

Wu Song Fights the Tiger, Part One Jingyang Ridge

<54 I return to the homeland I left while young./ The sound of the local tongue is still the same, but my hair has grown thinner./ The children I meet do not know who I am./ "Where are you from, dear sir?" they ask with beaming eyes./ 54>

These few lines of classical poetry are found in the records./ *Now our saga returns to the true story and we shall tell it clearly.*/ This saga's original title is "The Tale of the Noble Knight-errants"/ The episode of Wu Song Fights the Tiger has at all times kept people spellbound./

(Speaking) The story we are performing <54 is about Qinghe District of Guangping Prefecture, Shandong Province. There was a hero named Wu Song, he was the second son in his family.54> He was handsome and <54had outstanding martial arts skills. His character was loyal in the extreme, but his temper was headstrong. He had an elder brother named Zhisheng, whom people called Wu the Elder, weak in character and very ugly, 54> shorter than two feet and five-six inches. <54 Although he and Wu Song were born of the same mother, the elder was totally different from his younger brother. Thus, everyone disdainfully called him54> "Three Inch Poxymidget"¹. <54Let us postpone this and take our time to perform the story. Let us now tell only about Wu Song. One day he was drunk and killed a man.54> He was afraid of being

¹ *Sancunding gushupi* 三寸丁穀樹皮

arrested by the authorities, <54so he ran away from Qinghe District. He traveled to Taiping Village54> of Henghai County in Cangzhou, and took refuge at the residence of Chai Jin, the Little Whirlwind. <54He happened to meet the Opportune Rain, Song Jiang from Juncheng District there. Song Jiang was also taking refuge at Chai Jin's village because of a court case. When he met Wu Song, he found out that they had very much in common, so they swore each other blood brotherhood. Wu Song stayed at that Taiping manor for over half a year. Then he heard that the man he thought he had killed, was actually not dead after all. Wu Song was a loyal person, and immediately he thought of his elder brother. He wanted to go back home to visit his family. So he took farewell with Song Jiang and Chai Jin and left.54>

Wu Song took farewell with Chai Jin,/ and traveled toward Qinghe District./ With a quarterstaff in one hand,/ he was not afraid of being robbed on the road./ <54While feeling hungry as he walked,/ he had already reached a village without noticing it./ But there were no restaurants or taverns./ He stopped and hesitated./ *Just then he saw* that to the east of the road there was a small gate./ Outside the gate stood a woman about twenty years old./54> In his whole life Wu Song never was tempted by the opposite sex,/ so he went straight forward./ The woman called on him loudly:/ “Good guest, you can have a rest here!”/ Wu Song heard her calling,/ stopped and *addressed her thus*:/ “Is there a place that sells wine and food in this village?”/ The woman said:/ “All households in this village/ are farmers each and everyone,/ only mine sells wine and food.”/ Wu Song asked: “If

you sell wine, why don't you have a wine-banner?"/ The woman replied: "If you want food,/ dear guest, please come inside."/ Wu Song asked: "What are you selling?"/ The woman answered: "I sell things,/ if you want to buy, please follow me to my home."/ Wu Song was not looking for a prostitute./ But he was hungry and thirsty,/ and hearing that the woman was not insinuating,/ he nodded his head and followed her./ They entered the gate and went inside./ There were three thatched huts/ with bamboo curtains in front of the doors./ The woman opened the curtain/ and said: "Please come in, my guest!"/ Wu Song then opened the door and stepped inside./ The room was quite tastefully furnished./ In the middle there was a table,/ with two scholars' chairs on each side./ Behind the table there was a day bed/ covered with a clean sheet and a blanket./ Wu Song left his cudgel by the door,/ <54and sat on the chair./ The woman took the other chair/54> and called on her servant girl to pour some tea./ Wu Song said:/ "I want wine, not tea!"/ The woman told him: "There's no wine here,/ but I'll go buy you some if you want."/ <page 2> Wu Song said: "You just mentioned that/ you had good wine at home which was still sealed!/ Now let's stop arguing about the wine,/ but quickly bring me some food to eat!"/ The woman then called him "Good guest" and said:/ "Tell me what you would like to eat!"/ Wu Song said: "You just mentioned/ that you could offer me two steamed white buns,/ just bring me that stuff to eat."/ The woman said: "Good guest, you are so silly,/ those buns are really not eatable!"/ Hearing this, Wu Song began to understand./ Then he said "If

