

'Wu Song Fights the Tiger'

First part

Told by Ren Jitang

May 1989

The God-blessed Second Brother from Guankou, Wu Song, had sought refuge in the home of Chai Jin, the Lord of Liang, of the Chai estate in Cangzhou, Hebei Province. When he had received news from his elder brother, he bade farewell to his lord and went off to Yanggu District in Shandong Province to find his brother. He had been on his way not only for one day, no, he had marched for more than twenty days, and today he had reached the boundary of Yanggu District in Shandong. He had been on his way not only for one day. While he was walking along Wu Song caught sight of a pitch-black township in the distance. Our hero shouldered his bundle, held on to his staff and marched forward in big strides. When he came to the gate of the town, he saw the wall piled up with flat bricks all the way to the roof, the round city gate, and above it a white-washed stone with three large characters: Jingyang town.

As our hero walked into the town with hasty steps, he saw a broad alley, neatly lined with shops on both sides. The better part of the houses had thatched roofs, a smaller part had tiled roofs. When he had passed five or six shops, he spotted on the right side a brand-new thatched cottage with three wings. Under the eaves, hooked on to the doorway of the shop there was a brand-new green bamboo-pole, and hanging on the green bamboo-pole there was a brand-new blue wine-banner. On the blue wine-banner a piece of brand-new pink paper was glued. On the pink paper were written five big brand-new characters: 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge!' When he glanced inside the inn, he saw brand-new tables and stools, a brand-new kitchen-range, a brand-new chopping-board, a brand-new counter and brand-new people. Why? Utensils and things can be new or worn; can people also be called 'new' or 'worn'? Yes. Look, behind the counter sat a young innkeeper, no more than twenty-one years. In front of the counter stood a waiter, no more than eighteen or nineteen. The saying is:

Wave upon wave the Yangzi River flows,
New people overtake the elder generation.

So people can also be counted as 'new'.

The waiter was standing under the eaves in the doorway of the inn. He had a handsome look, white teeth and red lips, a small mouth with thin lips, on his head he wore a floppy cap, his clothing was all cotton, his apron was nicely tied around his waist. A dish-towel was hanging over his shoulder, and his arms were akimbo. He stood and looked out from the door of the inn. All of a sudden he saw a guest coming from the outside. The waiter became happy and hurried forward. Even before he had opened his mouth, his face was all smiles; he lifted both of his hands in salutation:

"Master! Are you hungry? In our humble inn we have chicken, beef, steamed rolls, pancakes, the food is fine and the prices are reasonable. Your Honour! Please take a seat in our inn!"

"Xiao'er!"

"Yes, Sir!"

"Do you have good wine in your inn?"

Even before Wu Song had entered the inn, he asked for good wine, how come? Because people in former times couldn't do without four words: wine, sex, wealth and vigour. But Wu Song only cared for two things: He was fond of drinking and he used his strength on behalf of innocent people. Therefore even before he had entered the inn, he would first ask whether they had good wine. The waiter gave him a look:

"Yes, sir! We do! In our humble inn, we wouldn't boast about other things, but the quality of our wine is amazing. The local customers have given our humble inn eight verse-lines in praise."

"What eight lines?"

"It is like jade nectar and rosy clouds,
its sweet bouquet and wonderful taste are worth boasting about.
When a wine jug is opened, the flavour will make people tipsy
three houses away.

Guests passing by will pull up their carts and rein in
their horses.

Lu Dongbin once paid with his famous sword,
Li Bai, he pawned his black gauze hat,
the immortal, he loved the wine so much he never went home ..."

"Where did he go then?"

"Drunken he tumbled into the West River embracing the moon!"

"Good wine!"

My goodness, how happy Wu Song became in his heart. The wine of this inn must be very good. According to what the waiter was saying, it seemed that when they opened a gallon of wine, the neighbours three houses away would become tipsy! It seemed like this kind of wine you need not drink, just by smelling it you would become tipsy. Therefore Wu Song hastily entered the inn at the heels of the waiter. Only then did he see how neatly and nicely the tables and stools were arranged. Our hero walked over to one of the tables and placed his staff beside it. He removed his bundle, laid it on the table and sat down. As soon as Wu Song had taken his seat, the waiter immediately came over to him:

"Master! Please, what does Your Honour want to eat with the wine?"

"Bring me some good wine and good food, and be sure there is enough, too!"

"OK!"

The waiter hurried out in front. Wu Song fixed his two eyes on the waiter. 'This was strange,' he thought. 'Just a moment ago, at the doorway of the inn, he was talking to me all in Northern language. How come, afterwards his pronunciation becomes incorrect and he speaks Yangzhou dialect?' Wu Song did not ask him, though. Let me, the storyteller, explain: Who could tell that this waiter actually was not a Northerner? He was from the district just north of the Yangzi River, just plainly my fellow townsman, a citizen from Yangzhou. As he was a citizen from Yangzhou, why shouldn't he speak Yangzhou dialect? Since the Yangzhou dialect has so many localisms, he was afraid that others wouldn't understand, and since Northern language was more current, he had made quite an effort at studying a few sentences of Northern language. Alas, he had just begun to knit! He knew only these few sentences, he hadn't got any more of them. So if you asked him to go on in Northern language, he wouldn't be able to turn out any more. So he had better be frank about it and stick to Yangzhou dialect.

The waiter went to the front and took a piece of beef, more than a pound, and cut it into thin slices, a big plate full, which he sprinkled with gravy. It was rosy red and its flavour attacked your nostrils. Then he peeled ten cooked 'chickies'. 'Chickies' that means eggs. He took out a small plate of white salt, filled two plates with steamed rolls, fetched a pair of chopsticks and a tray, and hurried back. When he came back, he put the tray on the corner of the table, and wine, food, cup and chopsticks were placed, one after another, in front of Wu Song. Then he removed the tray, and with his arms hanging at his sides he stood prepared to wait on his guest.

What about Wu Song? When Second Master Wu saw that wine and food were ready, he didn't care about anything else. First, he was anxious about the wine. He lifted his hand and gripped the wine mug: Sh-sh-sh.....He filled a cup to the brim, then looked at the wine in the cup. Uh! The

colour of the wine was not right, and it didn't have any flavour at all. Oh! It was not worth looking at, but may be it was worth drinking? 'I had better try and drink it!' Sh-sh-sh.....Oh, my! When he tasted the wine in his mouth, it was so thin that he pulled a face. It did not have the least spirit, it was just like watery wine. 'That was strange! According to what the waiter had told, the wine of this inn should be pretty good. I had better ask and see':

"Waiter!"

"Yes, Master!"

"Is this the good wine of your inn?"

"Oh, no! Master! This is only a medium good wine of our humble inn."

"Why don't you serve me the good wine?"

"Master! It is not that we do not want to give you the good wine. But let me tell you, because there is a reason for it. It is because to the west of our town there is a ridge called Jingyang Ridge. If one has drunk three bowls of the wine of our humble inn, then one cannot climb the mountain and cross the ridge. So for this sake I did not bring you the good wine."

"Are you poking fun at an outsider for having no drinking capacity? I can drink thirty bowls and still go straight across the ridge! Bring the wine!"

"OK!"

