

# VIII

## Wang School of Shuihu

### 'Wu Song Fights the Tiger'

*Told by Wang Xiaotang*

*November 1992*

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

Second Brother Wu Song from Guankou was in Henghai County when he 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 was not only one day on the road, he had marched for more than twenty days, and today he had reached the boundary of Yanggu District in Shandong. There was still more than twenty *li* to the city along the highway. It was in the middle of the tenth month, and now the sun was slanting steeply towards the west.

Our hero felt hungry in his stomach and wanted to take a rest. The moment he looked up, he saw in front of him a pitch-black town. He shouldered his bundle and went in big strides: "Ta-ta-ta-ta....." forwards to the gate of the town, and there he stopped on his two feet. When he raised his head and looked up, he saw the wall piled up with flat bricks all the way to the roof. Here was the round city-gate. Above it there was a whitewashed stone. On the whitewashed stone three hollow characters were engraved: 'Jingyang town'. As our hero forked his legs and entered the city-gate, he saw a broad alley, neatly lined with shops on both sides. He passed by the fronts of more than ten shops, and then to his right there was an inn, a brand-new thatched cottage with three wings. 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 our hero glanced inside the inn, he saw a brand-new kitchen-range, a brand-new chopping-board, brand-new tables and stools, a brand-new counter and brand-new people. Why?

In this world *things* can be 'new'; can people also be 'new'? Yes! Behind the counter sat a young innkeeper, no more than twenty-one or twenty-two this year. In front of the counter stood a young waiter, Xiao'er, not yet twenty years old. The proverb says:

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

Just as Wu Song prepared to enter the inn, that waiter of the inn, Xiao'er — who would have imagined it — was so eager to try out the tricks of the trade that he came forward to the door, all smiles, lifted both of his hands in salutation and looked at Wu Song:

"Oh! Yes, Sir! Do you want to take a rest in our humble inn? Millet gruel, sorghum, chicken, pancakes, steamed rolls, the food is fine and the prices are reasonable. Please, come in and have a seat, Sir!"

"Xiao'er!"

"Yes, Sir!"

"Do you also have good wine in this inn?"

Oh, that was strange! Even before Wu Song entered the inn, he asked for good wine, how come? People of former times in their daily life had four words of importance to them: 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. He saw that the town was small and the inn was small, too, so he was afraid that they did not have any good wine in this inn. Therefore even before he had entered the inn, he would first ask whether they had good wine.

"Oh! Sure, Sir! In our humble inn, we wouldn't boast about other things, but the quality of the wine is amazingly good. People from afar 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 loved the wine so much  
he never went home ... "*

"Where did he go then?"

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

WX[1]

"Good wine!"

My goodness, how Wu Song was comforted in his heart! The wine of that inn must be extremely good. When they opened a jug, the flavour of the wine would make people tipsy three houses away. Those people

didn't even need to drink the wine, just by smelling the flavour of the wine they would become drunk. Don't you think the wine of that inn was good? The immortals loved the wine so much, one lost his famous sword as a pledge, one pawned away his black gauze hat. Oh, that wine must be good. Wu Song followed Xiao'er into the inn. They went through the front wing, passed the half-door, and came to the next wing. Oh, the roof of the hall was thatched. The tables and stools of the hall were neatly arranged, the whole place fresh and cool. But there was not one single customer. Quite right, it was already long past the lunch-time rush. Wu Song took down his

bundle, placed it on a bench beside him, and seated himself at a table right in the middle. Xiao'er wrung out a hot napkin for Wu Song to wipe hands and face, and brewed a pot of tea for him. Then Xiao'er stepped over besides Wu Song:

"Master, what do you want to eat with the wine?"

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

"Ow! — Yes!" Xiao'er turned round and off he ran.

Strange! Didn't that waiter turn out a fine Beijing accent a moment ago at the gate? Why does he afterwards begin to speak in local dialect? Oh, that was just because his inn was situated in the area of Shandong. Because there was a lot of traffic in front of the gate, people travelling from south to north, people speaking in all the southern and northern idioms. Suppose you were standing at the gate of the inn, then if you were speaking the local dialect and wanted to do some business, then some people would not be able to understand. Therefore he had studied a few sentences of Beijing accent, he had studied a few Beijing dialect sentences. But he had only learned these

few sentences. If you asked him to continue speaking, he couldn't turn out any more of them. In that moment his foxtail would show and he would betray himself.

Xiao'er went out in front to cut some beef, put steamed rolls on a plate, poured wine and at the same time arranged cup and chopsticks on a tray, and then carried it back to the rear wing. When he stepped into the rear wing, he placed the tray on a table beside Wu Song. Then he arranged the wine and food on the table in front of Wu Song and took away the tray. Then Xiao'er took up a position ready to serve his guest.

When Wu Song saw that the wine and food had arrived, he placed the wine cup in front of him, lifted the wine mug and: "Sh-sh-sh....." poured himself a cup. Then he put down the wine mug, while he gave some clicks of dissatisfaction and shook his head. 'According to Xiao'er, his house wine should be very good. But I think that when I poured it, the colour didn't look right and it didn't have any flavour. Hm, perhaps it is no use looking at it, maybe one absolutely must taste it. Let me try and have a sip!' Our hero lifted the wine cup. My! When he had a mouthful, it didn't have any strength at all. 'Oh, that must be a joke! I must ask that waiter, Xiao'er, about it.'

"Xiao'er!"

"Yes, Master!"

"Is this the good house wine?"

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

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

"Master, if Your Honour actually wants to drink our good wine, then that is the one called 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge'."

"Fine!"

Oh, my! Wu Song became glad at heart. No wonder that before he entered the inn, he had seen those five characters on the wine-banner of the inn: 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge'. But he did not understand the meaning.

"What does it mean: 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge'?"

"Oh, Master, that is because the wine of our humble inn is very good! So if you have drunk three cups, then you will not be able to climb that ridge on the other side of our town, that ridge seven *li* from our town along the highway, called Jingyang Ridge — you will not be able to cross Jingyang Ridge, because you will be drunk from the wine. And that's why people have given this name to our inn: 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge'.".

"Fine! Bring me a mug to taste!"

"Oh, don't be in a hurry! After you have dined and wined, do you plan to travel onwards, or do you plan to stay overnight in our inn?"

"I'll travel on!"