the steamed buns are not eatable,/ what else do you have then? Please, make yourself clear!”/ The woman smiled and *opened her mouth*:/ “I call you silly, my dear little guest,/ everyone loves wine, sex, wealth and vigor./ Men love women and there’s no exception./ I was sent to a brothel since very young,/ where <54I entertained guests with my beauty./ Now since you are at my home being my guest,/ please taste me and see if it’s<54> good.”/ This was the kind of speech the woman put forth/ and the hero, Second Brother Wu, got terribly annoyed./

(Speaking) The story we are performing is about how Wu Song felt hungry, and how this woman first deceived him with fair words and then tried to seduce him. When Wu Song had heard her speech to the end, he got mad and was just about to use his fists. But then he thought: <54This kind of woman has to stand in the doorway and sell her looks.>54> As soon as she is saying goodbye to a customer, she must welcome the next. This is her nature. Even if she was trying to seduce me, she should not be blamed. He changed his angry mien and said with an ironic smile: “Dear lady, you do have a nice intentions, but I am not the kind of man who lusts for a woman. Thank you for offering me love, but I really cannot accept.” The woman replied: “<54I don’t believe what you said. From time immemorial there were few men who didn’t lust for women.>54> Even an immortal, like Lü Dongbin, did flirt with White Peony.” Wu Song said: “Well, I’m not an immortal and I don’t want to be Dongbin either. Please, don’t say more about this, and don’t get in my way.” After saying that, he stood up and wanted to leave.

That woman called “Good guest” and said:/ <54“Please sit down. I have something to tell you.”/ Wu Song asked what it was./ The woman told him:/ “Good guest, although you are not asking for my service today,/ you have to leave some money for make-up.”/ When Wu Song heard this,/ he felt a thunder-like rage./ He told the woman: “The money is not a big deal,/ but I will give you one more thing.”/ The woman asked what it was,54>/ and Wu Song replied: “Two blows!”/ He was rubbing his fist and just about to beat her,/ when the woman was scared/ and pleaded with him to forgive her./ She shouted: “Honorable guest,/ for heavens’ sake, control your thunder-like rage!/ I dare not ask for make-up money from you!”/ After saying that, she prostrated herself./ Wu Song then forgave her,/ <54took his cudgel, and went out of the door./ When he had traveled two *li* along the road,/ somebody behind him yelled./ He said: “Stop there!54> I’m coming!”/ <54Wu Song stopped and turned round./ *There he saw* a fellow approaching./ His age was around thirty or more,/ and he was wearing a54> felt hat and a black shirt,/ followed by two tough young men,/ about the age of twenty-something./ All the three of them had cudgels,/ and they were hurrying fast towards Wu Song./ Wu Song opened his mouth and asked:/ “Who are you chasing?”/ The man answered: “We are chasing you!/ <54We have an old score to settle with you,54> and you try to be funny asking us ‘Who’!”/ Wu Song asked: “What score do you have to settle”/ That man replied: “In this village,/ you didn’t pay the girl her make-up money/ and even wanted to beat her. That is outrageous!”/ Wu Song

