

## 'Wu Song Fights the Tiger'

*Told by Li Xintang*

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Chai Jin accommodates guests in Henghai County  
Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge.

When the God-blessed Second Brother from Guankou, Wu Song, had received news from his elder brother, he bade farewell to his lord, and went off to Yanggu District in Shandong to find his brother. He had been on the road not only for one day, no, he had marched for more than twenty days. It was in the middle of the tenth month. Now the sun was slanting towards the west, and Wu Song felt hungry in his stomach; so he wanted to take a rest. The moment he looked up, he saw in front of him a pitch-black and dead-dark town. As he came nearer he saw the wall piled up with flat bricks all the way to the roof and in the middle the round city gate. Above it there was a whitewashed stone with three red characters: Jingyang town.

Our hero shouldered his bundle, lifted his staff, and marched with big strides into the town. In the town's inn he drank himself good and drunk. From the wine called 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge' he drank thirty bowls. He drank himself mighty drunk, and when he set out on his way, his head felt heavy and his feet light, as he swayed along. When he came out of the town, he stumbled and staggered forwards for more than three *li*. He came to the Temple of Earth, and here he saw on the east gable a proclamation that was glued up on the wall. This proclamation was issued by Yanggu District, and the characters were clear to see. Even if Wu Song had never attended school, he had nevertheless picked up a few characters. He stopped up and stared at the wall, and if he came to some characters that he didn't know, he just skimmed over them. This is what was written on the wall:

On special order from the Main Office of Yanggu District, Dongchang Prefecture in Shandong, we Shi Wenhui, holding the honorary office of the tenth rank, ten times promoted, shall hereby make public the following instructions: Hereby it is notified that concerning the area east of the city,

Jingyang Ridge, that is the main thoroughfare that travellers and merchants have to follow, unfortunately this autumn a fierce tiger has appeared. It obstructs the road and kills people. Our district has already given the task to some of our strong menfolk and hunters to catch the tiger, but so far they have not been able to get hold of it. Apart from officials on government assignment, it is hereby publicly notified for military and lay folk in town and countryside alike, that everybody should be informed as follows: It is only permitted to cross the Ridge every day during the three watches from 10 to 4 o'clock. The travellers should form groups and the local headman should beat a gong, everybody should carry cudgels, so that they can safely be escorted over the Ridge. If a lonely traveller comes along, and the innkeeper does not keep him back, and the headman does not prevent him from crossing, and he is killed by the tiger, those parties concerned will be severely punished, when our district finds out, and it will absolutely not be tolerated. Special warning against violating this edict!

Xuanhe year, month, day,  
issued and pasted up at the Temple of Earth,  
east of the Jingyang Ridge.

This was the proclamation! If Wu Song had not seen it, so what! But now that he *did* see it: Goodness me! He was taken aback, but now it was too late to have regrets: 'I am too rough and rash! A moment ago the waiter, Xiao'er, from the inn came running after me. I should not have thrashed him. He was well-meaning and called me back, telling me that there was a man-eating tiger on the Ridge. I didn't believe him, but thought he had evil intentions; so I not only refused to thank him, but on the contrary I knocked him down. It was certainly me who was in the wrong.' But then he thought, that now it was all over and done with and useless to regret. Should he continue or not? In front there was a tiger, of course he should retrace his steps. But this was no joke! 'If I return, I'll be the laughing stock of that little Xiao'er. If I return I'll have to lodge in his inn. Even if he doesn't say something worse, he is bound to

say: "Master, I hurried after you to tell you, but Your Honour didn't believe me, but even beat me. Your Honour said, that the tiger on Jingyang Ridge had invited you to dinner, so why don't you go there to eat? Now I understand. It is probably because you saw that proclamation, so it dawned upon you that my words were not false. And then you were scared, so scared that you returned. You are surely a braggard!" Ah! How can I be mocked by him? If there is no tiger in front, then it is of no consequence whether I return or not. And if there *is* a tiger in front, I cannot return either! It could hardly be the case that I am *afraid* of that tiger? A real man only cares to march forwards, has one ever heard of the logic of retreat? I just have to rely on my agility, then of course I can fight the tiger, and kill that tiger and do away with the evil for all the people.' When our hero had got that far in his thoughts, he made up his mind to go that way, and decided he would absolutely go and fight that tiger. Intoxicated by the wine he went along in big strides, indeed:

Clearly knowing there was a tiger  
in the mountain,  
he obstinately climbed that  
tiger mountain.