"Ah ... That is no joking matter! If Your Honour wants to continue and you are going from east to west, you've got to cross the Jingyang Ridge. But you will not be able to climb it — not after the wine, 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge'."

"Bah! What nonsense are you talking? Hm? I can drink thirty bowls and still go straight across the ridge! Bring the wine!"

"Oh!"

Xiao'er looked at him again: Gosh! That customer was no good talking to: his eyes blinking: 'Wa-da-wa-da', his fists almost as heavy as a five-bushel willow basket each! No, a businessman couldn't afford to quarrel with him. He had better just simply bring a mug of wine and ask him to do as he pleases. He snatched away the wine and the wine mug in front of Wu Song and hurried out to change it into a mug of 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge'. Then he placed it in front of Wu Song, and stood as before beside him, ready to wait on him.

When our hero saw that the wine had been exchanged, he put the wine cup in front of him and lifted the wine mug: "Sh-sh-sh....." Good, ah, good things and bad things can hardly be compared, if you do compare them, the difference between high and low is revealed. Have a look! This colour was green and clear, and it had that fat limpid quality. This wine was good. He put down the wine mug and lifted the wine cup: "Gulp —! " . Ah, that wine — dear me! — coming down your throat it

WX[2] was almost like a fireball, rolling and rolling all the way down into your stomach. Ah, could it be that such good wine only had this single effect? Oh, no, according to the saying, when you drink good wine there are three flavours! What three flavours? First, the flavour you feel when taking a sip of the wine in your mouth. Then after a while, when you exhale the spirits, the flavour is still there. And besides, when you fart, it also has this flavour! But that was three bowls, already! One mug of wine would pour you three bowls, and then it was empty. When Wu Song began drinking, could he be slow?

"Xiao'er!"

"Yes, Master!"

"Bring more wine!"

"Here you are!"

"Fill up!"

"Oh, please!"

Xiao'er didn't dare to refuse, and in front of Wu Song were standing one mug to the left and one mug to the right. After a while he had downed five mugs.

After sitting and drinking for some time, Wu Song became more rude and rough in shouting his orders. Since his voice resounded like a bronze bell, the moment he said something, the whole place started to tremble, and even the young innkeeper at the counter out in the front was alerted. The young innkeeper lifted up his gown and stepped down from the counter, then went over to the door in the corner and looked inside. Oh, there was only one single customer sitting in the hall and drinking with Xiao'er attending to him!

"Wang Er! Wang Er!"

Whom was he calling? He was just calling the waiter, Xiao'er. Xiao'er and I are from the same family, his surname is Wang, too. He was the second child in his family, and he had not changed his first name, he had not studied, you see, so people just called him: Wang Er [Wang Second]. The moment Wang Er heard the young innkeeper calling, he at once hurried over to the door in the corner.

"Yes, boss!"

"That customer sitting and drinking in the hall over there, when did he arrive?"

"Oh, he has just arrived!"

"What kind of wine is he drinking?"

"He drinks 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge'."

"How many mugs has he drunk?"

"He has drunk five mugs."

"You stupid fool, you! Other people cannot hold even one mug, and you have served him five mugs!"

"But he ordered me to."

"Does he want to drink still more?"

"I do not know."

"In that case, if he does not order any more, that's that. But if he wants you to bring more, then you will have to fix it a bit on the sly."

"Sure, sure."

The young innkeeper disappeared. What does it mean to 'fix it a bit'? That is a slang expression used by people in that trade. It means that if this person wants still more wine, you cannot give him the good wine, so it is best to add some water to the wine. Why didn't he tell him to add water, then? Oh, it is no joking matter! If you were to say it quite plainly and ask him to add water, and if the customer heard that,

he might bang on that big table! So in this situation, he tells him to 'fix it a bit' on the sly, that is the slang of the trade, secret language. Xiao'er returned to the hall, and immediately took up his position besides Wu Song.

Did Wu Song then want to drink more? According to Wu Song's drinking capacity, those five mugs of wine were just right for him. If so, didn't he stop drinking, then? Oh, no, he couldn't. Why? 'A moment ago I said to Xiao'er: "I can drink thirty bowls and still go straight across the ridge". These words came from my mouth. One word from the noble man is like putting spurs to a flying horse. How can I go back on it? I must go on drinking.'

"Xiao'er!"

"Yes, Master!"

"Bring more wine!"

"Oh!"

"Fill up!"

"Oh, there you are!"

After this another five mugs were consumed. How would he know that these five mugs were far less potent than the first five? The first five mugs were taken from the exquisite original brew, but the next five mugs, I'm sorry to say, had been filled wine and water three parts to seven. But even so, Wu Song was now sitting there and staring, his face looking like red silk, his eyeballs fixed in a blank look. When he wanted to talk his tongue didn't follow suit.

"Xiao'er!"

"Yes, yes, Master!"

"Bring more wine!"

"Do you want still more? I think Your Honour shouldn't drink any more now, you look almost like a piece of red silk in your face, and you can hardly pronounce clearly."

"What nonsense are you talking? I can drink thirty bowls and still go straight across the ridge!"

"Oh, but you have already drunk thirty bowls!"

"Have I?"

"You have, you have! Look, look, try and count your wine mugs! Over there are nine mugs and here is one mug, that's ten mugs, and one mug holds three bowls, ten mugs hold thirty bowls, isn't that so?"

"Ah! — Ha, ha!"

"Oh, why do you laugh?"

"I have drunk thirty bowls, and what has that done to me?"

"Sure, Your Honour has capacity like the sea, only your tongue tends to get a little twisted."

"What nonsense are you talking?"

"Oh, oh, it has nothing to do with you, nothing to do with you! Will you, please, come to the front to pay your bill?"

Wu Song nodded. Our hero rose to his feet and shouldered his bundle, he felt the ground swaying and swinging under his feet. Xiao'er cleared the table and carried the tray out in the rear, then he followed behind Wu Song in order to give account:

"Hello! ǝX Do you hear me out there at the counter! Our guest owes four ounces in silver and five coppers!"

"OK!" The young innkeeper answered at once.

When Wu Song came up to the counter, he took down his bundle, placed it on the counter and opened it. He took out his silver-wrapper from it and opened it. There were still twenty to thirty taels of silver pieces in it. He picked out one piece and placed it on the counter, then looked at the young innkeeper:

"Weigh it and count it!"

"Oh, sure!"