smiled:/ “What’s your relation to that woman?”/ That man said: “You just try my cudgel!”/ Song asked: “Is she your auntie?”/ That man answered: “Bullshit!/ Don’t talk nonsense!/ <page 3> Where is such a beggar like you from?/ Don’t you dare to come to our village and make a fuss!/ Do you think you can go to that house and ask for sex,/ without paying your bill and even using violence!/ Beware of Second Uncle Li from our village!/ Who didn’t hear of me and who doesn’t know me!/ My arms have a thousand pound of strength./ I bought a girl and settled her in this village,/ so as to have her entertain foreign travelers./ What she earns on ‘make-up’ is what keeps us going./ If you don’t have any money with you today,/ you have to leave something here and we will let you go./ Otherwise, don’t blame us/ saying that we locals bully foreign travelers./ When I, Second Uncle, settle scores with you,/ you will know what I am talking about!”/ Hearing this Wu Song laughed out loud:/ “Since <54I have neither silver nor coppers with me,/ you can make an entry on me in your account book.”/ Li the Second split his mouth in a grin and replied:/ “I don’t have an account book and cannot make an entry./ Just get the money out and stop the squabble!”/ Wu Song said: “If you don’t have an account book,/ let’s go to your home and find a painting hanging in your hall./ You can write down ‘Wu the Second from Qinghe District/ owes you five taels silver of whoring money’.”/ Rage swelled within Li the Second when he heard this,/ he shouted: “My good fellow!54>/ How dare you curse me first!/ Let my cudgel send you to heaven!/<54 He raised his cudgel

fiercely with two hands/ and brought it down towards Wu Song's head./ Wu Song stepped aside and dodged the blow./ The two young men then charged forward,⁵⁴>/ both raised their cudgels trying to give a hand./ Wu Song raised his cudgel too, to give combat./ He posed like a cat teasing mice./ *Just listen* how he shouted "Aiya!"/ and Li the Second fell to his feet,/ while his helpers stumbled in the grass, too./ Realizing that they already lost their ground,/ one of them retired and ran away at flying speed./ Wu Song gave him time to go, and then <⁵⁴he smiled/ and cursed at the same time: "Son of a bitch!/ I should have chased you and given you a good beating!/ Now I give up like opening a cage and letting the birds escape."/ He turned round and said to Li the Second:/ "Hurry up! Get to your feet and let's have this old score settled!"/⁵⁴>

(*Speaking*) *The story we are performing* is about <⁵⁴how Wu Song ordered Li the Second to settle old scores. Li the Second was only concerned about his pain.⁵⁴> He kept groaning all the time. <⁵⁴How could he care about giving a reply! Wu Song cursed again: "You blind bastard! Earlier you wanted to settle scores with me, the Second Master. Why don't you say something now? If you don't speak, then I don't owe you anything. I am on my way!" He quickly turned around and walked away after saying this. He traveled a distance of about three *li* and reached the border of Yanggu District.⁵⁴> That very day it was about noon time. He had been walking so long that he felt hungry and thirsty. *Just then he saw* <⁵⁴there was a tavern by the road, advertised by a winebanner which read: "Three bowls and you can not cross the

ridge.” Wu Song walked into the tavern, laid his cudgel aside, and sat down at the table facing south.⁵⁴> He called the innkeeper: “Quickly, bring some wine!” *Just look* how the innkeeper came with three bowls and one plate of food, which he placed in front of Wu Song. Then he filled one of the bowls with wine. Wu Song picked it up and drained it in one gulp. He smacked his lips and exclaimed: “Good wine!”. Again he asked: “Landlord, have you something to line the stomach?” The innkeeper said: “Some cooked beef is all I’ve got.” “Slice me two or three pounds of the good part,” said Wu Song. The innkeeper went in and cut three pounds of beef and put it on a big plate which he placed in front of Wu Song. Then he poured another big bowl of wine. Wu Song drank it off and said: “Good wine!” One more bowl was poured. So now Wu Song had drunk exactly three bowls of the wine . And the host wasn’t going to pour any more.

Wu Song called out again: “Pour the wine!”/ Xiao’er² just ignored him./ Then Wu Song started to bang the table and shouted./ Xiao’er quickly came over/ and asked: “Good guest, what do you want?/ Do you want me to cut you more beef?"/ “Why don’t you come and pour the wine?"/ answered Wu Song./ Xiao’er exclaimed: “My good guest!” and said:/ “Because you have already drunk three bowls of the wine.”/ <Page 4> “After three bowls of the wine,/ <54why don’t you sell any more wine when you have more?” replied Wu Song./ Xiao’er said:

² This is the first time that the waiter is called ‘Xiao’er’, Little Number Two, in this version. The name is entered without any explanation or introduction. It is not found in text 54 which is very similar throughout.