LX[1]

Wu Song shouldered his bundle and continued forwards. He walked more than three *li*, and so he was already seven *li* from Jingyang town. In front of him there was a mountain ridge, namely that Jingyang Ridge. Across the highway from east to west that high mountain ridge was running from south to north. When travellers wanted to go west, they had to pass this place, they must climb the ridge to pass. Wu Song mounted the ridge in big strides. Knowing that the ridge was not as

much as one *li* high, Wu Song used to leap and bounce over the ridge in one single breath. But this time it didn't work. He had drunk too much. His head was heavy and his feet light, he swayed along, stumbling and staggering, and when he had come halfway he just couldn't walk any more.

Beside the road there was an old tree, and at the foot of the tree he discovered a moss-grown stone. It was about two metres long, one metre broad, and half a metre thick, and then I don't know how deeply it was embedded in the earth. The stone was quite clean actually, and after another glance at it, Wu Song wondered why he shouldn't sit down and take a rest. Our hero sat down on the moss-grown stone, placed his bundle on the stone and leaned the staff against it. How could he imagine that the moment he sat down he would fall asleep? 'Well, well, if I have to sleep, then let me take a good nap and then go on.' He had had too much wine! When there is a man-eating tiger around, can one then go to sleep? No: 'Drunk from wine, things come to naught!' He pushed his burden forwards and curled up his legs, rolled over on the side and went to sleep on the moss-grown stone. His right hand was clenched into a fist, his shoulder rested on his bundle, his fist covered his left temple, his left hand protected his heart. His two legs were curled up, this is called 'sleeping like a shrimp'. In his sleep he did not expose any part of him: The front of his chest was protected by his left hand. His lower part was protected by his two legs. If you should try to beat him up and hit his upper part, he would lift his left hand and parry your fist, while his right fist would hit you right on the spot. If you should try to hit him on his lower part, his two legs would parry the blow.

As he was slumbering, you see, as he rolled over on the side on top of this moss-grown stone, oh, he felt, you cannot imagine how comfortable! It lasted only a short while, z-z-z-z-z.....then he had fallen asleep and was snoring heavily. But there was a man-eating tiger! He had forgotten all about it, his memory was just too bad. Normally his memory was excellent. Today it didn't work. It was because he had had too much to drink. That is called: 'After wine things come to naught!' Ah, fortunately he took this nap, if not, he would not have been able, for the time being, to clear his head from the wine. Now Wu Song was fast asleep on the moss-grown stone, when a fierce north-west wind blew up for the first time. And therefore when he awakened seven tenths of the effect of the wine had disappeared.

He did not sleep for only a short while this time. How long did he sleep? He slept all the time until after the second watch. He was so sound asleep when something turned up. What was it? A man-eating tiger! Where was that tiger? The tiger lived on

the southern range of the Jingyang Ridge, in a place where no man had ever set foot, in a mountain hollow. Here there was a cave about the size of a house. As soon as one slipped through the opening there was dry grass spread all over. This beast had hollowed out the inside with its paws, and this was its tiger's den. Now it was about to step outside. It stood up on its forepaws, and hunched up its hindlegs, lifted its head and and looked at the bright moon in the sky. After staring and staring it broke into a tiger's roar:

"U-uh.....uh.....uh.....ha-a!"

