordinated:
As soon as the tiger had showed its three master tricks: springing, pushing and sweeping,
that Wu Song with a “thump” pressed down the tiger to the ground,
punching its upper part,
kicking its lower part,
with three punches and two kicks he finished the tiger.
“Bravo!” the applause from the audience rose like boiling water in a kettle!
(*Speaking*) “Second Brother”,
“Well?”
“This Wu Song is well played.”
“Indeed! Wu Song is acted as if he’s real!”
The audience congratulated him on his good acting of Wu Song,
Zhang San was happy in his heart.
Zhang San thought: “The audience congratulates me,
it looks like I’m quite extraordinary,
oh, how extraordinary, how extraordinary!
I must be the best in the whole country!”
Since then Zhang San changed,
he straightened his chest, narrowed his eyes, didn’t pay attention to others,
his airs grew faster than his abilities,
his nose was turned upwards to the sky!
Day by day he arrived later and later for the show,
finding faults back stage and losing his temper.
When one of them shouted: ”Zhang San, time to make up!”
he would counter: “I am the leading role! The last item of the show! Don’t urge me
making up!”
When another called: ”Zhang San, put on your costume!”
he would counter: “I am the leading role! I want a brand new costume!”

¹ Zhang San [Zhang Third Son] and Li Si [Li Fourth Son], correspond to 'Peter and Paul' in English.

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When the stage manager hurried him up: "The music has started, get on the stage!"
he complained: "The military stage props are too bad!

The gong players and the drum players
are a bunch of useless creatures!

Without me playing for you,
you would all sooner or later grow as skinny as parchment!"

Li Si couldn't stand it anymore:

"Zhang San! What you say is not appropriate,
we all play the same show,
you help me, I help you, like fish help the water and water help the fish.
Beautiful flowers need the green leaves,
you can not only have yourself in mind, and not the others.

Without the back-stage dressing you up,
would you sing your role stripped to the waist?

If there were no stage props for the civil and military performance,
you would stand there like a corpse!

And besides, without me playing the tiger,
with whom would you be fighting on stage?

Think about it, think it over,
the merit belongs to everyone."

Zhang San was not happy to hear that:

"What is so great about you!

I am the leading role, playing Wu Song!

You are just slipping into that tiger's fur.

The audience is here for watching me, not you,
the merit belongs to me alone!"

Li Si was furious, but did not say a word,

he thought: "Well! We shall find out about merit face to face on the stage!"

Today as usual they performed the same show.

Little did Zhang San imagine that the tiger would make things hard for him!

The tiger showed its tricks: springing, pushing and sweeping.

"Thump!" Wu Song pressed down the tiger to the ground,

punching its upper part,

kicking its lower part,

after three punches and two kicks

this Zhang San finished the scene and waited for the audience shouting "Bravo"!

"Eh...?" He listened and listened, but nothing happened.

Zhang San was getting suspicious:

"Why isn't the audience shouting "Bravo"?"

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“Oh!” On turning his head he saw the tiger was far from dead, still jumping up and down full of vigour!

Zhang San was stunned for a moment,
suddenly everything went round for him!

“I, you, this, this...I'll kill you!”

He pressed down the tiger on the floor for a second time.

After three punches and two kicks

he had another look, but the tiger was not the least affected!

No matter what he did, he could not finish the tiger,
the more he punched, the more the tiger became energetic.

Zhang San was sweating from exhaustion,
the tiger was swaying its head and swinging its tail with great pleasure!

Afterwards the tiger began to run and Wu Song gave chase,
running round and round on the stage.

Those on top of the stage were running, those below the stage were laughing,
a very strange performance, indeed!

Zhang San could not stand it anymore,
he clasped his hands and bowed to the tiger:

“Stop running, will you, please, die!

If you don't die, I'll soon be tired to death!”

At this point the tiger began to talk:

“You are the leading role! You should exert your strength on stage,
the audience is here for watching you, not me,
whether I die or not is besides the point!”

(Speaking) “No! That won't do!”

Now, the audience was giving negative applause:

“Get down from the stage! This Wu Song plays a disappointing figure,
he lets the tiger go without fighting it,
and on top of that he clasps his hands and bows to the tiger!”

At that moment, Zhang San realised how hard he was up to end the show,
so he grasped the tiger and tried to come to an agreement:

(Speaking) “That's enough! Dear Tiger Brother, dear Tiger Uncle, dear Tiger Master!

It is all my fault!

My youth and my ignorance are to blame for this.

Please, be nice and die now! Please, die!

If you won't die, how can we end the play?”

Only then “thump!”, the tiger fell flat on the stage,
well-behaved without moving.

So this show finally came to a messy end,

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and look! Zhang San's face was purple like an aubergine!

Translated by Hu Juan and Vibeke Børdahl