“On our flag/ is written clear enough, Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge.”/ “But what’s that supposed to mean?” asked Wu Song./⁵⁴> Xiao’er spread his lips and answered:/ “Our wine is rich and tasty,/ and it has more strength than many other famous vintages./ Therefore we sell only three bowls of the wine./ If you want the fourth bowl, then I am sorry that we’re not going to sell.”/ Wu Song said: “How mean you are!/ And how dare you to make up lies and cheat me!”/ Xiao’er exclaimed “My good guest” and said:/ “I was just warning you about the risk/ ⁵⁴<because I am an honest guy,/ I always think for our guests./ That’s why I wrote it clearly on the wine-banner,/ to let the guests see it carefully by themselves.”/⁵⁴> “What you said/ is not true and I’m not scared./ You can quickly bring me some more wine,” Wu Song said./ Xiao’er couldn’t help but pour him the wine./ Wu Song drank another three bowls of the wine./ became more excited and kept calling Xiao’er:/ “Pour the wine, hurry up!”/ Xiao’er exclaimed “My good guest” and said:/ “If you get drunk on this wine, then there’s no remedy.”/ Wu Song shouted at him when he heard this:/ ⁵⁴<“Whatever I drink, I’ll pay for./ It is none of your business whether I get drunk or not./⁵⁴> Bring me another three pounds of beef/ and another three bowls of the good wine!”/ Xiao’er had no choice but bringing him what he wanted./ Wu Song again finished the meat and the wine,/ “Hurry up! Pour the wine!” he requested./ Xiao’er replied: “I dare not pour you more.”/ ⁵⁴<Wu Song got very angry when he heard this./ He pointed his finger and shouted:/ “Enough of your

bullshit!/ Are you afraid that I won't pay you?/ If you say more and don't pour me the wine,/ I'll smash/ your little tavern/ into pieces⁵⁴> and then it will be too late for you to regret!”/ Xiao'er was afraid that he would use violence,/ so he dared not to stop pouring him the wine./ Having consumed altogether twenty-four bowls of wine,/ Xiao'er was really shocked:/ <⁵⁴“I've seen so many guests,/ but nobody was like this ‘wine jar with no bottom’!/⁵⁴> He has eaten ten pounds of beef/ and is still not full! I've never seen this in my life!”/ When Wu the Second finally had eaten to his heart's content,/ he called the innkeeper to reckon up how much he should pay./

(Speaking) The story we are performing is <⁵⁴about how Wu Song finished drinking and called the innkeeper to make out his bill. After he had taken out some silver and paid the bill, he laughed out loudly and said: “What ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge.’! I've had so many bowls today, how come I'm not drunk? You guys can watch me cross the ridge!” With these words he grasped his cudgel and marched out of the inn in big strides. Xiao'er followed him outside, crying: “Good guest, please, come back!” Wu Song halted and asked: “I've paid for everything, haven't I? What are you shouting about?” Xiao'er said: “I have something important to tell you.” Wu Song asked: “What's so important? Hurry up and tell! I'm on my way!” Xiao'er said: “There's something you don't know. The ridge ahead is called Jingyang Ridge. Recently there has been a fierce tiger on the ridge with slanting eyes and white forehead. It kills people along the road. Among the travelers and merchants it has

eaten twenty or thirty already. Therefore, the Magistrate of Yanggu District has given orders to the headman to let the hunters trap it in three days. Now the hunters have been punished many times, but so far they have not been able to capture it. So the Magistrate has posted a proclamation warning travelers and merchants that they must cross the ridge between the hours of nine in the morning and three in the afternoon. It's forbidden to cross at any other time. And what's more, single travelers are supposed to wait till there's a group of twenty to thirty people. It'll soon be night, and you travel alone. If you go up to the ridge now, you'll be just throwing your life away. You'd much better spend the night here. <Page 5> Tomorrow, you can look for company and make the trip together.” “Bullshit! You dare to fool me! I'm from Qinghe District,” Wu Song said, “I crossed this Jingyang Ridge dozens of times, never heard about fierce tigers. Now you want to scare me⁵⁴ and get me to stay at your inn, so you can come in at night and rob me of my life and my money. Isn't that true? Even if there really is a tiger, it doesn't scare a person like me! I will and shall cross the ridge!” After saying this, he made off in big strides.