It gave such a roar, and at the same time a fierce wind blew up, making the old trees creak and groan, and the pebbles on the ground were sent flying all over. A moment ago there was no wind, how come there was a wind now? People say: 'Clouds follow the dragon, wind follows the tiger!' Are these words right? This sentence is not necessarily right, I think. Rather, when the tiger becomes aware of a fierce wind, it will give a roar. It borrows the force of the wind to support its own majestic air. Therefore every time people hear the tiger roaring, there is also a fierce wind.

After roaring the tiger would stretch out its forepaws and lift up its hind legs:

"U-uh.....du-u....."

Then it would slink out of the cave:

"Pa-ah.....", and jump down. At this moment one could observe how it would in the first place sway, in the second place swing round, in the third place crouch down, in the fourth place flap its tail, and thereupon step forward with an official's stride. It was hungry! For many days now it had had nothing to eat. What would it eat? Among its various meals the best was *man*. Man was highest on the menu. Apart from man it would eat winged game and four-footed beasts.

Ever since that announcement from Yanggu District had been put up, people had started to travel in groups over the mountain, armed with cudgels, and only within the fixed period between 10 and 4 o'clock every day. When the tiger saw so many people at a time and every one with a weapon, it did not dare to come forward. These days it had had no human meal, so how could it refrain from eating winged game and four-footed beasts? Winged game and four-footed beasts were also unobtainable now. What does that mean? It had eaten all of them up. Don't be in a hurry! The winged beasts are flying in the sky, how could it manage to get them, even if it wanted to? It could perhaps fly, too? Oh, no! If it had a pair of wings and could fly, that would be disaster. If a tiger could grow wings, that would be extremely

dangerous!

When it had made up its mind to catch a bird, it would lay down in a bog deep in the mountains, lift its head upwards and stare into the sky. If no sparrow or other bird was coming this way, well, that was that! But if a sparrow or other bird was passing by, it would send out a roar towards the sky:

"U-uh....."

Immediately the smell of tiger would emanate from its mouth ... The sparrow would come flying at full speed, but sensing the stench from the tiger and smelling its foul air, it would become weak all over, and its two big wings would not be able to move any more. Weak as it is, it falls down: 'Plop!' Falling down from this height, even if it doesn't die, it is not far from

LX[2] it! The tiger will then in no haste and no hurry step up to it, and in one breath swallow it down into its mouth. Closing the lips it would spit out the feathers, while skin, meat and bones went down into its stomach. And even if it was just a sparrow, it would have to make do for breakfast.

Then there was the rabbit. Even if it is small, it can run very fast. When it sees a tiger, it runs to its hole like a wisp of smoke. The rabbit's hole is not very big, even if we are flattering, we cannot say it is bigger than a fist. As soon as the rabbit has slipped inside, the tiger will have no way to do him in. The tiger cannot nuzzle its way into the hole, and so it has to sit there and watch. In that case, is it so that the tiger is unable to eat the rabbit? Who says so? It doesn't need to pursue the rabbit, it only has to watch the rabbit. It will just smack its lips, and no matter whether it is one hundred steps or two hundred steps away from the rabbit, it only has to give a roar:

"U-uh.....u-uh.....", and the smell comes forth. When the rabbit in the distance smells the stench, it cannot move. It curls up in the grass, shivering. When it begins to shiver, it becomes confused, and is unable to move away. In no haste and no hurry the tiger comes nearer and nearer. And no matter whether it is two or three feet away, the tiger will swallow it all up in one breath. It closes its lips and the rabbit is already down in the stomach, serving as lunch.

And now we shall tell about the monkey, which is much more clever. The monkey by nature is able to climb very high. When it sees a tiger coming, it climbs to the top of that tree. It sticks its hind legs into a forked branch, and with its forepaws holds onto some twigs. Then it looks down towards the tiger, blinking with those monkey eyes: "Wa-da-wa-da". It says to itself: 'Elder Brother, even if you are fierce, you

cannot climb! What can you do to me?' But the tiger is even more ingenious. It will sit down ten to twelve metres from that tree, then lift its head and stare at the monkey while emitting a roar:

"U-uh.....uh.....uh....."