The waiter became so frightened that he darted off. Why so? When he saw Wu Song's eyes rolling and his solid fist, he thought to himself: If he did not bring the wine this time, Wu Song would probably lift his hand and bang it HXbang bang HXon the big table so that it turned over. He had better just simply bring a mug of wine and ask Wu Song to do as he pleases.

Now the waiter went to the front to fetch a mug of the wine 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge'. Then he went back and placed it on the table. What about Wu Song? When Wu Song saw that the wine stood ready, he lifted his hand and gripped the wine mug and filled a big cup to the brim. Then he looked down into the cup: 'Fine! This wine was surely good.' How would he know? You could see its green and clear colour, its flavour attacking your nostrils, and almost feel the fat limpid quality: Sh-sh-sh.....He tasted the wine. It was round and fragrant. Wait a little! What was it that was so good about that wine? I don't know. I'm an outsider. I cannot drink wine. But according to what people who like to drink wine say, when they talk about good wine, they point to three flavours! What three flavours? First, when you pour out the wine and sniff its flavour; second, when you take a sip and taste its flavour; and finally, when you breathe out the spirits, it still has this flavour. That is why they talk about 'three flavours'. In this way Wu Song would pour himself a cup and drink. And after drinking pour himself another. In no time he had emptied five mugs of wine.

"Waiter!"

"Yes, Master!"

"Bring more wine!"

"Here you are!"

"Fill up!"

"Please!"

Soon he had downed another five mugs. Altogether ten mugs. How much was ten mugs? One mug would hold three bowls. Ten mugs equalled thirty bowls. If so, Wu Song's drinking ability was not very impressive. Who says so? This wasn't the usual yellow rice wine or Shaoxing wine, this was excellent original concentrated white spirit. So RJ[2] talking about Wu Song's drinking ability, that was quite something! He looked like a big red crab in his face, his eyes were staring with a blank look, and when he talked his tongue wouldn't follow suit.

"Waiter!"

"Yes, Master!"

"Bring more wine!"

"My goodness! You must be joking!"

"Are you poking fun at an outsider for having no drinking ability? I can drink thirty bowls and still go straight over the ridge!"

"Master! Your Honour has already drunk thirty bowls!"

"Already?"

"Yes! You may count the wine mugs and see! On the corner of that table, there are nine wine mugs. And here is one wine mug, altogether ten wine mugs. One mug holds three bowls, so ten mugs is surely thirty bowls, isn't it?"

"Ha, ha!"

"Eh! Why do you laugh?"

"I'm laughing that nobody else has such drinking ability. Now I have drunk thirty bowls, so what do you think about me?"

"My goodness! Your Honour surely is not lacking in drinking capacity. But I think the colour of your face is not quite right, almost like a big red crab, and when you speak you slur your words a bit and your tongue has stiffened."

"What are you blabbering about?"

"Let's stop talking about it."

"I want to pay my bill!"

"Oh, sure! Listen to me, over there at the counter! Our guest wants to pay his bill, four silver ounces and five coppers."

When the young innkeeper at the counter in front heard this, he answered:

"OK!"

Wu Song stood up, took his bundle and his staff and stepped over to the counter with big strides. He lifted his hand and placed the staff besides the counter. Then he put his bundle down on the counter, opened it and stuck his hand into it. He took out a silver-wrapper. What's a silver-wrapper? That is a cloth of black silk to wrap silver. Now he opened this black silken cloth, and one could see that inside there were twenty or thirty pieces of silver money. The biggest were about one tael in weight. The smallest were three or four ounces. Wu Song lifted his hand and fished out one piece. This piece, I'll tell you, was worth one tael five ounces and four coppers. He put it on the counter.

"Please, count it!"

"OK!"

The young innkeeper turned round and took a silver steelyard from the desk. He lifted his hand and received the silver piece, then he weighed it in his hand. Why did he weigh it in his hand? He wanted to evaluate the colour of the silver. There was surely nothing wrong with the colour of this silver. Then he put the silver piece on the pan of the weight. You could see him with the two fingers of his right hand pick up the string of the weight, and with his left hand balance the stick of the weight and move the counterweight to the right point, so that the stick would stay horizontal. The young innkeeper bowed his head and looked at the piece of silver; then he lifted his head and looked at the expression on Wu Song's face.

"Oh, Master, this piece of silver of yours, I have just weighed it, it is one tae-e-e-e.....e-e-el minus one copper!"

Uh! What kind of report was that? Why did he draw out the sound and then break it off halfway? He wasn't just playing with the sound. But how could one imagine that this young innkeeper had bad intentions? He wanted to swallow this piece of silver, and so he meant to let a big piece seem like a smaller piece. Since that piece was one tael minus one copper, why didn't he say that it was nine ounces and nine coppers? Don't be a fool! Why? If you would just bluntly say nine ounces and nine, would you then have a way of knowing whether your customer did keep account of his silver? If he did keep account of his silver, and you would say nine ounces nine, then he would immediately fly into a rage and shout: "Where do you get that from? Is my piece of silver nine ounces nine?" And then you would have to find an excuse. So in this situation, he first declared that it was one tael in order to see how the land lay, only observing whether the customer had good account of his silver or not. If that customer did have good account of his silver, he would immediately cry out. He would say: "Where do you get that from? How could my piece of silver be only one tael?" Then I'll have something to say next. I would say: "Fellow! please don't quarrel, I have not finished what I'm going to say next. There is still so and so ounces plus so and so coppers to follow." And so I would steer clear. Who would have thought that when the two words: one tael

had popped out of his mouth and he glanced at the expression of his opponent, he saw that his face was quite indifferent, and so he guessed that his customer did not keep account of his silver. "Since he does not keep account I had better turn the other way round and say: 'Minus one copper!'"

Now let's take it slowly. Did Wu Song actually keep account of his silver? How could he? What do you mean? He had drunk far too much wine.

"Is this piece of silver enough?"

"Enough, enough! Let me tell you, it's not only enough, but it is more than enough!"

"Please, give the surplus to Xiao'er!"

"Oh, thank you so much, Master. Thanks a lot, Master!"

The waiter became so happy. Wu Song lifted his hand and wrapped the black silken cloth around his silver, put it back into his bundle, made a knot, shouldered his burden, took his staff, went out of the door of the inn, and went straight from east towards west.

When the young innkeeper saw that the guest had disappeared, he lifted his hand and opened a drawer, and was just about to put this piece of silver into his money box. When the waiter saw this he cried out:

"Oh, don't hurry, boss! I do not quite understand. Where are you putting that silver?"

"I'm putting it in the drawer."

"Oh, don't do it! This piece of silver is overweight. Our guest said that he would give the surplus to me. How come you are taking it away?"

"Listen to me!"

"OK."

"This piece of silver is nine ounces and nine."

"Yes!"

"Our guest has dined for four ounces and five, and he said he would give the surplus to you."

"Right!"

RJ[3]"Now I will take this silver and immediately return five ounces four to you. Isn't that OK?"

"Oh, no, boss! Please, give me that silver, that piece is nine ounces nine. Our guest dined for four ounces five and said he would give me the surplus. Please, give me that silver. Then I'll immediately pay you back and give you four ounces five. Isn't that OK?"

"Nothing wrong with that, but I'll pay you back!"

"Oh, no! I'll pay you back!"

"Shush! Come on! I don't understand you, young fellow! How come you want this silver?"