WX[3]

The young innkeeper fetched a steelyard and put the silver on the pan of the steelyard. With one hand he held the string of the steelyard and with the other hand he balanced the stick of the weight. He lifted his head and looked at the expression on Wu Song's face, then he lowered his head and looked at the silver piece, and after that he said:

"This silver piece of Your Honour's weighs one tae-e-e.....e-e-el minus one copper!"

One tael minus one copper! Why not simply say: nine ounces and nine? And why did he draw out the sound and then break it off halfway? Well, no, who would imagine that this silver piece of Wu Song's was not merely one tael and that the young innkeeper was harbouring evil intentions and wanted to make the piece appear less than its true worth? If he wanted to let it appear as worth less, why not say it was worth less? Don't be a fool! If at this very moment you were to say it was worth nine ounces and nine, how were you to know if this customer kept account of his money? Since it was his own money, he might very well keep account of it. And if he did keep account of it, he might start shouting: "What? How can it be only nine ounces nine?" That would be a mess. Therefore he made it *one tael* in the first place to see

how the land lay: "This silver piece of Your Honour's weighs one tae-e-e....." and then he would draw out the sound, while looking at Wu Song's face. If Wu Song pulled a long face, he would continue as follows: "... el plus five ounces and some." But the moment he saw that Wu Song didn't react, he understood that Wu Song didn't keep account. And since he didn't keep account, the innkeeper had better simply go on like this: " ... minus one copper." Did Wu Song actually keep account of his silver? How should he keep account? When he left the Chai estate in Hebei Province, the Lord of Liang, Chai Jin, had given him fifty taels to spend on the road. The money was a gift from a friend. How could he weigh piece after piece in his hand? Therefore he didn't keep account.

"Is that piece of silver too much or too little?"

"Oh, oh, Master, if you want to pay your bill, then this piece of silver is a little too much."

"If there is too much, then give the surplus to Xiao'er!"

Who would have thought that Xiao'er was right on the spot:

"Oh, thank you Master, thanks a lot, Master!"

Wu Song tied his silver-wrapper and put it into his bundle, then he tied his bundle and flung it over his shoulder. Thereupon he walked out of the door, staggering and stumbling. Then he began to march towards the west.

As soon as Wu Song had left, Xiao'er stepped forward to the counter. The young innkeeper was just about to put that piece of silver into his money box.

"Hello, boss, don't put that piece of silver into your money box, give it to me!"

"Why should I give this silver piece to you?"

"Well, just a moment ago you weighed it, and that silver piece was nine ounces nine. Our guest dined for four ounces five, and he said he would give the surplus to me, which comes to five ounces four, right?"

"Sure!"

"I shall give you the four ounces five of his bill, and then will you, please, give me that silver piece!"

"Come on, this piece of silver is nine ounces nine. Our guest dined for four ounces five. The surplus is five ounces four, so I'll give you five ounces four."

"Oh, no, no, no! Please, give me that silver piece!"

"Why do you want that silver piece?"

"Oh, take it easy, boss! Why do *you* want that piece of silver?"

"Let me tell you: the day before yesterday your sister-in-law said to me: 'Couldn't

you have a silver pin made for me?' I had a look at the silver in the silvershop, but it didn't have a nice colour. In our town there are only a few small silversmiths, but I don't dare to go to the city. I think the silver piece of our guest today looks very nice, and therefore I plan to have a silver pin made for your sister-in-law from it."

"Hey, boss, there is something odd about what you are saying! My elder brother has died, so my sister-in-law is a widow, how come she would ask you to have a hairpin made?"

"Oh, no, no, no, don't suggest that kind of suspicion! Even if the two of us are boss and waiter, we do call each other brother, don't we? I am about two years older than you, so I'm a kind of elder brother, agreed? And so my wife is a kind of sister-in-law, agreed?"

"Well, but please express yourself clearly!"

Just as they were standing there and quarrelling about the silver, the old innkeeper came home from the neighbour's. The old innkeeper had been on a visit to the neighbouring tailor's when he heard a quarrel was going on at home. The old innkeeper stroked his long full beard:

"Young fellows! All day long business has been fine, I cannot imagine why you are quarrelling!"

"Oh, oh, our old boss has come home, let me explain to you!"

"Very well!"

"A while ago there was a guest here who dined for four ounces and five coppers, and he payed with a silver piece. This piece of silver was weighed by our young boss and worth nine ounces nine. He said he would give the surplus to me. So then I asked our young boss to give me that silver piece, and then I would hand him the four ounces and five coppers of the bill, you see? Do you find anything wrong in that calculation?"

"Nothing wrong with that."

"Well, since nothing is wrong, then that's settled!"

"Young fellow, please, give it to him!"

"Why should I give it to him? My dear father, I have figured this out, too! This silver piece is nine ounces nine, our guest has dined for four ounces five, so there is five ounces four too much. If I give him the surplus ¡Ð five ounces four ¡Ð doesn't that come to the same?"

"Yes, not the slightest error!"

"Well, that's agreed, then!"

"No, old boss, please tell our young boss to give me that piece of silver!"

"Let's have done with it, young fellow, give it to him!" WX[4]

"How could I give it to him? Come on, this silver piece is worth much more!"

"Worth much more?"

"Yes, I told him it weighed less than it actually did. You must understand that this piece is not just nine ounces nine."

"How much more is it worth?"

"This silver piece is actually worth one tael five ounces and four coppers."

"How much did you tell our guest?"

"I told him nine ounces nine."

"Good gracious! Young fellow, your heart is black through and through! I don't understand what you are up to! How can you play such tricks? That person may return to our inn and make a row ... "

"No, no, no, he is well on his way. He shouldered his burden and off he went!"

"Where did he go?"

"From the east to the west."

"Did he go towards the west?"

"Yes, he went towards the west."

"So he went towards the west. Did you then tell him about Jingyang Ridge to the west? And that there is a tiger on Jingyang Ridge! Did you tell him that?"

"Too bad! Father, I forgot all about it!"

"Young fellow! All day long you only put your heart into making money, and so you don't care about the life of our guests! ¡XA fine young fellow you are!"

The he turned his face and looked at Xiao'er.

"Yes, sir."

"Come here quickly! Will you hurry up and get hold of our guest and bring him back here! As soon as you have brought him back, I shall give you the whole piece of silver."

"OK!"