When the monkey sees the tiger coming, it is frightened in its heart, and it begins to shiver: "De-de-de ...". And when the tiger roars, it shivers terribly: "De-de-de ...". The monkey shivers incessantly. It is not necessary to roar a lot, just eight or ten times, and the monkey becomes dizzy from shivering, its eyes are swimming. Its forepaws and hind legs are losing their grip. As soon as its limbs get weak it will fall down ¼ flop ¼ and the tiger will not waste time. No matter whether the monkey is several metres away, the tiger will snatch it in one gulp. As soon as it enters the mouth, it enters the stomach, serving as tea.

In the evening the tiger goes down to the river to drink. The water flows in through the left side of the mouth and out through the right side. Not one single fish or shrimp will escape, and that will do for supper. Four meals a day! But now all the winged game and four-footed beasts, fish and shrimp, had been eaten up. Not one single sparrow was to be found. When the tiger was squatting down at a place, it would turn out that all the winged game and four-footed beasts had disappeared. And they did not turn up from other places either. What was the reason? For example, there might have been a crow passing by, crying:

"D-u-u.....ua-a.....d-u-u.....ua-a.....".

What does that mean? It is talking! Can a crow talk? Humans have human language and birds have birds' talk! What did it say?

"D-u-u.....ua-a.....Don't go to Jingyang Ridge! D-u-u.....ua-a.....There is someone having free meals!"

So now it could not get hold of a single sparrow. For several days this beast had had nothing to eat. Now it came forward swaying and swinging with its huge body, and it was surely hungry. It had only licked the dew on the grass and chewed some pine twigs and pine cones for a meal. The tiger walked down the ridge and lay down on a grass lair. It stretched out its forepaws and hunched up its hind legs, then lifted up its head and stared at the bright moon in the sky. It stared into the sky and stared at the moon, then emitted a roar:

"U-uh.....u-uh.....!"

This roar woke up Wu Song!

"Aha.....!"

Wu Song gave a yawn. When Wu Song now awakened the better half of the wine was gone. My! This wind was blowing very hard, for sure: Du-u-u-u.....sh-h-h-h.....When the first gust of wind had passed, the next gust would follow tightly: U-u-uh.....hua-a-a-a.....When the next gust of wind had passed, the third gust followed tightly. On the tail of the wind there was a foul smell. When Wu Song smelled this foul smell:

"Ah!"

Even before he had concentrated his gaze and become fully alert, all the effect of the wine was gone. In this moment he understood that that beast of a tiger had turned up.

There is a saying among people: 'When there is a foul smell on the tail of the wind, then jackals or wolves, tigers or leopards are out to kill people.' 'And here I have been sleeping!' Wu Song hurried up, got hold of his staff, bent his waist, and headed up the ridge. He ran and he sprang, he leapt and he bounced. Now he had completely awakened from the wine, and on he raced. In one breath he reached the top of the ridge. He took the position of 'the golden pheasant standing on one leg'. He stood on his left leg, and with his right leg he made a circle forwards, he lifted his left hand and shaded his eyes, with his right hand he held onto his staff and stared around in all four directions in order to spot the tiger. He couldn't see the tiger. The only thing he could see was the wind blowing so hard that the branches of the trees and the grass were swaying. My God, this wind was not weak:

LX[3]

The five lakes and the four seas were surging high.

It blew so hard the Red Dust flew up to the Ninth Heaven.

Billows' crests were whitening like flowers.

The trees on top of the mountains were waving their branches.