"Oh, boss! How come you want this silver?"

"Now listen to me! I have a reason!"

"Oh?"

"It's because some time ago your sister-in-law asked me to make a silver pin for her."

"Oh!"

"I can see that the colour of this silver is nice, so I thought I would have a silver pin made for your sister-in-law."

"Oh, no, boss! You see, my sister-in-law is a widow! How can you get the idea to have a pin made for her?"

"Sorry! Sorry! Since you take it this way, I still have to explain away such suspicion. I'm not speaking about the sister-in-law of your family. I'll tell you, then you'll understand!"

"OK!"

"The two of us are boss and waiter, true?"

"Yes!"

"That can be counted as if we are in a relationship of elder brother and younger brother, see? I am a little older than you. So I can be counted as your eldest brother."

"Sure!"

"So my wife will then be your sister-in-law, agree?"

"Oh, that kind of sister-in-law!"

"Yes!"

"Now your idea is clear to me!"

Just as boss and waiter were quarrelling about this, somebody else turned up. Who was that? The old innkeeper. The old innkeeper had been on a visit to the neighbouring incense-and-candle shop. But then he heard the quarrel going on at home. It upset him, and so he went home to see. The old innkeeper was already well above sixty this year. He looked like a crab in his face and had a full beard. Now you could see the old gentleman stroking his beard as he entered the inn:

"Oh, there is something I do not understand: You have no business right now, you are not buying or selling anything. I really cannot see what you are quarrelling about!"

"Good gracious! Our old boss has come home. Father! You arrived just in the right moment. May I ask you to help in clearing up this matter?"

"Aha!"

"A little while ago there was a customer here, and when he had eaten in our inn, he paid with a piece of silver. That silver weighed nine ounces plus nine. The customer had dined for four ounces plus five, and he said that he would give the surplus to him."

"Aha!"

"So I say, I'll take this piece of silver and immediately find a piece of five ounces four to return to him. Do you see anything wrong with that calculation?"

"No!"

"No, no! Father! Listen to me! Let me figure this out for you once again! This piece of silver is nine ounces plus nine. Our customer dined for four ounces plus five, and said he would give the rest to me as a tip."

"Aha!"

"Now I ask our young boss to give me that piece of silver. Then I will immediately pay him back with a piece of four ounces plus five. Do you find anything wrong in that calculation?"

"Young fellow, I do not see the slightest error in that."

"That's it!"

"There is nothing more to speak about. Young fellow! Please, give it to him!"

"Why should I give it to him? You still do not understand. Let me tell you: This piece of silver weighs much more!"

"How much more?"

"Please, don't quarrel! Let me explain to you quite slowly. The real weight of this piece of silver is one tael five ounces and four coppers."

"Aha! How much did you say to the customer?"

"I only said nine ounces nine."

"Are you out of your mind! Young fellow, your heart is black through and through! Sssss.....! Take it easy now, there is something I want to ask you. After this customer had eaten, did you notice in what direction he went after he left your inn?"

"Oh, father, I have not thought about that."

"Well, young fellas, you are only caring about earning money, and you do not care about other people's life. Hello! My boy!"

"Yes!"

"Will you hurry up and get him back for me?! If you can make our guest return, then I'll take this piece of silver and give it all to you!"

My! The moment the waiter stepped out of the door, he ran faster than fast: diddleli-diddleli.....The guest had left, so what? Why try to catch him? They had to catch him. For what reason? Because west of this town there was a ridge called Jingyang Ridge, and on Jingyang Ridge there had appeared this year in the autumn a fierce tiger that used to bar the road and kill people. In Yanggu District a proclamation had been put up: Every day during the three watches from 10 to 4 o'clock, if travellers wanted to pass this way, the innkeeper should keep them back and the headman should prevent them from going. If the innkeeper did not hold them back and the headman did not prevent them from going and the traveller was attacked by the tiger, then the innkeeper and the headman would be accused in court. So this being the case, they absolutely had to catch their guest:

diddleli-diddleli.....The waiter was running fast, sure! He ran and he ran, and when he looked ahead, behold! HXThere he saw Wu Song hurrying forwards. Why? Did Wu Song walk so slowly? Don't blame him, he had drunk too much wine, so he stumbled and staggered, swayed and swooned. When the waiter saw RJ[4]him, he cried from afar:

"Hello! Please, Master, stop there in front. You should not go on!"

Diddleli-diddleli-diddleli.....Second Master Wu was at this moment marching forwards when he became aware HXat the rim of his ears HX that someone was calling him from behind, and he wondered who that could be. Our hero turned his face round and looked. Now he recognized that it was actually the waiter from the inn: 'I wonder why he calls for me?'

"Why do you call me?"

"Master, you cannot go further, because in front there is a ridge called Jingyang Ridge. On Jingyang Ridge there has appeared this autumn a fierce tiger, that bars the road and kills people. Mister, please, return with me immediately. You may stay overnight in our inn, and then tomorrow Your Honour will be safely escorted over the ridge."

"What?! Is there a tiger in front?"

"Yes, sure! There is a tiger in front. Mister, you cannot go now."

"Why didn't you mention that before?"

"Just a moment ago your humble servant was careless and completely forgot about it."

"Aha! I see!"

Did Wu Song understand? You bet he didn't! He had got it all mixed up. In Wu Song's mind there must absolutely be something shady about this inn. Both the owner and his waiter must be bad people. 'Already when my bill was totalled at the counter, and the owner and his waiter saw that I had a lot of silver in my bundle, then seeing the riches they began to make schemes. And that's why the waiter now comes to scare me with a story about a tiger. As soon as he can scare me with that tiger, I'll surely turn back, and if I turn back I'll have to stay overnight in his inn. Then they will wait until I have fallen asleep and slept until the third watch at midnight. And then the owner and his waiter will take a knife, enter my room and do me in!' HXMy God! The way you tell this, Wu Song surely was suffering from paranoia. You couldn't blame him! Why? Because in those times the road was deserted and dangerous, every thirty li there would be a camp of brigands, every fifty li there would be a mountain stronghold, every eight or ten li there would be a hold up or blackmailing, in every other inn they would mix a sleeping drug in the wine, robbers and thieves were buzzing like bees. If a traveller had bad luck on his trip, he might lose both life and fortune. So we cannot blame Wu Song that he was suspicious.

"Do you know? Today the tiger on Jingyang Ridge has invited me!"

"Oh? Invited you for what?"

"He has invited me for supper!"

"Hm! I think you are really witty! Oh, so that tiger has invited you for supper! I think, hm, probably it is you who will be delivered to the tiger for supper."

"What are you blabbing about?"

After Wu Song had said this, he turned round and off he went. Who would have guessed that when the waiter saw Wu Song marching off, he would become desperate and try to drag him back? To try to drag him back wouldn't matter, not even if you would cling to his clothes or grasp his stick. But he didn't do so. The first thing he saw when he looked at Wu Song, was the big bundle hanging from his shoulder. He lifted his hand and grasped his bundle:

"Master, you must not go on!"

Second Master Wu was just marching forwards when he heard a gust of wind behind him. Our hero looked round and spotted him: 'Ah, what a nuisance! It may not be true that he is clinging to my bundle, but it is surely true that he is trying to rob me of my bundle! Since you are taking action to rob my bundle, I shall give you a good thrashing.' Our hero turned round, lifted two fingers, aimed at the waiter's shoulder and struck him.