Diddleli-diddleli-diddleli.....Xiao'er immediately took to his heels and left. Why did the old innkeeper immediately act with such urgency? He was anxious. What was he anxious about? Because the local officials had put up a proclamation: For military and lay folk alike, if they notice a traveller, they absolutely must keep him back, he must not cross Jingyang Ridge. If you do not keep him back, and the traveller is killed by the tiger, then the local officials will treat the case severely. Can

you imagine how anxious the innkeeper was?

At this very moment Xiao'er rushed out of the door and headed forwards: Diddleli-diddleli-diddleli.....He looked into the distance. Hallo! There he saw Wu Song still stumbling and staggering forwards. That was because today Wu Song was tipsy. If he hadn't been tipsy, but had strolled along with his usual big strides, could Xiao'er have overtaken him? You wouldn't be able to overtake him in your whole life. But it was because today he was tipsy, his head was heavy and his feet were light, when he walked it felt as if the ground under his feet were swaying, and therefore he was walking rather slowly just now. Xiao'er closed in on him:

"Hey ǎX! Master, don't go any further!"

Wu Song heard him there in front: 'Why? It sounds like a well-known voice!' Then he turned his head and looked: 'Oh, it is Xiao'er from the inn. Wine in your belly ǎX but master of the situation!'

"Xiao'er!"

"Yes, yes, my goodness, I have been running for my life to catch up with you, Sir! Your Honour, please, stop!"

"Why?"

"Why ask why? You are going west! When you come out of our town to the west and continue along the highway for seven *li*, then you come to Jingyang Ridge. And on Jingyang Ridge there is a tiger! If you go on to that place and get eaten by the tiger, how terrible! Turn round, please! Hurry up and come home with me to pass the night in our inn."

"What? Is there a tiger on the road in front?"

"Yes, on Jingyang Ridge in front there is a tiger."

"Why didn't you tell me that before?"

"I forgot all about it at first, and then from the very moment I remembered it, I hurried after you to tell you."

"I understand!"

How should he be able to understand? At this moment Wu Song was getting suspicious, believe it or not. That was because during the Song dynasty the roads were dangerous, every thirty *li* there was a mountain stronghold, every fifty *li* a camp of brigands, every eight or ten *li* there would be a hold up or blackmailing, in every other inn they would mix sleeping medicine in the wine. In former times there were all too many sinister inns. Wu Song thought by himself: 'When I entered the inn, none of you told me there was a tiger on Jingyang Ridge, and when I left the inn,

none of you told me there was a tiger on Jingyang Ridge. Only now at this very moment do you hurry after me and tell me there is a tiger on Jingyang Ridge! So I understand! When I was standing at the counter and paying my bill, I opened my silver-wrapper, and you saw that pile of snow-white silver of mine. Seeing the riches you began to make schemes, and so you would try to cheat me to return and spend the night in your inn. Then when I have slept until the third watch, then the two of you, boss and waiter, will come crawling in, and take my life.' Wu Song was mistaken, however.

"Ha, ha! Do you know, today the tiger on Jingyang Ridge has invited me for dinner?"

"Oh! Hm, hm! Your Honour is witty, very witty. But I'm afraid it is rather you who will be served as dinner for the tiger! I think you had better return at once."

"What nonsense are you talking? Off with you!"

Then Wu Song hurried forwards. Now, if you were Xiao'er, would you run after him? Well, Xiao'er couldn't give up. Why? The old innkeeper had said he must. He must bring this guest home with him ;X only then will he get that silver piece. If he couldn't bring his guest back, he wouldn't get that silver piece. Therefore he was getting very anxious in his heart, and he stretched his arms out in order to drag Wu Song back.

"Master, please, don't go!"

Just as Wu Song was about to shoulder his bundle, Xiao'er, too, clutched at Wu Song's bundle. Our hero turned his head once more, and now Wu Song was getting angry: 'You! You try to scare me with a tiger,

WX[5] and when I don't go back with you at once, you have the nerve to rob me of my bundle! Since you don't mind robbing me of my bundle, I don't mind beating you!' Our hero turned round and raised his right hand, with two fingers ;X and these fingers of his sure looked like iron rulers ;X he hit Xiao'er on the left shoulder.

"You bastard, off with you!"

Swish! He struck him only once.

"Help!"

Hullabaloo! Z-z-z-z-z.....! Bang! Where did all those sounds come from? How would you guess, that when his body was set in motion, in that very moment he was stumbling against somebody else's solid wooden door. And in the very middle of that solid wooden door there was a halfdoor, and the bolt of that halfdoor had not been bolted, so at this very moment the halfdoor opened with a creak: "Z-z-z-z-z.....!" And:

"Bang!" He tumbled inside. Inside there was an embroidery shop. The old owner of the embroidery shop was standing at the counter doing the accounts. Junior was standing beside him. As the old owner was doing the accounts he suddenly heard: "Z-z-z-z...! Bang!"

"Good gracious! Young fellow, go and have a look!"

"Yes!" Junior went out to the main door of the shop and looked around:

"Oh, oh, father! It is not a stranger, it is Xiao'er from that inn, Wang Er! 王二! Wang Er! Have you got epilepsy?"

He saw at once that Xiao'er was holding on to his shoulder and his mouth was covered with saliva and foam:

"He's done for!"

"Who is done for?"

"I'll tell you: Just a while ago such and such a thing happened, and then so on and so forth."

"Enough! He wasn't willing to return, so you just have to go home!"

"Go home! I cannot even get to my feet."

"What do you mean you cannot get to your feet?"

The old owner heard them: "Well, well! Go over in the shop and call two men to carry him home."

His son called two men from the shop and they lifted him up and carried him home. The old innkeeper was kind, indeed. When he understood what Xiao'er had gone through, he gave him the piece of silver. When he was given the silver piece as a gift, wasn't it easy money? Well, he sure got some easy money. My God! How it hurt on that spot! He had a terrible bruise, you see! What to do about it? Ask a doctor to cure it. The doctor treated him for one day and for two days, but did it do him any good? Then the doctor told him: The pharmacy 'Eternal Life Hall' has a kind of plaster which is especially for curing bruises caused by falling or being beaten. Try to buy one and put it on and see! But the price of such a plaster was very high. Well, better get hold of one and put it on and see! Oh, who would have imagined that as soon as the plaster was put on, he felt a little better. And since he felt a little better, he had to change it after a couple of days. And so he put on one to the left and then one to the right, one to the left and one to the right, and as soon as he had used up these few coins of easy money, his wound was healed. That is called: 'ill-gotten wealth will not better the fate of a poor man'. That's the moment I'll leave them, in order to follow Wu Song.