Sh-h-h-h.....If this had happened to a less valiant person, he wouldn't have dared to stand at this place. Where was the tiger? The tiger was below in a thicket of withered grass. Why couldn't Wu Song see it? Because in the middle of October the grass is dark yellow. The tiger's fur is also yellow. And therefore at night it couldn't be seen clearly. Wu Song had not seen the tiger yet. How could one imagine that the tiger at this moment would turn its head round and with one eye stare towards Wu Song on top of the ridge. When the tiger at this moment saw this single man standing at the top of the ridge, it was almost dying



from laughter. It was so happy. For three days it had had nothing to eat, and today it saw this single fellow. It surely became happy, just as if we people have had to go hungry for three days, and we then see a big meat-ball, of course we get happy, too. The tiger didn't lose time, it lifted its forepaws and rose on its hind legs and emitted a roar:

"Lu-u-u-uh.....hu-u-u-h.....ta-a-a.....ta-a-a....." From the thicket of withered grass it leapt onto the highway and there it landed. When it had landed it lifted its head upwards, opened its mouth wide, stretched its tongue downwards and ½drip-drop, drip-drop ½ its saliva trickled out. It lifted its tail up and stared at Wu Song. It bared its teeth and flaunted its claws. It swung its tail and swayed its head. How about Wu Song? Wu Song was just about to look for it! When he heard that tiger's roar, he looked and saw the tiger coming. He couldn't help but be startled. Oh! Could even Wu Song be afraid? One cannot blame him. He had never seen a tiger before. But even if he was startled and even if he was afraid, as soon as he had come to himself, it didn't bother him any more. Wu Song looked at the tiger. How big was it? Twice as big as a bull ox. There are a couple of verse-lines to praise it:

Seen from afar it looked like a bull ox without horns.

Seen from nearby: a mottled wild beast.

The left ear was spotted with red colour, red as fire,

the right ear was mottled with green, like a wave,

between its brows a 'king's' character,

like a prefect inspecting the mountains.

Its twenty-four straws of whiskers were like thorns and barbed wire.

Four big teeth, eight small teeth were like iron cramps and steel nails.

In front were the paws, behind were the legs.

When it put its paws to the ground, it would climb the mountains

and bounce from hill to hill.

When it lifted its hind legs, it could jump over gullies and cross rivers.

When it lifted its head and roared in the wind,

the flying birds in heaven all lost their courage.

When it lowered its head and drank of the water,

the fish and shrimp of the stream all lost their mind.

Among the walking beasts he alone stands out.

His whole body is covered with striped brocade.

When he has not eaten human meat for three days,  
he will swing his tail and sway his head and grind his teeth.

"U-u-u-uh.....ma-a-a-a....."

When Wu Song saw it he became very happy: 'The reason why I came here was to find that tiger and fight it.' In a hurry he fixed his scarf on top of his head and tightened his belt around his waist. He stamped his feet in his boots, lifted his staff and cried out towards the tiger below:

"Hey! You monster, don't go away!"

And then he dashed down the hill, and when he was three staffs' length away from the tiger, he halted. Why didn't he go on? This was the first time that Wu Song had to fight a tiger. It was also because when those trained in the martial arts fight, they do not go near to each other. They always stand at a distance of say one or two staffs' length. And when they are ready to attack, they attack. Not like us, we do not miss any time before we begin close fighting, and not only close fighting, we even go into a clinch, and then only are we able to really fight. But those people trained in the martial arts do not act so. They stand at a distance of more than three staffs, with their feet firmly planted in the ground, and then they take up a martial pose. Now our hero lifted up the staff in his hands and stared at the tiger. What about the tiger? The tiger was below, lifting its head and glaring at Wu Song. It saw that man come running towards it and then stop at a distance of three staffs. That beast of a tiger thought to itself: 'Gosh! That man must be fierce. Normally I just have to look at people and emit a roar. And as soon as they get scared, they'll sink to the ground. Then I can just rush upon them, and with a crunch: A-ah.....wu-u....., I can haul them away. But that man today, he is not only unafraid, but he even comes running over to me. What is it that he carries? I wonder whether it is good to eat?' Its mind was only set on eating.