"You bastard, off with you!"

Swish!

"Help!"

Hullabaloo! Z-z-z-z.....! Bang! Uh, where did all those sounds come from? A lot of sounds it was, but not one of them was astray. How could one guess that just opposite there was an incense-and-candle shop? The door of that incense-and-candle shop was ajar and not bolted. When the waiter was hit by Wu Song a moment ago, he stumbled and swayed and was hurled sideways. Just as he was hurled down, he bumped against this solid wooden door: Z-z-z-z.....and his fall knocked it open: Bang! The waiter stumbled inside.

The owner of the incense-and-candle shop was standing at the counter doing his accounts. A young boy who was hired as his pupil in the trade, was standing besides the counter. The owner was just about to do his accounts, when he suddenly heard something from outside: Pooh-long-tong! Z-z-z-z-z.....Bang!

"Something's wrong! My boy, go and have a look who it is bumping into our shop!"

"Sure!"

The waiter hurried over and looked:

"Oh, Master, it is not just anybody bumping into our shop. It is the waiter, Wang Er, from that certain inn. I'm afraid he's got epilepsy. Please come and have a look! His mouth is covered with white foam and saliva all over!"

"It's awful! But it isn't epilepsy!"

"Oh, it isn't! It isn't. Then what kind of joke is this?"

"Let me tell you. A little while ago there was a guest drinking wine in our inn. When he had finished drinking, I forgot to tell him about that tiger. Now I came rushing after him especially to inform him. But he not only refused to believe me, but he even wounded my shoulder."

"So he wounded you and that's that. Get up and go home!"

"But I cannot get up!"

"Oh, too bad! HX Master, he cannot get up!"

"Come on, my boy, do me a favour and run inside our shop and call a few sturdy fellows to carry him home!"

Thereupon the waiter went into the shop and called a few sturdy fellows and asked them to carry the youngster back home. When the RJ[5]waiter returned home, the old innkeeper saw him arrive, and even if he had not succeeded in getting the guest back with him, the old man was nice and gave him that piece of silver weighing more than a tael. However, even if the waiter did get this silver in his hand, who would have thought that the next day he was unable to move? How come? Half his body was lame and he couldn't move. They had to find somebody to replace him. 'Idleness is the root of all evil': Somebody came up with a recommendation, and said:

"Oh, in the Long Life Pharmacy across the street they have a plaster, imported from the provincial town, and that is especially meant for curing bruises afflicted by falling or beating. The price is not expensive, five silver-coppers for one plaster. You should buy one, put it on and see!"

"Oh!"

The waiter bought one for this purpose, put it on and HX ah HX it felt a little better. Who would have thought that the next day, when the effect of the plaster was gone, he was still lame. So he bought still another plaster and put it on HXah HXnow he felt a little better again. In this way, putting on one to the left, and then one to the right, and again one to the right and another to the left, he put on at one go the first twenty plasters. No wonder he used up each and every penny of that extra big piece of silver for buying plasters. Therefore it is no use to hanker after riches that one has come to by unrighteousness here in this world. Well, after this he continued his business and let me leave him at it.

Now I shall turn round and go back to Wu Song. Wu Song was just about to climb the Jingyang Ridge.

'Wu Song Fights the Tiger'
Second part

Told by Ren Jitang
November 1992

When Wu Song had stayed in Jingyang town and drunk the wine called 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge!', his drunken state left him stumbling and staggering, swaying and swooning. At this moment he came out from the western gate of the town and was heading directly for the Jingyang Ridge.

Today there was a fairly strong north-west wind blowing. Second Master Wu marched on and on, but all along he felt something stirring in the pit of his stomach. Something was surging and swelling, and then it was coming up into his throat, so that he was on the point of throwing up. If you were this Wu Song, you would immediately have thrown up, and afterwards you would feel so relieved, wouldn't you? Well, no, he wasn't willing to do so. Wu Song had his own standard, and his standard wasn't low. What did he have in mind? He thought: 'It has been quite an effort to drink this. If I throw up, that's a pity and a waste!'

"Hiccup! Humph!"

'Confound you! I had a hard time swallowing you, and there you are trying to get out again! No way! Down again with you! Humph!' Oh, he managed to suppress it once more. That was the way of Wu Song. Now he marched on and on, and soon he had covered about two li and was about two li from Jingyang Ridge.

While our hero was marching on, he caught sight of a shrine of the God of Earth along the road, that is a Temple of Earth. In the rays of moonlight he was able to see things clearly, and it looked like something was pasted on to the shrine of Earth, it looked like a proclamation. Second Master Wu promptly took a few steps forward and stared at it. Quite right! It was a proclamation. Now Wu Song was reading it. But when he read it, he kept it inside, while I shall tell it aloud! Let's take our time. Was Wu Song able to read it, really? He was. Even if he had missed school as a child, he had studied a bit later on, so he actually did know a few characters:

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 in the area of the Jingyang Ridge, east of the city, unfortunately this autumn there has appeared a fierce tiger that obstructs the road and kills people. People in our district are gnashing their teeth in hatred. The task has already been given 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. It is hereby publicly declared and respectfully notified for military and lay folk in town and countryside alike, so that everybody should be informed as follows: It is only allowed 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. Whenever a traveller passes through this way, the innkeeper must keep him back and the headman must prevent him from crossing. If the innkeeper does not keep him back and the headman does not prevent him from crossing, and he is killed by the tiger, these concerned parties will be severely punished, when our district finds out, and it will absolutely not be tolerated.

Xuanhe year, month, day,
issued and pasted up at the Temple of Earth,

east of the Jingyang Ridge.

"Hello!"

Wu Song was taken aback. He was startled, but he wasn't scared. To be startled is one thing and to be scared is another. Why was he startled? Second Master Wu began to think: 'Oh my! A little while ago I was wrong beating that waiter, I was wrong blaming him. According to my reasoning at that time, I considered that inn to be a black den and the innkeeper and his waiter to be evil people. When he told me about the tiger, I was convinced that it was a lie and he was cheating me. How could I imagine that things were quite opposite! In front there was actually a tiger, and everything the waiter had told me was true. Not only did I not believe him, but I even beat him.' Wu Song understood RJ[6] that he had been wrong. Since he had understood that he had been wrong, surely he was about to turn back at this very moment? Oh, no! He wasn't. What does that mean? Wu Song had thought about it: 'In front there is a tiger, for sure, but if I turn back now, the waiter will laugh at me, and he is likely to say: "Oh, welcome back, Your Honour! But didn't you tell me a little while ago, pray, didn't you say that the tiger on Jingyang Ridge had invited you for dinner? Are you not going there for dinner?" If that happens, I am going to be the laughing-stock of those people. How can I let myself become the laughing-stock of other people? And what's more, the fact that there is a tiger on Jingyang Ridge, how on earth should one tiger be able to block my way? If so, would I then in the future be able to charge and fight? Would I be able to do great deeds?' So when Second Master Wu had come so far in his deliberations, you could see him marching straight forward along that road, with straight back and protruding chest. There are two lines in his praise:

Clearly knowing there was a tiger
in the mountain,

he obstinately climbed that
tiger mountain.