The words Wu Song said/ made Xiao'er very angry and he said no more./ <54>He said to himself: 'I was too kind, trying to help him./ But he was provoked to give me such an answer./ This was goodness paid with evil/ If you don't believe me, why should I care?'/ After saying this, he stepped back inside the inn,⁵⁴ shaking his head./ *I will not perform* about Xiao'er who returned to the inn,/ *but I will tell*

about <54Wu Song who marched forwards./ He saw the Jingyang Ridge in front./

When he arrived at the foot of the ridge/, he noticed that the red sun was setting in the west./ He began to climb the mountain while the wine still had effect./ *Just then he saw* a temple at the roadside./ with a proclamation glued on the wall./ Wu Song paused to read it./ It said: ‘The Magistrate of Yanggu District/ warns all travelers that/ due to the recent appearance of a fierce tiger on the ridge/ which incessantly attacks people and causes much distress./ he has set up a deadline for the headman/ and hunters to capture it./ All travelers who want to cross the ridge/ are accordingly advised not to attempt the crossing of the ridge/ except between the hours of nine in the morning and three in the afternoon./54> Furthermore, <54single travelers are not allowed to cross the ridge alone./ they must take care and not risk their lives!/ Everybody take heed of this urgent warning!'/54>

<54After reading this./ Wu Song realized that what the innkeeper had said was true./54> At first he thought he might postpone his journey./ in case he would meet the big beast./ ‘But if we return to the tavern./ Xiao’er will laugh at us.’/ <54As he hesitated./ he saw again the red sun setting in the west./ If he now admitted to feel scared,54> people would inevitably make him a laughing stock./ <54After all, Wu Song was a brave man./ and the wine began to mount to his head./ How could there be any good argument for turning back?/ In his heart of heart he was still hesitating, so he told himself:/ “Wu Song, Wu Song, your bravery is useless!/ You are famous enough among the rivers and lakes fraternity./

but how can a mere proclamation make a good fellow /so scared he does not dare to go forwards?!”/ Thinking of this, his courage returned,/ so he trudged on up the mountain path./54> He walked on a bit further along the mountain path/ and <54the wine began to make itself felt still more./54> He was swaying and wanted to sleep/ <54as he advanced towards a dense thicket./ Suddenly he saw a rock by the road./ The rock was smooth like a mirror./ Wu Song said: “On this rock/ I shall sleep a while!”/ So he laid his cudgel aside,/ loosened his clothing and sank down on the rock./ Wu the Second drifted off to sleep/ and didn’t care about the big beast on the mountain./ Since he was a child he had always been very brave,/ and now he was drunk, tired and could not keep his eyes open./54> <54When Wu Song was half asleep,/ there came a fierce gust of wind in the forest./ It swept the trees and stripped the branches bare,/ and suddenly in the turmoil he woke up./ He opened his drowsy eyes and looked around./ He heard something roaring behind the trees/ and out sprang a tiger with white forehead,/ its skin like rich brocade./ It bared its teeth and flaunted its claws ferociously./54> Wu Song had such a shock/ that he rolled off the rock and stood up./ Grabbing his cudgel,/ he felt all the wine start out of him./ He took one step and leapt behind the rock./

(Speaking) The story we are performing is about how <54that tiger already before it sprang out from the wood, had spotted Wu Song. So it clawed the ground with its front paws, pushed back its hind paws, and made a jump, springing towards Wu