The tiger said to itself: 'If you are not afraid, then I'll give you a good scare!' How could it frighten him? The tiger had three ways to strike people with awe! What three ways? The tiger's roar, the tiger's claw, the tiger's tail, called: roaring, clawing, sweeping. The first awesome way was when the tiger caught sight of a man and roared. The timid ones would be so frightened they couldn't stand on their feet when they heard that roar. And those in poor health would become dizzy from smelling that foul air, and tumble to the ground. The second awesome way was the tiger's claw. If it couldn't scare you out of your wits, it would rush upon you to claw you. And if it

caught you, that would mean ten holes in your body. If it couldn't get at  
LX[4] you, that tiger's tail would come sweeping. The tiger's tail was like a  
steel club: when it swept across one's back, the back was broken. When it swept across one's  
leg, the leg was broken. And you would end up with broken bones and torn muscles, peeled  
skin and shredded meat.

When the tiger saw that Wu Song was not afraid, it began to apply the first way: It  
lifted its head and opened its mouth wide. One could hear the sound of its whiskers,  
and from its mouth there came a sound: "Gua-a, gua-a.....", as if grinding its teeth.  
All of a sudden a roar broke out:

"W-u-u-u-u-h.....!"

The tiger's breath came forth. But Wu Song was not the least scared. That foul air  
was no good to smell, but Wu Song was in good health, he didn't care. When the  
tiger saw that, it stopped roaring. Why so? That man wasn't afraid! Since the first  
way couldn't frighten him out of his boots, the second way would come up: The tiger  
lifted its forepaws and rose on its hind legs ... and then it sprang, aiming with its two  
claws at Wu Song's left and right shoulder. Wu Song stared at the tiger:

"Well!"

That beast truly had a ferocious force. However, in no haste and no hurry he  
leaned to the left side:

"Well!"

"W-u-u-u.....ma-a-a-a.....!"

The tiger had jumped right into the air and came down to the right of Wu Song.  
Wu Song didn't delay, he immediately lifted the staff in his right hand, and then  
aimed a blow towards the tiger's head. But that beast was worse than worst. In a  
hurry it withdrew its head backwards. The staff missed its aim, and then it lifted its  
head, opened its mouth and took a good bite at the staff. With one bite it was divided  
into three: One small piece was in its mouth. One piece had fallen to the ground, and  
then Wu Song still had one piece in his hand. Wu Song looked at that piece and  
became very annoyed. Could one call that a staff? It was changed into a rolling pin!

"Ah!"

He flung it away, no use keeping it. Now he had no weapon in his hand. How  
could he fight a tiger with his bare hands? Oh, yes, Wu Song had the power to catch  
a tiger with his bare fists! Wu Song flung the staff away, and the tiger spat out the  
staff in its mouth. That beast loved to eat! But the staff was of course not good to eat.  
And therefore the tiger spat it out. It spat out that staff, and Wu Song threw away

that staff. Wu Song lifted his right hand, and then he took a firm grip on the tiger's striped neck:

"Don't move!"

That beast began to understand that the man was holding it:

"Ma-a-a.....a-a-a....."

Then it tried to slink away under his hand. What? Did it run away? It couldn't run away. It had come to have a free meal. But that free meal had not yet been swallowed down. So it could not leave. Second Master Wu turned round and saw how that beast tried to slink away. It tried to turn round, too, but that wasn't easy. It is not as agile as we human beings. The tiger's neck ... even if we human beings do not have a neck ... It has, but it is short. When it wants to turn, the whole body turns around at the same time. It is difficult! Just like a stubborn ass. But that beast, it had its own stubborn ways. It lifted its two paws and rose on its hind legs, and ... pa-a-a ... da-a-a it made a somersault and turned over. When it had turned over, it lifted its head towards Wu Song and stared. Yes, it still stared at him, that beast didn't run away. Our hero did not move, but stared back at it. His two hands were clenched into fists, one on the left and one on the right. The tiger was still at this moment standing in the same posture. It lifted its forepaws and sprang towards Wu Song's front. It could not change its posture. It could not change it. Even if this beast had eaten people thousands and ten thousands of times, it always used the same posture. It could not switch to another posture. It lifted its forepaws and stepped onto its hind legs, and sprang for the second time. But Wu Song was prepared in no haste and no hurry he leaned to the left side:

"Well!"