Thus Wu Song was marching on and on, again covering more than two li. Now he saw that he had reached Jingyang Ridge. Across the highway from east to west, the high mountain ridge, Jingyang Ridge, was running from south to north. From the foot of the ridge to the top, it was not more than about one li. In earlier days Wu Song never lost much time getting up there. He could do it in one breath. Who would have thought that today it didn't work? What was the reason? He had drunk too much. Our hero had a heavy head and light feet, he was stumbling and staggering, swaying and swooning. When he had come halfway he just couldn't walk any more. In front of him he caught sight of an old tree besides the road. A man could just get his arms around the trunk of this old tree, and at the foot of the tree there was a moss-grown stone. This moss-grown stone was altogether about six feet long, about three feet broad, and about one foot thick, and then I don't know how deeply it was anchored in the earth. Oh, that moss-grown stone was quite clean, shining and glistening. Second Master Wu thought: 'Why shouldn't I sit down and take a rest? I need it.'

Our hero stepped forward, lifted his hands, leaned his staff against the stone, pulled down his bundle and placed it on the stone, and sat down. Oh, how comfortable it was to sit down! My goodness! If he had not sat down, that would have been the end of the story! But now when he sat down, he wanted to go to sleep! Well, he had better sleep, then! Then Wu Song curled up his two legs and stretched out on the moss-grown stone, pushing the bundle towards the edge of the stone, and placing his right arm on the bundle. He clenched his right hand into a fist and put it under his temple, then closed his eyes and relaxed:

"Z-z-z-z-z-z.....!"

Oh, he was already asleep.

Why, was Wu Song really so exhausted? You shouldn't blame him, because during this trip he had not slept for several nights, and therefore the moment he lay down, he fell asleep. My

goodness! Wu Song was really incredible! If you know there is a tiger around, how can you go to sleep? Oh, he had completely forgotten about the tiger. What a bad memory he had! Oh, no, Wu Song's memory was not bad at all. But today things were different. What was the reason? He had had too much to drink. Therefore wine is not good for you. Wine can bungle matters. However, in my opinion, Wu Song was very lucky in taking this nap. He took a nap, stretching himself out on the moss-grown stone, and when the north-west wind came blowing for the first time, he was able to recover pretty quickly from the wine. And when the tiger suddenly came forward, he had recovered from his drunkenness, was alert and all ready to fight the tiger.

Wu Song did not sleep for only a short while. He began to sleep now and slept all the time until the second watch or so. As he was snoring heavily and breathing deeply in his sleep, just at that moment something turned up. What was it? A man-eating big beast. It was the tiger coming out to hunt. Don't go too fast! Was there originally a tiger on Jingyang Ridge? No, originally there was none. It had come only recently. It could hardly have fallen down from heaven or sprout up from the earth, could it? No, it couldn't. A tiger cannot fall down from heaven, and neither have we ever seen it sprout up from the earth. Where had this tiger come from? It had been sent flying from a landslide in a foreign mountain. Who could imagine that on that foreign mountain there were two tigers? When two tigers are in the same place, they fight. The saying is: 'One mountain cannot give room for two tigers!' Yes, those two tigers were fighting and fighting, and when they had fought to the end, the one who had lost fled to another place, and so it came to this mountain. Where did the tiger live? This tiger lived on the southern range of the mountain in a hollow where no man had ever set foot. The tiger had dug and dug with its forepaws, and so it had hollowed out a cave. How big was that cave? About the size of a house. If you took a look around, there was dry grass spread all over the place. The tiger lived here.

At this moment the tiger had already set out: Pa-da.....pa-da.....pa-da.....At the sight of him, it came first swaying, next it was swinging round, and then it began to step forwards with an official's [self-important] stride. Taking one step after another, it stepped outside. It rolled its hind legs up and propped itself up on its forepaws, lifted its head, opened its mouth, stared towards the sky, and then came a tiger's roar:

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

"U-u-u-uh.....a-a-ah.....!"

Then a fierce wind came howling and groaning, blowing so hard that the trees were swaying. A wind had blown up. Why did a wind blow up as soon as the tiger roared? It was not because the tiger roared that the wind blew up. But after the wind had blown up, this tiger began to roar.

RJ[7]Why? It borrowed the force of the wind to support its own majestic air. After the tiger had roared, one could see how it lifted its forepaws and rose to its hind legs:

"Ma-a!"

Swish! In one leap it leapt more than three metres and then landed on the ground: Pa-a-a! And after landing, it began trotting along HXpa-da.....pa-da..... HXall the way to the west of the ridge. West of the ridge there was H who could have guessed that HXa highway. And on the two sides there grew a lot of dry grass. Now the tiger hid in the thicket of dry grass. And when it had lain down to hide, it began to wait for a free meal! Oh, was the tiger hungry? It sure was! For three days it had not eaten. What does a tiger actually eat? Of all the things that it eats, man is its favourite dish. If it could manage to eat people, that was almost like when you and I manage to taste a meal of first-class wine and meat. Apart from people, there were a lot of other things that it used to eat, such as the flying birds in the sky, the four-footed beast on the ground, the fish and shrimp in the stream. Oh! Could it also eat the sparrows up in the sky? Yes, it could. You can think for example of a sparrow flying up there in the sky at full speed. As it flies along, it is spotted by the tiger who is hiding down there. The tiger lifts its head, opens its mouth and then it roars up at the sparrow:

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

With this roar it lets go of all the foul stench from its stomach. No need to worry about the sparrow flying along in the sky at full speed! But as soon as it senses the foul stench, too bad, then it cannot fly any more and it folds up its two big wings. It may well be asked: didn't that sparrow fly

up in the sky? Didn't it flap its two wings? Yes, but when it folded up its big wings, it couldn't fly any more, and then.....d-r-r-r-.....plop!.....it fell down. As soon as it had fallen down the tiger steps forwards, in no haste and no hurry, opens its big mouth H❖ suck! H❖ and swallows it in one mouthful. As soon as it enters the mouth it enters the stomach, serving as breakfast.

And now let's talk about the rabbit. The rabbit is considered one of the fastest runners. Probably the tiger wasn't able to get at it and eat it? Who says so? It would eat it all the same! Imagine the rabbit running there in front, running at full speed, and then the tiger catches sight of it, crouches down in hiding, opens its big mouth, stares at the rabbit and roars:

"Ma-a-a-h.....!"

It only has to roar once and the foul stench from its stomach will sweep all over the place. The rabbit is just about to run at full speed, but as soon as it senses the foul stench, too bad, then it cannot run any more. It hides in the shelter of the grass, shivering all the time: de-de-de-de..... The tiger steps forward in no haste and no hurry, opens its big mouth and HXsuck! HX swallows it down its stomach in one mouthful. As soon as it enters its mouth, it enters its stomach, serving as lunch.