Song.54> In a flash Wu Song dodged, and ended up behind it. That tiger lashed out at him with its tail, <Page 6> it pressed the ground with its two front paws and sprang again. <54> Wu Song again dodged behind it. That tiger was both hungry and thirsty, and failing to grasp its prey twice, it was burning with impatience and gave an ear-splitting roar as if a mountain was falling and the ground split open. It opened its enormous mouth and wanted to bite Wu Song. Wu Song raised his cudgel in both hands and shouted: “You monster, try and taste my cudgel!” He brought the cudgel down with all the strength of his body. But who would imagine that his cudgel did not even touch the fierce tiger? The stroke went right on to the black rock.³ With a swosh the cudgel was broken in two, and he was left with only the broken half in his hand.54> At that moment the tiger had already turned in front of him, and <54> Wu Song was in a desperate hurry. He threw away his broken cudgel, instantly stretched out his two bare hands and took a firm grip on the striped neck of the tiger, forcing its head down to the ground with all his strength, not a moment did he relax his grip. With his legs he delivered fearful kicks to its face. The tiger was in unbearable pain, it thrashed about but couldn’t get up, and all it could do was trying to move back and forth. Wu Song thrust it down with his left hand, managed to work his right hand free and hammered it under its ear with his fist. *Just look* how the red blood began to gush from the tiger’s ears, eyes, nose and mouth. After a while it lost its energy. Wu Song

³ It is a special feature of this version and text 54 that the cudgel is broken against the black rock. In other versions it is broken against an old tree, or the tiger grasps it. In some versions the cudgel is not mentioned. In the Rongyutang edition of *Shuihu zhuan* the cudgel is broken against a tree, but on the illustration in that edition, it looks like the cudgel is broken on the rock.

grabbed it, thrust it down to the ground, and continued to give it more blows with his fist. *One could see* how this fierce tiger stretched out its four paws and stopped breathing, lying there motionless. Only then did Wu Song loosen his grip and stop beating.⁵⁴>

<⁵⁴After Wu Song had killed the fierce tiger,/ he went back to the black rock and sat down to regain his breath./ As he sat there and rested for a while, it was already night,/ and Wu Song speculated in the darkness:/ “If another fierce tiger springs out,/ I don’t think I’d be able to cope./ I’d better get down the ridge and find a place to stay for the night.”/ When he made up his mind, he stood up and marched down./ He had barely gone half a *li*/ when he suddenly saw two tigers/ jump out from the thicket of dry grass./ Wu Song was greatly shocked at the sight./ But when he looked carefully, it was two men/ who wore suits made from tiger’s fur./ Both of them carried steel-tined forks./ Wu Song shouted to them: “Who are you?”/ They saw Wu Song and asked him in return:/ “Are you a ghost or a man?/ Have you eaten a leopard’s gall/ that you dare to travel alone in this place?/ And you have no weapon in your hand,/ how do you dare to travel here in the dark of night?”/ Wu Song opened his mouth and replied:/ “Good men, what are you doing here?”/ Those men split their mouth in a grin and said with a meaningful eye:/ “Dear traveler, haven’t you heard?/ Recently there has been on this mountain ridge/ a fierce tiger which has kept attacking people./ Since the

Magistrate did not see any way out,/ so he set up a reward and called us hunters into action./ We were ordered to take turns and try to capture this fierce tiger./ But six or seven hunters were killed by the tiger already./ It is our turn to be on duty tonight./ So we gathered a group of local villagers,/ put down traps and loaded them with poisoned darts./ Now we were trying to catch the tiger, when we suddenly meet you traveling alone here./ Did you see this tiger?"/ Wu Song split his mouth in a grin and replied:/ "When I was sleeping in the wood a while ago,/ that tiger came out from the wood and sprang at me./ I grabbed the big beast's neck/ and beat it to death, with my blows and kicks."/ Those men were shocked and didn't believe him:/ "Not to mention the fact that you were all alone,/ but even if there had been ten people, they would not dare to get close to it./ Let me just tell you one thing that happened last night:⁴/54> >54There was a local fellow called Xing Gang./ He led a group of ten people armed with knives and spears/ and yesterday night they climbed the mountain to capture the fierce tiger./ Who could imagine that the moment they had climbed the mountain ridge,/ Xing Gang didn't even have chance to do anything/ before the fierce tiger dragged him away,/ tore his chest and ate him./ In no time it had devoured him, body and head./ He had no elder or younger brothers,/ so his poor mother cried to death./54> His wife and children were left behind,/ and his children are crying for dad all day long."/ <Page 7> <54While these two hunters were talking,/ *just look*

⁴ The episode of Xing Gang is unique to this version and text 54.