"Ma-a-a....."

The tiger leapt into the air, to the left of him. Our hero was moving fast, he lifted his left hand, let it come down, and took a firm grip on the tiger's striped neck:

"Don't move!"

"Ma-a-a....."

What did that mean? It was caught by Wu Song. That beast understood it was in a bad way. Today it should have had a free meal, but it had gotten caught, and therefore at this very moment it roared:

"Ma-a-a-a....."

It roared and it tried to lift its head up. It wanted to fling Wu Song's hand off. Hm! It couldn't fling it off. When Wu Song saw that it did not move any more, he snorted:

"Ha!"

With that snort he exercised all his might. And if it wasn't one thousand pounds, it was at least six hundred and sixty! The two forepaws of the tiger were pressed down in the mud. Its legs were curled up and its head was forced down to the ground. The tiger [roared]:

"Ma-a-a-a....."

Now the tiger was suffering. It could not move its forepaws. Wu Song lifted his left foot up and with his heel he kicked the tiger right in the face. That kick, it was not meant to be so ...

"Ma-a-a....."

What did that mean? The tiger was mad with pain. Its left eye had been kicked blind by Wu Song. The eyeball was smashed so that black fluid poured out and blood ran in streams. It surely hurt! Now it had only one eye left. But Wu Song still did not know this. He only saw it roaring like that on the ground. Our hero stared entranced at it. The clear stars and the bright moon were shining from above, and now he saw clearly:

"Well!"

The good thing was that the tiger had already been blinded on one eye. 'Hey! That was done unwittingly. But why not kick out its right eye, too, and turn it into a blind tiger?!' Yes, our hero stepped on to his left foot, stretched LX[5] his right leg into the air, concentrated all his energy in his heel and aimed at the tiger's right eye: "Smash!" At that moment the tiger was dying from pain, this was killing! Today it should had had a free meal, and what had it got, but both eyes blinded jX two eyes that could not see. The tiger was not able to move its forepaws. When it tried to lift its head, it couldn't; when it tried to open its mouth, it couldn't. When Wu Song was fighting the tiger today, the most important thing was this left hand that held the striped neck in a firm grip and pressed it down. The tiger could not move its forepaws, it was not possible. But now you should see how it scratched with its hind legs: "Ba-a.....ba-a.....ba-baa....." in the earth, digging up two narrow furrows. It scratched so that pebbles whirled around. But it could not get at Wu Song. It could not get at Wu Song, and so it could not get to eat him. Then the tiger began to swing its tail to beat Wu Song. It swung from side to side in order to come sweeping down. The moment Wu Song realized it:

"Too bad!"

The tiger's tail was like an iron staff. If it came sweeping down on your body, you would be done for! He had to do away with it, he had to kick it off. Anyway, Wu

Song did not dare to loosen his left hand, he had to keep it down. He leaned his body to one side, to the left side of the tiger. He stretched his right leg up in the air and held it there over the tiger's back. Then he concentrated all his energy in his right foot. With the tip of his right foot he kicked the tiger at the root of its tail. The tiger's tail was standing upright, swinging to and fro. Our hero gave a shout:

"Got it!"

Fine! The tiger's tail was broken at the root. These bones are all gristle, joint by joint. The tail of the tiger is very hard, though. This meant hard against hard, and so the joint was broken. When the tail was broken, it drooped. It couldn't swing any more. The tiger had lost all three awesome ways. It was at the mercy of Wu Song. Second Master Wu lifted his right leg forwards and sat down astride the tiger. He was riding the tiger. He

pressed his hand down: "M-m-m!" The tiger was well aware that things looked bad now: 'That man is riding me as if I were a donkey ... ' But at this point the tiger was unable to lift its head. Then it moved to the right, it was moving and moving. What did that mean? It was moving round towards Wu Song. It roared:

"A-a-ah.....ma-a-a-a....." and it still wanted to eat Wu Song. He turned his head round to the right, lifted his right fist and smashed it down on the tiger's right brow:

"Take that!"