There is also the monkey. The monkey is considered one of the best at climbing. Probably the tiger isn't able to get at it and eat it? Who says so? It eats the monkey all the same! Imagine the monkey in a tree, hanging by its two forepaws from a branch and blinking with those monkey eyes HXwa-da-wa-da HXsaying to itself: 'Oh, Elder Brother, even if you are fierce, you cannot climb. What can you do to me?' But the tiger is even more ingenious. The tiger is lying prostrate at the foot of the tree. Then it lifts its head and stares at the monkey while emitting a roar:

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

When the monkey hears the tiger roaring, it begins to shiver in its heart, it is frightened: De-de-de-de

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

De-de-de-de.....too bad, it shivers terribly. It is not necessary to do it a lot of times, the tiger only has to roar three or five times, and then the monkey will become dizzy from shivering, its eyes are swimming. Its forepaws and hind legs are losing their grip, and it falls down: Plop! When it has fallen down, the tiger opens its mouth and H❖ suck! H❖ swallows it up in one mouthful. As soon as it enters the mouth, it enters the stomach, serving as dinner.

In the afternoon it goes to the mountain stream 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 so it has three meals a day. The winged game, the four-footed beasts and the fish and shrimp have been eaten completely up. There is nothing more to eat! Beg your pardon! Since all the winged game and four-footed beasts had been eaten up by it, how come not even a lonely 'stray bird' would pass by? Didn't winged game and four-footed beasts from other parts come to this place? No, they didn't. For what reason? They had got news! Who had brought them news? Their comrades! Oh, haven't you seen them together, beast and beast between themselves? They can speak, too! Sure, humans have human language, and beasts have beast talk! Sure! When they are together and have nothing to do, then they chat for fun. You can imagine how the winged game and four-footed beast of this area would roam to other distant places, and when they meet winged game and four-footed beast of these other places, they greet each other:

"Hey! Elder Brother! Fellows! Don't go to a certain place! There is someone having free meals over there!"

Therefore they had all heard the news, and so the winged game and four-footed animals of other places didn't come to this place. Therefore that beast had had nothing to eat for three days on end. Now you could see it hiding in a thicket of dry grass. It lifted its head and stared at the bright moon in the sky, then emitted a roar:

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

Ha! Looking at that bright moon, it thought by itself, that it wished it could have swallowed the bright moon down into its stomach in one mouthful. How comfortable it would be then!

RJ[8]Who would imagine, that when the tiger a moment ago roared for the first time, it was quite

far from Wu Song! One was to the east of the ridge, and one was to the west of the ridge. The second time the tiger roared, it was already coming much nearer. During this second roar Wu Song was roused from his sleep. Second Master Wu was sleeping on the moss-grown stone. As he was snoring heavily and breathing deeply in his sleep, he was suddenly awakened by a gust of wind.

"Ah-ya!"

He felt chilled to the bone. Our hero pressed his right elbow against the bundle, bent over and sat up. After he had sat up, he lifted his two hands, rubbed his eyes and blinked, opened his eyes wide and looked around, and then he understood that a wind had risen: U-u-h.....a-a-a-h! The first gust of wind passed by. As soon as the first gust of wind had passed, the second gust came along. Who would have imagined, that on the tail of the second gust of wind Wu Song smelt a foul stench. 'That is no good!' Wu Song understood that things were looking bad. For sure the tiger was coming, or some other wild beast was coming. How could Wu Song guess that? He had heard people say so. Whom had he heard say so? He had heard people along the road say so. People along the road said: 'If you travel to other places, and come to the deep mountains and old forests, and especially if you happen to feel a gust of wind, and if there is a foul smell on the tail of that wind, then it is most likely a tiger or another wild beast coming out to hunt. Second Master Wu thought: 'Aya! I cannot stay for long at this place. I have to get away at once!' Our hero stood up, lifted his hand and tied up his clothes. Then he stamped his feet into his boots, looked around, took his cudgel, and without bothering about his bundle, he ran off in one breath to the top of the ridge: pooh-pooh-pooh-pooh.....!

When Second Master Wu had 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 in the air. He placed his left hand on his hip, and with his right hand he held on to his staff. From up there he was staring downwards. At this moment Second Master Wu was looking down and scouting about. Who would have imagined that, taking a look all around, he could not detect the tiger? Where was the tiger? That beast was hiding in the thicket of dry grass. Why couldn't he see it? That's nothing strange! That is because the colour of the dry grass is dark yellow, and the colour of the tiger's fur is also dark yellow, and therefore it is not so easy to see it. Who would have imagined that Wu Song was standing at the top of the ridge without being able to spot the tiger? But the tiger, hiding in the thicket of dry grass, had already long ago spotted Wu Song at the top of the ridge. That beast said to itself: 'Aha! Today I shall have a free meal, and just in time, too, you fellow!' Oh, the tiger surely presumed it was going to have a free meal just in time. If I had been there, I would have warned it: "You will not be able to get that free meal! Hey! That meal will be bitter to the taste. Beware he doesn't nail your upper jaw, because then you will not be able to close your mouth again!" How in the world would it be able to understand? At this moment you would see the tiger stand on tiptoe on its forepaws and hind legs, arch its back, lower its head and lift its tail. HX it was tiger's toil! What does that mean, 'tiger's toil'? In plain talking that is just to stretch one's back. If one wants to see the tiger's toil, is that possible? Yes, it is. If you want to see the tiger in 'tiger's toil', then you just have to look at a cat stretching its back. Don't we commonly say that the cat looks like a tiger? For instance, if somebody at home raises a cat, then especially in the cold days of winter, where does the cat sleep? Maybe it sleeps in its straw basket, or by the hot-water kettle. If you burst into the room and all of a sudden wake it up, then it will arch its back, lower its head and lift its tail, and thereupon with a "Miao-o-o-o....." it will step down. That is the way a cat stretches. The way the cat stretches and the way the tiger performs the 'tiger's toil', there is no difference, it is one and the same thing. After that beast had done such a tiger's toil, it lifted its forepaws and rose on to its hind legs, and:

"Wu-u-u!"

Du-u-u.....pa-a-a! It leapt on to the middle of the highway and landed there. When it had landed, it stared at Wu Song on the top of the ridge. It bared its teeth and flaunted its claws, swayed its head and swung its tail.

Second Master Wu stood at the top of the ridge and stared downwards. Just as he was looking, he saw something leap out from the thicket of dry grass, and Wu Song was taken aback. He gazed

fixedly: 'Damn it! That's the tiger!' How could Wu Song know it was the tiger? Even if he had never seen a real tiger, he had seen tigers painted on pictures HXhe had seen imitated tigers, embroidered tigers, and therefore he knew this was the tiger. Wu Song looked at it again: 'Here it comes face to face! If this had happened to somebody a little less courageous, that fellow would have been scared out of his wits today! But damn it! That beast looks fierce!' The way it looked, it was very frightening. Was the tiger so fierce? Of course it was fierce. I have a few verse-lines to praise it:

Seen from afar it looked like a bull ox with one horn.
Seen from nearby it was a mottled wild beast.
The left ear was spotted with red colour, red as fire.
The right ear was spotted with green colour, like a wave.
Between its brows a 'king's character',
it looked 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.
Its eyes were like bronze bells, their light like lightning.
RJ[9]The tiger's tail was like a bamboo whip
In front were the paws, behind were the legs.
When it put its paws to the ground,
it could 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 courage.
When it lowered its head and drank of the water,
the fish and shrimps 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.

"Ma-a-a-a-a!"

It looked at Wu Song, baring its teeth and flaunting its claws, swaying its head and swinging its tail.