how there came a group of local villagers./ Wu Song asked: “What about this crowd? Who are these people?” The hunters said: “They are *our*⁵ comrades.”/ As they were speaking, the crowd was approaching./ The villagers asked: “You two fellows over there,/ who are you talking with?”/ The hunters replied: “Look at this man,/ he climbed the ridge alone/ and *we* were scared by him./ We asked if he saw the big beast,/ and he told us he had it already beaten it to death with his bare fists./ But we don’t know if it’s false or true./ If one man would try and handle a fierce tiger,/ he must have six arms and three heads.”/54> <54Wu Song said: “If you don’t trust me,/ let’s go together and have a look./ Then you will know if it’s true or false.”/ The hunters called the people/ and they lit several big torches,/ followed Wu Song and marched forward./ When they came to a big tree⁶ on the ridge, *just look* how the tiger sprawled in front of the rock,/ with traces of blood from its four openings./ At this sight the crowd rejoiced tremendously./ They tied the dead tiger up with ropes/ and carried it in procession./

(Speaking) The story we are performing is about how the hunters carried the dead tiger down the ridge, while one of the villagers went ahead and informed the headman. So when the headman had heard the report, he gathered all the villagers, lit up lamps and torches, and came to receive Wu Song. When Wu Song arrived, they invited him to sit down. The headman said to him: “Since this fierce tiger appeared on

⁵ 俺 *an I, my, we, our* (italics is used to mark the occurrence of *an* in the Wu Song texts).

⁶ This ‘big tree’ is not found in any other versions of the tiger story.

Jingyang Ridge, our whole village has been in danger. Now at last you strong fellow have turned up and done away with the evil for our village. But we still don't know your name and where you come from? Please, *tell us the details.*" Wu Song told them the following: "I come from Qinghe District, my name is Wu Song and I'm the second in my family. I traveled from Henghai District of Cangzhou to here. It was sheer luck that I chanced upon the fierce tiger and did it in, and this was because of the good fortune of your village. It really has nothing to do with me." The headman said: "Strong fellow, how could you say that? If you strong fellow were not such a hero, how could you kill the tiger with your bare fists? Now you must be very hungry, strong fellow, let me serve you some food and wine." So saying he arranged the food and wine, 54> and invited Wu Song to eat. <54Wu Song didn't care about courtesy, but started eating right away.54> He finished all the dishes there and then.

When the headman was cleaning up the table,/ the other people wanted to make a feast with wine./ Wu Song told them: "It's late now,/ I feel very tired./ We can leave the feast till tomorrow."/ The headman at once prepared a bed/ and Wu Song had a good rest that night./ The next day at dawn the headman sent someone/ to the Magistrate with a report/ about how Wu Song killed the fierce tiger./ The Magistrate was very delighted,/ so he sent three of his officers/ to this village, leading one riderless horse/ to welcome the tiger killing hero./ *We shall postpone the chapter about these events./ Let us now tell how Wu Song got up*

early in the morning,/ washed and dressed. When he was ready,/ all the villagers had a feast ready for him./ As Wu Song and the villagers were beginning to drink the wine,/ there came a man with a message:/ “The Magistrate has sent a messenger/ to welcome the tiger killer, Second Brother Wu.”/ When Wu Song heard this, he got to his feet./ The headman told people to make a frame for carrying the tiger./ They moved the dead tiger onto the frame,/ and several men were to carry it along./ Wu Song then mounted the horse/ and proceeded to Yanggu District together with them./ On their way, all travelers were curious to see them./ In no time they had reached Yanggu Town,/ where multitudes were waiting for them,/ all of them eager to see the tiger killer,/ and the whole Yanggu District was in an uproar./ The cross-road street at the entrance to the district was packed./ *I cannot mention all these persons here and now./ Let us now tell* how the messenger reported to the Magistrate./ The Magistrate of Qinghe⁷ District was sitting in the courtroom,/ when he called in the hero Second Brother Wu./ The villagers carrying the tiger were at the head of the procession,/ **<Page 8>** and Wu Song on his steed followed behind./ When they reached the entrance to the *yamen*, he got off his horse./ Order was given to carry the tiger into the hall,/ as the Magistrate himself wanted to inspect it./ When the headman heard the order, he let his men/ carry the tiger to the hall of the district administration./ The Magistrate of Yanggu District first inspected the tiger,/ and then he asked for the