"M-a-a-a-a....."

He hit the tiger right on the head. This time its head was swimming. His fist smashed down on its right brow. This fist of his together with his foot had beaten the tiger blind on both eyes. Later on when he came to Yanggu District and his deed was examined in court, his case was tried: At this point they did not count his first kick, they only counted this as one blow of his fist. The tiger was sprawling on the ground, roaring:

"Ma-a-a.....ya-a-a....."

Then he lifted his right fist:

"Hey!" and aimed at the tiger's right hip, at that soft spot:

"Ah! Hey!.....Hey!.....Hey!....."

He beat it the first twenty times, I should say. He only beat it at this single spot, he did not change to another spot. Later on when he came to Yanggu District to have the case examined in court, this was only counted as one single blow of his fist. The inspector performing the autopsy didn't have cold feet, did he? Since Wu Song had

beaten the tiger for the first twenty times, why was this counted as one blow of his fist? What did it matter? The tiger could not report the ill it had suffered. Evidently the fewer blows, the more honour to the hero who had killed the tiger. By all means, what if the tiger didn't give in after those first twenty blows! It was still roaring there down on the ground:

"Wu-u-u.....ha-a-a-i....."

Our hero was getting tense. This was no good, his fist was of no use. He was beating the body of the tiger, but it didn't give in. He might as well go and trade his fist for candy! He thought about it once more. He got it! He had not hit its deadly spot. 'If you fight a man, and it's a question of life and death, you must hit his deadly spot, then only will he die. This time I have to hit the tiger on the part where its deadly spot is. Where is the deadly spot of a tiger?' Now Wu Song lifted his right fist, while his eyes wandered back and forth searching. The tiger began to move its legs again. Why did it move all the time? It was pressed so hard by Wu Song that it hurt! It wanted to move to the right. It turned up its right ear towards Wu Song. Second Master Wu stared at it. 'Hm! The ear is just the deadly spot! The ear is the deadly spot of man. Why not beat the tiger on its right ear? If I cannot beat it to death, I'll beat it again and think of another way. Fortunately this fist belongs to my own body, so I don't have to pay for it!' Our hero lifted his right fist again, used all his might, strained every muscle:

"Got it!"

After that blow you only heard:

"Wu-u-u....."

Probably the tiger couldn't even roar any more. Its head was crushed down. From its left ear something was splashing out: Pi-i-i-i..... ¡Ð more than one staff's length, just like a red silk thread being spattered out into the thicket of withered grass. So the tiger had opened up a small silk shop in its ear? Nonsense! Then why do you speak about that silk thread? It was *as if*, it was blood coming out of the tiger's ear. Oh, blood! But that ought to come out of its right ear. Awful! He beat its right ear, so the blood should come out of its right ear. But because Wu Song's right fist was so mighty strong, he had beaten the right ear of the tiger so hard it was blocked up. It could not get out through its right ear, so it had to come out through its left ear: When

you cannot enter the main door, you have to go in the back door! Now LX[6]  
the tiger did not move any more. Wu Song looked at it:

"Dead?"

He still didn't dare to loosen his grip. It couldn't be that the tiger was pretending to be dead? Slowly he loosened his left hand, he loosened little by little, and then the tiger's head fell down. It did not move its mouth any more. Our hero rose to his feet, he stood up and gave the tiger a push, it fell over to the other side as if asleep. It did not move. It was dead. Our hero was proud when he saw that:

"Ha!.....Well! This time I have done away with the evil for all the people!"

We don't have to say that Wu Song was right in this statement. When later generations saw this, they praised him in the following four lines:

Second Brother Wu, his courage was strong,  
stood up and went alone to Jingyang Ridge,  
with his clever fist he caught the mountain tiger,  
since then his great fame has swept over all the world.

LX[7]