After Wu Song had thrashed Xiao'er from the inn, he turned round and said to himself: 'Ha, ha! To try to scare me with a tiger!' Then he hurried forwards out of the town. When he came out of the town, he had a strong west wind dead ahead, blowing right into his face. He was good and drunk. Wonderful! The wind was so pleasant! Wu Song was still staggering and swaying. He walked and walked, but he had only covered three and a half *li*. Our hero hurried forwards, taking advantage of the moonlight. He discovered something beside the road. When he took a closer look, he saw there was a Temple of Earth at the roadside, and on the eastern gable a snow-white thing was hanging. What was it? At this moment our hero was stepping up in front of the Temple of Earth, and availing himself of the moonlight he fixed his eyes on it. Oh, it turned out to be a proclamation from the local authorities. How could he know? Because a notice had been put up, and at the bottom it was stamped with a neat square seal of the local authorities. And as for the characters on the proclamation, Wu Song was even able to recognize some of them, too. Although Wu Song had never been to school, he had studied a bit on his own, memorizing and asking. Skimming through this from the beginning to the end, he couldn't fail to notice a sentence like 'a tiger obstructs the road'. At this moment our hero was standing there and staring, but I had better read it aloud. The first line is nothing but official titles:

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, causing extreme suffering and grief. The  
local headman must at all events prevent the traffic. 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 headman should beat a gong, everybody  
should carry cudgels, so that they can safely be escorted over the ridge. If the  
innkeeper does not keep people back, and the headman does not prevent them  
from crossing, and travellers are thus 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 [ad 1119], month, day,  
issued and pasted up at the Temple of Earth, east of the  
Jingyang Ridge.

"Oh, my! — Good grief!"

What? Why was Wu Song so despairing when he saw that  
WX[6] proclamation? Why did he stamp his feet? When Wu Song saw that  
proclamation, oh, woe to him! Poor Wu Song! 'It was my fault, my fault! You see, just a  
while ago Xiao'er came hurrying after me to tell me, that there is a tiger on Jingyang Ridge.  
Not only didn't I believe him, I even thrashed him. You see, so here is the proclamation  
pasted to the wall, and the proclamation states that there is a tiger on Jingyang Ridge. It must  
be true! It carries the stamp of the local authorities. Since this is the case, I had better return,  
then? Oh, no, I cannot. A moment ago I boasted and said that the tiger had invited me for  
dinner. If I go back, Xiao'er will laugh at me when I'm back.' In the next moment Wu Song  
thought: 'Come on! ¼X' Our hero thought to himself: 'What is the point of learning the  
martial art of boxing and cudgel play? We learn it for self-defence and protection. The tiger  
¼X enough about that tiger! How fierce could the tiger be, after all? Moreover this tiger is  
obstructing the road and killing people. Shouldn't I do away with this evil for the people  
who travel here? I simply have to kill this tiger!' Therefore Wu Song thought in that  
moment: 'Come on!'

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

Our hero again hurried forwards, still staggering and stumbling. At that time he  
was already feeling a little better, because a wind was blowing, so that the wine ¼X  
his drunkenness ¼X was evaporating a little.

Then he walked another three and a half *li*. Since leaving the town, he had  
progressed altogether seven *li* along the highway, and just now he had arrived at the  
foot of Jingyang Ridge. That ridge wasn't so very big, and that ridge wasn't so very  
high. Usually Wu Song could have crossed the ridge in one single breath. Hm! Today  
it didn't work, because today he was drunk. When he walked, the ground under his  
feet was shaking. Swaying along, he forced himself forwards up the ridge. When he



male tiger, and then they mate, don't they? No, they do not mate. They stand face to face and take turns at roaring:

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

What for? They talk and have fun! They like to get friendly! And then by and by, they begin to roar louder and louder, and are filled with lust, and then they mate. But on this day of mating, our tiger was not very successful, because this male tiger ½Xor man-tiger ½Xhad a thorn on his male member. So as for the tigress, in her female opening, it felt like a furnace, as if she had caught fire. One of them was aching like being burned, and the other was aching like being stabbed, and they both gave a roar! When finally the lust had passed, one of them ran straight east, and the other ran straight west. After running so far, all his lust had worn off, and our tiger had hollowed out a cave and hidden himself here. So this tiger had been thrown out because of tiger mating.

In this moment the tiger stepped, swaying and swinging, out of the tiger's den. The tiger swayed along with steps exactly like an official. It walked all the way to the road west of the ridge, and then to the fringe of a grove, it hid in the thicket of dry grass. It lay down its two forepaws,

WX[7] and curled up its two hind legs, let its lower jaw drop down on its forepaws and began to stare at the moon in the sky with those tiger eyes. That beast had a strong desire to swallow up the moon! And so the tiger was lying right here and staring at the moon. Who would have thought that this tiger had actually had nothing to eat for three days? How come? Couldn't it eat people? There were none! It had eaten them up! When travellers came to this place, it used to eat them. But lately a proclamation from the local authorities had been put up: People were 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 could safely be escorted over the ridge. They did not come one and one or two and two, no, they formed groups of two to three hundred. So even if this was such a beast ½Xas you could see ½X an enormous beast, and very intelligent, too ½X when it saw such a crowd of people, it didn't dare to come forward. It could not eat people. What about winged game and four-footed beasts? Couldn't it eat them? There were none of them, either. They had all been eaten up by it. For example, the tiger may sit on top of the ridge, look into the sky and catches sight of a sparrow. The sparrow comes flying by. A tiger cannot fly! In the first place, if the tiger had a pair of wings, that would be disaster! Even more ferocious! However, it only has to lift its head and give a roar:

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

From its mouth streams a foul smell. It opens its mouth wide and gives a roar, letting out breath which carries the smell up into the air. The sparrow flying in the sky has to rely on its two wings. Pressing them against the wind, it is able to fly along, but when it smells that stench, it suddenly folds up its wings and falls to the ground: "Plop!" The tiger steps forward and has it for breakfast. Another example is the rabbit. Can it not run away? Those four legs of the rabbit sure run fast! The moment it sees a tiger, off it goes, running straight into its hole. The tiger's head is so very big, and how big is a rabbit's hole? When the tiger spots a rabbit, it probably sets out chasing after it? No, it doesn't. The tiger lies prone on the ground and:

"Wu-u-u-u.....ma-a-a-a.....", it roars.