⁷ Mistake for “Yanggu” here?

tiger killer, the strong fellow Wu, to enter./ Wu Song stepped forward and entered the hall/ saying: “Your Excellency,/ your underling kowtows to you!”/ The Magistrate took a good look at Wu the Second:/ “This is indeed a great hero!”/ Then he said: “Strong fellow, please, do not stand on ceremony!”/ Wu Song rose and stepped to the side./ The Magistrate asked: “How did you handle such a mighty fierce tiger/ and manage to kill it with your naked fists?”/ So Wu Song told his story about how he killed the tiger/ all over again and in every detail to the Magistrate./ The Magistrate was very pleased by his story,/ so he granted Wu Song three cups of wine and toasted to him./ Then the Magistrate called his accountant and said:/ “Check out five hundred strings of cash/ and reward it to Wu Song, Wu the Strong Fellow.”/ Wu Song split his mouth in a grin and said: “Your Excellency,/ I’m simply enjoying the reflection of Your Excellency’s great fortune./ It was sheer luck, so I don’t deserve the reward./ Since these hunters here/ suffered sanctions and punishments,/ might we not give the money to these hunters?/ That would be very kind of Your Excellency.”/ The District Magistrate said: “If that is your wish,”/ “I leave it to you, strong fellow, to arrange it.”/ So Wu Song took the five hundred strings of cash/ and right there in the hall he distributed them among the hunters./ The Magistrate praised the action: “Well done, Wu the Second!/ I like your open-handedness and largess!”/ Then he said to Wu Song:/ “Although you are from Qinghe District,/ which is not far from our Yanggu locality,/ I would like to offer you a position as captain in our district./ I

wonder if you would accept it?"/ Wu Song split his mouth in a grin and replied:
“Since Your Excellency is showing me such favour,/ how could your underling
dare resist?"/ Accordingly, the Magistrate called the registrar and had him write
out the order/ appointing Wu Song a captain there and then./ When everything
was done, the Magistrate left the hall,/ and so did Wu Song./ At this moment there
came two soldiers/ who cleaned up the office room for Wu Song/ and carried in
his luggage./ About this time all the important members of the district *yamen*/
came to offer their congratulations to the new captain./ Some came with gifts and
others invited him for banquets/ and celebrations lasted for many days on end./
Soon half a month had passed,/ and then one day as Wu Song was free and had
no official duty/ he took a walk in the street to relax./ Just as he was walking
alone, he suddenly heard someone call out behind him./

(Speaking) The story we are performing is about how Wu Song was walking in the
street, when he heard someone call out behind him: “Isn’t this my brother Captain
Wu? Why don’t you come to see me?” Wu Song turned his head and saw that it was
his own brother, Wu the Elder! So he turned around and walked over to his elder
brother, asking: “Brother, how are you doing these days?” The Elder said: “I haven’t
heard from you for over a year since you left home. I inquired around for your
information, but didn’t hear anything, so I was very sad. Yesterday, as I came to town,
I heard there was a strong fellow who had killed the tiger on Jingyang Ridge, with the

name Wu Song. Moreover he had been appointed a captain by the Magistrate of Yanggu District. I was pretty sure it was you, my little brother. Today, we've met and it really was you! Where have you been for such a long time?" Wu Song said: "I was in Cangzhou. I lived there for over a year. When I was on my way coming back to see you, my brother, I happened to kill that tiger. But how come you, my brother moved here?" The Elder said: "Brother, there was a reason why I moved here. Just because last year I took a wife. In the neighbourhood there were some idlers who often came to my house and took advantage of me. I couldn't do anything to protect myself." After hearing this, Wu Song shouted angrily: "Who are those bold bastards? How dare any of them bully innocent people!" When the brothers began talking to each other, they had so much to tell they could hardly finish.

Translated by Feng Yining and Vibeke Børdahl