

Ma Rufei: Opening Pieces First scroll: Wu Song

Wu Song

Godlike was Wu Song in his awe-inspiring manliness.

Deep-seated was the martial spirit of this captain of Yanggu District.

Once upon a time he fell asleep when drunk on Jingyang Ridge.

There he subdued the fierce tiger by force, and won fame throughout the land.

*It so happened* that Pan Jinlian got acquainted with Ximen Qing,

and then they poisoned her husband, the Midget.

Returning from his mission, Wu Song's suspicions were soon aroused.

At the third watch his elder brother's spirit came into his dream

and told Wu Song every detail of his murder.

Voicing his grievance to the officials, the officials turned a deaf ear to his case.

All he could do was to gather the neighbours,

kill his sister-in-law with a sharp knife and thus bring his sacrifice to the dead soul.

At Lion Bridge he tracked Ximen Qing down and killed him right away.

He gave himself up to the court and was exiled to a distant fortress.

There he met Shi En with whom he pledged brotherhood.

For justice' sake, he took on the task of liberating Happy Woods.

Flaunting his strength, he drank his fill and beat Jiang the Door God.

General Zhang's schemings sent Wu Song in exile to Qingzhou.

On Flying Clouds Rise his escorts lost their lives.

In Ducks and Drakes Tower he beheaded his enemies.

“Wanted” posters were put up in the search for him,

so at Crossways Rise he shaved his hair and became a pilgrim monk.

Defending the beauty Chanjuan, he reaped havoc on Centipede Hill.

Soon he fled to Twin Dragon Peak,

where he found Lu Zhishen, his brother-in-arms.

Three times they fought in Qingzhou to reunite with their brothers,

settling finally in the Marshes of Mount Liang.

Later they were given amnesty and in Jiangnan their fate was settled.

With only one arm left, he still caught Fang La.

To this very day his courage makes mountains<sup>1</sup> shiver!

Translated by Feng Yining and Vibeke Børdahl

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<sup>1</sup> Jinmen, maybe Jinmen [Golden Gate] mountains in Henan.