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

A gust of wind carries along the stench from its mouth. Over there the rabbit is running at full speed, but when it smells that stench, it begins to shiver. And as soon as it sits there shivering, the tiger 𐄂 in no haste and no hurry 𐄂 walks over to it, and 𐄂 "flop" 𐄂 has it for lunch. The monkey, however, it can climb very high, isn't that so? As soon as a monkey sees the tiger, it clings to the top of a tall tree. The two hind legs sit on a forking branch, and the two forepaws clutch some twigs. Then it looks down towards the tiger, blinking with those monkey eyes: "Wa-da-wa-da". It says to itself: 'Elder Brother, I don't care if you are fierce! Can you climb, perhaps? Can you come up here? What can you do to me?' But the tiger is even more ingenious. The tiger will sit down in front of that old tree and stare at the monkey:

"Ma-a-a-a.....!", it roars.

As soon as the monkey sees it roaring, my goodness, it begins to shiver in its heart. But when you shiver, the tiger goes on roaring:

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

And the more fiercely the tiger roars, the more fiercely the monkey shivers. And thus shivering and shivering, shivering and shivering, its hands loosen their grip. And when the forepaws have lost their grip, the hind legs also slacken and it falls down: "Plop!" Then the tiger steps forward and 𐄂 "flop" 𐄂 has it for 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! Winged game, four-footed beasts, fish and shrimps, everything had been eaten up by now. Oh, it could not get hold of any creature from around there. But what about stray animals? Couldn't it eat

some stray animals passing through the area? No! After the tiger had settled here, all the winged game and four-footed beasts of the area had fled and gone to other places. For example, at the moment a crow was leaving the place, it might meet another crow and scream:

"Du-u-u-u-u-u....."

What did it scream?

"A tiger! Don't go to Jingyang Ridge! There is a tiger! There is someone having free meals!"

Everyone had heard the news, and therefore the tiger had nothing to eat. If it had nothing to eat, it must be fated to die from hunger! Three days had gone by! Don't take it too seriously! No problem! Assuming there were people around, then it ate people. If there were winged game and four-footed beasts, then it ate winged game and four-footed beasts. But now it couldn't get hold of any, it couldn't get hold of any. Day after day it would drink the dew to allay its hunger and pretend to be full up.

At this very moment the tiger was lying prone in the dry grass west of the ridge, and once again it emitted a tiger's roar ...

The west wind was very strong: "Wu-u-u-u-u.....!" The wind blew from the west towards the east. Wu Song was sleeping on the stone halfway up the eastern slope of the ridge. He was so soundly asleep. The stone was flat and smooth, the wind refreshing, and the wine had already evaporated almost totally. In this moment Wu Song woke up from his sleep. Oh, my! The wind blew so cold that the hairs of his body were standing on end! How cold it was! It was the weather of late autumn.

"Oh, my!"

Our hero opened his two eyes, leaned on his elbows, bent over and sat up. A gust of wind passed by, and on the tail of the wind Wu Song became inadvertently aware of something, he sniffed again, hm, there was a foul smell. Hm, hm! That was probably the tiger out hunting. Wu Song had 'wine in his belly and something on his mind!' He thought about what had happened earlier in Jingyang town and that someone had told him there was a tiger on Jingyang Ridge. How could he know that at this very moment the tiger was coming out hunting? That was because when he had been at home, he had made friends with some hunters, and those hunters had told him:

"Whenever we go to the deep mountains and the wild moors, and a strong wind blows up, and if the tail of the wind carries along a foul WX[8]

smell, then that means a wild beast is out hunting."

It could only be the tiger opening its mouth wide resulting in that bad smell. So when Wu Song inhaled the smell he must have had tremendous resistance or otherwise he would never have been able to stand it! Yes, the tiger was out hunting! Wu Song didn't bother about his bundle, but pushed himself up with his hands and on to his feet. He got to his feet and he leapt and bounced: Pooh-pooh-pooh-pooh..... On and on he went, until he reached the top of the ridge. When he was on the top of the ridge, he took the position of 'the golden pheasant standing on one leg'. He stood on his left leg and kept his right leg hanging in the air. His left hand was clenched into a fist, akimbo on his hip. He lifted his right hand to shade his eyes from the moon in the sky, and stared in all four directions.

He was looking for the tiger. He was looking for the tiger and he had not yet found it. But the tiger had caught sight of him! The tiger was at the fringe of the grove nearby. It was lying in ambush in a thicket of dry grass. Since it was late autumn, the grass had turned yellow. The fur on the tiger's body was also yellow, and therefore, for quite some time, Wu Song was unable to recognize it. At this moment the tiger spotted Wu Song: 'Oh, goodness me!' That big beast was clever. The tiger felt too happy for words! Oh, my! It was so glad! How did it look when it was so glad? It would stretch out and bury its forepaws in its own fur and flesh and scratch itself on the breast, so glad was it! 'Woe! For three days I have eaten no man. But the man who comes there, is a big one! Uhm! Today I'll have an ample meal!' Then the tiger conveniently propped itself up on its four paws, stretched its forepaws forwards, stepped back on to its hind legs, arched its back like this, put down its tiger's head and lifted its tail upright ¿ what for? It gave a stretch! A tiger, you see, is almost like a cat. A cat looks like a tiger, a cat looks like a tiger, you see. For instance, if you take a cat, and if it is winter time and it is sleeping in the firewood basket and it is purring in its sleep, and then you come along and as usual pat it gently, and at that moment it jumps down. And when it has jumped down, it stretches its forepaws outwards, it puts its head downwards, it raises its tail right up in the air, and then it arches its back, and in this way it stretches itself just like us human beings. The tiger in such a moment, that is called 'tiger's stretch'. After the 'tiger's stretch', it lifted its forepaws and stepped on to its hind legs and:

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

Plop! It leapt on to the road and landed on its four paws. When it had landed it lifted its tiger head upwards and stared at Wu Song. It swayed its head and swung its

tail, bared its teeth and flaunted its claws, and then it broke into a tiger's roar.

How could one imagine that just as Wu Song was standing on the very top of the ridge, and exactly when he was about to look around, just preparing to look for the tiger, then suddenly ¡Ð plop! ¡Ð something nearby leapt out. It leapt on to the road and landed there. In the light of the moon he now saw this tiger:

"Ugh!"