At this moment Second Master Wu was standing on the top of the ridge. He lifted the staff in his right hand, aimed at the tiger with the point of his staff and shouted angrily:

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

Wu Song dashed down: Pooh-pooh-pooh-pooh.....fast as the wind. In one breath he came down the hill, and when he was about one zhang from the tiger, he stopped. Our hero stopped flat, one leg in front of the other, with splayed feet. He clenched his left hand into a fist and placed it akimbo. With his right hand he held on to his staff, and with his two eyes he stared at the tiger. Oh! Didn't Wu Song move forward to fight the tiger? No! Why? First he had to take up the right pose. Haven't you seen those who practise the martial arts? No matter with whom they fight, whether with a beast or with a man, they always have to take the right pose before going into action. Therefore Wu Song was standing there.

What about the tiger? That beast of a tiger, when it came upon people, it had three ways of awe. Three ways of awe, what does that mean? Three ways of awe HX that is three kinds of ferocity. What three ways of awe? The first way was the tiger's roar, that is crying out. It would roar, and if, face to face, you felt a little bit weak, not quite up to it, you would be paralysed, and that would be the end of you. But if you were able to dodge the first awesome way, then the second way would

follow. The second way, that was its two forepaws. It would stretch out its two forepaws and leap on to you, aiming at your left and right shoulder, and if you were touched by it, I'm sorry, you would end up with broken bones and torn muscles. But if you were able to eschew the second way, then the third way would follow. The third way, that was the tiger's tail. The tiger's tail, would come sweeping down on you and do you in. When it swept across one's back, the back would be broken. When it swept across one's leg, the leg would be broken. It was just like a steel club. What was the tiger up to now? The tiger was starting the first awesome way. It stretched its forepaws and rolled up its hind legs, opened its mouth wide, and staring towards Wu Song it emitted a tiger's roar:

"Ma-a-a-a-a!"

The tiger's roar was followed by a gush of foul stench from its stomach. And how about Second Master Wu? Wu Song was standing there as if nothing was happening, without even moving. He was still taking the same pose, one leg in front of the other, with splayed feet. The tiger threw another glance at that man opposite: 'My! Damned! Hey, that man must be terrible! What I did a moment ago, didn't impress him the least. Oh, it looks like the first awesome way is no use. Better get on with the second way.' One could see the tiger suddenly lift its forepaws and rise on to its hind legs, and dash forward: Do-o-o-oh! It leapt forward, aiming with its two forepaws for Wu Song standing just opposite. How about Wu Song? When Wu Song saw the tiger spring forward, aiming with its two forepaws on to himself, our hero shifted the weight from his left to his right foot:

"Well!"

Then he leaned to the other side. He not only leaned his body to the other side, he also took his staff over the other side. What about the tiger?

"Ma-a-a-a!"

The tiger had leapt into the air. When the tiger sprang, it sprang to the right of where it had been standing. But at this moment the tiger had leapt into the air. It was fully aware that the man was to its right, and therefore it inclined its head and prepared to bite Wu Song:

"Ma!"

Second Master Wu saw that the tiger was about to try and bite him. Aiming at the tiger's head, our hero lifted his staff high into the air and let it come down with a blow:

"Got it!"

"Wu-u-u-u!"

He heard a sound: Snap! and then: Crunch! Well, the staff was broken! How was this staff broken? Wu Song let the staff come down with a blow. But the tiger withdrew its head backwards. As it withdrew, the staff came down in the air. When this staff was coming down, it aimed at the tiger's front. But when the tiger saw the staff, it did not know what it was. It thought it was something edible. And therefore when it came sweeping down, the tiger took a bite, and bit the staff into three pieces. How could it bite it into three pieces? The end piece fell to the ground. The middle piece the tiger kept in its mouth. The last piece Wu Song grasped in his hand. Second Master Wu looked at his staff: 'Well, that is no use any more. Originally I could have killed a tiger with it. But this time it cannot beat any more, it's too short. To keep this in my hand is only a burden, it is only a nuisance. I had better throw it away!' Then he lifted his hand and threw his staff away H💎 plop!

Wu Song threw his staff away, and at the same time the tiger spat out the staff. Why did it spit out the staff? While the tiger held the staff in its mouth, it wondered: "It has no taste! Dry and wooden, dry and wooden, I can't eat that! I had better just spit it out!" As soon as it had spitten out RJ[10]the staff, it aimed at Wu Song and rushed forward to bite him:

"Ma-a-a!"

When Second Master Wu saw the tiger rushing forward to bite him, our hero lifted his left hand, and with his five fingers he aimed at the tiger's skull, the striped neck, and took a firm grip on it:

"Monster! Don't move!"

"Ma-a-a!"

Do-o-o-oh! What kind of trick was that? At this moment the tiger suddenly became tense all over, wriggled out under Wu Song's hand, and leapt away. It leapt more than one 'staff's' length and fell to the ground. Was the tiger about to run away? No! Why not? Today it had come to get a free

meal! It had not yet had this free meal, so how could it run away? It didn't want to run away. At this moment the tiger turned its head round, and when it had turned round, it aimed again at Wu Song and rushed on him. Second Master Wu saw how the tiger rushed upon him again. Our hero leaned to the left as before. Again the tiger leapt into the air. As before it landed to the right of Wu Song. Second Master Wu threw a glance at the tiger: 'This time I won't miss you.' Our hero lifted his left hand, aimed at the tiger's striped neck and took a firm grip:

"Monster! Don't move!"

"Ma-a-a!"

Fine, now he had got hold of it. Woe! It couldn't move any more. It was pressed down. You see, those five fingers of Second Master Wu, how could one call them fingers? They were more like iron hooks, and now they were holding the tiger in an iron grip. Next our hero lifted his right foot and aimed with the tip of his foot at the tiger's face, and kicked it:

"Got it!" Phew!

"Ma-a-a!"

Who would have imagined that when the tiger roared this time, it was because its eyeball was smashed. It saw only the three colours of white, red and black. That was because Wu Song in this moment had kicked it so skilfully, right in the eyeball. Where did all those colours come from? Oh, that's obvious: white from the white of the eye, black from the pupil, red from the fresh blood. But why these three colours? Oh, was the tiger bleeding? So it was! Oh, but haven't we heard people say that when a tiger sees blood its throat is blocked? Yes, people say that when a tiger sees blood its throat is blocked. But that doesn't mean the tiger will die when it has seen some blood. Let me give you an example: It doesn't matter if you take a knife and cut out a piece of flesh from the tiger's behind. That's of no consequence! Afterwards the wind will blow over it, it will be covered with mud and a scar will grow on it, and when the scar falls off, the fur will grow over it and everything will be as before. What matters is if you take an awl and pierce a hole in its forepaw, so that blood trickles out. That's really bad! Oh, now the tiger is bound to die! What's the reason? It will hide all day in its cave and stare at the trickling blood. The tiger is a very clean beast, it loves cleanliness. It cannot stand to have a little dirt on its body, and when it sees the trickling blood, it licks it off with its tongue. Well, its tongue is not able to lick it dry. Why not? Even the tongue of a cat is so formidable, to say nothing of the tongue of a tiger! How sharp isn't its barbed tongue! As soon as it begins to lick, the hairs around the wound are licked off. Gosh, the wound is getting even bigger! And the blood is dripping more profusely. When it sees the blood, it licks it off, and when it has licked it off, it bleeds again, and when it bleeds, it licks again, and so it licks away at it day after day, hour after hour, minute after minute, until it has licked to the bone, licked itself to death. Therefore this manner is called: to see blood and have the throat blocked. That doesn't mean that when a tiger sees blood, it dies right away!