Why did he say 'ugh!'? Hm, Wu Song had another look: 'Damn it! Such a tiger!' No wonder, it had killed quite a few travellers. My God! This tiger must be one of the largest. It was as big as a bull and when it opened its mouth wide, it looked like a pail of blood. Its teeth were as sharp as swords and its tail was like a steel whip. Under the eyes of Wu Song the tiger looked up at him. At this moment Wu Song felt a little ¡X well, he became a little afraid. In fact I have a few verse-lines to praise the tiger:

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, like the sun,  
the right ear was spotted with green colour, like the moon,  
between its brows a 'king's' character,  
like a prefect inspecting the mountains.

Its twenty-four straws of whiskers  
were like needles 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.

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 winged game 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 four-footed beasts he alone stands out.  
Deep mountains and desolate moors are his home.  
When he has not eaten human meat for three days  
he will swing his tail and sway his head and grind his teeth.

It looked at Wu Song, swinging its tail and swaying its head, baring its teeth and flaunting its claws. 'Hm!' Wu Song took another look at it: 'You beast, you are so terrible! So fierce! So ferocious! You have killed so many travellers! Just by looking at your appearance, one can imagine your ferocity. Today I have come, and I am bound to kill you! My God! Is the tiger so terrible? And if it is so terrible, what to do? And even if it is so terribly dangerous, I am still a man, not a beast! Come on! You come and try to kill me! If you don't come, that's it! But if you do happen to come, I'll first kick blind those two eyes of yours. And then I'll watch how a blind tiger like you is going to eat a man?! When you don't know either east or west, north or south, where are you then going to find me?' Therefore the man, Wu Song, as he is found in the cycle called 'Opening with the tiger and closing with the dragon' from 'Ten Chapters on Wu Song', throughout these ten chapters of storytelling, the actions of this man should be called not only brave, but also resourceful. He is a great hero of both wit and courage. So Wu Song had already made a WX[9] plan. First he was to attack the tiger's eyes. When our hero had made up his plan there and then, he put his scarf right, tightened his belt, tucked in the loose corners of his clothes, then he stamped his feet into his boots, rolled up his sleeves and rubbed his hands: Pooh-pooh-pooh-pooh.....! He was standing about three metres from the tiger. Our hero was standing in the posture of 'three tips closely together'. The 'tip' of his nose and the 'tips' of his feet were coordinated and ready. Wu Song stared at the tiger without blinking at all. This man, Wu Song, had never been defeated, whatever he had done. He was awfully cool-headed, ready to cope with the situation. 'Come on! Come on! I'll handle you as I see fit!' Thus, at this very moment Wu Song was standing there and watching the tiger attentively.

The tiger, certainly, was a beast! When the tiger had caught sight of him, it lifted its forepaws and rose on its hind legs:

"Ma-a-a-a.....!" and ¡Ð thump! ¡Ð sprang towards him. With its two forepaws it aimed at Wu Song's left and right shoulder and sprang! Hm, hm! He was not going to get caught! If it caught Wu Song, he would be squeezed flat. As soon as Wu Song saw the tiger springing, its two forepaws aiming at his own left and right shoulder, our hero at the right moment turned his body and leaned to the left side. The tiger

made a jump into the air:

"Huh!" and with this jump it landed on his right side. As Wu Song saw it lying prone in front of him, our hero planted his left foot firmly in the ground, lifting his right leg, and then he twisted the tip of his right foot and aimed at the tiger's left eye:

"Got it!"

"Phew!"

When he kicked it this time, he hit it very deftly. The tiger broke out in a roar:

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

Why? It truly roared! My goodness! The tiger was hurt to the marrow of its bones! Wu Song had kicked the tiger right in its eyeball so that it exploded. This damned old eyeball looked exactly like a small egg being squeezed out, dripping with blood. Didn't the tiger have to recover from the pain? At first the tiger didn't move. Our hero prepared to catch hold of it. From time to time the tiger raised all the hairs on its body:

"Wu.....ma.....!"

Suddenly it leapt forward. Our hero turned his body again. But the tiger had no mind to give in. Sure, it had not had its free meal! But it had had a lot of hardship, and now it had got severely wounded. It made a jump upwards, turned round in the air and stood again face to face with Wu Song. Because of the moon in the sky, our hero was able to see the tiger:

"Well!"

My goodness! How well he felt! 'Ugh! You beast, haven't you had one of your eyes blinded? You try and come! If you come again, I'll kick out the other eye of yours! Then let me see how a blind tiger like you can eat people!' That tiger, sure, was a beast! And now it had suffered badly. As soon as it looked at Wu Song, it lifted its forepaws and rose on its hind legs:

"Wu.....ma.....!"

Again it aimed at Wu Song's left and right shoulder. At the same moment Wu Song saw that it was about to spring and:

"Hey!" bent his body and leaned to his right side. Again the tiger had jumped into the air:

"Huh!"

After this jump it landed on his left side. Our hero planted his right leg firmly in the ground and lifted his left leg up in the air. He concentrated all his energy in the tip of his left foot and aimed at the tiger's left eye:

"Got it!"

"Phew!"

When he kicked it this time, the tiger was to be pitied:

"Wu.....ma.....!"

Good gracious! It hurt! How it hurt! Who would have thought, that its left eye would be blinded, too? Wu Song had kicked the tiger right in its eyeball so that it exploded. It looked like a small egg, dripping with blood. Now the tiger had been blinded on both eyes. It didn't know east, west, north and south any more. Didn't Wu Song let it run, then? No, our hero took the opportunity to step forwards and prepared to catch hold of it. The tiger wanted to turn round. Yes, now the tiger wanted to turn. You want to turn, and you cannot for your life do it! The tiger's head was just there to the left of Wu Song. Our hero lifted his left hand:

"Hey!"

and took a firm grip on the tiger's neck. He took a firm grip, but the tiger was about to leap forwards. Wu Song saw this: 'So you are about to jump off and run away! Where do you think you are going?' Wu Song's five fingers were like iron hooks. In this instant our hero was holding it so tight, it couldn't get away. The next moment he twisted his left arm:

"Hey! Hey!"

Wow! Terrific! How on earth could that be an arm? It was more like a thousand pound iron pillar. When the tiger got that blow: "Wu-u-u.....!", it couldn't even move any more.

However, there was the tiger's tail, swinging ½X flop ½X flop ½X from side to side. And the four paws were scratching the earth below. Wu Song watched it intently: 'Poor you! Poor you! So you are still swinging your tail, you beast? Are you? Well, if that tiger's tail slaps me, that will feel like a steel whip! I don't want to taste that!' Our hero bent forward and placed himself opposite the tiger's left hip. He planted his left foot firmly in the ground and lifted his right foot into the air. With his right foot he made a sweeping movement along the tiger's back, and then he kicked it. That is, he aimed at the root of the tiger's tail with his heel and kicked:

"Got it!"

WX[10]

"Phew!"

It gave a sound:

"Crack!"

That sound ½X'crack' ½X came from the bone that was broken. The tiger's tail was

drooping to the ground and it could not swing any more. The bone of the tail had been broken by that kick! Do you think it could still swing? The tail drooped to the ground, and Wu Song took the opportunity to mount the tiger. He didn't treat it like a tiger, he rather treated it like a head of cattle. The tiger was suffering badly. It had never carried anything so heavy on its back before. Didn't the tiger feel worried?

"Wu.....ma.....!"

It stubbornly tried to raise its head. Wu Song was holding it. He watched it intently: 'Do you have the guts to raise your head again?' Then he raised his right fist and concentrated all his energy:

"Got it!"

"Phew!"

This time he beat it on its right eyebrow.

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

The tiger again put down its head. Our hero concentrated his energy in his right fist and aimed at its right flank:

"Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!....." swooping down on it a dozen times or so. That can't be right! He killed the tiger with three knocks and two kicks! How could he beat it a dozen times or so? Well, not so! When he beat it a dozen times, he didn't hit it on a lot of different spots, but only beat it on that very spot he had aimed at. Therefore it was only counted as one knock, when he later on arrived at the office of Yanggu District and the inspector performed an autopsy. Therefore even though he had beaten it more than a dozen times, since it was not at different spots, it was only taken as one knock, you see!

Wu Song had beaten it a dozen times.

"Yo-ho!"

My God! Wu Song said to himself: 'If I carry on this way, will I ever be able to go to the battleground again and fight? Will I ever be able to raise my hand against an enemy again? Will I? I can't even kill a tiger! How am I to take the life of an enemy? Oh, I have an idea! When you fight a man and want to kill him, you have to wound him on his deadly spot. If you don't wound him on his deadly spot, how on earth is he to die? A tiger, well, a tiger is of course like a man. Man is no different from all the living creatures. Where does one find those deadly spots on a man? The ear is such a deadly spot. Hm, the right ear of the tiger is exactly under my hand. Come on! Let me box him on his ear for once!' Our hero raised his fist and concentrated his energy:

"Got it!"

"Phew!"

This time his force was enormous! How could the tiger guess that it was to get such a blow?

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

The tiger gave a snort, it couldn't even roar any more. From its left ear something looking like a red silk thread gushed forth more than three metres: Sh-sh-sh-sh.....! What was it? Blood! Blood from where? Extravasated blood from its right ear. Blood from its right ear? That ought to drip from its right ear or gush forth from its right ear! Why did it gush forth from its left ear? Oh, that was because the force of Wu Song's fist was so enormous that he had blocked up the main door. When you cannot take the main door, you have to go to the back door, and so it gushed forth from the left ear: Sh-sh-sh-sh! When this blood gushed forth, the tiger didn't raise its head any more and it didn't scratch with its paws any more. Before it had dug out four deep furrows in the ground, but now it did not move any more. Wu Song said to himself: 'It's dead! It's dead, dead, dead! Beware! Such a beast has many a trick! Maybe it pretends to be dead! Come on! Let me ask and see!' With his left hand he pinched it twice. It didn't move. It didn't move, so it was probably dead. Our hero rose to his feet. He swung his right leg over to the other side, put his weight on his left foot, raised his right foot and gave it another kick ¡X phew! ¡X thump! The whole body of the tiger fell down to the ground. Did the tiger fall down? Yes, it fell down. It shouldn't do so! Isn't it so, that 'a dead tiger keeps its posture'? Oh, no, no, no, no! It's true that 'a dead tiger keeps its posture', but it depends how it dies. If the reason is that it has caught some illness, and it understands it is going to die, it cannot move any more, then it always finds a crossroads of three or four roads where it props itself up, opening its mouth wide and stretching its tongue as long as it can. Then it sits there, and if passers-by suddenly catch sight of this tiger:

"Help! My God!"

As soon as they detect the tiger, they scurry off in a hurry. But actually this is a dead tiger. Even after it is dead it can frighten people. The great generals from former times used to compare themselves to tigers:

"My lord, you are certainly a tiger general!"

However, this tiger had been beaten so viciously by Wu Song, that its posture had collapsed totally. How could it stop falling? It fell down, and our hero stepped over it to the other side and watched it intently:

"Ha, ha! You monster! Where is your majestic air?"

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

WX[11]

At this moment Wu Song hurried to the east side of the ridge, he wanted to go back and get some sleep. That place where he had been sitting, wasn't there a moss-grown stone? First he sat down to relax a bit, and then he wanted to return and get some sleep. He had that bundle of his, and now he shouldered his bundle and crossed the ridge:

"Pooh-pooh-pooh-pooh.....!"

When he had come about two *li* down from Jinyang Ridge, he caught sight of something in front:

"What?"

He suddenly saw a crossroads: 'Aiya! Two roads, one to the right and one to the left. Which one of these roads leads to Yanggu District? Too bad, at this time there are no travellers, and moreover there are no peasants around to ask. What direction should I take?'

Just as Wu Song was standing there and speculating, he suddenly heard something at the rim of his ear:

"Ding-dong-ding-dong....."

To the left of him this sound was ringing, as if it were a bell ringing. He turned his head to the left and looked:

"My!"

Good gracious! Wu Song got really scared! On his left hand he saw a big forest, and at the fringe of the forest two tigers were lying in wait. How could one imagine that the sound of bells came from the tigers' necks?

"Ding-dong-ding-dong.....", it sounded.

Wu Song said to himself: 'My God! How many tigers are there after all on Jingyang Ridge? Please? I have just killed one tiger on top of the ridge. And now I am completely exhausted. Two tigers more at this moment, well, those two tigers, I do not have more force! What can I say?' At this moment Wu Song was just about to flee, but the tigers came rushing towards him.....

WX[12]



