Second Master Wu glanced at it: 'Hm! There you are with a blind right eye! Now I had better knock you a blind left eye, too! Then I shall see what a blind tiger like you will be good for! Whether you are so fierce or not!' Our hero lifted his right foot again, and with the tip of his foot he aimed at the left eye of the tiger, and then he kicked it:

"Got it!" Phew!

"Ma-a-a-a!"

Well, the left eye was struck blind, too! Now the tiger had lost sight in both eyes and had turned into a blind tiger. One could see fresh blood trickling and dripping from its two eyes. The tiger was in pain, it was tormented to the point of death. Of course it hurt! You see, Wu Song had a firm grip on its head, that also hurt! At this moment the tiger was suffering badly, and with its four paws it scratched the earth: Pa-da.....! Pa-da.....! Pa-da.....! The tiger scratched and scratched, so that the pebbles on the ground were flying all over and the dust was whirled up. It scratched out four deep dikes. Not only was the tiger scratching the earth with its four paws, it was also swinging its tail from behind: Pa-da.....pa-da.....! When Wu Song realised it ... 'Oh, my! Too bad! That tiger's tail is suspect.' How come? When the tiger swings its tail, one must beware the tiger's tail doesn't hit one's body, because if it does, you'll get the worst of it, you'll suffer for it. What to do then? The best

thing is if you can get rid of that tail, if you can kick it so that it breaks off. That is worth doing. Our hero turned up his right foot, and when he had turned it up, he let it follow along the back of the tiger, aiming at the root of its tail, and then he kicked it:

"Got it!"

Pi-i-i! There were only the sounds: Tap! Chop! Fine, the tail was broken off. How could that tail be broken off? Who would imagine that the tiger's tail consists of joint after joint of gristle bone? A moment ago RJ[11] it was swinging its tail over there. The joint at the root of the tail, that is very hard. When Wu Song kicked it just then with his foot, that was very hard, too! That means hard against hard, and so HX Chop! HX and there it was broken! As soon as the tail was broken, it couldn't swing any more. What had it to swing with? Thereupon Wu Song withdrew his right foot and mounted the tiger's back as if riding a horse. With his left hand he was still holding on to its spotted neck. He looked at it. My goodness! At this moment the tiger tried to lift its head. Why did it lift it? It hurt! It wanted to lift its head in order to be a little more comfortable.

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

As soon as it lifted its head, Wu Song saw it, and he clenched his right hand into a fist, aimed at the tiger's right eyebrow, swung his arm and beat it:

"Got it!"

Pi-i-i!

"Ma!"

With this blow he beat the head of the tiger down into the dust, he knocked it flat. Thereupon he straightened himself up and aiming at the tiger's right shoulder he beat it a dozen times:

"Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!"

But I must explain that even if he beat it a dozen times, he attacked it at one single point, he didn't change that spot, he only beat it at that spot. Therefore later when the tiger was carried off to the Yanggu District Hall and the inquest officer came over to inspect the wound, this spot was considered the wound of only one single blow of the fist. How could that be? Because he did not change his point of attack, he only aimed at one single spot, and even if he beat it a dozen times, it was only reckoned as the wound of one blow of the fist.

Second Master Wu stared at the tiger: 'What?' He saw the tiger still moving on the ground. Had the tiger not died yet? He stared again, this time at his own fist:

"Alas!" Wu Song sighed. 'This fist of mine is no use! I may as well exchange it for candy! Isn't that so? I have been beating this tiger for ages, but I haven't been able to beat it to death. What use is this fist of mine?' Oh, at this moment Wu Song was just about to find the spot where he could give the tiger a deadly wound. How come? It is commonly said that no matter whether it is a man or a beast, the most important thing is to find the spot where you can give it a deadly wound. The moment you hit the deadly spot, you will solve your problem. Wu Song was just about to look for the deadly spot of the tiger, when HX hm HX the beast tried to turn its head over to the side. Why did it turn it to the side? It hurt! At this moment it planned to turn its head over in order to get on to Wu Song and take a bite.

"Ma-a-a!"

Just as it turned its head over to this side, Wu Song had a look: Oh, wonderful! It was giving an opening! Where? The opening of the right ear. How can the opening of the right ear face upwards? Yes! Wu Song thought: 'The right ear is surely a vital part, it is the spot for a deadly wound. I had better aim at your right ear and give you a knockdown. That is worthwhile!' Our hero raised his right fist, aimed at the tiger's right ear, used all his might, and, you bet he strained every muscle:

"Got it!"

Pi-i-i!

"Ma!"

Sh-sh-sh-sh! What trick was that? He saw something splashing out of the tiger's right ear, more than one staff's length, exactly like red-green silk thread. Oh, perhaps the tiger kept an embroidery shop in its ear? Oh, no! It was not an embroidery shop. What was it? Blood! He had beaten it so that blood was gushing forth. But you have made a mistake about the place. How? You told a little while

ago that Wu Song aimed with his fist at the tiger's right ear. So the blood ought to come out from the right ear. How could it come out from the left ear? There is a reason for this. A little while ago I told about that fist of Wu Song, he used too much force, he was too fierce, with that one blow he smashed the right ear so hard it was blocked up. The blood was inside, it could not get out of the main door, so it had to go round and get out of the back door. So under such circumstances the blood was streaming out from that side. Blood was streaming out and the tiger did not move any more. Second Master Wu looked at it: 'Hm, looks like it has died!' But one should not get negligent. Why? A tiger, even if he is just a beast, he is intelligent. He often pretends to be dead. 'Let me try and see!' He loosened his grip a little. The tiger didn't move. Wu Song loosened his grip a little more, and the tiger still didn't move. Then he simply let go his hold. Even so, the tiger didn't move. Hm! Second Master Wu looked at it: it was surely dead. Our hero moved his right leg and stood to the left of the tiger. He raised both of his hands and pushed the tiger over: Boom! The tiger fell down. Oh! Did the tiger fall down? Yes! Oh! Isn't it so that people say 'a dead tiger keeps its posture'? It is true that 'a dead tiger keeps its posture', but it depends how it dies. Whenever a tiger understands that it is going to die, it tries to come first and find a suitable place. It prefers to find a crossroads between main roads, and then it settles down in the right posture, rolling up its hind legs and propping itself up on its forepaws, raising its head, opening its mouth and eyes wide and stretching out its tongue very far, and then HX see? HX in that moment it dies. This situation is what is called 'a dead tiger keeps its posture'.

Today it was not so. How come? Today it didn't keep its posture. Why RJ[12] didn't it keep its posture? It had been felled by that fellow Wu Song. Its ugly posture had been smashed, so what kind of a posture had it left? Therefore it fell down. Second Master Wu threw another glance at the tiger and became glad at heart: 'Today I have killed the tiger and done away with a great evil for the people.' Our hero looked at the tiger and retorted:

"Bah! You monster! Where have your awesome ways gone?"

Second Brother Wu, his courage was strong,
stood up and went straight to Jingyang Ridge,
with his clever fist he killed the mountain tiger,
RJ[13] since then his great fame has swept over all the world.